

The Life of David



THE LIFE OF DAVID

**A COLLECTION OF WRITINGS ABOUT DAVID
FROM THE PEN OF PASTOR CHARLES T. RUSSELL**

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This book is arranged to assist in the study of the sequential Biblical account.
A few reprint articles were split to fit them into the appropriate account.
These articles are notated as continuations.

FRONT COVER: *King David Playing the Harp by Gerard van Honthorst*
BACK COVER: *The Shepherd Boy by Harold Copping*

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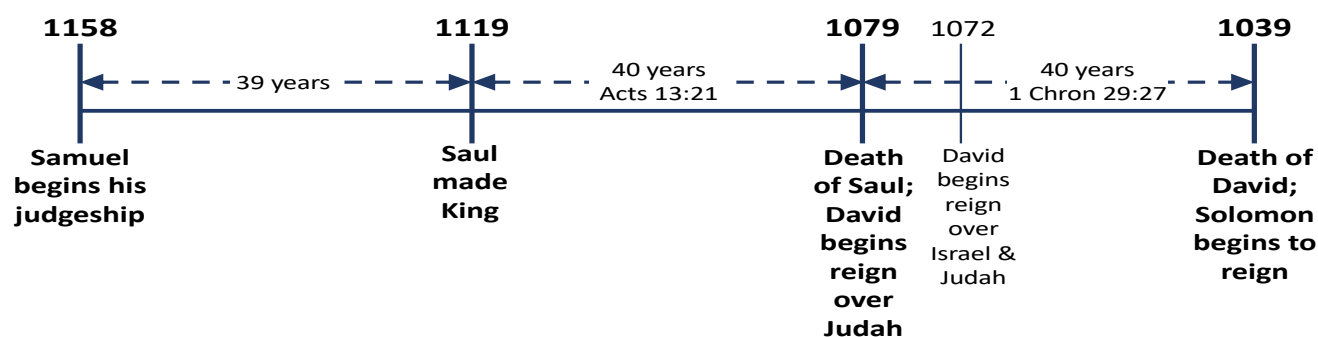
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Connecting David's Life with his Psalms

<u>Scriptural Event</u>	<u>Psalms</u>	<u>Possible occasion on which the Psalm was composed</u>
1Sam 16:11-19	8, 19, 23, 29	On creation and nature from David's early shepherding life
1Sam 17:4-51	9	On the victory over Goliath
1Sam 19:11-17	59	On Saul seeking David's life at his house
1Sam 20	11	On David receiving advice to flee from Saul
1Sam 21:10-15	34, 56	On David before Achish, king of Gath
1Sam 21:1-7; 22:9-23	52	On Doeg's telling Saul that David came to Ahimelech
1Sam 22:1	142	Prayer of David in the cave of Adullam or Engedi
1Sam 22:5, 23	63	On being a fugitive in the wilderness of Judea & Ziph
1Sam 23:7-13; 23	7, 31, 64, 109	On David's persecution by Saul
1Sam 23:19-28	54	On the treachery of the Ziphim to David
1Sam 24:3-22	35, 57, 58	On David's refusal to kill Saul in the cave
1Sam 27:1-2	16, 17	On David's persection by Saul
2 Sam 5:3-5	118	On becoming king over all Israel
2 Sam 5:7-10	2	On taking Jerusalem and subsequent battle with the Philistines
2Sam 6:5-19	15, 68, 132	On bringing the ark to Jerusalem
1Ch 16:7-38	24, 96, 105, 106	On bringing the ark from Obed-edom's house
2 Sam 8:3, 13; 10:6, 16	60	On victories over Edom & Syria
2Sam 10:6-8, 19	20, 21	Prayers about wars with the Ammonites and Syrians
2Sam 12:1-14	51	Confession and repentance of David after his adultery
2Sam 12:1-14	32, 33, 103	On forgiveness of David's adultery
2Sam 15:13-17, 23-31	3, 4, 5, 42, 43	On David's flight from Absalom
2Sam 15:13-17, 23-31	55, 62	During the flight from Absalom
2Sam 22	18, 144	On the deliverance from oppression of his enemies
2 Sam 24:15-17	91	On stopping of the pestilence by the angel
2 Sam 24:18-25	30	On the dedication of the threshing-floor of Araunah
1 Kings 1:30; 2:1-4	72	On Solomon becoming king and receiving David's last charge

1 Samuel at a Glance					
Focus	Samuel		Saul		
Reference	1:1—————4:1—————8:1—————13:1—————15:10————31:13				
Division	1st Transition of Leadership: Eli—Samuel	Judgeship of Samuel	2nd Transition of Leadership: Samuel—Saul	Reign of Saul	3rd Transition of Leadership: Saul—David
Topic	Decline of Judges		Rise of Kings		
	Eli	Samuel	Saul		David
Location	Canaan				
Time	99 years				

2 Samuel at a Glance						
Focus	David’s Triumphs			David’s Transgressions	David’s Troubles	
Reference	1:1 — 6:1 — 8:1 — 11:1 — 12:1 — 13:37 — 24:25					
Division	Political Triumphs	Spiritual Triumphs	Military Triumphs	Sins of Adultery and Murder	Troubles in David’s House	Troubles in the Kingdom
Topic	Success			Sin	Failure	
	Obedience			Disobedience	Judgment	
Location	David in Hebron	David in Jerusalem				
Time	7 ½ years	33 years				



*David presents a greater number of distinct and striking features
than any one of those great men (Moses, Elijah, Paul);
...the widest character on record—a shepherd, a soldier, a courtier,
a famous friend, a fugitive, a captor, a marauder, a general,
a king, a statesman, an exile, a priest, a prophet, a saint,
a criminal, a penitent, and nothing by halves.
His character was a harp of many strings.” C. Reade R. 4223*

*The name David signifies “Beloved”,
and as it applied specially to our Lord and Master,
of whom it was said by Jehovah, “This is my beloved Son”,
so also it applies to all the members of His Body,
each one of whom must be beloved,
else he cannot be acceptable as a member.
Of such the Head says, “The Father Himself loveth you,”
and again he says that we should love one another as he has loved us.
It is not too much to say that all who receive this anointing of the Lord
must ultimately be of this David, or beloved, character.
The spirit of love must be in them—love for the Lord
and love one for the other, else they are none of His. R.3225*

*He [David] perceived that the Lord had established him king
over Israel and that he had exalted him king for his people Israel's sake.
So, too, we should remember that God has a purpose in the
selection or election of the Church. As the Apostle says,
“We are chosen for a purpose.”...
Let this thought keep us very humble, very near to the Lord.
Let us strive to learn the lessons necessary to fit and prepare us
for the ruling, judging and uplifting “all the families of the earth.” R. 4255*

To this end, may this study bring forth a blessing.

DAVID ANOINTED KING – R. 1901

1 Samuel 16:1-13

“Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” – 1 Samuel 16:7

IN selecting David to reign over Israel God chose one who was not only suitable to the necessities of that people and time, but one who aptly prefigured the Christ, Head and body, selected during the Gospel age and anointed to sit on the throne of the Kingdom of the Lord. In this view of the matter the golden text forcibly reminds us of the statement of the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 1:26), “Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught the things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence.”

God looked for the same characteristics in David that he now seeks in those whom in this age he calls to be anointed for the Kingdom. He found in him faith, meekness, courage, energy and loving obedience. Yet he was young and inexperienced and untrained and unskilled in the duties of the high office to which he was called. This latter condition, which, in the estimation of men, would have been an insurmountable barrier, was no obstacle in God’s sight; for God is able to inspire his called ones with his spirit and to arm them with his might. So he did with David, and so he does with the Christ – our Lord Jesus and his body, the church. In the Psalms of David his typical character is very clearly indicated, sometimes personifying Jesus our Head, and sometimes the whole body of Christ. Thus, for instance, when he says, “They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture,” the reference is only to our Head; while in other cases, as in Psalm 23, the application is to the whole body, whose Shepherd is the Lord Jehovah.

It required the two reigns of David and Solomon to represent the great work of the Lord’s Anointed. David’s reign represented the work of

the church in the flesh, while Solomon’s reign represented the work of the church glorified and at rest from all her enemies.

David when anointed was but a youth. He was not one, however, who wasted the precious spring time of life in sowing “wild oats.” He was a bud of promise, a noble youth, – meek, modest, gentle, faithful, courageous in the line of duty, and brave to face danger and to endure hardness in any good work, especially wherever the interests of God’s cause or God’s people were at stake. Seeing in him this sterling stamp of character God called him to higher service. So he has been calling and anointing with his holy spirit a similar class all through the Gospel age. They are the Lord’s anointed kings; but their kingdom, like that of David, is not established: they are surrounded by enemies on every side as was David, and the whole time of their life in the flesh is a continual warfare as was his. Like David, too, they have had it in their hearts to build the temple of God in the present age, that all the world might come and worship. But this privilege is not granted to the church in the flesh, even as the building of the typical temple was denied to David, but was reserved for Solomon, to whom the Lord gave a rest, peace and prosperity which made it an apt symbol of the reign of the glorified church. – 1 Chron. 22:7-9. But while David was not permitted to build the temple of God, he was permitted to gather together and prepare the materials for the building. So the church in the flesh makes ready the materials for the temple of God which in the dawn of the Millennium will come together noiselessly as did Solomon’s temple, without the sound of a hammer. David’s warfare, then, was a type of the warfare of the whole church, Head and body, while in the flesh, against the principalities and powers of darkness on every side that oppose her to the very end of her earthly course, so that, though she is anointed for the kingly office, she is never established in power, peace and security to the day of her death. Her work on this side the vail is to war a good

warfare, and to industriously gather the materials and prepare the living stones for the glorious temple which shall by and by call all the world to worship.

Beyond the veil of the flesh this same anointed company (all the faithful overcomers of this age) will enter into the glorious reign prefigured by the reign of Solomon – “They shall rest from their labors, and their works follow with them.” (Rev. 14:13) And the temple of God shall rise and shine in its beauty, and in it shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, which blessing was typified by the abundant blessing, peace and prosperity of Israel during the reign of Solomon.

Let all who have this glorious hope in them remember the words of our golden text – “The Lord looketh on the heart.” He is looking to see who is worthy to sit on the throne of his Kingdom; and has shown us very clearly the traits of character for which he is looking. It behooves us, then, to see that our hearts (our will, purpose, intention and effort) are in such a condition of loyalty, faithfulness and obedience as will bear the inspection of the all-seeing eye, while we remember for our encouragement that, as shown in the type, no conditions of birth or station or circumstances can form any obstacle to our acceptance with God and our future exaltation with Christ if we are faithful.

DAVID ANOINTED KING – R. 5656 (also R. 3225)

1 Samuel 16:4-13

“Man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the Heart.” – 1 Samuel 16:7

KING SAUL’S rejection by the Lord because of disobedience meant not only his own ultimate removal from the throne, but that his sons should not succeed him in it. Furthermore, it meant also the Lord’s selection of another man, another family, for the office of ruler in Israel and representative of the Lord upon the throne. The Lord’s choice was David, to whom the Prophet Samuel had indirectly referred, saying, “The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people, because thou [King Saul] hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.” – 1 Samuel 13:14.

At the time of the events of today’s Study, David was about twenty years old; consequently the Prophet’s words must have been uttered about the time of David’s birth. Thus we have another illustration of God’s foreknowledge and design in respect to those whom He especially uses in His service. Similarly God’s choice of Jacob was declared before he was born; and similarly the Apostle Paul was chosen from before his birth. We are to separate from this declaration any false thought respecting the Divine choice, and note that none of these was chosen to eternal life, but each of them, all of them, chosen and fitted for special service.

This gives us a suggestion of the possibility of paternal and maternal influence affecting the natural disposition of a human being from before his birth. He still has a will, however; and even though favorably endowed, it remains with himself to determine, to will, whether or not he will walk in the Lord’s ways and to what extent he will be obedient. There is no coercion of the will; for the Lord seeks such as worship Him in spirit – willingly, heartily – and in truth.

David’s great-grandmother was the gentle Ruth, who gleaned grain probably in the very field with which David was familiar. His great-grandfather’s name was Boaz, a page of whose history is recorded in the Book of Ruth. Like Boaz, David’s father Jesse was doubtless one of the Elders of the city of Bethlehem, respected and honored as a noble man. Of his mother we know little, except that David twice mentioned her as a handmaid of God.

SAMUEL’S FAITH TESTED

The Prophet Samuel mourned and prayed for King Saul, and apparently was disappointed that this man, of whom he had expected such great things and under whose guidance he had anticipated great prosperity for Israel, should be rejected. Quite probably fearful forebodings of a civil war to result from the installation of a new

king perturbed the Prophet's mind. He knew that Saul would not quietly submit to laying down the scepter which he had taken up with so great modesty, in obedience to the Divine arrangement. The Prophet's mental eye could see the probability of civil strife, which might rupture the nation and cause great trouble. He should have had greater trust in the Wisdom and the Power of the Almighty, but his trouble was more or less like that which assails all of the Lord's people even today.

The lesson to our hearts should be that we will implicitly trust the Lord to manage His own affairs; that we will trust Him where we cannot trace Him and will be obedient to His directions; and that so far from mourning at the execution of His plans we will rejoice, knowing that all things are working together for good to them that love God – that all things will ultimately work blessings for those who are in accord with the Lord – blessings for the future life, if not for the present.

When sent to anoint David, the Prophet Samuel exhibited a fear not elsewhere noticeable in his character. He did not hesitate to perform the Lord's bidding, but intimated that he clearly understood that it meant the risk of his own life – that King Saul would kill him as a traitor if he should anoint a successor to the kingdom. The Lord made it clear to him that it was not the intention to make the matter known at once, and directed him to go to Bethlehem and make a sacrifice there and, incidentally, to improve the opportunity of finding and anointing the one who in due time would be made known and exalted to the throne. At the time, he was merely to perform the initial work, which David's father and brethren would not understand, thinking perhaps that the anointing meant a special blessing or a commission from the Lord to engage as a member of the school of the prophets or something else of this kind. Quite probably, however, the Prophet informed David privately of the meaning of the anointing, just as he had privately informed Saul when he secretly anointed the latter to the office of king of Israel.

GOD'S CHOICE OF KING

Our Study begins at the point when the Prophet Samuel had arrived at Bethlehem. The

Elders were in fear, thinking that his presence signified some sin on their part, or on the part of some of their fellow-citizens, which God had sent him to reprove and to punish. Hence they inquired whether or not he came peaceably – whether or not his presence meant a blessing or the infliction of a penalty. Their fears were allayed when they heard that his mission was a peaceable one – to offer a sacrifice unto the Lord.

Some time before this, the Ark of the Covenant had been captured by the Philistines. The Tabernacle services, thus discontinued, had not yet been reestablished, and for this reason this sacrificing was performed by the Lord's especially appointed servant. The command to the people of Bethlehem to sanctify themselves if they would be participators in the blessings of the sacrifice signified that they should wash their persons, put on clean clothes and draw nigh to the Lord with their hearts. Thus they typically represented that justification and sanctification which the Church of this Age has enjoyed.

The Prophet seems to have taken supervision of the family of Jesse to the intent that he might without public display find the man whom the Lord had chosen, and might anoint him to the office and give him the Divine blessing in preparation of it. Jesse properly introduced his sons to the Prophet according to the order of their birth – his eldest, Eliab, first. As he was of fine appearance the Prophet naturally assumed that he was the Lord's choice; but as he looked to the Lord for direction in the matter he got the response – in what manner we know not – which constitutes the Golden Text of this Study.

Judged from the human standpoint of appearance, age, ability, etc., Eliab was the most suitable person in Jesse's family to be the king over the nation, but not so in the Lord's sight. The Lord was looking at the heart, and had already selected David as a man after his own heart, although, at this time being under age, his father had not thought worthwhile to send for him to be present at the feast. As one after another of Jesse's sons appeared, the Prophet found not him whom the Lord's Spirit indicated as the one to be anointed. Then he inquired,

“Are all thy children here?” Jesse suddenly remembered that he had another boy, his youngest, who was in the field with his sheep, and sent for him.

THE ANTITYPICAL LORD’S ANOINTED

Our Golden Text appeals to all Christians in connection with the High Calling of the Gospel Age, and year by year experience shows us its general applicability. We, too, as the Lord’s messengers, are seeking for those to be anointed with the oil of gladness, the Holy Spirit, that they may be kings and priests unto God in the Kingdom which He is about to establish and which will supersede present kingdoms. We too, like the Prophet Samuel, might feel afraid to proceed with this work of anointing the successors of present institutions, did we not realize that the work of sealing the Elect of the Lord, which is now in progress, is a secret work, which the world cannot understand. Indeed, none understand this matter of the sealing, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, except those who have received it; and they are all of the David class.

The name David signifies Beloved; and as it applied especially to our Lord and Master, of whom it was said by Jehovah, “This is My beloved Son,” so also it applies to all the members of His Body, each of whom must be beloved, else he cannot be acceptable as a member. Of such the Head says, “The Father Himself loveth you”; and again, He says that we should love one another as He has loved us. It is not too much to say that all who receive this anointing of the Lord must ultimately be of this David, or beloved, character. The spirit of love must be in them – love for the Lord and love one for the other; else they are none of His.

In seeking the Lord’s anointed, who shall by and by reign in Millennial glory for the blessing of the world, as antitypes of David, we notice that as he was counted by his brethren as too insignificant to be considered in this connection, so also are those whom the Lord is choosing and anointing for His Heavenly Kingdom. Our Lord Jesus was disesteemed of His brethren, and when the suggestion was made that He should be the Lord’s Anointed, His people hid, as it were, their faces from Him – disdained Him, despised Him, and considered Him hopeless

respecting anything great or glorious – “a root out of a dry ground.” The same has been true respecting the members of His Body, the elect Church. They also have been despised and rejected of men; and of them the Apostle declares, “We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things” – for Christ’s sake, for the Truth’s sake. – 1 Corinthians 4:13.

WHO CAN READ THE HEART?

Again he declares, “Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.” St. James asks, “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him!” This principle of the Divine selection of things that are not esteemed amongst men, to bring to naught the things that are esteemed by men, is noticeable throughout this Gospel Age. Often have we, like the Prophet Samuel, looked about amongst men seemingly eligible to a place in the Kingdom – socially, intellectually, morally, educationally – and in the esteem of men, and have expected that surely the Lord would sanction their anointing with the oil of gladness and grant them a knowledge of the Truth pertaining to the Kingdom, only to find ourselves mistaken and to get a fresh lesson on the fact that God looketh not on the outward appearance, but on the heart.

We concede that we are unable to read the heart; but we are fully satisfied to accept the Divine decision in such matters and to trust that when in due time all the secrets of this present life shall be disclosed we shall then be able to understand the meaning of the Lord’s selections more completely than we do now. We shall then be able to see what a difference there was between the hearts of those whom the Lord accepted and the hearts of those, outwardly humble, whom He did not so highly favor in respect to the Kingdom call. Meantime, we must simply wait and trust the Lord and accept His decisions, as expressed by our dear Redeemer when He said, “I thank Thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.”

Instructed respecting the Divine methods, we are not to despise the least, the most ignoble or illiterate of those who give evidence of a purity and honesty of heart toward God, and to whom He seems to give the anointing of His Spirit and the “ear to hear.” Rather, while making known the Message to all as we have opportunity, we are to rejoice especially with those upon whom the Lord’s favor is manifested, regardless of their earthly surroundings, etc. (“The Lord knoweth them that are His”); and it is for us to recognize, to honor and to co-operate with all such, as the ambassadors and representatives of our Lord and Master.

Often have we thought, as we have looked over a congregation of the Lord’s people and beheld some not prepossessing in personal appearance, some not well educated or refined, some ignoble – but nevertheless bearing the marks of the anointing of the Lord, the light of the Truth shining in their faces, the confidence and hope of the Truth inspiring them, and their lives indicating a transformation from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son – often have we thought that had the Lord sent us forth to seek His Bride, we might have ignorantly passed by some of His choice jewels and have gathered in some whom He rejects as unworthy – because we are unable to read the heart. This thought should make us very humble, gentle and meek toward all, and very trustful of the Lord and very much inclined to look for His leading in respect to our labors as His servants – just as the Prophet Samuel looked to the Lord in connection with the anointing of David.

A PICTURE OF THE MILLENIUM

Samuel’s words, “We will not sit down until he come hither,” referred to the feast of which they were about to partake. It was the custom that, after the sacrifice had been offered, the sanctified persons present and those in spirit sharing in the sacrifice might join in a feast,

eating the flesh and thus celebrating a communion with the Lord. It was this feast that the Prophet decided should not be commenced until David’s arrival. Indeed, by reason of being the Lord’s anointed, he would be the most important person present at the gathering.

Perhaps in this also we can see a figure of the Lord’s blessing in the Divine Plan. A feast of fat things has been designed for the whole world of mankind. But the feast cannot be participated in until the justifying and sanctifying sacrifice has been killed. More than this, the feast cannot be commenced until first the Anointed One shall come and shall receive the anointing. The anointing began with our Lord, the Head of the Church, and throughout the Gospel Age has been flowing down upon the members of His Body, the Church. The Sacrifice has been killed; and we, as members of Christ, have been participating in the sacrifice. Shortly the whole matter will have been accomplished; and then, as the Lord’s anointed, the feast of fat things will be spread – the Anointed One, Head and Body, being the principal in that great antitypical feast.

The blessing and power of the Lord accompanied David’s anointing in some manner – just how we may not understand; for the manifestation of the Spirit was not the same then as it is with the Church, since Pentecost. (John 7:39) However, in some manner God’s blessing and power were with David, enabling him to progress in knowledge, etc., and preparing him for the duties of the office to which he had been anointed. May we not consider as an antitype to this, the anointing which comes upon the Church from the time of her acceptance with the Lord? Ours is not a physical anointing nor are the blessings conferred of a temporal character. It is as New Creatures that we are anointed, that we grow in grace, knowledge and love; and it is as New Creatures that by and by we shall be perfected in the First Resurrection and come to the Throne with our Lord and Master as our Head.

VICTORIES OVER MODERN GIANTS – R. 5662

1 Samuel 17:1-54

THE first giants mentioned in the Bible were those who had human mothers, but whose fathers were materialized fallen angels, as recorded in Genesis 6. These, however, all perished in the Deluge of Noah's day. From time to time since then, there have been human giants found in Asia. Og, king of Bashan, had an iron bedstead thirteen feet long. In their report on Canaan, the spies told of seeing giants there – the sons of Anak. Goliath, the giant of Gath, whom David slew, was probably a descendant of this family.

We have had giants in recent times, also; Byrne, an Irishman, eight feet four inches; Middleton, an Englishman, nine feet three inches; Lushkin, the Russian, eight feet five inches; Chang, the Chinese, seven feet eight inches. Pliny declared that Gabbaras was nine feet nine inches tall. There is, therefore, no room for discrediting the story of David and Goliath.

David, a youth of probably twenty years, visited the army of Israel, in which three of his brothers were soldiers, taking food and delicacies for their refreshment. To his amazement he found the army of Israel facing the army of the Philistines, who had invaded from the west. They were not fighting, each apparently fearing the other. A champion from the Philistines came forth every morning, a giant in size and strength, wearing a bronze armor weighing two hundred and twenty pounds, and brandishing his spear, the head of which weighed twenty-five pounds, and the shaft of which was nearly three inches thick. He defied the Israelites, declaring that a battle between individuals would settle the war. He defied not only the nation of Israel, but its God.

Young David was amazed that this had progressed so long, and that nobody accepted the challenge. A believer in the true God, he realized the Covenant between God and his nation. His faith in the Almighty was such that he accepted the Divine promises implicitly. He wondered at the lack of faith manifested by his brothers and his countrymen. He intimated that, backed by

God's promises, he himself dared to meet that Goliath.

King Saul of Israel had let it be known that great honor would come to the one who would meet the challenge of the foe. Young David was brought before him; but, anxious as he was for a champion, the king realized that the sinewy youth before him would be no match for the giant strength of Goliath, one blow from whose spear would destroy him. Then the stripling pleaded his cause. He declared that, as keeper of his father's sheep, he had time and again delivered them from the mouth and the paw of the lion and the bear. He had the courage, and above all he had the faith in God. As God had blessed him in his daily duties of the past, He would give him strength for victory in the duty of the hour, the meeting of the defiance of the giant and his insult to Jehovah.

The king was impressed. He would lend David his armor – the best in Israel. But after trying it, young David declined it with thanks. He was not accustomed to such armor and could be himself better without it. He took with him merely his shepherd's staff, to which he was accustomed, and his sling. Passing over toward the side of the Philistines for the combat, he chose five smooth pebbles from the brook. This slight armament, with God's blessing, was more than sufficient; for he needed to use only one of the pebbles.

The giant was indignant, saying, "Am I a dog, that this boy should come out to meet me with a stick?" According to tradition, as the lad approached the giant laughed, throwing his head backward. His helmet fell off; and he was exposed to the sure marksmanship of his despised opponent. There were no newspapers in those days, nor public libraries; and he knew not of how mighty a place sling-stones occupied in warfare even then, and that often, in skilled hands, they were almost as effective as are the rifles of today. The giant stunned, his armor-bearer fled; and young David quickly dispatched him and took his armor as a trophy. The

Philistines surprised, dismayed, fled, Israel pursuing them to their own fortified city.

HOW TO MEET MODERN GIANTS

Following Jesus' death, a new Divine order of things was ushered in. Those who have faith in God still have battles to be won, but not with carnal weapons. Their victories, nevertheless, are based upon the same principle which operated favorably with David. Faith in God is lying at the basis – the realization that the cause in which they fight is one approved of God. A courage proper to their faith – a faith gradually developed in previous victories over lesser foes, as in David's case – helps to give courage and strength for battling with the most terrifying giants we may encounter.

Remembering this, each Christian should be daily on the alert to overcome the little weaknesses, the little frailties – to become conquerors in the little battles with selfishness, anger, malice, envy, evil-speaking. Victories over these, and experiences gained with God's help in overcoming these, give preparation step by step for the greatest trials and the grandest victories.

When we learn of the Divine promise, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne," it gives us the thought that a great

victory must be won to prove ourselves worthy of the great honor to which God has called His Church. And this victory, as we are happy to learn, is not always to the strong, but to those whom God will bless. And the conflict which God approves and will reward is not strife with friends or neighbors, however unreasonable they may be, but strife against unrighteousness, against sin, against everything which the Divine Law opposes. This strife and victory belong, first of all, in our own hearts and minds and, secondarily, will extend, as the Lord's providence may indicate, in battling against public evils and in support of public and civic righteousness.

We are not, however, to forget that the great giant of sin and iniquity, which has dared the people of God for centuries, will be smitten down only at God's appointed time, and by the antitype of David. The name David signifies Beloved. The antitypical Beloved is The Christ – Jesus the Head, the Church His Body. Shortly, a sling-stone of Truth is to smite down the great opponent; and the antitypical David will begin the Millennial Reign which is to lift up the world and bless it. As members of this David class, we must have the overcoming spirit, and its supporting faith and trust in God's promise and power.

DAVID AND GOLIATH – R. 1902

1 Samuel 17:38-51

"The battle is the Lord's." – 1 Samuel 17:47

THE lesson to the Christian to be gathered from this narrative is briefly embodied in the golden text – "The battle is the Lord's." Let him ever bear this in mind, and daily go forth to battle with the great powers of darkness, strong in the strength which God supplies, with the faith, courage and heroism that distinguished David, and no foe can stand before him. The one great essential to victory is faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "Without faith it is impossible to please God" or to secure his interposition on our behalf.

Having faith, we need no carnal weapons, and no armor of human invention is of any service to us; but trained and practical faith can work wonders as great as did David's sling and stone. The sling and stone were not an untried

weapon with David. He was in constant practice with them, and thus he had gained skill and confidence in their use. So the Christian must practice dependence upon God continually in all the small affairs of life, and then when the giant trials come his practised faith will be abundantly able to meet and overcome them. And the more severe the trial, the more glorious the victory of faith and the greater the strength of character derived from its exercise. Doubtless it was the previous struggle with the lion and the bear, and the victory God gave him then, that gave David such boldness in defying the power of Goliath. So every battle we fight and every victory we win through faith in God develops strength for future conflicts and makes the more sure our final overcoming.

OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD – R. 3230

1 Samuel 17:38-49

If God be for us who can be against us?” – Romans 8:31

THE Philistines occupied a considerable portion of the seacoast fronting the land of Canaan at the time the Israelites took possession, and their rights seem to have been respected by the Israelites, for even when the land was divided by lot, before it was subdued, the portion occupied by the Philistines was not included in that recognized as given by God to the Israelites. Indeed we remember that the Lord used this powerful nation as his rod in chastening the chosen people when the unfaithfulness of the latter required it on more than one occasion. Thus in the time of Samson the Philistines were the masters of Israel, Samson being used of the Lord as one of his agents in the removal of their yoke – although the work begun by Samson was not completed until the days of Samuel, the prophet. – 1 Sam. 14.

Our lesson shows us another invasion of Israel's borders by the Philistines, Saul at this time being king, though David had already been privately anointed but not publicly proclaimed as his successor. The Philistine hosts had advanced a considerable distance into the territory of the Israelites, and had reached the more mountainous country, where Saul gathered the army of Israel to meet them. A valley lay between the two hosts, and in the center of this valley there was a ditch about ten feet deep, cut through the rock by a mountain stream. The place was favorable for a battle of the kind usually fought at that day. Neither army seemed to be anxious to attempt to cross the steep banks of the brook in the face of its opponent, for under such conditions the attacking party would be considerably disadvantaged. Besides, the Philistines – knowing that Israel's king stood head and shoulders above his fellow-Israelites – had pitted against him a giant Philistine, Goliath, still taller, about ten feet high and probably stout in proportion, as indicated by the weight of his armor, spear and sword. The challenge set forth that the disputes between the two nations,

of many years' standing, should be settled, not by a general battle, but by a duel between the Philistine giant and the most competent Israelite who could be found to come against him – who undoubtedly would have been Saul, the king.

For forty days this challenge was made every morning, and the king of Israel and his chief mighty men practically confessed that they feared the giant and would not respond to his challenge. It was at this juncture that David, a young man of about twenty-one, was sent by his father to his brethren in the army of Israel to see how they fared, to take them some delicacies from home, and to bring back word respecting the prosperity of the Lord's hosts. The infidel is prone to twit the Lord's people upon the statement of Scripture that David was a man after God's own heart – referring to some of his weaknesses and shortcomings; but in this lesson we see clearly the feature of David's character which God so highly esteemed, and which he has always esteemed in everyone to the extent that he possesses and manifests it. This quality which God esteemed in David was his faith – the same quality that he esteemed in Abraham and in all the faithful of the past. Of all who had “this testimony that they pleased God,” it is written that by faith they did thus and so, “and it was counted unto them for righteousness.” – Gal. 3:6.

David's faith in the Lord being great, he was surprised to learn when he came to the army that the Philistine had been boasting himself for forty days against Israel and Israel's God, and that no one of his nation had possessed sufficient faith in God to accept the challenge. He at once proposed that he would accept it himself and asked to be taken to the king that he might be thus commissioned. Those who mentioned him to the king spoke of him as a “mighty, valiant man,” yet when Saul looked upon him he perceived that he was but a youth and was physically no match for the giant. However, he was the only champion who had arisen, and he

was full of confidence in his own success as an instrument in the Lord's hands for delivering Israel from the boastful heathen. Saul finally consented, and proposed to loan Israel's champion his own armor; but, unused to such accoutrements, David found when he had donned them that he could not feel properly at home in them. It would require considerable time to learn how to use such armor and implements advantageously and without discomfort, and he decided to go in his usual garb as a shepherd, armed only with his shepherd's club and sling and the scrip or leather bag in which to carry the stones which he selected from the bed of the brook as he passed.

Goliath could scarcely believe his own eyes when he saw that the ruddy youth who approached him had come out to do him battle with a club, for he probably did not notice the sling. He felt indignant and inquired whether he – the great, the mighty, the strong, the well-armed – was regarded as a dog to be attacked by a club; and, cursing David by his gods, he declared that he would make short work of him, and that the fowls should have his flesh.

David's retort shows clearly that he appreciated the situation in all its bearings. He was aware that his opponent was armed with sword and spear and javelin, but, as he states the matter, he was approaching the conflict strong in the strength that God supplies – strong in his faith in the Lord as the decider of battles, as the one who would be able to give him the victory and deliver his people from all their enemies. David noted, and counted well upon the fact, that the issue was not between the two armies, not between two men, but between the God of Israel and the false gods of the Philistines. Faith in God had doubtless been increasing amongst all the Israelites within the twenty years preceding this event. They were gradually coming to learn that, having been punished for their sins and idolatries and having returned unto the Lord, his favor was now with them because of his people, but David seems to have had confidence in God in more than an ordinary degree. Doubtless his own anointing to be Saul's successor in the kingdom gave him assurance that



David und Goliath by Osmar Schindler

it was God's will that the kingdom of Israel was to be continued, and that God's favor was to be with them still as a nation, notwithstanding the transgressions of the divine commandment by Saul, noted in a previous lesson.

The Jews have a tradition that it was while Goliath threw back his head in laughter at his stripling opponent that David's sling-stone struck him in the temple. The helmets of that time were not nearly so complete as those used extensively in the middle ages, and apparently the neck and a portion of the head were generally exposed, so that David's stone might have struck the vital spot of the forehead even though Goliath's head had not been thrown back in laughter. Neither was David's marksmanship so extraordinary as to be considered wholly miraculous. We have the Scriptural record that many in the tribe of David could throw such sling-stones to a hair's breadth. (Judges 20:16) Xenophon mentions the expertness of certain Persian slingers, and Livy speaks of slingers so expert that they could send a stone from a distance through an ordinary wreath or chaplet,

and could not only strike their enemies in the face, but in whatever part of the face they chose.

We cannot call this little incident a type, but we may properly see in it a figure and a lesson respecting spiritual things applicable to all who belong to the anti-typical David – Beloved – the Christ. Goliath fitly pictures the great Adversary, Satan, and all who are on his side of any controversy, seeking to bring the Lord’s consecrated people into bondage either to errors or sins. Satan, as the prince of this world, found no one either willing or able to dispute his supremacy of power until our Lord Jesus, the antitypical David (Beloved), became the champion of God and the truth and such as love righteousness. As David risked his life for the deliverance of his people Israel, so our Lord Jesus not only risked, but sacrificed, his life for the deliverance of antitypical Israel; as David, after being anointed, encountered the lion, so Jesus, after he had been anointed by the holy Spirit at Jordan, was led of the Spirit into the wilderness and endured a great fight with the Adversary. He conquered him with the Word of God, answering each of Satan’s propositions for his overthrow with the words, “It is written.” The Apostle explains, – For this purpose Christ was manifested, that he might destroy the bondage of death and “him that hath the power of death, that is the devil” – eventually delivering all the people of God. – Heb. 2:14.

David’s conquest in some respects illustrates battles which all of the Lord’s people must engage in. Goliath and the hosts supporting him may well illustrate to our minds various foes of God and truth and righteousness which challenge us and all of the Lord’s people.

(1) The hosts of doubt and scepticism are today led about by the great giant of unbelief, whose size, armor, sword and spear are over all the hosts of nominal Christendom – all except the David class – the body of Christ. This giant is the evolution theory, and his armor-bearer is higher criticism. The records and promises of Israel’s God are disdained, and the David class who stand forth in their defense are treated with contempt and their pebbles from the brook of truth disregarded. But science, falsely so called, though it boasts itself today and creates so great

an impression that few would think of opposing it, will, nevertheless, meet its Waterloo. It shall fall before the Lord’s anointed – David, “Beloved” – and its own sword of truth shall eventually complete its destruction in the morning of the new dispensation: at the same time all the hosts of error shall flee, and many of the people of God, aside from the elect body of Christ, shall be blessed by these deliverances.

(2) Goliath may properly represent pride, backed by a host of worldliness. One of the severe ordeals of the New Creature is the conquering of the love of the spirit of worldliness under the leadership of pride. Worldly pride challenges faith in God and obedience to him, and only those who are of good courage and full of confidence in the Lord can overcome this giant. It is necessary, too, that the victory should be made complete – that pride should be thoroughly humiliated, killed, so that it can never rise up again to destroy us. It is an individual battle, and the only proper armament against this giant is a stone from the brook, the message of the Lord, showing us what is pleasing and acceptable in his sight, and assuring us that he that humbleth himself shall be exalted and he that exalteth himself shall be abased. As the poet has expressed it: –

“Where boasting ends, true dignity begins.”

(3) Another giant which will sometimes challenge the people of God is fear, distrust. Mighty, imposing and terrifying indeed is the influence of fear, except upon those who have learned to know the Lord through previous experiences, and to trust him even where they cannot trace him. The giant of fear and despair must be met with the pebble from the brook, “It is written.” The sling of faith must propel the word of promise with such force as to slay the adversary and to deliver us from his domination.

(4) Another giant which assaults the Lord’s people, but which in the present time can be overcome only by the David class, the body of Christ, is the giant of sectarian influence. How strong, how majestic, how well-armed, how influential is this great giant, whose powers are exercised in a large measure in intimidating the Lord’s true children, so that all their lifetime they are subject to bondage and fail to attain the

liberty with which Christ makes free indeed! To meet this giant and to resist him successfully and to gain the victory over him, thoroughly armed as he is with the haughty voice, and large and strongly organized and equipped with worldly power and influences and boycotting opportunities, requires great grace, such grace as is to be found only in the little flock, the overcomers, the body of Christ – the David class, the “Beloved.” Thus armed only with the Word of God, and trusting in his rod and staff, we may well be courageous and answer imposing sectarianism as David answered the Philistine, “Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of the

Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which thou hast defied.”

Let us all remember the meekness and humility of David, note that his conduct was utterly devoid of boastfulness, and that we are to copy this. Like him our confidence is to be in the Lord, and not in ourselves.

*By whom was David taught to aim the dreadful blow,
When he Goliath fought, and laid the Gittite low?
No sword or spear the stripling took,
But chose a pebble from the brook.
'Twas Israel's God and King who sent him to the fight,
Who gave him strength to sling, and skill to aim aright.
Ye feeble saints, your strength endures
Because young David's God is yours. – Cowper*

VICTORY NOT TO THE STRONG – R. 4216

1 Samuel 17:38-49

“In the Lord put I my trust.” – Psalm 11:1

NOT long after David's anointing he became the hero of a most remarkable battle. The Philistines, residing on the seashore of Palestine, were the enemies of the Israelites from earliest times, and, as we have already seen, they held mastery over them at the time of Saul's coronation. Subsequently the victory gained over them by Saul was not complete, and they still occupied the city of Gath and considerable territory in the land given to Israel. In Gath dwelt Goliath, a descendant of the giants or Anakim, whose sight terrified the spies of Israel when they first essayed to enter the promised land. Goliath was a Philistine therefore, not by birth but by naturalization, as people of various nationalities become Americans. Goliath was in the prime of his manhood, proud of his size and strength. The Philistines, too, were vigilant and thought that with this champion and leader they might gain another victory over the Israelites. As a result they organized an army and marched northwesterly toward Jerusalem. King Saul, apprised of the fact, recruited an army to oppose them. The two armies faced each other on opposite slopes of the valley Elah. Evidently the opposing forces were fairly well matched and neither cared to make the attack. The Philistines, resorting to a method already known in history, proposed that a war be averted and that the

issues between the two armies be decided by a personal battle. They sent forth Goliath as their champion and dared the Israelites to meet him. Similarly the Romans and the Albans, B.C. 667, settled the war by having three Roman Horatii and three Alban Curatii engage in mortal combat. The victory came to the Romans, inasmuch as one of their number survived. Similarly later, Sir Henry d'Bonham fought with Robert Bruce between the two contending armies in Scotland.

Goliath was a giant indeed. His six cubits and a span, if estimated on the 16-inch cubit, would represent 8 ft. 8 in., or counted by the 18-inch cubit would represent 9 ft. 9 in. A cubit is the length of the human arm from the elbow to the tip of the little finger; a span is half a cubit. *Encyclopedia Britannica* refers to several giants: one a Scotchman, whose height was 8 ft. 3 in.; another an Arabian of 9 ft.; Charles Birne, an Irishman, measured 8 ft. 4 in.; Patrick Cotter, 8 ft. 7½ in.; a Russian giant, 9 ft. 8 in. There is nothing, therefore, impossible or improbable in the story of Goliath. The giant was elaborately armored and practically invulnerable.

ISRAEL AND ISRAEL'S GOD DEFIED

At that time each nation apparently stood for a religious system and their prosperity and influence were largely credited to the favor of

their god or gods. For forty days Goliath, clothed in his resplendent, gleaming armor, with a loud voice had shouted defiance to the men of Israel and incidentally to the God they worshiped, thus endeavoring to shame them and drive them to an unequal contest, of which he felt sure he would be the victor. We cannot wonder that no Israelite was found foolhardy enough to undertake a battle with the giant on the terms and conditions then prevalent – a battle with sword and spear and javelin; ordinarily anyone would have been but a child at the mercy of the foe.

Jesse at Bethlehem was only about twenty miles distant from the camp of the army, and on the fortieth day he sent David with greetings and delicacies for three of his elder sons who were in Saul's army and to bring back word of the progress of events. The ruddy youth, the shepherd boy David, with little knowledge of warfare, was surprised to see the challenger and that the God of Israel was thus defied by the heathen. By nature and by experience in the keeping of his sheep and the defending of them from wild animals David was courageous, fearless. Besides, he evidently was well born as respects reverence for God and faith in him. It was Goliath's defiance of the God of Israel that seemed to strike him most forcibly. He made inquiries as to why none of the Israelites in the name of the Lord had undertaken the battle, implying his own willingness to do so. Many of those with whom he communed on the subject were evidently impressed with his faith and ardor. But his own brethren were less appreciative, and sneered. However, the matter spread from mouth to mouth until it reached the ear of King Saul, who sent for David.

Although the king for some years had been out of favor with the Lord, he nevertheless had good reason for believing in divine power, as it had already been manifested in his own experiences. He evidently queried if this proposition of David, his only hope, might not be of the Lord. David explained briefly his own prowess in connection with the slaying of a lion and at another time a bear in defense of his flocks. The king admired the youth, his courage and his faith, and consented that he should undertake the battle with the giant, hoping doubtless that God would

favor his people with a victory even against such odds of physical strength. King Saul had the best armor, of course, amongst all the Israelites, and he proposed that David use it. But when the latter tried it on he felt himself constrained and declared that he would have less confidence in it than out of it. He went forth to meet Goliath in his own way, armed merely with a shepherd's oak stick and with a sling and a shepherd's bag. Selecting five smooth stones for use in his sling he approached the giant as the latter came forth as usual to dare the Israelites.

The story of the conflict is quickly told. The Philistine was indignant that he should be asked to fight with a boy unarmored, and he cursed David in the name of his gods, saying, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and unto the beasts of the field." David's reply was characteristic – full of that faith in God which marks his entire history from first to last, and on account of which the Lord speaks of him as a man after his own heart. He said to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with sword and spear and with javelin; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee and take thy head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the hosts of the Philistines this day to the fowls of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hands." Thus the issue was seen by both Philistines and Israelites to be as between the Lord, his people and their enemies. Hastening forward David threw his first stone, which struck the giant in the forehead and caused him to fall senseless. Directly David finished the conflict with Goliath's own sword, beheading him while the Israelites, their faith reviving, attacked the Philistines, whose courage fled.

It is supposed that Goliath wore a helmet with moveable front common in those days, and that he laughed at the youth who was coming against him, and in so doing threw back his head, allowing the vizor of his helmet to open,

exposing his forehead. Others suppose that he reached for his javelin, which he carried in a sheath between his shoulders, and in reaching back for the javelin the helmet opened at the opportune moment and admitted David's stone. However the matter happened we cannot doubt that David was quite correct in his understanding of the matter; that divine providence supervised the entire transaction and brought the victory. Nor was such marksmanship with the sling an unusual thing in those times, for we read how on another occasion 700 men of the tribe of Benjamin threw stones "to a hair's breadth." – Judges 20:16.

THE CHRISTIAN'S ADVERSARY AND CONFLICT

What lesson can the "New Creation" of the present time draw from this story of olden time? David, whose name signifies beloved, in many respects typified the Christ, Head and Body. His experiences with Goliath illustrate well first of all our Lord's conflict with the Adversary during the forty-days' temptation in the wilderness. Our Lord's victory over Satan on that occasion, his loyalty to the Father and the work entrusted to him, his own self-sacrifice, meant the victory for all the world of mankind desirous of being in harmony with God and his arrangement. Did he not declare to us, "Fear not, I have overcome the world"? In overcoming Satan, the prince of this world, he was gaining at the same time a victory over all the hosts of evil and servants of sin. He stood faithful to God and to his covenant relationship and responsibility and hurled at the Adversary the pebble of truth – "It is written." As Goliath fell before David, so Satan was vanquished by our Lord, who declares, "I beheld Satan fall from heaven," and declared also as a result of his victory, "All power is given me in heaven and in earth," and sent forth his disciples in his name to similarly battle in his strength and to come off conqueror and to ultimately share with him in his Kingdom, which is to "bless all the families of the earth."

It is written of the Lord's faithful disciples, who shall constitute the Church of glory, that they must walk in his steps as he set the example. This means to them as to him a warfare against sin, its great representative and leader

Satan, and all the hosts of deceived humanity who are on his side. Does not the Apostle intimate this when he says, We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in influential positions? (Eph. 6:12) Our enemy is a giant in whose presence we are feeble indeed. The Apostle calls him a wily foe and our Lord taught us to pray the Father, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Very evidently, then, we need divine assistance in our unequal contest, as did David in his.

"NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT"

All those whom the Lord accepts to probationary membership in the Body of Christ, have been previously anointed and come under the divine power and guidance. They have had their experiences, too, in struggling against evil in general, even as David had his experience with the lion and the bear, and those experiences in the Lord's providence were merely preparations for the great testing, the great conflict with the Adversary and his various devices for our injury. The natural thought in connection with such a contest is to put on armor similar to that of our opponent, as Saul offered his armor to David. It is for each of the Lord's people, however, to learn that victory cannot be won along worldly lines. We cannot fight evil with evil, wrong with wrong, boasting with boasting and slander with slander, hatred with hatred, etc. If we undertake so to do we shall surely lose in the battle. Our course, like that of David, must be full reliance upon the Lord and the use of the sling and pebble of truth. If we cannot conquer along these lines we cannot conquer at all. Who is sufficient for these things? – for such an unequal contest with the prince of darkness and all the hosts of sin? Surely the one who would have confidence in himself would be unwise; hence, as the Apostle says, we place our confidence in God; if we are loyal to him victory will be ours, if we are careless or unfaithful we shall not be of the David class – not be members of the glorious Body of Christ, in which event we shall never reign with him, even as David, who received the anointing, would never have reached the throne, if he had fought the giant with Saul's armor.

“WORKS OF THE FLESH AND OF THE DEVIL”

The imperfections of the flesh with which we all must contend are indeed part of the works of the devil, for did he not in Eden accomplish the fall of our first parents, and thus the fall of our entire race into the sin and death condition against which we struggle in vain, except as we are rescued by him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood? But in addition to these inherited weaknesses of the flesh we must contend against the active works of the Adversary – not only his temptations to ourselves but his intrigues through mankind in general, for he is indeed the “one who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience,” and they are much more numerous than the children of obedience. Hence our assailants are manifold, and in many of their assaults upon us they have at least the sympathy of our fallen flesh, however antagonistic our hearts, our minds as New Creatures in Christ.

The Apostle helps us to get a view of the great enemy and the influences he is bringing to bear against us on every hand and every day. He sums them up as follows: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these, – adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders [he that hateth his brother is a murderer], drunkenness [intoxication literally or symbolically with the spirit of the world, Babylon], revelings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” – Gal. 5:19-21.

“WE WRESTLE NOT WITH FLESH AND BLOOD”

Behold in this list the Goliath with whom we must contend! The special weakness of one may not be the special weakness of another, but the list which the Apostle has here provided is sure to include the weak points of the flesh of every one of the Lord’s consecrated people, every one who is a member of the David class, of the Beloved One, of the Christ. All who are anointed for the coming glory as kings and priests, as New Creatures, have a Goliath in their own flesh to be fought, and fought to a finish! Either the old

nature must die or the new one must die. Exhorting along this line the Apostle says, Mortify, therefore, your members that are upon the earth – the downward tendency of your flesh. It must be killed, it must be beheaded, as was Goliath; but there can be no complete putting away of the earthly mind, the fleshly mind and its influence until first we in the name of the Lord have conquered by smiting it with the pebble of truth.

As we look over the above list of the works of the flesh and the devil, we find that they are all rooted in selfishness; and as we look to the Lord as our pattern as New Creatures we find that all the fruits and graces of the Spirit are reversely centered in love. In proportion, therefore, as the New Creature lives, grows and thrives in love, the old creature, the works of the flesh, will perish with its selfishness.

We might be inclined to reason amiss on the subject and to say with the Apostle, Having begun in the spirit, are you seeking to be perfect in the flesh? We might say, Surely all who have been begotten of the holy Spirit and who have reckoned themselves dead indeed to the flesh and its inclinations and desires – none of these, surely, could ever be influenced again to come under the Adversary’s power and become a partaker of his spirit and participate in his works!

This is a wrong thought! It is possible for some of the Lord’s true children to be thus overcome. True, if thoroughly overcome by the spirit of selfishness it would mean the death of the New Creature, and this would mean the Second Death. The path from the new nature into the Second Death is not necessarily a very long one, but we have no reason to believe that it could be taken at merely one step. We remember that the new nature up to the present time, up to the time of our resurrection change, is but the new mind, the new will, the new disposition in harmony with the Lord, his righteousness, his love. We are to remember, as the Apostle suggests, that we have this new nature in an earthen vessel and that the earthen vessel has practically all of its original blemishes and fallen tendencies still as powerful as ever except as the new mind has these under its mastery and control; but if that mastery or control should be released even for a moment the result would be the

awakening, the reviving of the old nature. And we may be sure that our Adversary is alert and fully realizes the situation and will do all in his power to put us off guard, even to the extent of endeavoring to make white appear black and black appear white before our judgment. The Lord very graciously shields us from temptations more than we are able to bear. Hence it is possible for us at all times to be overcome, not only in the infancy of our new nature, but also in its further development; but the testings permitted grow more severe, more crucial, as we near our spiritual graduation time. Nor can we object to this; it is exactly what we should expect.

The Apostle, following this line of thought, declares, "I keep my body under;" and again he says, "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth" – your earthly ambitions, will, etc., everything in yourself that would tend toward envy, hatred, anger and strife – put these to death. Allow the new nature to have full sway and control in every thought, in every word, in every deed. And watch to this end; watch your thoughts, watch your words, watch your conduct. Many can watch their conduct who find it difficult to scrutinize and properly weigh their thoughts and their words. Truly the Apostle intimates that out of the heart proceeds envy, bitterness, evil speaking, back-biting and strife; unless they are in the heart the mouth cannot utter them, for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh.

"THE TONGUE IS A FIRE AND A WORLD OF INIQUITY"

Alas, yes! our words do judge us; as the Master declared, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." No wonder the prophet said, "I will set a guard upon my lips lest I sin with my mouth." The setting of a guard evidently means that we will practice great deliberation, great care in respect to everything that we say; that we should speak evil against none. Our evil speaking is not at all necessary to the Lord and to his cause; he is perfectly able to accomplish all of his purposes without our violating a single one of his wise arrangements on our behalf. If he is not wise enough to bring order out of confusion,

surely we are not sufficiently wise, and it would be very presumptuous on our part to interfere with the Lord and his affairs, except strictly along the lines of the instruction of his Word. Let this be our authority; when he instructs us to speak let us speak, when he instructs us to be silent let us be silent. No other course is a safe one.

The Apostle declares the "tongue setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of Gehenna." (James 3:6) In other words, that which fires the tongue to evil is a spark which belongs to the Second Death, for all anger, malice, envy, hatred, strife, evil speaking, back-biting, are all works of the flesh and of the devil, which are tending toward the Second Death. As the Apostle says in enumerating these, "They that do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:21) They that do such things, if they continue in that evil course, will not only fail to get a share in the Kingdom, but fail to get a share in the Great Company, and will receive their portion in Gehenna – the Second Death. This is no exaggerated teaching on our part; it is the clear testimony of St. Peter and St. James. And not only is this the rule of this Gospel Age and the Church which is now on special trial, but the same will be the rule during the Millennium; those who will not come into harmony with the law of love, which is the opposite of all these works of the devil, will be counted as servants of sin and of Satan and will have their portion in the lake of fire, which is the Second Death. – Rev. 20:14.

When the Apostle speaks of the tongue as setting on fire the course of nature, we believe that he is expressing a truth in full harmony with that set forth by the Apostle Peter, when he tells us that the symbolic heavens and the symbolic earth shall surely be on fire. The tongue, that little member, will thus set on fire the course of nature and eventually bring in the great period of awful anarchy with which present institutions will go down, preparing the way for the Kingdom of the Lord under the whole heavens. Whoever has an ear to hear can already perceive that bitter tongues are moving rapidly in the direction of the igniting of the

great fire which the Apostle delineates. Passions are being aroused in Church, State, financial and political circles. Selfishness is more and more getting into command until by and by, as the Scriptures declare, there will be no peace to him that goes out or comes in, but every man's hand will be against his neighbor.

If thus the tongue is to set on fire the course of nature in the nominal Church and in the social world, shall we suppose that the Church of the Living God, whose names are written in heaven, will be exempted from such trials, and shall we suppose that the tests will be less crucial with them than with the world? No, verily! We must expect that judgment will begin at the house of God and extend to the nominal house and to the world. It behooves each one to be awake on this subject of the unruly member, to bring ours into absolute submission to the will of the Lord; that we shall speak only those things which are edifying; that we shall speak evil of no man; that our tongues wherewith we bless and praise God shall be used only in

blessing and assisting and uplifting and strengthening the Lord's cause.

But since it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh we must keep our hearts with all diligence, we must remember their natural deceitfulness; we must be on guard lest they should deceive us now into thinking that evil is good, and that in promoting evil in speaking and slandering one another we are promoting good. This is a part of the artifice of the Adversary, and, as the Apostle says, "We are not ignorant of his devices." Let us, then, be more than ever on guard to scrutinize our motives, and not only so, but after finding good motives, let us scrutinize our methods and square them all with the Word of the Lord, especially remembering his instructions that we shall love one another as he has loved us – to the extent of laying down our lives for each other – and that we shall be obedient to him to the extent that we shall give heed to his Word, not forgetting his methods of procedure, as outlined to us in his own words. – Matthew 18:15-17.

Self-Examination

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own his cause,
Or blush to speak his name?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vain world a friend to grace
To help me on to God?

Must I be borne to Paradise,
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy Word.

When thine illustrious day shall rise,
And all thy saints shall shine,
And shouts of vict'ry rend the skies,
The glory, Lord, be thine.

A FRIEND IN NEED A FRIEND INDEED – R.4223

1 Samuel 18

“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” – Proverbs 17:17

HISTORY does not record a more touching story of love than that which existed between Jonathan and David. Both were noble characters, capable of loving deeply, intensely, although in many respects they were men of entirely different stamp. David was the more versatile, His is the broadest character on record; says Charles Reade: –

“In holy writ Moses, Elijah and Paul; in profane history Solon, Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, Napoleon and others excelled David in one quality or another. But David presents a greater number of distinct and striking features than any one of those great men; and that is why I style him the widest character on record – a shepherd, a soldier, a courtier, a famous friend, a fugitive, a captor, a marauder, a general, a king, a statesman, an exile, a priest, a prophet, a saint, a criminal, a penitent, and nothing by halves. His character was a harp of many strings.”

Jonathan, the son of King Saul and heir apparent to the throne of Israel, had also noble qualities. He was a faithful son, who alone could comfort his father in his times of disappointment. He showed himself an able warrior and displayed great faith in God; and his religious nature was apparently as fully developed as was that of David. Evidently these elements of honesty and devotion and reverence for God which these two men perceived in each other, constituted the basis of the great friendship which so spontaneously knit their hearts together in a wonderful bond of friendship – love. Indeed, according to the entire account, Jonathan would seem to have been the larger of these two great souls and his love the greater. From this standpoint alone, since love is the principal thing in the world, Jonathan may be considered to be one of the grandest characters in the world; for he loved much and against his own interests.

DEEP FRIENDSHIP FOR HIS RIVAL

At times friendships spring up based upon mutual admiration, and often with a measure of selfishness in cooperation. But in the instance

under consideration selfishness would have operated against the friendship; it is, therefore, a sample of disinterested love. Every success and honor that came to David raised him as a popular idol to the place which Jonathan to a considerable extent had held. Every advancement of David meant the preparation of the people to receive him instead of Jonathan as Saul's successor. The king saw this, so did Jonathan; but they were reversely affected by it. The king was made jealous, angry; Jonathan, reversely, loved his rival, and that from the time of their first meeting, on which occasion he gave to David his armor and court robes. (1 Sam. 18:4) We read, “The soul of Jonathan was knit unto the soul of David”; their natures interwove, intermixed – a beautiful description of the purest and truest of love. Alexander White says:

“Had I read, ‘Jonathan loved David as his own soul,’ for once only I should have passed it by as hyperbole,... but as I read again the rest of the story, I found myself saying to the sacred writer, ‘Lo, in all this speakest thou plainly, and speakest no hyperbole.’”

THE BASIS OF LOVING FRIENDSHIP

Friendship love is not a miracle, but results from certain combinations. The one we love need not of necessity be just like ourselves, but rather would appeal to us more as a counterpart possessing qualities which we admire, but do not so strongly possess. Darkness, however, never loved the light; the light never loves darkness. Hence for friendship-love on a noble plane both friends must have high ideals, noble aspirations, even though they may have these in different measure. Each should see in the other something to esteem and to look up to; although in the case of the Almighty this cannot be true; his love for us must be chiefly along the lines of sympathy for us and appreciation of our endeavors to attain to his character standards. We may be sure, too, that in Jonathan's case reverence for the Lord had much to do with estopping any feeling of rivalry and with encouraging his

admiration for his rival. Who will not admit that such an appreciation of the divine will and providences would be a help to all friendship, a hindrance to all spirit of rivalry and in general a most valuable uplift in every Christian character? How much it means to us in the way of contentment to know that our heavenly Father is at the helm as respects all the affairs of his people! How much rest it permits in our own hearts! How much meekness, gentleness, kindness and love it prompts toward others, both to realize that they as well as ourselves are subjects of divine care, and to have a heart so fully submitted to the Lord as to desire that his will shall be done irrespective of our own temporal interests or those of others.

Undoubtedly this was the good basis of Jonathan's love; and undoubtedly it is the fruitful soil out of which all proper love amongst the Lord's people will be developed. We must love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul and strength before we shall be prepared to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to wish for him the same riches of grace that we desire for ourselves under the Lord's providences. Still more is it necessary to have this supreme love for God before we could in any measure approximate the degree of love which the Lord set before his followers as a new commandment, saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you." Jonathan's love approximated this Christian love, this self-sacrificing love which so loved his neighbor as to delight to see that neighbor have the Lord's blessing upon him, even while this meant his own loss of honor, prestige and kingly power. Oh, that such love as this might more and more prevail in the hearts of the New Creation! It is to such that the Apostle says, "Let the brother of high degree rejoice in that he is abased, and the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted" – under the Lord's providences.

A DAVID AND JONATHAN BOND

It is not necessary for us to form a society for the propagation of the Jonathan and David bond of love amongst us as the Lord's people. We have this organization which inculcates a love that is even greater. The head, the chief, the center of this organization is our Lord Jesus Christ, who not only exhorted us to the highest conceptions and practices of love, but exemplified this in himself when he laid down his life, not only for his friends, but also for his enemies. "Greater love hath no man than this." This greatest of all lovers, our Lord Jesus Christ, has organized an association of lovers, and has made membership therein dependent upon the willingness of his followers to take up the cross and follow him, to lay down their lives for the brethren.

Only those who have made such a consecration of faithfulness to the Captain, faithfulness to the spirit of love, faithfulness to one another as members of the Body of the Anointed – only these are admitted to membership in this exclusive society, "The Church of the Living God, whose names are written in heaven." And more than this, the founder of our society has told us that he is the Vine and we are the branches; and that every branch in him that beareth not this fruit of love will be taken away, cut off from the Vine, disassociated from membership in this blessed Church. He assures us further, that our faithfulness to our covenant with this true Vine will bring upon us purgings, prunings from the great Husbandman, that he may develop in us more and more the fruits of the Spirit, the fruit of the Vine – meekness, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love; that these graces may be in us and abound; that thereby the Father may be glorified and blessed, and that we may be made ready, "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

So then we see that we need no special organization, but are already members of such a company, if so be that we are disciples of Christ and united to him as members of the New Creation.

(Article continues on page 44)

STRONG CHARACTERS IN CONTRAST – R.3231

1 Samuel 18:5-16

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” – Psalm 46:1

SAUL and David were both men of strong character, but the former neglected the divine word and counsel and undertook the management of his own affairs, while the latter accepted the Lord and his leadings and by faith sought to follow him. The results showed in both cases: Saul came to an ignominious end. David was prospered and exhibited a wisdom and strength of character quite beyond his times. We are not to forget in this connection that David's discreetness and obedience to the Lord kept him from the throne of Israel for years – years of trouble, privation and wandering, whereas the following of worldly methods might have led to much greater prosperity so far as outward appearances would be concerned. Nevertheless, we are to remember also that the nation of Israel had been adopted by the Lord as his chosen peculiar people, with whom he would deal, whose course he would supervise, and in respect to whose rulers he would decide. Neither are we to forget the great difference between the Jewish age, with the divine arrangements and regulations of the same, and this Christian or Gospel age, with its different regulations and its law of love, patient endurance and spiritual instead of carnal warfare. Those who consider the course of David and other faithful ones of the Jewish epoch to be patterns for the Church, the body of Christ, show thereby that they have a total misunderstanding of the divine Word on this matter. To their mind David's battles and victories and slaughters are figures illustrative of spiritual battles and victories on the part of the antitypical David, the Beloved, – head and body – the Christ.

Although Saul had already been notified by the Lord through the prophet Samuel that the kingdom should be taken from his family and given to a neighbor more worthy of the trust than he, more faithful to the Lord, nevertheless he had been given to understand that the kingdom might endure in his hands for a considerable time. We may assume, therefore, that Saul was on the lookout for one to rise to prominence

who should ultimately become his successor, – although we have no reason to think that he understood that David had already been anointed to this position, for David's anointing was kept secret.

Saul, although appreciative of David's prowess, was, nevertheless, jealous of him because of the prominence to which his noble course brought him in the eyes of the people. This jealousy was accentuated as he heard the praises of David sung in grander terms than his own were lauded. Jealousy is always an evil quality – no part of the Lord's Spirit, the holy Spirit, but a strong ingredient in the spirit of evil. Hatred, envy, malice, strife, works of the flesh and devil, are all closely related to jealousy, and often spring from it. Saul should have resisted the envious suggestions which came to his mind: he should have allowed his mind to rise above all personalities and to rejoice most sincerely, most heartily, in the praises of his young general. Doubtless it was in part his remembrances of the Lord's declaration that he should be bereft of the kingdom that made him look with jealous eyes upon David from thenceforth.

Jealousy is one of the great foes that confront every Christian. It should be slain on sight as an enemy of God and man and of every good principle; and to the extent that its presence had defiled the heart even for a moment, a cleansing of the spirit of holiness and love should be invoked. Jealousy is not only a cruel monster of itself, but its poisonous fangs are almost certain to inflict pain and trouble upon others, as well as to bring general woe and, ultimately, destruction upon those who harbor it. Jealousy is sin in thought, wickedness in thought, and is very apt to lead speedily to sin and wickedness in action, the probable result being the defilement of men. The mind, if once poisoned with jealousy, can with great difficulty ever be cleansed from it entirely, so rapidly does it bring everything within its environment to its own color and character. This sin, when it is finished, if it is allowed to grow, if it is not routed, if it is not

overcome, bringeth forth death. All of the Lord's followers should be on guard against this sin, and none need it more than those whom God has greatly honored as his mouthpieces or servants in any capacity. Had David and Saul not been in such high positions, jealousy and rivalry and enmity would have been comparatively impossible.

Under the circumstances we are not surprised to read (v. 10) that jealous Saul was troubled with an evil spirit – an evil disposition. Perhaps the language should be understood as meaning that an evil spirit – in the sense of a fallen spirit, a demon – troubled him. We certainly know that as love, patience, joy and peace are elements of the holy Spirit – God's disposition – so a spirit of hatred and jealousy is an evil spirit or disposition "from God," – that is, away from God, to the contrary of God. We may recognize the fact, too, that such an evil spirit as here took possession of Saul was not only a spirit far from God, or anything that he could approve, but we may even assume that, since Saul was God's anointed representative in the

throne of Israel, the evil spirit could not have gained control over him without at least divine permission. As holy men of old were moved by the holy Spirit to speak and write matters of divine indictment, so men have been moved and are sometimes moved today by evil spirits to speak and to write perverse things. This is the thought contained in the word "prophesied" in this verse. Saul spoke unwise things, improper things, spoke foolishly while he had his javelin in his hand. The spirit of evil was upon him, leading him to make a motion with his javelin as though he would do violence to his faithful and humble young general who, as a friend and companion, played for him upon the harp with a view to dispelling his melancholy. The word "cast" (v. 11) is a stronger one than is borne out by the original, which seems simply to signify a motion – although subsequently he did actually hurl the weapon. – 1 Sam. 19:10.

David seems to have been quite intrepid, fearless, and again and again exposed himself to Saul's power when the latter was under the influence of his melancholia. There is no mention of David's fear, for although he felt it to be propriety and duty to escape as he did, he seems to have had continually the memory of God's power for his preservation, and the fact that God had already anointed him to be the king in due time. Such faith and courage points a good lesson to all the members of the antitypical David. Nothing shall by any means hurt us. Things may interfere with our fleshly interests or comfort or course of affairs; but when we remember that we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, that it is as New Creatures that the Lord has promised us the Kingdom in his due time, we can realize that no outside influence can interfere with our real interests, our spiritual interests, nor hinder our attaining to the glories of the Kingdom which the Lord has promised to his faithful ones. Only our loss of confidence in the Lord and our unfaithfulness to him could separate us from his love and his promises.

Saul's jealousy of David was supported by his fear of him. Doubtless he wondered often that the fearless youth who attacked the lion should spare himself – even when he, Saul, had manifested openly his hatred and opposition



Saul Attempts to Kill David by Gustave Doré

toward him. He perceived that the Lord was with David and not with himself. David's presence became distasteful in the palace, and, as he could not be ignored, he was put into the army and various commissions given him in connection with the interests of the kingdom, Saul evidently hoping that through some indiscretion David would give an excuse for a turning of popular sentiment against him – perhaps hoping also that in some of the forays he would be wounded or killed. But the Spirit of the Lord, as the Apostle explains, is the “spirit of a sound mind,” and in proportion as David trusted the Lord and was guided by that trust he was enabled to do his part with wisdom, winning the approval of the people and all the more the fear and awe of Saul.

This lesson to some extent illustrates the relationship between the Lord's consecrated people and the world at the present time. The worldly are in power, in influence, and yet they are conscious of the fact that divine favor is no longer with them; that a change of dispensation is about to be determined in the divine program; that the Laodicean stage of the church is to cease to be the Lord's mouthpiece, and to be spewed out; that the faithful little flock – of whom not many are wise or great or noble according to the course of this world – are to inherit the Kingdom with much power and glory. They do not indeed realize that the anointed class is in their midst and mingling with them day by day;

nevertheless they feel a jealousy in respect to those who have more of the Lord's Spirit than themselves, and hate that which is purer and higher and better than they themselves possess. At times their jealousy would almost lead to murder; but they fear and hate the David class because of their closer relationship to the Lord, and because of his blessing manifested in their hearts and lives. Our Lord referred to such a condition of things in the end of the Jewish age, which was certainly a type of the end of this age. He said of the religious people of that time: “The darkness hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest its deeds be reproved; but he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.” Thus, as a separation was made between Saul and David, and between those who loved the darkness and those who loved the light at the Lord's first advent, so a separation is rapidly going on today between those who love the light, the truth, and who are guided by the holy Spirit, and those who are of a different mind or disposition.

Our Golden Text should be borne in mind as a comforting and sustaining power to the Lord's faithful. It is in full harmony with the words of the Apostle in the New Testament, who declares that “all things are working together for good to them who love God, who are the called according to his purpose.”

THE SPIRIT OF ENVY AND MURDER – R.4218

1 Samuel 18:6-16

“The Lord God is a sun and shield.” – Psalm 84:11

THIS lesson affords us a contrast between a spirit or disposition in harmony with the Lord and a spirit or disposition out of harmony with him and his arrangements. The first is exhibited in David, the shepherd boy, secretly anointed to the office of king and later brought into prominence through his victory over Goliath, recounted in our last lesson. So far as Saul is concerned the record is that an evil or malevolent spirit possessed him. On the contrary the Spirit of the Lord is said to have been with David from the time of his anointing. We are not to confuse

in our minds those blessings of the Lord's Spirit in ancient times with the still more blessed experiences of God's people throughout the Gospel Age under the anointing of the holy Spirit, the begetting of the holy Spirit, the sealing of the holy Spirit as sons. Doubtless there would be much in common in the experiences of those who received the Lord's Spirit at that time and those who receive it now; but most certainly that which we now enjoy as the “house of sons” is far beyond anything that was possible for the “house of servants” to experience; because the

holy Spirit as a comforter and guide into the truth and a seal of the new nature was not then given, because Jesus was not then glorified. Hence the blessing of the Spirit given at Pentecost and enjoyed by the Church since is peculiarly the Lord's blessing for the Bride class and has been possible only since their Advocate appeared in the presence of God for them in the merit of his own sacrifice.

To whatever extent the holy Spirit was bestowed upon the "house of servants" it would necessarily be a spirit of moderation, of fellowship with God, of desire to do his will and of peace with him; and to this extent it would be the spirit of a sound mind, relieving its possessor of much of the nervous fret and strain, excitability and languor which might be his own naturally under trials and disappointments. Of Saul, it is said that an evil spirit entered into him, but this does not necessarily mean that he became obsessed of a demon, but rather that an evil mind, a perverse mind or disposition, an unhappy or melancholy mind took the place of the restful and peaceful and trustful mind which he previously had enjoyed.

AN EVIL SPIRIT FROM THE LORD

But we read that an evil spirit from God came upon Saul and he prophesied in the midst of the house. This would seem more like an obsession, or, as Dr. Merrine suggests in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Saul had psychic epilepsy; he says, "Epilepsy may coexist with a healthy growth and development of the intellectual faculties, and a very high degree of intelligence and even genius may be associated with it. Julius Caesar, Augustus Caesar, Napoleon, Petrarch, Mohammed, Moliere, Handel and many other great men were epileptics. Certain peculiarities are common to the whole class of epileptics, and dominate their character, such as an explosive irritability of temper; in some instances a display of highest excitement, and again a gloomy stupor. Numerous criminal acts have been committed while in this state."

We do not get the thought that this evil spirit was from the Lord in the sense that the Lord exercised this evil influence upon Saul, but we understand the word *from* in an entirely different

sense, and signifying **not of**, contrary to: "An evil spirit [apart] from the Lord was upon Saul." The Apostle tells us that anger, malice, hatred, envy and strife are works of the flesh and of the devil, and hence to whatever extent Saul or anybody else came into sympathy with these works of the Adversary to that extent he would have, would be controlled by an evil spirit, an evil disposition, the Adversary's spirit; and, as a matter of fact, those who come consciously into accord with the Adversary in spirit become thereby exposed to obsession, to the intrusion of the evil spirits themselves.

It is undoubtedly true that persons whose minds are in sympathetic accord with righteousness and truth, are proportionately surrounded by a protective influence which shields them from the intrusion of the evil spirits. This is the intimation of the Scriptures, which declare that the holy angels are ministering spirits for those who shall be heirs of salvation, and "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." (Heb. 1:14; Psa. 34:7) But with any departure from the reverence of the Lord, with any departure from loyalty to righteousness and truth would come a corresponding separation from this holy protecting influence of the angels of the Lord and a consequent exposure of heart, of mind, to the malevolent influences of the fallen angels, who are ever ready to enter into such, and more seriously than ever defile them. This lesson seems to be enforced by our Lord's parable of the man out of whom a devil had been cast and his heart swept and garnished; not, however, receiving into it the good Shepherd of his soul, but, standing for righteousness merely in his own strength, he was assaulted by seven demons more wicked than the first and was overcome, and the last end of that man was worse than the beginning. – Luke 11:24-26.

Thus it was with Saul; as a natural man he evidently had some noble characteristics, because of which Samuel loved him; but failing to make a full consecration of himself to the Lord he was continually beset by his own will, a spirit of selfishness, which hindered him from being a satisfactory servant of the Lord. As a result of this, the Lord's special protection and

assistance were not afforded him, and correspondingly the spirit of selfishness grew. In our lesson we saw that so far from desiring that the will of the Lord should be done in him and in all of his affairs the very reverse spirit of selfishness, of self will, grew rankly in his heart. These heart conditions merely needed an opportunity to manifest themselves, and this opportunity came in connection with David. After the exploit with Goliath the fame of David greatly spread abroad throughout the cities of Israel. As the story was told subsequently that he with the army gave battle with the Philistines and victory resulted, his praises were sung after the custom of the time by women and children, who at the gates of the various cities saluted the returning victorious warriors. A song gradually spread, the chorus of which was, "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands."

It would have required a man of very large calibre in Saul's place not to be offended at this, not to feel jealous of such honors given to the young hero of the hour, implying that he had entirely eclipsed the king. But whatever might have been the natural sentiment of King Saul or others there can be no doubt as to what would have been the proper one. The king should have rejoiced and taken pleasure in honoring the young patriot, whose chivalry had been so blessed to the whole nation. To have done this would have been to evince the spirit of a sound mind, and it would have redounded to the honor of Saul himself. But it does not surprise us that it had an opposite effect upon him, knowing as we do the general spirit of the world in respect to such matters – the spirit of selfishness and pride. Saul was filled with anger and envy and eyed David jealously henceforth. He recognized in him a rival; he also perceived that David was a true servant of the Lord, and that the Lord's blessing was upon him. Jonathan, on the contrary, of a different cast of mind, loved David more and more, because of the very qualities which led his father to hate David.

LESSONS FOR SPIRITUAL ISRAELITES

Keeping in mind that the anointed David represents the Church, the Lord's anointed, who by and by with Jesus their Head shall occupy the throne of the world's dominion for the

blessing and uplifting of mankind, and for the deliverance of all from the yoke of Satan, sin and death, we may properly enough apply the essence of this lesson to this class. Their victories over the evil one, over the power of sin in their own bodies, and their general fighting of the good fight of faith bring the approval of some of the Jonathan class, as well as the comfort of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the Lord's Word. (2 Pet. 1:4) But these victories over sin will not bring to this class the love of the world, the love of those who have not the Lord's Spirit, but a selfish spirit, the spirit of those represented by Saul. Of this condition of things the Lord forewarned us saying, "Marvel not if the world hate you; ye know that it hated me before it hated you." He tells us that we are the children of the light, and should let our lights shine, and that in proportion as we are faithful in so doing it will bring upon us the opposition of the children of darkness, who love the darkness rather than the light, who love sin rather than righteousness, selfishness rather than love.

Perhaps, too, Saul represented those of the present time who in the nominal Church system, the nominal kingdom of God, affect to be reigning now. As they perceive the Lord's blessing on those who have no titles amongst men and whose anointing is not of man, neither recognized by man, they feel jealous of their success, they seem to realize that the prosperity of Present Truth in the world makes steadily against the institutions of Babylon. Every victory for truth, every evidence of the Lord's favor towards it seems to beget an evil spirit of indignation, of opposition, hatred, envy, strife – "works of the flesh and of the devil."

Saul's coming under an evil influence, by which he prophesied, seems to correspond thoroughly with the power of evil spirits exercised at various times in the past. And speaking of the power that Babylon will exhibit in the near future, the Lord tells us that the image of the beast will become so alive shortly that it will call down fire from heaven upon all opposed; that is to say, it will, apparently in the name and power of the Lord, express imprecations and fiery vengeance from the Almighty upon all who are not in full sympathy and accord with it. It may even seek

to destroy us with the javelin of bitter words, misrepresentation and slander, as Saul threw his javelin twice at David. But as the latter was not smitten with the javelin, so we shall not be injured as New Creatures, no matter what the Lord may permit to come against us according to the flesh. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to his purpose" – to his anointed. His Word is, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets [ministers] no harm." (Psalm 105:15) And again, "Nothing shall by any means hurt you," injure your real, highest interests.

"JEALOUSY IS CRUEL AS THE GRAVE"

These words of the wise man have been amply demonstrated as truthful through many centuries of the world's experience. Some one has said, "Jealousy is said to be the offspring of love. Yet, unless the parent makes haste to strangle the child, the child will not rest until it has poisoned the parent."

The lesson to the New Creation is that we should be specially on guard against jealousy, envy, hatred and strife. We cannot doubt that much of the final testing of the "very Elect" will be along these lines. "Who shall be able to stand?" is a question, therefore, that appeals to all those who have taken their stand for the Lord, for righteousness, for truth – their stand for love of God and of the brethren. If, indeed, we have consecrated our lives, to lay down our lives in the service of the Lord and his truth and in the service of the brethren, what should it not mean to us as respects the manifestation of that love and faithfulness! Any root of bitterness, any word of bitterness, any thought of jealousy entering into our hearts might mean the defilement of not only the brother or sister against whom these are directed, but would surely mean the poisoning of our own hearts, the destruction therein of the spirit of love, the Spirit of the Lord; and possibly this evil spirit, far from the Lord, proceeding from us, might contaminate many members of the Body of Christ for their defilement. How much on guard, therefore, each of us ought to be; how we should analyze our thoughts, our motives, our intentions to see that they all square perfectly with the law of love to

the extent that our Lord indicated, saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you;" to the extent of being willing to die for each other's interests and welfare and honor!

On the contrary the Spirit of the Lord in David kept him sweet, kind, generous toward his enemies. He indeed fled from the king's presence when in a fit of anger Saul threw the javelin, and we may be sure that it was nothing less than faith in the Lord and in his divine providence that enabled David to continue to serve the king as his musician, and by the sweet music of his heart and of his voice, to cheer Saul and drive away his melancholy. Such should be our attitude toward those who oppose us. The natural disposition of an evil course toward us would be to arouse an antagonistic spirit in return, render evil for evil, railing for railing, accusation for accusation. The result of such a course would be our own injury as well as the possibility of further injuring our opponents. David's course was the proper one; he waited upon the Lord, he was submissive to what the Lord's providence permitted. In his estimation and ours nothing could befall him that would be outside the divine knowledge and the divine power to prevent. Hence these trying experiences meant for David a great development of character, a strengthening of his heart in harmony with the divine will.

PROVIDENTIAL CHANGES ACCEPTED

In various ways did Saul seek to arouse in David a spirit of antagonism; not only did he make an attempt to assassinate him twice, but he kept back from him a part of the promise he had publicly made, that the one who would gain the victory over Goliath should become his son-in-law. How foolishly shortsighted was Saul's course even up to this time! He might have fallen into line with the Lord's providences and have fulfilled his obligations to David, and by having David as a son-in-law, his own family would have been closely knit to that of David when the latter would ultimately come in possession of the kingly authority, as the Lord had ordained. But jealousy and hatred are usually blind to their own best interests. So Saul kept back his daughter from being the wife of David, and his next step was to send David to the army as the

commander of a regiment, with the hope and the expectation that his boldness in war would mean his death. But the Lord was with David and blessed him, and the record is that “he behaved himself wisely in all his ways.”

So with all those who now have the Lord’s Spirit in still greater measure and power for the illumination of their minds, their hearts and their guidance in the right way. All these, under this heavenly influence and as sons of the Most High, should behave themselves wisely, prudently, in a manner to glorify their Father in heaven, to honor the Lord Jesus, to make themselves helpful to all the household of faith, and to let their lights so shine before men that the latter may take knowledge of the fact that they have been with Jesus and learned of him.

But the more wisely David conducted himself, the more envious did King Saul become. The more the Lord blessed and prospered David in his humility of life and wisdom, of course the more opposition did he have from the king. And so it will surely be with us. In proportion as we have the spirit of a sound mind and are zealous for the Lord and for the brethren, laying down our lives in the service of the truth, the more hatred and fear we may engender in the hearts of those who are out of heart-harmony with the Lord. But as we read of David that all Israel and Judah loved him, so we may be sure as respects the true people of God; for they are more and more loved and respected – those who have the Lord’s Spirit, those who are of the David class. By and by when Satan shall have been bound, and when the Lord shall have established his Kingdom under the whole heaven, when all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears unstopped, then all the people, all who are in accord with the Lord, shall recognize the faithfulness of the David class, the Christ, and shall glorify God on their behalf.

“THE LORD GOD IS A SUN AND SHIELD”

Our Golden Text is a great encouragement to the David class, the beloved class, the anointed ones, the members of Christ. To these the Lord God is both a sun and shield; he not only enlightens these but he will not suffer them to be injured by the blessings which he bestows upon them. He will shield them from all enemies and everything that would tend to injure them in any manner; all things shall work together for good to those that love him, to the called ones according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28) With such blessed assurances, then, we may look forward into the future with rejoicing and with confidence, trusting to have a share in the glorious rewards God has promised to the faithful.

As it would not have done for David merely to have thought about his anointing to be king and the blessing that would then come to him, so it would not do for us merely to think about the Kingdom honors that God has promised to the faithful, for in so doing we might be puffed up and thereby made unfit for a share in those coming blessings. Rather our attention, like that of David, must be directed to the things of the present, without, of course, forgetting the blessed influence of the coming prospects. It is ours to do with our might what our hands find to do at the present time, remembering that only thus can we make our calling and election sure.

As each step of opposition on the part of Saul worked out a blessing for David, giving him wider experiences and fitting and preparing him for his future usefulness as the king, so all of the trials and difficulties and the disappointments that the Lord will now permit to come upon us from the world, the flesh and the Adversary – all of these will prove but preparations for his glorious Kingdom privileges, if faithfully used.

THE FAITH OF ONE PERSECUTED – R.5662

1 Samuel 19

“Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.” – Proverbs 29:25

WARS with the Philistines continuing, David was made a regular soldier, with a command over a regiment and closely in touch with King Saul himself. Victory after victory came wherever David was engaged, and King Saul saw the admiration of the people turned from himself to David. The sentiment reached a climax when, returning from one of the victories, the women and girls of a village came forth singing:

“Saul hath slain his thousands,
But David his tens of thousands!”

The flame of jealousy took full possession of the king, and thenceforth his one purpose seems to have been to destroy David. It was a secret withheld from him that David was already anointed by Samuel to be his successor. He merely knew that Samuel the Prophet had told him that, as a consequence of his failure to carry out the Divine instructions regarding the Amalekites, the kingdom would be taken from him and his family and given to another. He possibly hoped that this might never come true – that his son Jonathan might be his successor.

Jealousy is the bitter fruit of selfishness gone to seed. It unbalances reason, extinguishes happiness. It subjects its possessor to horrible melancholy, so that when it is in control he is really crazy. Not only is this illustrated in King Saul's case, but it is more or less illustrated in the experiences of every human being. Who does not by experience know what jealousy is? and the more he knows of it the worse. It has made murderers of children, as well as of grown-ups. It has wrecked homes, as well as business enterprises. It is the most terrible, and at the same time the most foolish, manifestation of selfishness. Every one recognizing it in himself should be alarmed – should throttle it promptly, seeking victory through vigilance, and if a Christian, through prayer.

SAUL'S JEALOUSY WAS CRAFTY

When under control of these fits of jealousy, King Saul is described as having had an evil spirit from the Lord, but more properly, we shall

say, an evil spirit opposite from the Lord's – the reverse of the Lord's Spirit of kindness, justice, love. When the king was laboring under these fits of melancholy which followed the cessation of the Philistine wars, young David could sometimes soothe him by skilful playing on a harp; yet he knew the king's treacherous mood and, keen eyed, on two occasions caught the king with his eye in time to hinder Saul from throwing at him a javelin-scepter which he usually carried.

Intent upon drawing David into a quarrel which might be construed as traitorous and justifying his death, the king promised him his elder daughter to wife, and then gave her to another. David, however, was discreet, and merely commented that he was not of a sufficiently noble family to expect such honors; neither was he able financially to give a sufficient dowry for a king's daughter. Another trap was to betroth to him the king's younger daughter, Michal. Young David again told of his unworthiness of the daughter and his lack of wealth for dowry, whereupon Saul stipulated that the dowry should be the evidence of the killing of a hundred Philistines. No doubt he hoped confidently that in the attempt to meet this requirement David would lose his own life; but instead, young David killed twice the number and received Michal, Saul's daughter.

The king, getting more insanely jealous, told his son Jonathan and his courtiers in general that David must be destroyed. The sentiment of Jonathan was as loving and brotherly as his father's was cruel, jealous, selfish. It was Jonathan who would lose by David's attainment of the honor of the kingdom. Hence the love of Jonathan has become a proverb. Additionally, he had the true spirit of manhood and brotherhood, the spirit of a peacemaker. He interceded with his father for David. His language is a beautiful model of filial respect as well as of devotion to his friend David. He said, “Let not the king sin against his servant, against David;

because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to theeward very good: For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel; thou sawest it, and didst rejoice; wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood to slay David without a cause?" – Verses 4,5.

The plea of the peacemaker was successful. The king relented. David was brought back and became again a member of the household. But it was only for a time. The king was not without some noble sentiments, but they were not deep enough. They did not control his life. On the contrary he was under the control of the evil mind, the selfish mind, the jealous mind, which is far from, and opposite to, the mind, the Spirit, of God.

Ere long, in a jealous fit again, the king not only made the motion to throw the javelin, but threw it with deadly aim and smote into the wall just behind where David sat; for David was quick and dodged it. David went to his room; but a guard had been stationed there, instructed that upon his coming forth he was to be killed. His wife informed him and assisted him to safety by letting him down out of a window. Possibly the house was built upon the wall, as in the case of St. Paul's similar deliverance.

TWO HUNDRED MURDERS FOR A WIFE

Scoffers seize upon one feature of this lesson to condemn the Bible as encouraging murder and with being, therefore, in conflict with righteousness and in conflict with a God of righteousness. They say, "Here we find David, a Prophet, described as being very discreet and as having the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of a sound mind; and yet we see him taking the lives of two hundred human beings as the price of a wife, and not a word in the Scriptures in condemnation."

Such charges and arguments should be met in a reasonable way – they should not be passed over with the remark, "No use reasoning with you; you are an infidel." He that doeth righteousness is righteous; he that doeth unrighteousness is unrighteous. This Bible proposition applies to God and to David, as well as to others. But, when inquiring respecting it, we should

approach our subject with unprejudiced minds. Instead of condemning from the standpoint of prejudice, we should rather inquire how this course can be made to square with the principles of justice, which the Bible everywhere maintains.

In the first place, we must have in mind the difference between being a Jew under the Law Covenant and being a Christian under the headship of Christ. Second, we should remember that the Bible does not teach that those who die still live and pass immediately into everlasting torture. It teaches that the dead are really dead, and that the hope which God holds out for them



David Escapes through a Window by Gustave Doré

is a resurrection from the death state in the future under more favorable conditions, under the blessed influences of Messiah's Kingdom. The Bible informs us that the penalty of sin is death – not torment after death. It informs us that this penalty was justly inflicted upon Father Adam because of his intelligent and wilful sin. It tells us that the human family are dying because, by laws of heredity, the seeds of sickness, imperfection, death, are in us, from the hour of our birth.

From this viewpoint, our entire world is a world of convicts under death-sentence. This accounts to us for the different treatment which God accords to humanity from that which He gives to angels – joy, peace, life, perfection. This accounts to us for God’s permitting various death-dealing circumstances to have control – famine, pestilence, earthquakes, cyclones, etc. When we come to see that the same God who justly condemned all through one man’s disobedience has made a provision for the justification of all through the obedience of Christ unto death, then we see things in a new light. When we learn that Messiah’s Kingdom is to be set up for the very purpose of bringing light, knowledge of God and full opportunity of return to His favor and everlasting life, our hearts rejoice.

Coming back to our first proposition, we realize that we are not to judge David and people of his time as we would judge ourselves of this Gospel Age. He must be judged by the Law, under which he and his nation were placed at Mount Sinai – “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a man’s life for a man’s life.” The Israelites were informed that the people of the Land of Canaan had allowed their cup of iniquity to come to the full (1 Samuel 15:2,3); and that the children of Abraham were given that entire land, with the Divine approval of their taking possession of it as quickly as possible. They were fully commissioned to slay all their enemies there as being enemies of the Lord, not even being told that the Lord had a future provision for them all in Messiah’s Kingdom.

The Philistines were in the Land of Canaan, where they not only held their own portion, but had invaded the portion which Israel had already conquered. They had caused loss of many lives in Israel. It was in full accord with the Divine instruction to the Israelites that the

Philistines and all other occupants of Canaan should be utterly destroyed. David, therefore, was merely carrying out what all Israelites recognized as being the Divine instruction respecting the Divine Program. From this viewpoint alone can the Lord’s instructions and the conduct of the Israelites in the past be recognized as proper.

Under the New Dispensation which began with our Lord’s redemptive work and the Pentecostal blessing, the Lord’s people of this Age, the Church, are under new orders, and by word and by example they are to illustrate the principles of mercy as in previous times the Jews were commanded to illustrate the principles of Divine Justice. We are to love our enemies, to do good unto them that hate us and that persecute us and say all manner of evil against us falsely. Thus we shall be the children of our Father who is in Heaven, and manifest that we have been begotten of Him by His Holy Spirit. But the Jews were not children of God. They were a “House of Servants.” (Hebrews 3:5) They never thought of speaking of themselves as sons of God. When Jesus declared Himself to be the Son of God they were indignant, said that He blasphemed, and took up stones to stone Him.

The first human son of God was Adam, and when he sinned, he was cut off from that relationship to God; and none others from Adam’s time down to Jesus’ time were ever recognized or spoken of in the Bible as sons of God. They were sinners, strangers, aliens, foreigners, convicts, under death sentence. But with Jesus came not only the new teaching but the new relationship. “Moses verily was faithful as a servant over all his House; but Christ as a Son over His own House [of sons]; whose House are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” – Hebrews 3:5,6.

A FRIEND IN NEED – A FRIEND INDEED – R. 5664

1 Samuel 20

“A friend loveth at all times.” – Proverbs 17:17

HISTORY records noble examples of friendship; but supreme amongst these is the story of our lesson – the friendship, the love, of Jonathan, son of Saul and prospective heir of the throne of Israel, for David, his rival in the hearts of the people and in the Divine Program. The purity and unselfishness of his friendship demonstrates to us a nobility possessed by some in those days, which we might not have suspected and which is quite in conflict with the Evolution theory.

The loving spirit of Jonathan stands out all the more in contrast with the jealous spirit of his father, King Saul. Apparently his first meeting with David was after the latter's victory over Goliath. Instead of thinking of David as a rival, who should be crushed, the noble Jonathan took off his own princely robe and gave it to him, together with his sword and his famous bow.

Rev. Alex. Whyte remarks, “Jonathan was the eldest son of Saul; and he was thus the heir-apparent to the throne of Israel. Handsome and high-mettled, full of nerve and full of heart, Jonathan was the pride of the army and the darling of the common people. His comrades, for his beauty of person and swiftness of foot, were wont to call him The Gazelle. But for his father's great and disastrous transgressions, Jonathan might soon have been the second king of Israel, second in succession to Saul, but second to no king that ever sat on a throne in those great qualities of mind, heart and character that give stability to a throne and add lustre to a crown.” Well was it written by one of the ancients, “Life hath no blessing like an earnest friend”; and a poet has written:

*“Life offers no joy like a friend;
Fulfilment and prophecy blend
In the throb of a heart with our own –
A heart where we know and are known.”*

“A FRIEND IN NEED, A FRIEND INDEED”

Jonathan's friendship, love, was not of the effervescent kind. It was the genuine article. He did not love merely in word, but in deed and in

truth – not merely when his father favored his friend and when the public acclaimed him and when he would thus have favor with others; but he loved him just the same when the king became the enemy of his friend and sought his life. Indeed, it may be said that no friendship could be surely counted upon until after it has been tried. The friendship which will not endure trial, testing, the friendship which will make no sacrifices is not the kind to be modeled after.

Jonathan had love of the kind the Lord admonishes His followers to have – the love which in honor prefers one another. While other loves have been great, this one doubtless stands preeminent above earthly love, especially because it was founded on a religious basis. It was because David loved the Lord, and sought to be guided by His will as that will was manifest at that time, that he would wait – that he conducted himself with wisdom, as the record declares. And it was because Jonathan discerned this spirit of wisdom, because he realized David was guided by the spirit of righteousness, that he loved David.

Indeed, we may be sure that in proportion as we understand the Bible and receive the spirit of the Truth, in that same proportion we shall be able to appreciate and to copy and to exemplify the best there is of principle – whether of friendship, or of duty to a monarch, of duty to our family relationship, or of duty toward our God. There are many influences operating toward a spirit of selfishness, avarice, jealousy, while the influences making for true friendship, true love, all the best qualities of heart and head, are from the Lord.

We have already noted in a previous lesson how Jonathan acted as peacemaker between his father the king, and David. Today's lesson brings to our attention another occasion on which Jonathan acted the part of a true friend. David realized that his life was in danger and mentioned his fears to Jonathan. The latter was at a loss to believe that his father would break

his word, yet was impressed by David's attitude. The feast of the new moon was at hand; and David was expected to sit at the royal table, King Saul at the head, Prince Jonathan at the right hand, the captain of the host at the left, and David occupying the fourth place, opposite the king. In harmony with an arrangement made between the friends, Jonathan was to ascertain his father's intentions definitely and to communicate these to David.

On the first day of the feast the king said nothing, although Jonathan, to attract attention to the matter and thus to draw out his father, chose a convenient time for taking David's seat. Finally the king asked for the "son of Jesse," as though he hated the very name "David." Jonathan replied that David had gone to keep the feast at Bethlehem by his permission.

The king had apparently been foiled in his intention to kill David at this time and vented his wrath upon his son, whom really he greatly loved. He addressed him as an unruly son, unworthy of his mother, thus implying that he ignored him as his own son. In his anger he threw a javelin at his son, probably not with the intention of striking him, but merely of venting his ferocious jealousy. Jonathan's speech in return shows that he was thinking less of what he himself was risking for his friend and more in respect to the injustice being done that friend. "So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month; for he was grieved for David, because Saul had done him shame."

It is a beautiful friendship which in stress forgets self and thinks only of the interests of the friend. As though in contrast with all the human loves and friendships, we read of Jesus, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Nevertheless, in the case of Jesus, it meant more than any earthly love or friendship; for "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The Apostle declares that the Lord thus set an example to all Christians, that they should "lay down their lives for the brethren," be ready to die the one for the other. This is the Heavenly love, the Divine friendship, of which the love of Jonathan

may be taken as a sample, next to the example of our Lord and the Apostles.

"IS IT NOT BEYOND THEE?"

The next morning David, having returned from his home, was to get Jonathan's judgment respecting the king's sentiments. The agreed-upon signal was that Jonathan with his bow and arrows should go into the field near to a great rock; and in connection with his archery would call out, "Is it not beyond thee? Make haste!" if the message was that David should flee. And so it was done. But the two friends could not think of parting, perhaps forever, without having personal contact. Jonathan went over to the rock behind which David hid. The two embraced, after the manner of the East, kissing each other Goodbye – true lovers, with a manly, noble love.

Here it was that Jonathan indicated his faith in God's providence in respect to David, and asked him to make a covenant with him that whatever should occur he would deal graciously with him and his family, saying, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, forever. And he arose and departed; and Jonathan returned to the city."

Bible history shows us that David never forgot the obligation he thus undertook to be a friend to the family of Saul. The custom of the East at that time was that a new dynasty coming into power should utterly destroy all the males of the dynasty which was being overturned. But this was not so in David's case.

It was on the occasion of Jonathan's death with his father on the field of battle shortly after, in conflict with the Philistines, that David expressed the beautiful words:

*"O Jonathan, on thy high places thou wast slain!
I am distressed for thee, my Jonathan, my brother!
Pleasant hast thou been to me exceedingly!
Wonderful was thy love to me, passing the love of women!"*

We trust that none can read this story without being influenced favorably toward friendship, to be a truer, a nobler, a more faithful friend than otherwise; but especially should Christians get a blessing from this story of

Jonathan's love, leading on as it does to the love of Christ and to the injunction that they should be copies of God's dear Son; and that their friendship should be loyal, true, enduring,

especially one for the other, as the Apostle exhorts, "Doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially unto the Household of Faith."

DAVID AND JONATHAN – R. 1907

1 Samuel 20:32-42

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." – Proverbs 18:24

TRUE friendship is a rare flower on our sin-cursed earth, and when it is found and proved it should be greatly prized. It is an element of the original likeness of God. True friendship can never exist in a heart where selfishness reigns; for the moment self-interest is crossed, the false and fickle friendship begins to decline or proves treacherous.

The friendship of David and Jonathan was evidently of the true kind; for it was proved on the part of both in the furnace of trial, and it held fast through years under circumstances of temptation which meaner souls could never have withstood. It was founded, not upon a mere fanciful whim on the part of either, but upon real moral worth in each; and those points of moral worth were the attractions and bonds of their friendship. Both were devout men of God, men of faith and of godly courage and heroism, and lovers of truth and righteousness; and it was the discovery of these elements of character in each other that knit their souls as one.

Jonathan, the eldest son of King Saul, was the natural heir to his throne, and doubtless would have succeeded his father had Saul not incurred the divine displeasure and so forfeited that privilege for his posterity and cut short his own career. (1 Sam. 13:13) Jonathan was a devoted son to his father and a devoted and energetic servant to God and to his people. The deep attachment of father and son is manifest from several facts: Jonathan could undertake his dangerous expedition against the Philistines only by keeping his project a secret from his father. (1 Sam. 14:1) The effect of Saul's strange vow was emphasized by his affection for his son. (1 Sam. 14:39-44) That dearest object he declared he would sacrifice, if need be, in fulfillment of his vow. But the people rescued him, declaring the Lord to be on the side of Jonathan.

There was very marked and intimate confidence between the father and son. (1 Sam. 20:2) "Behold my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will show it me." And Jonathan had great influence with his father (1 Sam. 19:6), and was very active in cooperation with him in the defence of the Lord's people against their foes and oppressors.

Jonathan loved the Lord and his people, and had strong faith in the power of God on their behalf. Like David before Goliath, with faith in God he with his armour bearer approached the garrison of the Philistines, saying, "It may be that the Lord will work for us; for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." – 1 Sam. 14:6.

In that beautiful friendship there was no spirit of rivalry, no jealousy, no vain glory, although Jonathan was the natural heir to the throne of Israel, and David had been anointed to take his place; though Jonathan was of the royal family and a man of some thirty odd years, while David was but a shepherd youth, probably about twenty-three years of age. Each in simplicity of heart accepted the Lord's appointments as wisest and best, and determined nobly to do his part toward the Lord and toward his people and toward each other. And so Jonathan, cooperating with his father in the duties of his office to Israel so long as the Lord sustained him in power, nobly used the privileges of his position for the protection and preservation of the one whom he knew to be appointed to reign in his stead.

And while Saul, filled with envy, malice, hatred and revenge against this one whom he regarded as his rival and the rival of his house, determined, and continually sought, to slay him, Jonathan, by every means in his power,

protected and defended him, even at the risk of his own life. – 1 Sam. 20:32,33.

When David first came to the house of Saul to minister to him, and Jonathan's soul was knit to that of David, "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul; and [in recognition of the fact that he was the Lord's anointed – the Lord's choice for the kingdom by and by] Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow and to his girdle." Thus they covenanted faithful friendship to each other, being subject in all things to the will of God.

And when David was taking leave of Jonathan to fly for his life from the face of Saul, again they covenanted perpetual friendship. "And David arose out of his place...and [approaching Jonathan] fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times [in token of great respect for both the person and office of his friend]; and they kissed one another, and wept one with another until David exceeded." And Jonathan said, "Go in peace, and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father. And [when thou comest into the kingdom] thou shalt not only while I live show me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not; but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever [as he foresaw David might be tempted to do when later the descendants of Jonathan might urge their claims to the throne]; no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth....And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him; for he loved him as his own soul." – 1 Sam. 20:13-17.

Only once again they met, a year or two later. It was under very similar circumstances, in the wilderness of Ziph. Saul was still hunting for his rival to slay him, and again Jonathan, learning of his situation, sought him out. "And Jonathan went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not; for the hand of Saul, my father, shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also my father knoweth. And [again] they

two made a covenant before the Lord." – 1 Sam. 23:16,17.

In this touching narrative there are valuable lessons which we cannot afford to overlook.

(1) It shows that true and enduring friendship is possible, though it be of rare occurrence.

(2) It suggests that true and lasting friendship can exist only between noble and unselfish souls, whose wills are fully submitted to the will of God, and who are actuated by the fixed principles of truth and righteousness.

(3) It suggests that if such friendship existed under the dim light of the Jewish law, it ought to be of much more frequent occurrence under the light of the gospel. True, there may not always be just such circumstances to make it manifest, but there are many similar circumstances. There are always temptations to rivalry, to the ignoring of the will and appointments of God and the substituting of one's own will and way.

When tempted thus, let us call to mind the noble examples of Jonathan and Samuel – Jonathan strengthened the hand of David in God, and saying, "Fear not, ...thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee;" and Samuel saying of Saul, his rival, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people!" So let us "in honor prefer one another," and ever rejoice to see the Lord's will and the Lord's way prosper.

The friendship of David and Jonathan seems also to be suggestive of that beautiful accord which shall exist between the glorified Church and the earthly princes who shall be next to them in the Kingdom of God. There will not be a note of discord or rivalry or jealousy between them; for each will be delighted to fill his honored place in the wonderful plan of God, and will love the other as his own soul. Though the Gospel Church will receive the first place of favor offered in the Abrahamic covenant, and the ancient worthies will find themselves next in honor, they will rejoice to have it so, because divine wisdom and love have so planned it.

And as David remembered his covenant with Jonathan not to cut off his kindness from the house of Jonathan (2 Sam. 9:1-13), so the glorified Church will remember its covenant to

bless the ancient worthies first, and then all the families of the earth who will then be under their jurisdiction. Their loving ministry through the law and prophecies and their noble examples of

godly life and character, which have been so helpful to us, while Satan was hotly pursuing us ("as a roaring lion," 1 Pet. 5:8), as Saul pursued David, shall be held in "everlasting remembrance."

THE PASSOVER IN THE FIRST MONTH – R.4127 (excerpt)

CONSIDERABLE difficulty is experienced by many in harmonizing our solar calendar with that of the Jews, which is built upon an association of lunar and solar time. We tender assistance to such by quoting an extract from *Smith's Bible Dictionary* on the subject – followed by an extract from the Hebrew chronologist Lindo on the same subject.

Smith's Bible Dictionary says: –

"As a lunation from one conjunction to another, termed a synodical month, has 29:12:44:3½, being 29" days and about

! hour, it could not be better arranged than by making one month 29 and the following 30 days. When a month has 30 days, the last day of the month and the following day are both kept as New Moon, on the principle that a holiday cannot be kept part of a day. The 30th day being half in the preceding month and half in the new moon, the whole day is made a holiday, and the following as a matter of course, from its being the first whole day of the new moon. That this rule was followed in ancient times, is to be seen in 1 Sam. 20:5,27.

A REMARKABLE FRIENDSHIP – R.3232

1 Samuel 20:12-23

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." – Proverbs 18:24

HISTORY relates many instances of intense friendships between great men in ancient times, but it tells us of none surpassing the friendship between Jonathan and David, referred to in this lesson. Jonathan's love for David, evidently thoroughly reciprocated by the latter, shines out not only as a friendship that was unselfish, but as one that was apparently injurious to Jonathan's interests – though not really so.

As the son of King Saul, Jonathan was the recognized heir to the throne of Israel, and was at this time about thirty-five years of age. David, the country youth of about twenty-one years of age, had suddenly sprung into prominence before the nation, had been appointed a captain of a thousand men, and was just recently married to Saul's daughter. Saul himself viewed David as a rival in the affections of the people, and everything foreboded that some day he would be Saul's successor. From the standpoint of fallen manhood, therefore, Jonathan had every reason to consider David an opponent and rival, and the envy and jealousy of the fallen nature might

be expected to breed in Jonathan's heart hatred and enmity instead of friendship and love. These circumstances constitute the remarkable friendship between these two young men one of the most wonderful on the pages of history.

We read of how Jonathan's soul was knit unto the soul of David – their affections, confidences and loves were interwoven. Jonathan giving to David certain parts of his own apparel when the latter came to live at the court of Saul, was merely an outward manifestation of the other precious sentiments which prompted this and other manifestations of affection – all of which, dignifying David and promoting his honor, were derogatory to the natural interests of Jonathan, who, as the heir apparent, might not improperly have aspired to the maintenance of his own place of honor at the court. Small minds are apt to make the mistake of supposing that the crushing down of others is essential to their own honor and exaltation; but it was because Jonathan was not thus small-minded, but noble-

hearted, that his character has been beloved by all who have known it from then until now.

There is a reason for everything, and there must have been a reason for this love between these two noble souls. We are to love and esteem whatsoever things are just, true, pure, noble, honorable, says the Apostle, which implies that the love of the reverse of these would be improper. True, there is a difference between loving principles of righteousness and goodness and loving individuals, but what we wish to notice is that the love for individuals should be based upon their possession of noble and love-worthy characters. Neither of these men could have loved the other had he been bad, ignoble; for only the mean can love the mean, and only the perverse can love the perverse.

What was there in David's character that attracted Jonathan's love? Undoubtedly it was his nobility, his courage, his honesty, his faithfulness to the king and to the nation, and, above all, his trust in God, his reliance on him. What was there in Jonathan which drew forth the responsive love of David? There were many of the same qualities: Jonathan was also courageous and had already demonstrated this; he was sincere, honest, humble-minded, generous, faithful to a friend, and above all faithful to his God. – 1 Sam. 14:1-15,27-30,43; 23:16-18.

While these two men had certain natural qualities of heart which commended each to the other's love, the great bond of union was the faith and devotion of each to God. Some one has said that those who would be the best friends need a third object in which both are interested, and that then, like the radii of a circle, the nearer they come to this center the nearer they approach to one another. So with these men: their loyalty to God and to the principles of truth and righteousness exemplified in God, was the strong bond of their friendship which hindered the diversity of their earthly interests from alienating their affections.

This same principle is exemplified in all true, unselfish love: there must be something mutually attractive to draw and to hold the interest and love of each to the other. The breaking of vows of love and friendship or the breaking of marriage vows implies that one or other had a

selfish love and not a pure love, which the Lord's Word inculcates and which is so nobly illustrated in this lesson. Selfish love may indeed admire that which is brilliant, that which is good, that which is noble, that which is generous; but not being equally noble and generous, it will be sure at some time to be assaulted with the temptation to abandon the friendship where it believes it could better serve its own interests. Jonathan's love was not of this selfish kind, consequently it was unchangeable – indeed, grew the firmer and the stronger in proportion as it triumphed over the propositions of any selfish suggestions. In this respect it well represents the love of our Lord Jesus for his people. As Jonathan loved David at the cost of his own position, our Lord Jesus left the glory which he had with the Father that he might become the Redeemer of his people, to whom he declares, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

*"One there is above all others
Well deserves the name of friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end."*

Our lesson introduces these two friends at a time when the life of David was in danger. Our preceding lesson showed that Saul was disposed to do violence to David. The threatening action mentioned in that lesson was repeated several times, and finally the javelin was thrown at his musician David, but the latter escaped it. It was in view of this hostile feeling that these friends decided that it would be unwise for David to again appear at court unless King Saul manifested some change of mind toward him. The coming feast would be an important one; Jonathan and others of the household would be present, but it was not considered prudent that David should hazard his life by attending, and it was arranged that Jonathan should make his excuses to the king and should subsequently let David know the king's attitude of mind, so that if necessary he should flee out of the country. Jonathan found Saul full of bitterness of heart toward David, so much so that he was angered at his son for making excuses for him and threw his javelin at him as an evidence of his displeasure, though probably not with the intention of killing him. Jonathan resented the indignities

and wrong of his father, and at once communicated the matter to David by the prearranged signal related in this lesson. However, the two friends could not part without a personal interview, in which they kissed each other, and wept, and bound each other in promises, and called upon God to witness the sincerity of their devotion to each other. Jonathan was evidently fully convinced that David was the Lord's choice for a king to succeed Saul, and, being full of faith and devotion to God, he had not the slightest thought of opposing the divine arrangement. Quite probably, too, in their confidences, David had already told Jonathan of his anointing, assuring him, however, that he would not consider this anointing a proper excuse or ground for any interference with King Saul; that on the contrary, as the Lord had sought him and anointed him, the Lord himself was able in his own due time and in his own way to instal him in authority and power without his stretching forth his hand to do injury to one who already had been anointed of the Lord to this office of king.

We have already noticed that friendship implies like qualities of mind and of heart. The generous love the generous, the noble love the noble, the honest love the honest, the meek love the meek, etc.; but now we call attention to the fact that amongst the Lord's people are not many great, wise or noble – naturally speaking – and that God loves and accepts as his covenant people, friends, children, chiefly those who are not noble by nature. We notice also a love and friendship amongst the Lord's consecrated people stronger and deeper than any earthly tie or relationship – notwithstanding the fact that amongst the Lord's people are “not many great or noble,” but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith. How comes this seeming contradiction of a general rule of friendship? We reply that God's love toward us as sinners was not that of friendship but of compassion, and similarly the love of his people for sinners is not that of friendship but of compassion, sympathy, the desire to help them out of their degradation. Not until after we had ceased to be sinners, through acceptance of Christ, were we privileged to become the friends of God and to realize him as our friend. Not until we had ceased to be sinners,

and had been accepted in the Beloved, would we become the friends of others similarly transformed, and begin to grow in this quality of friendship – love for one another as brethren, partakers of the holy Spirit.

In a word there are two planes of friendship – a natural plane, on which men of like natural qualities would be drawn together; and a spiritual plane, on which those unlike in natural qualities, but alike in spiritual hopes, aims and ambitions, are drawn still more closely together by the new tie, the new love, which binds not their flesh but their hearts in Christian love and unity.

These New Creatures in Christ Jesus know each other not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. In each other's spirits or new minds there are the noblest sentiments, the highest aspirations, that which is good, true, noble, pure – whatever may be their weaknesses according to the flesh. They love each other from the new standpoint of intention, will, harmony with God, and their friendship for one another grows increasingly as they perceive each other's energy in fighting the good fight of faith against the evil influences of the world, the flesh and the Adversary. Nor tongue nor pen can properly express the love, the friendship, which subsists between these New Creatures in Christ Jesus, to whom old things have passed away and all things have become new.

This does not signify, however, that a parent must have exactly the same love for other children as for his own; – he has a greater responsibility for his own, and should realize it. Nor does it imply that even the saints will all be loved to the same degree. Our Lord, we are told, **specially** loved some of his disciples. By and by, when perfection shall have replaced imperfection, all “brethren” will be perfect and all neighbors will be brethren beloved. Until then, however, we must love all, but “making a difference” – according to natural obligations and spiritual development. – Jude 22.

As there are nominal Christians and real Christians, so there is a nominal love as well as a real love amongst those who profess the name of Christ, and it should be more and more the aim of the Lord's true people to cultivate his

spirit, his character, his disposition, his love, his friendship; and that they may be able to cultivate these he has caused the Apostle to present to our attention a most graphic description of the love which is from above. This description is given in 1 Cor. 13. It must be enjoyed to some extent by all who are New Creatures, for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his; but it will be increasingly enjoyed and appreciatingly understood in proportion as the Lord's people each become stronger in the Lord – copies of God's dear Son – like him who is the friend above all others.

One writer says, "The glory of life is to love, not to be loved; to give, not to get; to serve, not to be served....The self-centered cannot keep friends even when he makes them."

Another remarks, "Behold, what gross errors and extreme absurdities many do commit for want of a friend to tell him of them."

"True criticism does not consist, as so many critics seem to think, in depreciating but in appreciation. More lives are spoiled by undue harshness than by undue gentleness."

"The centered love of any one person tends toward universal good-will, the love of all. The candle not only shines on him who lights it, but on all within reach of its rays."

"Every power for good in true friendship is a power for evil in the false."

"Was it friend or foe that spread these lies!
Nay, who but infants question in such wise?
'Twas one of my most intimate enemies."

A FRIEND IN NEED A FRIEND INDEED – R.4223

1 Samuel 20:30-42

(continuation of article on page 26)



David, A Friend – Lifeway Collection

HOW LOVE MAY BE DEVELOPED

David, the younger man of the two, as we have seen, possessed by nature a deep, generous character, capable of intense love, but apparently time was required for its development. And as we perceive Jonathan's love for him, the brighter and more intense at first, we find that David's love was drawn forth, that he loved in return, just as God's love was first toward us and subsequently our love drew out toward him increasingly. Our lesson tells us how Jonathan endeavored to preserve peace between the king and David, but finding his father intent upon killing his friend, he took occasion to forewarn David that he must flee, as matters had come to that pass where his life would be unsafe anywhere near the king. This warning was given by a previous arrangement in a field at a distance from the palace. David was hidden behind a great rock. As an excuse, Jonathan went forth to practice archery, with a lad accompanying him to bring back the arrows. His real mission, however, was to advise David whether or not he must flee that vicinity. His words to the lad, "Make speed, haste, stay not," while appropriate to the arrows, were really intended for David, that he might know the urgency of the situation.

Then, sending the boy with the weapons to the palace, Jonathan concluded that he must risk a few moments with his friend. By this time David was realizing the depth of Jonathan's love, which had been proved in so many ways and now finally in his willingness to protect David's life, when it would have been to his own interest to permit his father to wreak vengeance upon David. Such a love is rarely known, except amongst the saints; and alas, we fear not too much experienced even amongst these. When, however, we do find a friend who sticketh closer than a brother, we properly appreciate him all the more because of the rarity of his kind.

At this meeting David bowed himself three times to the earth, an eastern custom expressive of humility and appreciation. The friends kissed each other and wept one with another, David ultimately appearing to be the more heartbroken of the two. Although confident in the Lord, he was leaving his home to be an outcast – an outlaw. He not only was losing the companionship of his dear friend Jonathan, but he would be considered by many of the people of his own nation as a traitor, because of the king's opposition and the necessity it would put upon him for becoming a kind of brigand. Then it was that Jonathan said to him, "Go in peace; forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord shall be between thee and me and between thy seed and my seed forever." They parted, according to the record, and never met again except once, a year or two later, when David was pursued by Saul. Then Jonathan went again to his friend to comfort him and "strengthened his hand in God." – 1 Sam. 23:16.

A glimpse of David's estimation of Jonathan and his love is given in what is termed "The Song of the Bow," David's touching lament at the death of his friend Jonathan. He exclaims, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan. Very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." (2 Sam. 1:26) But we, dear friends, know of a still more wonderful love than this, of which we sometimes sing,

*"Love of Jesus, all divine,
Fill this longing heart of mine."*

Love begets love; and so the Scriptures tell us that it was not that we first loved God, but that he first loved us and manifested his love for us in the gift of his Son. So it was the love of Jesus that attracted us and drew forth our love in response. And day by day, as we come to appreciate more and more the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love of God and of Christ, which passes all human understanding, the more our love toward them will increase and abound. And as it increases we ourselves become more Godlike and correspondingly also from us proceeds a love for others who love us not; and our love for them will excite the love of some in return, and lead them to a greater appreciation of this principle which stands in opposition to the spirit of the world, the love of the world, the selfishness of the world. Let us then seek to cultivate this godlike quality. Let us notice not only that the Scriptures declare love to be the principal thing in the world, but that it is the very essence of the divine character, the very essence of the divine law which is fulfilled in this one word, Love. Let us remember then that in the exercise of this quality we are preparing ourselves for the glorious possibilities to which we have been invited, and which by our Lord's grace we are seeking to obtain by making our calling and election sure.

In the Scriptures sharp contrasts are drawn; and while this love of Jonathan, and the love of the Father and of the Son are set forth as worthy of emulation, another kind of character is also pictured, as when our Lord is represented in the Psalms as saying respecting Judas, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." (Psa. 41:9) Let us see to it that this spirit of love, our spirit of friendship, proceeds, from the fountain of love itself; for God is love. Let us also have in mind the Apostle's declaration that there are only two great sources: a sweet fountain cannot send forth bitter waters, nor a bitter fountain send forth sweet waters. (James 3:11) Let us, therefore, settle it in our hearts that any spirit of treachery toward a friend, toward a brother, is not in any sense of the word connected with the spirit of love, but in

opposition to it. Let us remember that a sweet fountain, a pure fountain, a love-fountain, cannot send forth bitter waters of hate, of malice, of envy, of strife. We must recognize such a stream of evil as coming from a different quarter, a different fountain, from the enemy of God and man. These qualities are therefore set forth in the Scriptures as works of the flesh and of the devil. Let us remember, too, that a radical change from an attitude of love and friendship to an attitude of bitterness and enmity is not an instantaneous but a gradual work. In the case of Judas we see a gradual deflection, which at first merely murmured because others had honors bestowed from the Lord; yet that spirit of murmuring increased, until within a week it took delight in betraying the Friend of all friends, who was even then laying down life on his behalf. Let us remember that by nature we have seeds of evil, of selfishness, received from the Adversary through heredity, through the fall; and that we need continually to be on guard to uproot all such roots of evil, and need continually to be cultivating the tender plant of love, that its fragrance may fill our entire lives and prepare us for association with him who is love and with him who is the friend above all others.

OUR GOLDEN TEXT

Well has the wise man said that a friend loveth at all times. He who merely loves at a time when he thinks it will be to his own advantage to love knows not love. He who loves, and is a brother in prosperity merely, and whose love and friendship wither under the heat of persecution and adversity, has never known love in its true sense, but merely a certain brand of selfishness – the love of the world.

As God commended his love toward us and showed us that not through selfishness, but generosity, at a great cost to himself, he provided us release from our prison, and gave us privileges of sonship, so true love will be willing to sacrifice. Let us judge then of our love for others, for the Lord, for the brethren, for our families, for our neighbors, for our enemies even, by our willingness to sacrifice in their interest and for their highest welfare. If we find ourselves sacrificing nothing in the interest of the Lord's

cause, let us not delude ourselves by saying that we love the Lord. If we find ourselves unwilling to endure, to sacrifice in the interests of the brethren and others dear to us, let us not mistake the matter and call it love. If we find ourselves unwilling to do kindness even to our enemies when they are in need, let us make no mistake; for the Lord hath declared that a course of goodness and mercy and self-denial is the only index of a loving heart. If once we can see that such a love of heart is essential to a place in the Kingdom it will make us doubly earnest in the attainment of such a character. If still farther than this, we see that none will ever gain eternal life in this age or that which is to come, except as he or she shall possess a heart of love, it will help to awaken us to realize that love indeed is the principal thing, the most important thing to be attained and cultivated by ourselves, yea, by all.

Note Canon Farrar's earnest words: "My brethren, the love that sees goodness and beauty in all human nature, helps to make goodness and to make beauty in human nature. To those who love, even a common person is a human soul, who walks in the transfiguring glory of their affection. You think a person dull. Why? That is because you are dull. An angel has been with you and you have known it not; and I imagine that to a spirit full of malice and self-conceit an angel would be very dull. Each human soul is like a cavern full of gems. The casual observer glances into it through some cranny, and all looks dark, sullen and forgotten. But let light enter into it; lift a torch up to the walls; let God's sunlight fall into it and flood its open recesses; and lo, it will flash with crystals and with amethysts, and each separate crystal will quiver under the touch of brightness with a transporting discovery of its own nature. If souls do not shine before you it is because you are bringing them no light to make them shine. Throw away your miserable, smouldering, fuming torch of conceit and hatred; lift up to them the light of love, and lo! they will arise and shine; yea, flame and burn with an undreamt glory."

*"Was it friend or foe who spread these lies?
Nay, who but infants question in such wise?
'Twas one of my most intimate enemies."*

“DO GOOD TO THEM THAT HATE YOU” – R. 4225

1 Samuel 22

“Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you.” – Luke 6:27

FOR seven years David was forced to be an exile from his home and nominally to fill the role of an outlaw. King Saul, troubled with evil spirits, was at times practically insane, and no doubt pursued David from place to place during those seven years as a relaxation, as some men take pleasure in hunting wild game. It is in this light that David himself in the Psalm presents the matter of his escape. A large band of discontented people gathered to David as their leader, mostly victims of Saul's persecution. These numbered 400 at least (1 Sam. 22:2) and later on 600. (1 Sam. 25:13,27) David's own parents and brothers were amongst those persecuted, probably on David's account; also the prophet Gad, and the high-priest Abiathar, a son of the high-priest Abimelech (1 Sam. 22:22,23), also his nephew Abishai, subsequently a great general. (1 Sam. 26:6) It is also noted that in the company were eleven mighty men of valor of the tribe of Gad (1 Chron. 12:8-14), and twenty-three Benjamite warriors who could shoot their arrows with both hands equally well. – 1 Chron. 12:1-7.

Professor Wright suggests that under the circumstances then prevailing, to be an outlaw was creditable. He says: “To be an outlaw at such a time was not to be on the side of disorder; it was the beginning of a justifiable revolution. The dissatisfied men who gathered around David in the cave of Adullam were the true patriots of the time....This is evident from his message to Nabal, in which he claims that he had performed all the duties of a government in protecting Nabal from the incursions of the bordering tribes; so that the tribute he asked was not more than just taxation of established authority.”

There are many caves in that limestone region. The one credited as the Cave of Adullam has several apartments and space for a small

army; it is located not far from the place where David encountered Goliath. Associated with its name are three items of considerable interest. One of these, told in 1 Chronicles 11:15-19, gives us a little picture of the fidelity of David's followers and of David's own unselfishness, which lay no doubt at the foundation of the love which his followers bore him. It was at a time when the Philistines were making an invasion and when David and his followers could not be on Saul's side, yet would not be against him. The Philistine camp lay between the cave and the spring of fine water at Bethlehem, David's home town. Thirsty, David had remarked longingly on the fineness of the Bethlehem spring. With devotion to their leader three of David's chief men ventured through the lines of the Philistine camp and brought him some of the coveted water. On receiving it David's heart was full of gratitude to God for such appreciation and love from his followers; yet considering the price it had cost them and the dangers they had risked, he felt himself unworthy, and tendered the water as a thank-offering to the Lord and as an expression to his followers of his highest appreciation of their kindness. Of this the poet says, –

*“And all the host looked and wondered,
And those noble three,
The mightiest of the thirty, felt their souls
Knit closer to King David and to God.”*

The second item of interest referred to was the taking of David's aged parents from Adullam on a long journey over the rocky hills and around the furthest end of the Dead Sea and up the mountains of Moab to a place of safety with the king of Moab. – 1 Sam. 22:3,4.

The third item of interest referred to was the sparing of the life of King Saul at this cave. – 1 Sam. 24.

(article continues on page 52)

OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD – R.3238

1 Samuel 22

“Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.” – Luke 6:27

THIS lesson concerns the seven years of David's experiences as a fugitive from the envy and hatred of King Saul. The latter, though still the nominal representative of the Lord upon the throne of Israel, had lost the divine blessing and power which, in considerable measure, had been transferred to David after his anointing to be Saul's successor. The lesson brings before our minds in sharp contrast the king, whose better judgment was overcome by evil impulses, and David, the “man after God's own heart,” who, although far from perfect, strove successfully for mastery over himself, and overcame promptings of evil under the guidance of principles of righteousness. We are not to think of David as perfect. Neither are we to be blind to his faults and sins, nor to excuse them nor to copy them. David was not one of the “saints” in the New Testament sense. He lived at too early a date to share in the high calling, nor could he follow in the footsteps of Jesus, since the Captain of our salvation and our forerunner in the narrow way had not yet come. David was a man after God's own heart, in the sense that he was full of faith in God and aimed aright. At heart he desired to do the Lord's will, and wherever he failed of this it caused him grief and led him to repentance. He lived before the time of God's revelation of his own character and plan and perfect will concerning his people. All things considered, David's attainments in faith and obedience were quite remarkable, so that although as a whole he was not to be considered as a model or pattern by the Church of the Gospel age, nevertheless many beautiful illustrations of proper faith and obedience may be drawn from his career, and some of them are noted in the lesson before us.

The seven years from the time David fled from the wrath of Saul until Saul died must have seemed to David a peculiarly long period of trial of faith and patience. His own course had been a noble and true one. He had served his king and his nation most loyally, yet he suffered as a reward. He was for a time an exile in a foreign

land, and his father's family was obliged to remove to Moab for protection. It must have seemed peculiar to David that the Lord should permit him, anointed to succeed King Saul, to be thus delayed from coming into his kingdom, and instead to be hunted and persecuted as an outlaw. This, however, was a valuable test of his faith, and doubtless helped to strengthen its roots, and thus to make his character stronger and his trust in the Lord firmer. But besides this, we may readily see that those seven years were valuable to David as a preparation for his kingly office. They made him intimately acquainted with the people and their usual manner of life and general sentiments – acquainted also with the neighboring peoples. Above all, he became intimately acquainted with the Lord, and, we may be sure, learned to trust his providences even where he could not trace them. Several of the Psalms were either written during this period and describe David's experiences on the spot, or written subsequently describing the lessons learned from those experiences. Amongst these Psalms may be mentioned numbers 34, 52, 56, 57, 63.

Spiritual Israelites who have already received the adoption and anointing of the Lord to future service as kings and priests, who shall reign on the earth with our blessed Lord and Head, to bless all the families of the earth, can easily trace valuable lessons in the trying experiences of David at the time of this lesson. The Prince of this world is our enemy, not because we have done evil, but because he realizes that he has but a short time, and because he has a spirit that is opposed to the Lord's Spirit in us. We too, at times, may wonder why the Lord – having anointed us and assured us of the glory, honor and immortality in the Kingdom – permits us to have such trying experiences and such severe conflicts with the world, the flesh and the devil. The reason becomes evident as we learn the way of the Lord more particularly – as we learn that the present “afflictions which are but for a moment [comparatively] are working out

for us [fitting us for] a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” We have need of patience, and that can only be gained by trials. We have need of faith, and that can only be developed by necessities. We have need of experience for our future work, which can be gained only by such experiences, which permit us to be touched with a feeling of the infirmities and difficulties and trials of those about us, to whom we shall be ministers and representatives when we reach the throne. For us, then, as for David, the lesson of present experiences is to resist evil, – and not with evil but with good.

In considering the story of David and other Bible heroes we are impressed with the candor of the narratives – that the evil things of their conduct are told with the same frankness as their good deeds. This is one of the peculiarities of the Bible and one of the internal evidences of its truthfulness. How easy it would have been to have glossed the history of David so as to have avoided everything that would be to his discredit; and how surely this would have been done, especially in the case of a king, had the

preparation of the Bible not been under divine supervision. Some, we are sure, incline to the thought that the Bible would have been much better reading had some of the faults of its prominent persons been omitted; we, however, are not sure of this. The story of the trials and failures and repentances of some of these noble characters have been no less blessings than the records of their noble deeds and sentiments. As some of the Lord’s people have realized their own weaknesses in the flesh, having at times come short of their ideals in the battle against sin, they have found encouragement in the experiences of others related in the Scriptures – not to delve further into sin but to realize that “there is forgiveness with the Lord that he might be feared.” As such have noted the failures of David on various occasions and his repentance, contrition and restoration to the Lord’s favor, it has given them courage to similarly repent and to similarly trust in God’s mercy and in their own forgiveness, and similarly to be encouraged to arise from their dejection and sin and start afresh in the battle for righteousness, truth, purity, etc.

(article continues on page 50)



David's Valiant Men by James Tissot

OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD – R.3238

1 Samuel 26:5-12,21-25

*“Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.” – Luke 6:27**(continuation of article on page 49)*

Our lesson deals with one of David's experiences when pursued by Saul. The erratic course of King Saul under the control of an evil spirit doubtless led him to deal unjustly with other men, as he did with David, – with some for one cause, with some for another. Such people as incurred Saul's enmity, and those that were forced to become fugitives and to be ranked with outlaws, sought out David and put themselves under his superior control. These numbered at one time 400 and later on 600. (1 Sam. 22:2; 25:13; 27:2) These men, hindered from engaging in the ordinary pursuits of life by reason of the king's erratic course, moved about from place to place, and, since they must eat, their presence was doubtless an affliction upon the farmers wherever they went. Their foragings may have been carried on in harmony with the Jewish law, which provided that any hungry persons might enter any farm, orchard or vineyard and eat to his satisfaction without molestation.

Doubtless it was because the people of the village of Ziph desired to curry the king's favor, and also because they feared the foragings of so many men, that they sent word to King Saul that David and his company could be found in their vicinity. The king hurriedly gathered a troop of 3,000 and went to the place, probably anxious to capture David and his followers. The latter, however, were not so easily caught; indeed they were much better used to scouting than the regular army would be. They readily ascertained all about the king and his army, while the king knew little or nothing of them.

The story shows how David with one trusty companion went into Saul's camp. King Saul and the whole army were sleeping without tents, clothed in their outer robes, as is frequently the custom in Palestine even yet. The king lay not in a "trench" but in a space or corral formed by the army wagons; and at his head, to distinguish him from the rest of the army, his spear was erected near his head-rest, as is still the custom

among the chiefs of the Bedouins of that country. Secure in the thought that David and his handful of followers would be afraid of the king and his army and would not think of coming nigh them, no provision had been made for pickets or watchmen, so that David and his companion readily found the king, and could have murdered him in his sleep and escaped without detection had they chosen so to do. It was not that David was so obtuse that he could not see the advantage that would come to him that he refrained from killing the king, but because of his respect for God and his loyalty to him. David recognized fully that God was the King of Israel, and that God had **set** Saul in the position he occupied and anointed him as king; and that it was the duty of the people to honor the king as God's representative. (Kings among the Gentiles are not thus divinely **set**) He did not have so weak a conscience as would have permitted him to reason that as God had anointed him to be Saul's successor he had now providentially put Saul's life in his power. On the contrary he reasoned properly that God was still King and that he had all the power necessary to dethrone Saul and to bring him to the throne in his own way; and that the Almighty needed not the assistance of murder on his part for the accomplishment of his plan.

To make the test still stronger David's companion suggested all this, and proposed to carry it out; so that the entire matter might have been done without David saying a word or lifting a finger. To a weaker mind this would have been an extremely strong temptation – he would have argued with himself that the crime would not be his, – that by merely keeping silent and refusing to interfere the whole matter might be accomplished by another. But David knew that his companion would not act without his consent, either formal or implied. He recognized that the responsibility still would be his, whoever might be the tool in the murder. He decided that he

would not meet Saul's envy, malice, hatred and murderous spirit with the same spirit, – returning evil for evil, – but, instead, he would requite his evil and murderous intentions with mercy. This was not merely a matter of policy, but evidently David never had in his heart any murderous spirit towards Saul, for this was now the second time he had him in his power and might have destroyed him. We are not to suppose that David loved Saul with an affectionate love any more than he would have loved any other person of such a character. He loved him in the sense referred to in our Golden Text – with the kind of love it is proper to feel toward our enemies; – the love of sympathy and compassion which, however it might disapprove the character, etc., of the enemy, would neither do him injury nor encourage others to do so, but would spare his life and be ready in any manner to do him a kindness.

There is a good lesson here for all spiritual Israelites. We are to recognize the Lord's appointments and permissions, not in respect only to earthly governments, but also, and particularly, in respect to those whom God has *set* in the Church. Even though such should become enemies of righteousness, it is not for us to accomplish their destruction. The Lord, who called us to the Kingdom and who has promised to give it to us in his own due time, declares it his will that in the present time we should live peaceably, and to exercise patience, moderation and kindness even toward our enemies – toward those who would destroy us or who are pursuing us with the intention of assassinating our characters, or what not. We are not to render evil for evil, nor railing for railing, nor slander for slander; but contrariwise, are to speak as kindly of our enemies as we can, and to think as generously of them as possible – in no sense of the word either physically or with our tongues or otherwise may we retaliate or manifest their spirit, but return good for evil, mercy and compassion for malice and injury.

After David and his companion had reached a position of safety, and when the proper time had come, they hailed the king and his chief general, and called their attention to the fact that the king's life had been in jeopardy, but had

been spared; and as proofs they showed the spear and water bottle and informed the king that these would be returned to a messenger whom he might send for them. It was not improper that David should let all know the spirit of magnanimity which had controlled his conduct in this matter. The king at once recognized the situation, and had manhood enough to confess it promptly and to apologize for his own contrary course. David's procedure conquered him.

The results of well-doing are not always so apparent as in this case, because some evil-doers have less character and principle than had Saul, – unappreciative, envious and malicious as he was. But even if our rendering of good for evil fail to bring the acknowledgment of the evil-doer it nevertheless is right, and becomes a blessing to us. It is the evil-doer who loses by his failure to be conquered by our kindness. Although Saul evidently repented, David knew better than to trust himself to his power; and there is a lesson in this for us also, viz., that while generous toward our enemies, returning them good for their evil, we should not be too readily convinced of reformation on their part, but should realize, as David did in Saul's case, that he was under control of an evil spirit, and that therefore any acknowledgment of wrong or profession of reformation should be esteemed a passing emotion rather than a change of disposition until reasonable time should be given for a demonstration of a change of heart.

David's answer to Saul, under all the circumstances, was a model of truthfulness and forbearance. He neither affirmed nor denied Saul's guilt, nor did he solicit the king's favor and mercy. On the other hand he declared his confidence in God – that he would deal with every man according to his righteousness and mercy – and showed that it was his respect for God and his standards that spared the king's life. He declared that as he had shown mercy toward the king he was trusting in the Lord to show mercy toward him, and that in the Lord – not in the king – he trusted for compassion and help, to deliver him from all tribulations. To what extent David appreciated the high standard of his own expression we do not know. Being a prophet, he frequently typified the Christ,

Head and body. His words are certainly more appropriate for the Church than they were for him personally. David was still under the Law and must therefore be judged by the Law, which, as the Apostle declares, proves that there is none righteous, no not one. In our day, however, we may be covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness, so that "the righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled in us who are walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Our heart intentions for righteousness are acceptable to the Lord under the merits of Christ's sacrifice. Our desires and endeavors to be faithful to him and to his Word are accepted instead of perfect works, and hence we may expect that in due time the Lord will accept us in the Beloved, to the glory of his Kingdom. Again David's sentiments are ours and his principles those which appeal to us when he declares that God would have mercy upon him as he had mercy upon Saul. This is the very essence of our Master's

teaching – "If ye forgive not men for trespasses against you neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses" – he who shows no mercy shall obtain no mercy.

As Saul recognized the spirit that was in David as being more righteous than his own, and declared that ultimately David would be prospered greatly, so do the enemies of spiritual Israelites realize the difference between their conduct and that of those who are guided by the Lord's Spirit – although they do not often candidly acknowledge the matter as did Saul. The class represented by Saul is a numerous one. It discerns and acknowledges righteousness but follows unrighteousness: it discerns the good but opposes it with evil. Let us, in respect to faith in God and desire to please him, be like David, whose name signifies Beloved, and who, as already intimated, in many respects was a *type* of the Beloved – Christ, Head and body.

"DO GOOD TO THEM THAT HATE YOU" – R. 4225

1 Samuel 26:17-25

(continuation of article on page 47)

DAVID TESTED – SAUL SPARED

The lesson of today concerns the second sparing of Saul's life by David. The King had come out against David and his band with a large army corps. After the manner of that day the camp had been set with the king's tent in the center, as indicated by the king's spear standing at his doorway. Possibly, however, at that time no tents were used in that country, where there would be no danger of rain and where it is customary for travelers even to wrap themselves in their outer garments and lie down to sleep at any convenient place. David with his scouts was familiar with the entire country and everything that happened; and one of the chiefs of his band suggested to him a daring plot for the overthrow of the enemy, for the rescue of the country from the rule of a partially demented sovereign, and for the rectification of his own wrongs and those of the company of faithful men with him. The proposer of the plan, provided David's consent could be obtained, was to steal into King Saul's camp while his soldiers were

sleeping after the fatigue of the journey, and kill King Saul in his tent, and thus end all their difficulties which centered in him. The plan was one that would be considered proper by nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand soldiers, yet it did not appeal to David.

Taking the proper view of the situation David considered King Saul the divine appointee for the place and position he occupied although the anointing oil had come upon himself as Saul's successor. He properly reasoned that when the Lord's due time should come for his accession to the throne, the Lord could and would bring it about in his own way; and that it would be sin on his part to connive at the king's death on any ground. Not only would he not kill Saul, but he would not sanction another's doing it, not even by a half-hearted protest. On the contrary he would act as Saul's protector, so that the author of the bold scheme might have no opportunity for its execution. David went with him to carry out a different project; namely

to bring away from the camp something that would prove to the king that he had been entirely within David's power, and that at heart David had no desire for Saul's injury, but the contrary.

In execution of this plan David accompanied Abishai quietly, speedily, into Saul's camp. First they took Saul's spear from before his tent; then entering the tent they found near the king's couch a cruse or bottle of drinking water, which they took. The two then went to a hillside opposite Saul's camp and shouted to awaken the soldiers and Saul. David upbraided Saul's captain-general for his carelessness in not properly protecting the king, telling how he had invaded the camp and had taken the king's spear and drinking pitcher, not, however, revealing his identity. Soon the entire camp was awake, and it was the king himself who recognized David's voice and also the facts related – that his spear and cruse were gone. These David offered to return through a messenger, explaining that he had taken them merely to prove that he had no ill will to the king, no wish to do him injury. David did not attribute Saul's enmity to his own evil passions and selfishness, but very politely suggested that if it were of the Lord it might well cease with an offering to the Lord; but if the king were following the counsel of men these must be wicked men, for the effect of their counsel was to alienate a fellow-Israelite not only from his home and land, but also from his God and his religion, by driving him from amongst his people to the heathen. He assured the king that if his blood must be shed he preferred that his death should be in the land of Israel, and that this alone was his reason for not leaving his native land. But he suggested that for the king to be pursuing him as an enemy and thinking of himself and his associates as foes to the empire, was as ridiculous as to think of a hunting expedition against a partridge as being war.

King Saul was honest enough to admit that he was in the wrong, and said, "I have sinned. Return, my son, David; for I will no more do thee harm because my life was precious in thine eyes this day. Behold, I have played the fool and have erred exceedingly."

"DELIVER ME OUT OF ALL TRIBULATION"

David's reply to the king is very noteworthy, and shows us that the center of the man's character and the guidance of his conduct was his reverence for the Lord, his faith. He said, "The Lord shall render to every man [according to] his righteousness and his faithfulness....It was the Lord that delivered thee into mine hand today and I did not put forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed. And behold, as thy life was precious today in mine eyes, so let my life be precious in the eyes of the Lord and let him deliver me out of all tribulation." (Vs. 23, 24) How wonderful this expression! In it there is no appeal to Saul for mercy, no expression of dependence upon him, but an appeal to the Lord, an expression of absolute confidence in the willingness and ability of the Lord to deliver him. Moreover, David seems to have learned a lesson which many dear Christian people have not learned, even though possessed of education and advantages in the school of Christ which David never enjoyed. David's course and language show that he understood that portion of the Lord's prayer which says, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" – have mercy upon us as we have mercy upon others. This is the essence of David's statement, As I have shown mercy to you, King Saul, so may the Lord show mercy to me.

"Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David. Thou shalt both do great things and shalt surely prevail. So David went on his way and Saul returned to his place." But although invited to return, David realized that the word and the heart of Saul were unreliable. It is a lesson that we all need to note, that a wicked heart is an unreliable thing, though for the moment it may seem contrite, gentle and loving. This would not mean that we never again could have confidence in any one who had done evil to us or injury, or had done us harm; but it does mean that while not rendering evil for evil, bitterness for bitterness, malice for malice, slander for slander, we should nevertheless use wisdom and not entrust ourselves too fully to the power of such until we should receive not merely reassuring words but practical evidence

of a change of heart; that the leaven of malice had been purged out.

OTHER LESSONS FOR THE NEW CREATION

David won a great victory over Goliath; but this lesson records a still greater victory over himself. As a natural man, not begotten again of the holy Spirit, he certainly exhibited wonderful self-control. We cannot say that it was his love for Saul that spared the king's life; rather it was his love for the Lord, his respect for divine authority. We can see that unless his devotion to the Lord had been very strong indeed the temptation would have swept him before it. To the average man eight reasons would appeal for a contrary course for killing his enemy. (1) It was legitimate warfare, as between the king and his army and David and his handful. In any army today such a surprise would be considered entirely justifiable. (2) His own self-preservation seemed to demand the king's death; and such preservation is recognized generally by the world as the first law of nature. (3) His desire to escape from his wandering life and to live quietly and peaceably as one of God's chosen nation, appealed strongly for action. (4) The fact of his anointing to be king and Saul's successor, and the prospect of soon coming to the throne would be a powerful reason with many. (5) Revenge for the things he had suffered from Saul would no doubt suggest itself. (6) His patriotism – his love for his country and his nation, and his appreciation of the fact that Saul was rapidly becoming unfit to be king – was another reason for Saul's death. (7) An opportunity for accomplishing the deed thus coming to his hand might have been construed as of divine providence; and a wicked heart and guilty conscience would have so decided. (8) The interests of all of his followers, amongst them those who had risked their lives for his comfort and defence, demanded that the king should be slain; and furthermore doubtless many of them would be unable to comprehend David's motives in sparing the king's life. To such his course would appear foolish almost to madness in letting escape such an opportunity. Thus he might alienate from himself his associates in tribulation.

Surely a weaker man, or a man with less reverence for the Lord and less faith in him,

would have yielded under the pressure of such inducements. The fact that David did not yield testifies loudly as respects his character, his principles.

How is it with us who have had advanced lessons in the school of Christ, and who have the advantage of being begotten of the holy Spirit, and ability therefore to comprehend the deeper things as respects the divine character and will? Would we have been similarly faithful and generous? But surely the Lord would expect still more of us than of David; surely, therefore, we should expect much more of ourselves, who are of the "house of sons" and have much advantage every way over the "house of servants." Has not our Redeemer, our Master, our Teacher, instructed us and given us a new commandment saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you"? Again in the words of our Golden Text we are instructed, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." How are we exhibiting our appreciation of the lessons, of the instructions we have received? How do we daily put in practice this law of love for God – for his instructions, for the brethren, for our enemies?

NO MURDERER IN THE KINGDOM

It may be said that no such test as David had could come to us today as Christians; but that if it did, surely no Christian, no saint, would be a murderer. We reply that it must not be forgotten that we under the new dispensation are under the same law, but with a higher definition or explanation; as for instance the Master's words, when he said, "He that looketh upon a woman to desire her hath committed adultery already in his heart;" and again, "He that is angry with his brother without a cause is in danger of the judgment." "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." (Matt. 5:22,28; 1 John 3:15) Taking this higher definition of the divine law and its operation in our minds, we can readily see that opportunities may offer to every one of us very similar to this which came to David, opportunities to render evil for evil, railing for railing; opportunities to assassinate our neighbor, our brother – to kill his influence, his reputation, etc.

How are we meeting these tests? Are we gaining victories over self, as did David, or are

we being overcome by the wicked one? If the latter course is ours, we are thus proving ourselves not members of the David or Beloved class, but establishing a relationship with the Adversary as being to some extent partakers of his spirit, his disposition, and manifesting this to some extent in wrong doing, murdering our brother. Our Lord indeed seems to imply that in the end of this age there will be special trials coming upon his people along these lines. He declares that brother shall deliver up brother to death, and parents shall deliver up children; and that his faithful ones under such conditions may become hated of all men. To what extent are we conniving with or cooperating with the enemy in such matters? To what extent are we like David of old, so reverent toward the Lord that we dare not touch, harm one of the members of the anointed, nor even an enemy who seeks our life, who does us injury and who says all manner of evil against us falsely, as Saul did against David?

A certain part of the temptation which comes to the Lord's people is well illustrated in this testing of David; viz., the opportunity to favor another's doing an evil work which we ourselves would not wish to do. How easy it would have been for David to say to Abishai, Proceed to do according to your judgment, I will hold aloof; but will say to you privately that I believe you will be doing a noble work for our nation; and it will even be to the king's interest, because he is an enemy even to himself and might the better die. Let us note how different a course David pursued; and let us judge that any other

course would have been displeasing to the heavenly Father and would have meant David's failure in the test.

Similarly with us. Not only are we ourselves not to do unrighteousness, not to speak evil, not to think evil, not to do evil toward friend or foe; but we are to be so heartily in sympathy with this procedure that if another proposes to do an evil in our interest, we would be so in sympathy with the divine will and the law of brotherly love that we would oppose the act with all our energy.

During those seven years of trial David was being disciplined for the kingship. It was a school of adversity, of persecution and testing, in which he learned valuable lessons. Many of his most interesting psalms are credited to this epoch; as for instance, the thirty-fourth and fifty-seventh. Similarly the Lord's anointed of this Gospel Church are now in the wilderness of discipline pursued by our opponents; and with us this is the time to learn valuable lessons preparatory to occupying our kingly position; and this is the time in which our hearts may be drawn out toward the Lord in praise, and thanksgiving, in homage, as was David's. The difference in every respect is in our favor. His were typical and earthly things, ours are the antitypical, the heavenly things, the realities of priceless worth. What manner of persons ought we to be! How thoroughly we should learn these lessons! How great is the prize, the Kingdom we hope to attain! "If we know these things, happy are we if we do them." – John 13:17.

"TOUCH NOT MINE ANOINTED" - R.5672

1 Samuel 26

"Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." – Luke 6:27

OUTLAWED and hunted by King Saul, young David had a varying career. He was soon joined by a class of unfortunates, justly or unjustly ostracized from society. Some of them doubtless were criminals; some were debtors, liable to imprisonment, who fled to preserve liberty, etc. At all events young David soon found himself at the head of a company of about four hundred men, more or less armed, more or less desperate.

It was a great training for him in preparation for his kingdom work later on. It gave him an inside view of the conditions of the ne'er-dowells of society. Himself and his little army doubtless subsisted upon foragings, collecting a toll in the nature of a tax from the farmers. In offset to this toll, or tax, David doubtless defended them from the marauders who frequently came, not only from the Philistines, but also across the Jordan from Moab. Evidently up to

that time no adequate police protection had been provided by King Saul's government. Instead of guarding the interests of his subjects properly, the king was mad with jealousy against his faithful servant David, and from time to time instituted pursuits of him, much after the manner of hunting expeditions for wild beasts in the forest.

Amongst those who came to David were three of his nephews, sons of his sister. These afterward became very prominently identified with King David in all his work. One was Joab, who became the captain of the host, or general. Abishai and Asahel were the two others, men of ability, who afterward became renowned in the kingdom.

DAVID'S NOBILITY OF CHARACTER

For a time David and his company had the cave of Adullam as a stronghold. It is greatly to his credit that he refused to plunge his nation into civil war, as he would have been abundantly able to do. Evidently the majority of the people would have sided with him from the first, and his victory over King Saul might have been easily accomplished. And how easily he might have deluded himself into thinking that such would be God's will! He remembered that the Lord, through the Prophet Samuel, had anointed him to be the king; but he remembered also that it was not for him to take possession, but to abide God's time, when Divine Power would overthrow Saul's kingdom and give the control to himself as Saul's successor as king.

How blessed it would be if all of God's people would thus remember to wait upon the Lord! "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until that Day when I rise up to the prey." The Lord's times and seasons are best for us, and any attempt on our part to push ourselves in advance of the Lord's will would be sure to react unfavorably. It was because David was thus full of faith in God and possessed of the spirit of obedience to Him that he was called a man after God's own heart – not that he was perfect – not that he always did the Lord's will, but that the Lord's will was his real heart's desire; and whenever through weakness of the flesh he took a different course, he was prompt to repent on seeing the mistake, to implore Divine forgiveness and to change his course.

Joseph Parker, commenting, says, "There is no straining of the meaning in discovering in all this picture a type of the position of Jesus Christ in the world. He was despised and rejected of men; He had not where to lay His head; and the people who immediately surrounded Him were characterized by unaccountable expectations, personal inferiority, social degradation, and also by needs of every description; surely it was no valiant or brilliant host that gathered around the Son of God whilst He tenanted this Adullam cave which we call the earth."

While sojourning with his followers at the cave of Adullam, David, in a fit of homesickness, referred to the fine well-water of his Bethlehem home, intimating how much he would relish it if he could have it here. Thereupon three of his faithful followers, one of them his nephew, undertook the perilous journey, unknown to David. It was perilous for two reasons: first, they were outlaws from King Saul; second, Bethlehem was in the hands of the Philistines at the time; but notwithstanding these difficulties these brave men manifested their love and loyalty to their leader, and brought a water-skin from the favored well.

When they arrived and presented it to David, he showed a wonderful loyalty of heart. Not only did he appreciate the great devotion that they had shown, the risk that they had run and the water that they had brought, but he declared it was too precious and gotten at too great a cost to be lightly used. He poured it forth upon the earth in oblation, a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord for the blessings they were enjoying and for the comfort and support of such loyal associates. Surely the greatness of David and his devotion to the Lord and his faith were well manifested again in this transaction! It marks him as more than an average man – a noble man.

TRAINING FOR KINGDOM WORK

By this time David and some of his followers were at a place called Nob, where Ahimelech the priest showed him kindness. King Saul, learning of this through a spy, slaughtered all the priests of that place and all of their lineage, eighty-five persons. This brought to David one of the sons of Ahimelech with the priestly ephod. One of the

prophets had also joined David. All of this helped to make David's position the more secure, and to convince Saul all the more that God's favor was departed from him. Nevertheless Saul continued to fight against God and His Divine Program.

Under these circumstances David's forces gradually increased to the number of six hundred, increasing his experience also and preparing him the better for his coming work. As Bishop Wilberforce remarks, "A mighty training lay in that wild outlaw life for the knowledge and government of men. Nothing but the completest personal supremacy could hold such unruly elements under any species of command; and David, the unwilling head of such a following, learned in mastering them the secret of governing men and of knitting together their discordant hearts into an harmonious unity."

Every now and then King Saul would become feverish for the destruction of David. On one of these occasions, David and his company were occupying a cave amongst the bleak rocks on the west side of the Dead Sea, when King Saul, with probably a good-sized company, pursuing David, entered the same cave for rest and refreshment – for how long we know not. Kitto tells us that some of these caves are quite large enough to shelter fifteen hundred men. Another writer remarks, "A traveler indeed tells us that in one of them, which lies some twenty miles from En-gedi, no fewer than thirty thousand people once hid themselves. These caverns are dark as midnight. One can see outward clearly, but to see four paces inward is impossible."

David and his associates were further back in the cave; and when Saul and his company entered it to rest, the desire of David's band was that Saul at least should be killed, and that thus the trying experiences of them all might be ended and that a just recompense should be made for the evils the king had done and was doing. But David would not consent. Instead, however, he cut a piece from King Saul's robe as a demonstration that the king had been fully within his grasp, and that he could have killed Saul had he chosen – as a demonstration, too, of his loyalty to the king.

Then, when the king and his company had gone a certain distance so that there was no danger, David and his associates showed themselves and protested that the king was not appreciative of the loyalty of his subjects, and that he was seeking their lives when they would not take his. Saul's better nature was aroused; and he wept, saying, "Thou art more righteous than I." And for the time, the hunting of the outlaw David was abandoned with the promise that he would never do so again. Nevertheless, our lesson tells of another similar experience a little later on.

On this occasion David, with his nephew alone, went into Saul's camp and took away from beside his head his spear and his royal water-bottle. Departing with these, they from a distance on an opposite hill, a ravine between, could safely speak to Saul and his host and be heard. David pointed out to the king that he not only was more vigilant than Saul's soldiers, but that he was more loyal to the king's interests and that if a messenger were sent he would return both the spear and the bottle; that he wished no harm, but merely brought these away to further convince the king of his absolute loyalty; and that to pursue him as an enemy was a mistake.

Such an intrusion into the camp of a king today would be impossible because of modern methods of setting guards, pickets, etc., but not so in olden times, nor to any great extent in eastern countries today. We recall that Gideon and his band similarly invaded a camp. We recall Abraham's pursuit of the five kings, and his finding them enwrapped in slumber without proper picketing. A traveler of large experience in the East says, "The Arabs sleep heavily, especially when fatigued. Often when traveling my muleteers and servants have agreed to watch together in places thought to be dangerous; but in every instance I soon found them to be fast asleep, and generally their slumbers were so profound that I could not only walk among them without their waking, but might have taken the very covering from them."

A PROFITABLE LESSON

David's explanation of his unwillingness to take the life of his enemy was that Saul was God's anointed, and that to have made an assault upon him would have been to attack the Almighty's arrangements. This David could not conscientiously do. "Touch not Mine anointed, and do My ministers no harm."

It is well that we of today should have in mind this principle. We are not to think of the kings of today as being the Lord's anointed, however. They are their own anointed. Their kingdoms are kingdoms of this world. On the contrary, Israel was God's special kingdom, which He had accepted under a special covenant arrangement. By Divine authority King Saul had been anointed with special anointing oil, which typified the Holy Spirit. David's anointing with the same oil was not to give him a right to interfere with the Lord's anointing previously accomplished in Saul, but to give him the assurance that he was to be the successor of Saul, not by his removing Saul, but by the Lord's giving the possession in His own time and way.

Although the coins of all the kingdoms of earth represent that their rulers reign and govern as representatives of Messiah's Kingdom, we know that this is a mistake. Messiah's Kingdom has not yet been established. We are still praying, "Thy Kingdom come."

EARTH'S FIVE UNIVERSAL EMPIRES

When God removed His typical kingdom from the earth, the Message to the last king, Zedekiah, was, "This shall not be the same. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more until He comes whose right it is and I will give it unto Him." Thus was intimated an interregnum, as far as Divine rulership in the world was concerned, from Zedekiah's time until Messiah's Millennial Kingdom. Meantime, however, God did give the Gentiles an opportunity to show what kind of kingdom they would be able to establish in the world. From the days of Zedekiah, 606 B.C., to the present time, we have had four distinct kinds of government, and the fourth one modified in a deceptive manner.

These kingdoms were (1) Babylonia, (2) Medo-Persia, (3) Greece, and (4) Rome. The present governments of Europe are the Roman Empire under a new gloss, or pretense. Their laws, methods and ambitions are the same as those of the Romans exactly; but deceiving and being deceived, they style themselves Christian kingdoms; and by common consent the whole world is accustomed to speaking of these as Christendom – that is, Christ's Kingdom.

The Bible pictures this; and in the symbolic image which represented all these governments, the feet were of iron the same as the legs, but were smeared with miry clay to make them look like stone feet – stone being the symbol of God's Kingdom. So these kingdoms of Europe today at war and manifesting anything but a Christian spirit – manifesting anger, malice, envy, hatred and strife, which the Apostle says are "works of the flesh and the Devil" – these are the kingdoms which are claiming to be Messiah's Kingdom, and are represented in the feet of the image, colored like the Stone Kingdom, which is shortly to fill the whole earth. – Daniel 2:31-45.

Messiah's Kingdom is pictured as "a stone cut out of the mountain without hands," without human power; and it, in the days of these kings, represented by the toes of the image, is to smite the image and grind it to powder; and the stone is to become the great Mountain, or Kingdom, of the Lord in all the earth. This smiting, we believe, is near at hand, the present war of Europe being intended of the Lord to weaken the nations and to prepare them for the next stage of trouble, the great earthquake, which in symbol signifies revolution.

Following the revolution quickly, is to come the great symbolic fire which is to destroy the present order of things entirely. This fire represents anarchy, the overthrow of all rule and authority. Thus God is allowing man to prove to himself that his best attainments are but imitations and ultimately lead to disaster. The lesson learned, all mankind will be ready for Messiah's Kingdom, which will then be ushered in and be "the desire of all nations." – Haggai 2:7.

KING SAUL'S LAST BATTLE – R. 5673

1 Samuel 28

“Jehovah is my strength and my Shield; my heart hath trusted in Him, and I am helped.”

Psalms 28:7

TODAY'S STUDY covers an interesting period in the history of Israel and in the experiences of David, the beloved of God. Persecuted and hunted by King Saul, no place was safe for David. The Philistines, desiring him for a friend rather than a foe, gave to David and his followers the city of Ziklag. While residing there, David's conquests were over the Amalekites, and never against the Israelites. He could not willingly battle against the Lord's people, though he felt free to fight against those whom the Lord declared were to be destroyed because their wickedness was come to the full, to the limit of Divine permission.

Meantime, the end of Saul's reign was nearing. A fresh invasion of the Philistines required all the army he could muster, and then he felt very dubious respecting the results. Although as king, in harmony with the Divine regulation, he had ordered all witches, wizards, and all who claimed to communicate with the dead to leave the land of Israel, nevertheless there were some here and there remaining. In his extremity, seeing the Lord would not answer him, King Saul visited the Witch of Endor – said by some to have been the mother of the king's chief general, Abner.

The witch, after being assured that it would not work ill for her, got into communication with the fallen angels, who she supposed, as spiritualists still suppose, were the spirits of the dead. Doubtless she was honest, and thought it was Samuel that was called. But the Bible assures us that “the dead know not anything.” Samuel was sleeping with his fathers, waiting for the resurrection morning, and could give no counsel, could know nothing about matters going on.

The evil spirits, however, in that time as well as now through mediums, personated the dead and, using their superior knowledge, answered as instead of the dead. The questions having been propounded in this case, the answer was that the king would lose the battle the next day, and that himself and his sons would be slain.

We do not know how the fallen angels know so much about the matters of our race, but we do know that it is unwise for any to have any dealings with them; for the Lord has forbidden it. Their sole object is to deceive the people; and, according to St. Paul, through dreams and revelations they have brought into the Church various doctrines of devils (1 Timothy 4:1), which, becoming incorporated in our creeds, like the fly in the ointment, have made them to stink. – Eccl. 10:1.

Happy would it be for people if they realized what the Bible so clearly teaches; namely, that the dead are dead and can give no information of any kind, that they have neither joy nor suffering, but are simply in a state of suspended animation, awaiting the Dawn of the better Day in which Immanuel, Messiah, will bring the knowledge of the glory of God to all as the result of His Ransom-Sacrifice at Calvary. The teaching that the dead are more alive than they were when they were alive is not only senseless, but contradictory to the Lord's Word, and has become the foundation of all the various grievous errors which have distressed the reasoning faculties of Christian people. None would pray for the dead, or say masses for them for their release from Purgatory, if they knew that their dead friends were merely sleeping until the resurrection morning.

But, worst of all, this theory that the dead are alive has become the foundation of serious blasphemies against God, in which all denominations are more or less joined as represented by their creeds. These blasphemies consist in declarations respecting God's character and Plan which would be a disgrace to any devil, and are far from the character and attributes of the God of all grace, the Father of all mercies, from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift. – James 1:17.

(article continues on page 78)

SPIRITISM EXAMINED – R. 754

“Regard not them that have familiar spirits ...to be defiled by them.” – Leviticus 19:31

“There shall not be found among you...a consulter of familiar spirits, or a wizard or a necromancer...because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive out (the nations) from before thee.” – Deuteronomy 18:10-12

The belief that the dead are alive in another sphere or condition of being is not new. It was part of the religion of the ancients, and was the very root of all mythology. This naturally made it appear then as it now does, at least reasonable that these dead persons under such circumstances should be capable of, and did hold intercourse with the living.

This very plausible reasoning, based on a misunderstanding (the facts being made known in the Scriptures only) has given cover and force to the deceptions practised by “demons” under the guise of disembodied spirits of men. They have eagerly availed themselves of this mode of concealing their identity, and have thus perpetuated their sway over the minds and lives of many.

God regards this intimacy or familiarity with spirits as a vile abomination, and threatened those who would engage in it (mediums) and those who would inquire of them with death.

This consulting of spirits was evidently extensively practised by the heathen nations that had inhabited the land of Canaan. Against spiritism, “orthodoxy,” so called, makes a feeble show of opposition, but it is really powerless to cope with it, because the orthodox theories give it encouragement and strength. This is shown by a sermon preached by Rev. W. J. Robinson, of Allegheny, which we quote below from the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, of November 3d, 1884:

MODERN SPIRITUALISM

“An unusually large audience assembled last evening in the First United Presbyterian Church, of Allegheny, to hear an interesting and instructive sermon on “Modern Spiritualism,” as delivered by the pastor of that congregation, Rev. W. J. Robinson, D.D. He had chosen for his text the words: “They have Moses and the Prophets. If they hear not them neither will they believe, though one rose from the dead.” In his

introductory remarks he said he did not see the necessity of any soul returning from the spirit land, as they could tell no more about it than had already been revealed by the word of God as set forth in the Scriptures. He cited the declaration of King David in regard to Absalom’s spirit returning. David said, “I will go to my son; he shall not return,” and again, Job had emphatically declared, “the dead shall not come until the heavens are no more.” There are but three instances of the return of souls from spirit-land in all the records contained in the Bible. When Jesus took three of his disciples into the mount, they fell asleep, and, upon awakening, saw Moses and Elijah was one of these; Samuel’s apparition to King Saul forewarning him of his death on the morrow, and the coming reign of David was another, and the returning of Dives, the rich man who persecuted Lazarus and turned a deaf ear to his requests for the necessities of life, was the remaining one.

As to Samuel’s coming, there was no need of it, as Saul knew what was inevitably to happen to him for his wilfulness and disobedience of the commands of God; but it is evident that Samuel came to convince men of the uselessness of such visitations, as he could tell only what was already known. Moses had been dead several hundred years. Elijah had departed for the other world 150 years previous. Dives’ message was concerning that hell of torment of which all had heard. He told them that repentance on earth alone would save a soul, and that such a thing was impossible in hell. And that was also familiar to every one who had heard the Scriptures read or explained. All these came with messages and only reported facts which God is constantly keeping before the eyes and in the minds of men. But how different were these Bible revelations to those spoken of to-day. Only one in all the ages appeared in response to a call. And then the manner of their coming. Those of the olden

times were voices which spoke messages of truth, while those of to-day, so called, are rappings, which would indicate anything else as well as a return from Spirit Land. The Bible-told messages were the truth, while those of modern times speak a mummary that whatever else the spirits had learned they had lost their former senses. They speak drivelling nonsense. The difference lies between truth and falsehood and light and darkness. The Bible contains all men need to know; there is found the testimony of the dead. "And now, while the dead did not come back to us, we are rapidly going to them. Study this world and your Bibles, and prepare for the world to come," were the concluding words of his sermon.

This may be regarded as the expression of "Orthodoxy" as to the condition and abode of the dead.

"Only one (says Dr. Robinson) in all the ages responded to a call," but if one why not more? And this one was God's faithful servant Samuel. If this were true, then God's righteous servant was under the dominion of a wicked medium, and all God's servants would undoubtedly be subject to the same kind of power, and if the great God was powerless to protect Samuel from this abomination which was so abhorrent to his will, how could any of his children expect protection from the powers of darkness? We cannot find words to express our indignation and abhorrence of such blind and misguided views of God and his word. Is it any wonder that Spiritism is spreading, when teachers in high places misquote and flatly contradict the word of God? God's word declares, "The dead know not anything;...there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:5,10). "In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks" (Psa. 6:5). Either so-called Orthodoxy and Romanism and Spiritualism are right, and that the characteristics and sensibilities of life are possessed by the dead, and God's word is a lie, or else God's word is true, "the dead know not anything," and these man-made systems teach falsely. There can be no middle course. We must reject one or the other.

If Dr. Robinson had quoted Job correctly he would have demolished his own argument. Job says (Chap. 14:10-12), "Man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost ("gasps out – expires" – Young), and where is he?... as the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down, and RISETH NOT: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

Could anything be stated more plainly than this? It shows the absence of everything that characterizes life – wisdom, knowledge, work, device, remembrance, or thanksgiving. And none are exempt from its penalty. "In Adam all die." No man can deliver his soul (being) from its power. He is cut off from the "land of the living" – all life, for the time being, shown by the words "man dieth...and where is he?" implying that he no longer exists – except as he has a place in God's purpose to be realized through a **resurrection**.

The penalty or wages of sin is death – extinction of life. There is no escaping it, nor is there any possibility of rising out of it: this is proven beyond peradventure by these Scriptures, and is made very emphatic by the words – "riseth not," and "shall not awake," but that there will be an awakening or resurrection of the dead at an **appointed time** is apparent from the completion of the sentence – till the heavens be no more; i.e., till the new dispensation is introduced; the present referred to by Jesus (Matt. 24:29), and by Paul, (Heb. 12:26,27), being shaken and removed. As no exception to these statements of God's word is possible, it should be evident that the possibility of communication with dead men is a delusion. The deception practiced in Spiritism is the more gross, because, not men but demons are communicated with. There is abundant proof of this furnished by God's word. Nevertheless "orthodoxy" is powerless to cope with this abomination because of her adherence to false theories as to death and her wilful ignorance of the testimony of God's word to the contrary.

The mediums of modern spiritism are identified with those who anciently had "familiar spirits," who under the names of Witch and Wizard then claimed power to bring up and communicate with the dead as they now do. This is

shown by the reply of the Witch of Endor to Saul's request: "Whom shall I bring up unto thee"? and Saul answered, "Bring up Samuel" (1 Samuel 28:11). That which she did bring up assumed to be Samuel as do the same spirits now assume to be dead friends of living men. If this spirit told the truth as claimed by Dr. Robinson, and the "orthodox" theory be right, wicked Saul would next day be with righteous Samuel.

If, however, this consulting of familiar spirits was contrary to God's express command – "Regard not them that have familiar (or intimacy with) spirits...to be defiled by them" (Lev. 19:31) how could God's prophet who had denounced this as wickedness, be a party to it now that he was dead? And whether called up willingly or unwillingly, he would in either case have become subject to the powers of darkness in this intimacy with one that was deemed guilty of death, because of this kindness.

If it was not Samuel, then who was it? We answer, It was an evil, lying spirit who personated Samuel.

These wicked spirits eagerly avail themselves of every opportunity to bring mankind under their foul sway, deceiving those who commune with them as to their identity, notwithstanding God's command: "There shall not be found among you...a consulter of familiar spirits, or a wizard or necromancer, for all these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive out (the nations formerly inhabiting Canaan – whose sin Israel's king imitated) from before thee" (Deut. 18:10). And "the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits and after wizards...I will set my face against that soul and cut him off from among his people" (Lev. 20:6). Of these commands Saul was well aware: he knew that he was in the most deliberate and wilful manner acting contrary to these commands in consulting the Witch of Endor; and God visited upon him the threatened punishment for this transgression. "Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the word of the Lord which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it" (1 Chron. 10:13). This settles the

point at issue. Saul sinned in asking counsel contrary to God's command of one that had intimacy with a spirit to inquire of it. Therefore it is plain, not only that it was not the Lord's prophet that was consulted, but that it was an evil spirit – the same in kind as those cast out by Jesus and his disciples. That they were of this same class of fallen spiritual beings, is conclusively proven by the similarity of description in the case of the "damsel possessed with a spirit of divination... which brought her master great gain," by soothsaying, which so grieved Paul that he "turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her, and he came out the same hour" (Acts 16:16). This corresponds with the account in 1 Sam. 28, "Saul said to her, I pray thee divine (make known) unto me by the familiar spirit." The divination practiced by the Witch of Endor was of the same nature and through the same agency used by this damsel out of whom Paul cast the unclean spirit or demon.

Nor does the **appearance** of Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration, quoted by Dr. Robinson, support the theory that dead men live, for Jesus expressly declared to these disciples that this was a "**vision**," and charges them to tell no man of this foreshadowing of the kingdom of Christ until after he was risen (Matt. 17:9).

All the parables recorded in the New Testament receive a non-literal interpretation by orthodoxy, except that of Dives and Lazarus, which, contrary to this generally accepted principle, they literalize: this involves some absurdities, such as Lazarus carried by angels into Abraham's bosom; and the great gulf fixed so that they which would pass hence (from heaven) to you (in an orthodox hell) cannot, &c. They commonly add to this literalism that "they who enter hell return no more: they who sink there, sink forever." Dr. Robinson, however, adds a new phase to it which reaches the climax of absurdity and inconsistency in trying to make it appear that Dives returned from spiritland (an orthodox hell) with a message. For a consistent elucidation of this parable, see "Food for Thinking Christians," page 154.

DID KING SAUL SPEAK WITH THE DEAD? – HG 727

The Bible story of King Saul's "seance" with the witch of Endor, a necromancer, or spirit-medium, as related in 1Sam. 28:7-20, is an illustration of what is claimed to be performed today. Although the Law with reference to these mediums was very strict and the punishment death, there were some who were willing to risk their lives because of the gains which could thus be obtained from people who believed that they were obtaining supernatural information from their dead friends—just as with spirit-mediums today. King Saul was well aware that there were many of these mediums residing in Israel contrary to the Divine injunction and his own law, and his servants apparently had no difficulty in finding the one at Endor. Saul disguised himself for the interview, but no doubt the crafty woman knew well the stately form of Saul—head and shoulders taller than any other man in Israel. (1Sam. 9:2) Hence her particularity to secure a promise and oath from his own lips that no harm should befall her for the service.

The methods used by the evil spirits through the medium at Endor were similar to those in use today. They caused to pass before the medium's mental vision the familiar likeness of the aged Prophet Samuel, wearing, as was his custom, a long mantle. When she described the mental (or "astral") picture, Saul recognized it at once as a description, of Samuel; but Saul himself saw nothing—he "perceived," from the description, that it was Samuel. Easily convinced, as people under such circumstances usually are, Saul did not stop to question how it could be that Samuel looked as old and as stooped as he looked in the present life, if he was now a spirit being and far better off; nor did he inquire why he wore the same old mantle in the spirit world that he had worn when he knew him as an earthly being.

Saul had been forsaken by the Lord and was now easily deceived by these "Lying spirits," who personated the Prophet and spoke to Saul in his name, through their "medium," the witch, necromancer, Spiritist.

The fallen spirits are not only well informed in respect to all the affairs of earth, but they are adepts in deceit. In answering Saul, the manner and style, and as nearly as could be judged the sentiments of the dead Prophet were assumed—the better to deceive. (Thus these "Lying spirits" always seek to counterfeit the face, manner and disposition of the dead) The response was, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" This answer corresponds to the Jewish belief—that when a person died he became unconscious in "sheol," the grave, waiting for a resurrection. (Job 14:12-15, 21; Psalm 90:3; Eccl. 9:5, 6) Hence the representation is that Samuel was brought up from grave, and not down from heaven, and that his rest or peaceful "sleep" was disturbed or "disquieted." Psalm 13:3; Job 14:12; Psalm 90:5; John 11:11-14 Saul was easily deceived into thinking that the Prophet Samuel who had refused to visit him to have any further converse with him while alive, had been forced to commune with him, by the wonderful powers of the witch. (See 1Sam. 15:26, 35) Saul's own testimony was, "God is departed from me and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams." 1Sam. 28:6, 15

WOULD SAMUEL OBEY WITCH RATHER THAN GOD?

Any rightly informed person will readily see the absurdity of supposing that Samuel would hold any conference whatever with Saul under the circumstance.

(1) Samuel (when living) was aware that God had forsaken Saul, and hence Samuel had no right to speak to him and no right to give him any information which the Lord was unwilling to give him. And Samuel would not do so.

(2) It is thoroughly absurd to suppose that a spirit-medium under condemnation of the Lord and prohibited of the right of residence in the land of Israel could have the power at the instance of a wicked king, whom God had deserted, to "disquiet" Samuel and to bring him "up" out of sheol. Was Samuel down in the earth, or was he afar off in Heaven? and had the

witch the power in either case to command him to present himself before King Saul to answer his question? Or is it reasonable to suppose that any spirit-mediums have the power to “disquiet” and “bring up” or in any other manner cause the dead to appear to answer the speculative questions of the living?

The “familiar spirit” of the witch, personating Samuel, foretold nothing which Saul himself did not anticipate. Saul knew that God’s word had been passed that the kingdom should be taken from him and his family, and he had sought the witch because of his fear of the Philistine hosts in battle array for the morrow. He expected no mercy for himself and his family, God having told him that David would be his successor. He even anticipated, therefore, the statement which was the only feature connected with this story that indicates in any degree a supernatural knowledge, *Liz.*, “Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me; the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.” The well informed demons knew far better than did Saul the strength of the Philistines’ position and army, and the weakness of Saul’s position and army, and that he himself was already panic-stricken and making this inquiry of the witch-medium because he was distracted at the situation. Any one familiar with the warfare of that time would know

(1) that one day’s battle would probably settle the question; and

(2) that the death of the king and his household would be the only logical result. Nevertheless, the “familiar spirit” erred, for two of Saul’s sons escaped and lived for years. It is even denied by scholars that the battle and the death of Saul occurred for several days after the visit to the witch.

It is not surprising that Satan and the fallen angels, his consorts in evil, should know considerably more than do men, concerning many of life’s affairs. We must remember that by nature they are a higher, more intelligent order than men; for man was made “a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:5); besides, let us remember their thousands of years of experience, unimpaired by decay and death, as compared with man’s “few years and full of trouble,” soon cut off in death. Can we wonder that mankind cannot cope with the cunning of these “wicked spirits,” and that our only safety lies in the Divine provision that each one who so wds may refuse to have any communication with these demons? The Word of the Lord is, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (Jas. 4:7) “Be sober, be vigilant; because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring [angry] lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith.” 1 Pet. 5:8, 9

“PERILOUS TIMES SHALL COME” – R.4976 (excerpt)

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” – 2 Timothy 3:1

WE ARE to distinguish clearly between the restraint of the fallen angels “in chains of darkness,” and the binding of Satan, who is the Prince of demons. The binding of Satan, as the Scriptures set forth, is at the second coming of Christ: “And He laid hold of the dragon, that Old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:2) And during that thousand years Christ and His saints shall reign as Kings and Priests unto God. The restraint of the inferior angels is mentioned by St. Peter and St. Jude. Speaking of these fallen angels, St. Peter says, “Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering

of God waited in the days of Noah.” – 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; 1 Pet. 3:20.

As we examine the Scriptures we see that there were angels of light who became disobedient, who left their primary estate as angels, and sought to become men, who assumed the human form. We find the record of them in Gen. 6:1-4: “The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.” There were children born to them. “And there were giants in the earth in those days,... mighty men which were of old, men of renown.” Then the whole world was filled with wickedness more than during the

sixteen hundred preceding years. And God swept away all mankind except those saved in the ark.

SPIRITS SEEK TO MAKE VOID THE WORD OF GOD

The Apostle proceeds to show what was done with the angels who fell. They have less power, less privilege, than formerly. Then, they had the power of materialization, and could not only eat and drink, but perform all the functions of men. After the flood they were restrained in chains of darkness; that is to say, they were restrained from materialization and from working their power in light, as they had previously done. However, they were still working, as when

Saul sought the witch of Endor to inquire as to how the battle would go. – I Sam. 28:7-20.

The Prophet Isaiah says we should not have anything to do with those “who peep and mutter” and who pretend to have communication with the dead. (Isa. 8:19) But these fallen angels seek to make void the Word of God; hence the various personations of the dead, as in the case of Samuel to Saul. It is not to be supposed that Samuel would come and give the information which God had said that Saul should not have. The same principle applies down to our day. The fallen angels have not been able to do their work except as they have gotten possession of **human bodies** by getting possession of their **wills**.

WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT SPIRITISM? – R. 2171 (excerpt)

WHO ARE THESE SPIRITS WHICH PERSONATE THE DEAD?

We have in the Scriptures most abundant and most positive testimony that no communication could come from the dead until after the resurrection. Furthermore, we have positive Scripture testimony that not only some, but all, of these spirits are “evil spirits,” “lying spirits,” “seducing spirits.” The Scriptures forbid that humanity should seek to these for information, and clearly inform us that these demons or “devils” are “those angels which kept not their first estate,” – some of the angels to whom was committed the supervision of mankind in the period before the flood, for the purpose of permitting them to endeavor to *lift mankind out of sin*; that by their failure all might learn that there is but one effectual remedy for sin; viz., that provided in Christ. These angels, instead of uplifting humanity, were themselves enticed into sin, and misused the power granted them, of materializing in human form, to start another race. (Gen. 6:1-6) Their illicit progeny, was blotted out with the flood, and themselves were thereafter restrained from the liberty of assuming physical bodies, as well as isolated from the holy angels who had kept their angelic estate inviolate.

The Apostle Peter (2 Pet. 2:4) mentions these, saying, “God spared not the angels that

sinned, but cast them down to hell [Tartarus] and delivered them into *chains of darkness*, to be reserved unto judgment.” Jude (6) also mentions this class, saying, “The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation [proper condition] he hath reserved in everlasting chains – *under darkness* unto the judgment of the great day.” Notice three points with reference to these evil angels.

(1) They are imprisoned in *Tartarus*, restrained, but not destroyed. *Tartarus* is nowhere else rendered “hell,” but in this one passage. It does not signify the grave, neither does it signify the Second Death, symbolized by the “lake of fire and brimstone;” but it does signify the air or atmosphere of earth.

(2) They have some liberties in this imprisoned condition, yet they are chained, or restrained, in one respect – they are not permitted to exercise their powers in the light being “under chains of *darkness*.”

(3) This restriction was to continue *until* “the judgment of the great day,” the great Millennial Day – in all a period of over 4000 years. As we are now in the dawning of the Millennial Day – “the great day” – it is possible that this should be understood to mean that some of these limitations as to “*darkness*” may ere long be removed, gradually. If so, if the “chains of

darkness” should be released, it would permit these evil spirits to work deceptions or “lying wonders” in the daylight (as they are now attempting to do) to the delusion of mankind more than ever has been known since the flood.

These fallen angels, or demons, are not to be confounded with Satan the prince of demons, or devils, whose evil career began long before – who was the first, and for a long time the only, enemy of the divine government; who, having been created an angel of a superior order, sought to establish himself as a rival to the Almighty, and to deceive and ensnare Adam and his race to be his servants; and to a large extent, for a time at least, he has succeeded, as all know. As “the prince of this world,” who “now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience,” he has indeed a very multitudinous host of deceived and enslaved followers. Naturally he would appreciate the deflection of the “angels who kept not their first estate,” and who were restrained at the time of the flood; and hence he is spoken of as their chief, “the prince of devils,” and no doubt as a superior order of being he exercises some degree of control over the others.

These fallen angels, “demons,” have probably very little to interest them amongst themselves; – evil beings apparently always prefer to make game of the purer, and apparently take pleasure in corrupting and degrading them. The history of these demons, as given in the Scriptures, would seem to show that the evil concupiscence which led to their fall, before the flood, still continues with them. They still have their principal pleasure in that which is lascivious and degrading; and the general tendency of their influence upon mankind is toward working mischief against the well-disposed, and the debauchery of those over whom they gain absolute control.

We are well aware that many Christian people have reached the conclusion that the Lord and the apostles were deceived, when they attributed to the works of demons conduct that is now considered *human propensity* and mental unbalance and fits. But all should admit that if our Lord was in error on this subject, his teachings would be an unsafe guide upon any subject.

Notice the *personality* and intelligence attributed to these demons in the following Scriptures – “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; devils also *believe* and *tremble*.” (Jas. 2:19) Do human propensities “believe and tremble?” The demons said to our Lord, “Thou art Christ, the Son of God! And he, rebuking *them*, suffered *them* not to speak [further], for *they knew* that he was Christ.” (Luke 4:41) Another said, “Jesus *I know* and Paul *I know*, but who are ye?” (Acts 19:15) The young woman from whom Paul cast out the *spirit* of soothsaying and divination (Acts 16:16-19) is a good illustration. Can it be claimed by any that the Apostle deprived the woman of any proper talent or power? Must it not be confessed to have been a *spirit* which possessed and used her body? – an evil spirit unfit to be tolerated there?

Many of those who claim that the demons of the Scriptures were the spirits of wicked men and women who died, and that these are the “lying spirits” acknowledged by Spiritists, have still another difficulty; – for generally they claim that the spirits of wicked dead go to hell-torments, as they wrongly interpret *sheol* and *hades* to mean. If so, how could they be so much at liberty?

“Witchcraft,” “Necromancy,” the “Black art,” “Sorcery,” etc., are supposed by many to be wholly delusions. But when we find that they had a firm hold upon the Egyptians, and that God made special provision against them with Israel, we are satisfied that he made no such restrictions either against that which is good, or against that which had no existence whatever. The instruction to Israel was very explicit: they should not have any communion nor make any inquiries through necromancers (those who claimed to speak for the dead; *i.e.*, spirit-mediums); nor with any wizard or witch; nor with any who had occult powers, charms; nor with those who work miracles by means of sorcery and incantation. – Read carefully all of the following Scriptures, – Exod. 22:18; Deut. 18:9-12; Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; 2 Kings 21:2, 6, 9, 11; 1 Chron. 10:13,14; Acts 16:16-18; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; Isa. 8:19, 20; 19:3.

The Bible story of King Saul's "seance" with the witch of Endor, a necromancer or spirit-medium, as related in 1 Sam. 28:7-20, is an illustration of what is claimed to be performed to-day. Altho the law with reference to these mediums was very strict and the punishment death, there were some who were willing to risk their lives because of the gains which could thus be obtained from people who believed that they were obtaining supernatural information from their dead friends – just as with spirit-mediums to-day. King Saul was well aware that there were numerous of these mediums residing in Israel contrary to the divine injunction and his own law, and his servants apparently had no difficulty in finding the one at Endor. Saul disguised himself for the interview, but no doubt the crafty woman knew well the stately form of Saul – *head and shoulders taller* than any other man in Israel. (1 Sam. 9:2) Hence her particularity to secure a promise and oath from his own lips that no harm should befall her for the service.

The methods used by the evil spirits through the medium at Endor were similar to those in use to-day. They caused to pass before the medium's mental vision the familiar likeness of the aged prophet, Samuel, wearing as was his custom, a long mantle. When she described the mental (or "astral?") picture, Saul recognized it at once as a description of Samuel; but Saul himself saw nothing – he "perceived," from the description, that it was Samuel. Easily convinced, as people under such circumstances usually are, Saul did not stop to question how it could be that Samuel looked as old and as stooped as he looked in the present life, if he was now a spirit being and far better off; nor did he inquire why he wore the same old mantle in the spirit world that he had worn when he knew him as an earthly being. Saul had been forsaken by the Lord and was now easily deceived by these "lying spirits," who personated the prophet and spoke to Saul in his name, through their "medium," the witch, necromancer, Spiritist.

The fallen spirits are not only well-informed in respect to all the affairs of earth, but they are adepts in deceit. In answering Saul, the manner and style, and as nearly as could be judged the sentiments of the dead prophet were assumed –

the better to deceive. (Thus these "lying spirits" always seek to counterfeit the face manner and disposition of the dead) The response was, "Why hast thou *disquieted* me to bring me *up*?" This answer corresponds to the Jewish belief – that when a person died he became unconscious in "*sheol*," the grave, waiting for a resurrection. (Job 14:12-15,21; Psa. 90:3; Eccl. 9:5,6) Hence the representation is that Samuel was brought *up* from the grave, and not *down* from heaven; and that his *rest* or peaceful "sleep" was disturbed or "disquieted." – Psa. 13:3; Job 14:12; Psa. 90:5; John 11:11,14.

Saul was easily deceived into thinking that the Prophet Samuel who had refused to visit him to have any further converse with him while alive, had been *forced* to commune with him, by the wonderful powers of the witch. (See 1 Sam. 15:26,35) Saul's own testimony was, "God is departed from me and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams." – 1 Sam. 28:6,15.

Any rightly informed person will readily see the absurdity of supposing that Samuel would hold any conference whatever with Saul under the circumstance. (1) Samuel (when living) was aware that God had forsaken Saul, and hence Samuel had no right to speak to him and no right to give him any information which the Lord was unwilling to give him. And Samuel would not do so. (2) It is thoroughly absurd to suppose that a spirit-medium under condemnation of the Lord and prohibited of the right of residence in the land of Israel could have the power at the instance of a wicked king, whom God had deserted, to "disquiet" Samuel and to bring him "*up*" out of *sheol*. Was Samuel down *in* the earth, or was he afar off in heaven? and had the witch the power in either case to command him to present himself before King Saul to answer his question? Or is it reasonable to suppose that any spirit-mediums have the power to "disquiet" and "bring up" or in any other manner cause the dead to appear to answer the speculative questions of the living?

The "familiar spirit" of the witch, personating Samuel, foretold nothing which Saul himself did not anticipate. Saul knew that God's word had been passed that the kingdom should be

taken from him and his family, and he had sought the witch because of his fear of the Philistine hosts in battle array for the morrow. He expected no mercy for himself and his family, God having told him that David would be his successor. He even anticipated, therefore, the statement which was the only feature connected with this story that indicates in any degree a supernatural knowledge; viz., "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hands of the Philistines." The well-informed demons knew full better than did Saul the strength of the Philistines' position and army, and the weakness of Saul's position and army, and that he himself was already panic stricken and making this inquiry of the witch-medium because he was distracted at the situation. Any one familiar with the warfare of that time would know (1) that one day's battle would probably settle the question; and (2) that the death of the king and his household would be the only logical result. Nevertheless, the "familiar spirit" erred, for two of Saul's sons escaped and lived for years. It is even denied by scholars that the battle and the death of Saul occurred for several days after the visit to the witch.

It is not surprising that Satan and the fallen angels, his consorts in evil, should know



Saul and the Witch of Endor

considerably more than do men, concerning many of life's affairs. We must remember that by nature they are a higher, more intelligent order than men; for man was made "a little lower than the angels" (Psa. 8:5); besides, let us remember their thousands of years of experience, unimpaired by decay and death, as compared with man's "few years and full of trouble," soon cut off in death. Can we wonder that mankind cannot cope with the cunning of these "wicked spirits," and that our only safety lies in the divine provision that each one who so *wills* may refuse to have any communication with these demons? The Word of the Lord is, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (Jas. 4:7) "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring [angry] lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: *whom resist*, steadfast in the faith." – 1 Pet. 5:8,9.

But while able to tell things *past* and *present*, these evil intelligences are quite unable to do more than guess at the *future*. Yet these guesses are often so skillfully stated as to satisfy the inquirer and yet appear true, if the result should be the opposite of his expectation. Thus the oracle of Delphi having been consulted by Croesus demonstrated to him a super-human knowledge of *present* things, and when he, having thus gained confidence in it, inquired through its *mediums*, "whether he should lead an army against the Persians," the answer as recorded by Herodotus the historian was, "By crossing the Halys, *Croesus will destroy a mighty power!*" Relying upon this, Croesus attacked the Persians and was defeated. His *own mighty power* was destroyed! History is full of such evidences that the demons know not the future; and God's Word challenges all such, saying-

"Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth and *show us what shall happen*. Let them show the former things [things *before* or *to come* what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. *Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.*" – Isa. 41:21,23.

But *where* was Samuel the prophet, if Saul would be *with him* the day following? Clearly the meeting place would not be heaven, for wicked Saul was surely unfit to enter there (John 3:5); nor could the meeting be in a place of flames and torment, for surely Samuel was not in such a place. No; the “familiar spirit” spoke to Saul from the standpoint of the general faith of that time, taught by Samuel and all the patriarchs and prophets, – namely, that all who die, good and bad alike, go to *sheol*, the grave, the state of death, the sleep from which naught can awaken except the resurrection power of Michael, the arch-angel (Dan. 12:1,2); – except it were claimed that the witch’s “familiar spirit” could awaken the dead in advance, – but this, as we are showing, was a deception, a fraud, the “lying spirit” personating the dead and answering for Samuel.

Of this passage Charles Wesley wrote –

*“What do these solemn words portend?
A gleam of hope when life shall end? –
Thou and thy sons shall surely be
To-morrow in repose with me: –
Not in a state of hellish pain,
If Saul with Samuel remain;
Not in a state of damned despair,
If loving Jonathan be there.*

SPIRITUALISM – R. 196 (excerpt)

Take a concordance and see how much God says against wizards, witches, and “they that have familiar spirits” – *mediums* of the devil for communicating with mankind. It was the claim of these *mediums* of “familiar spirits” that they held communication with the dead and received their information from them. In this claim they contradicted the plain statements of God’s word, which assure us that the *dead could not* furnish any information. (See Job 14:10-21; Eccl. 9:10)

But this was merely another way in which Satan sought to continue the lie imposed upon Eve in Eden. [“He is a *liar* from the beginning” said Jesus.] God had said that if disobedient they should *die*; Satan contradicted this statement; claimed that man had naturally,

One remarkable thing in connection with the manifestations of these fallen angels, or “demons,” is that people of ordinary common sense are so easily deceived by them and accept such flimsy proofs respecting the dead, which they would not accept respecting the living. The inquirer will accept through the medium a description which fits to the individual and his manner, clothing and appearance years before, and will hold sacred a message purporting to come from him, whereas the same individual would be more on guard against deception by a living impostor, and his message through a servant.

The mention in the Scriptures of these necromancers, witches and mediums, leads us to infer that through mediums they were for centuries seeking fellowship with the Israelites. But it is apparently the custom to change the manner of manifestation from time to time: just as witchcraft flourished for a time in New England and Ohio, and throughout Europe, and then died out and has been succeeded by Spiritism, whose tipping and rapping manifestations are gradually giving way to others, clairaudience and materialization being now the chief endeavors, the latter, being very difficult and the conditions often unfavorable, are often accompanied by mediumistic assistance and fraud.

immortality and could not die, and that God was a liar. Ever since, he seeks to uphold the statement, “Ye shall *not* surely die.” Full well does he know that if people realized that it was the “spirits of demons” who spoke to them through the mediums they would shun them; hence, the claim that it is dead people (not *dead*, but more *alive* than ever) who communicate the information.

An illustration of this sort, is given in 1 Sam. 28. Saul, King of Israel, had become wicked, and God would no longer communicate with him through the Prophets. He was engaged in a war with the Philistines, and a great battle was about to be fought. He wanted council and desired to know what would be the outcome. Since the Lord would not answer him, he sought out

one of the condemned and forbidden class, a *medium*, a woman who had a familiar spirit – the witch at Endor.

All are familiar with the story: (1 Sam. 28:3-20) how that the medium pretends ignorance as to her visitor, knows what Saul desires, gives a description of Samuel, etc. Then follows an account of the coming defeat of Saul's army and the death of himself and his sons. The fact that these things occurred just as foretold by the *medium*, has been thought by some, to be a proof that Samuel really furnished the information. But, Satan could foretell those things as well as Samuel could were he alive. Not that Satan is a prophet, nor that God reveals coming things to him, but he is a student of God's word and a *believer* of it. "Devils also believe and tremble."

(Jas. 2:19) The defeat of Saul and accession of David to the throne had been foretold by the Prophet and both Saul and Satan knew it, and Satan had learned that every word of God's is *sure*.

Besides we should not forget the words of the apostle that "He that hath the power of death is the devil." (Heb. 2:14) Since he is the executor of the death penalty, and must have the permission to execute from God, (Job 1:12) is it strange that he knew that he was to have power over the lives of Saul, his sons and many others on the next day? No, it is the *reasonable* inference. Certainly we should not for a moment suppose that God (or Samuel if he could) would recognize, or use any means of communication which He had prohibited on pain of death and condemned as wicked. Read 1 Chron. 10:13.

The Sure Mercies of David

Psalms 89 - NLT

- ³ I have made a covenant with David, my chosen servant.
I have sworn this oath to him;
- ²⁰ I have found my servant David.
I have anointed him with my holy oil.
- ²¹ I will steady him with my hand ..
I will make him strong
- ²⁷ I will make him my firstborn son,
the mightiest king on earth.
- ²⁸ I will love him and be kind to him forever;
my covenant with him will never end.
- ³³ I will never stop loving him
nor fail to keep my promise to him.
- ³⁴ No, I will not break my covenant;
I will not take back a single word I said.
- ³⁵ I have sworn an oath to David,
and in my holiness I cannot lie;
- ³⁶ His dynasty (seed) will go on forever;
his kingdom will endure as the sun.

DAVID'S VICTORIES – R. 2015

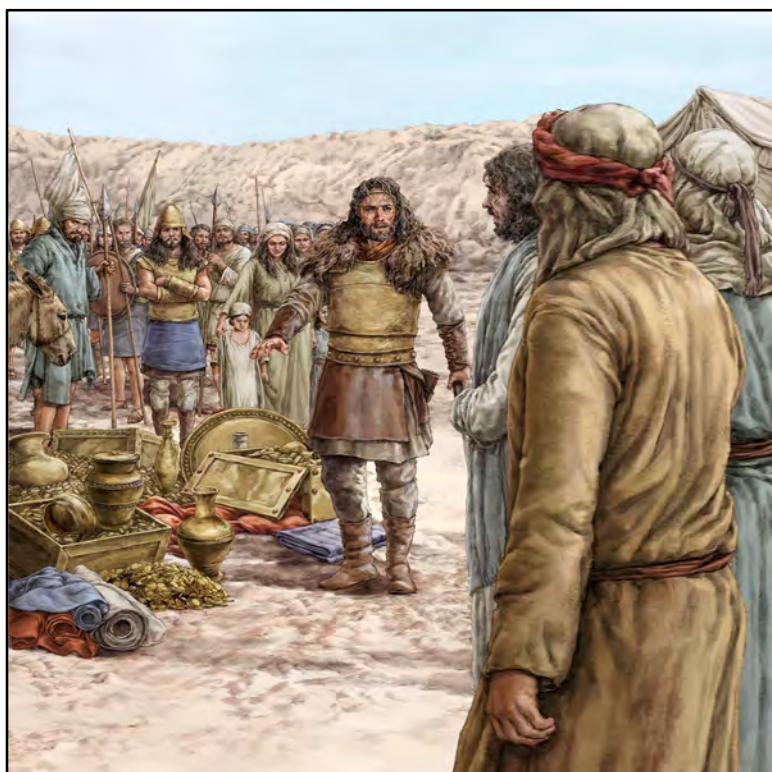
1 Samuel 30:21-25

(continuation of article on page 114)

Another instance of David's lively sense of justice is that recorded in 1 Sam. 30:21-25, where David made an ordinance for Israel to the effect that those who in time of battle remained behind on account of physical weakness, or to guard the stuff, or the home, should share equally the spoils with those who went to the battle. The account is very explicit on this point. We read, "Then answered all the wicked men, the men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us;... for who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day."

This ordinance in Israel is the statement of a principle which has many applications. The wife, for instance, who cares for the home, should have an equal share with the husband, who, being relieved from such cares, has his time free to earn the money. They are rightfully "*heirs together* of the *grace of life*," as well as of the burdens of life.

The golden text of this lesson suggests the proper frame of mind for all the Lord's people who are now fighting the good fight of faith. Though the situation may look dark and dangerous, and though foes may multiply and perplexities increase, it bids them fear not – "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" David said, "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." – Psa. 27:1-14



David with the Spoils of Battle

GREAT OPPORTUNITIES MISUSED – R. 3240

1 Samuel 31:1-13

“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

Proverbs 14:12

KING SAUL’S life as a whole was a blunder and a failure. It opened with grand possibilities and opportunities under divine favor and the love and adoration of his countrymen. Not only his personal qualities were in many respects estimable, but even his physical proportions – head and shoulders above his fellows, goodly to look upon, and attractive to his people – had added to his influence. Yet he failed. A valuable lesson may be drawn by each of us from the causes of his failure. A contemporary sums up his case thus:

“Saul had many noble and lovable qualities, such as bravery, promptitude – in his earlier days modesty and generosity. All these he had by nature, but there is no sign that he ever sought to cultivate his moral character or to win any grace that did not come naturally to him; nor is there any reason to suppose that religion had ever had any strong hold upon him. From the baleful influence of his selfishness, as before some hot poison-wind, all the flowers of good dispositions were burned up, and the bad stimulated to growth. His earlier virtues disappeared and passed into their opposites. Modesty became arrogance, and a long course of indulgence in self-will developed cruelty, gloomy suspicion and passionate anger, and left him the victim and slave of his own causeless hate. He who rebels against God mars his own character. The miserable last years of Saul, haunted and hunted as by a demon by his own indulged and swollen rebellion and unsleeping suspicion, are an example of the sorrows that ever dog sin; and, as he fell by his own sword in his final battle at Gilboa, the terrible saying recurs to our memory: ‘He that being often reprov’d hardeneth his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.’ ”

Saul’s difficulty, which led to all this disaster, was his selfishness – and he was not unusually selfish either. The great majority of mankind are equally selfish – self-willed; and the great

majority, like him, make a failure of whatever possibilities were before them at the first. As David’s career illustrates the wisdom and advantage of an early consecration to the will of the Lord, and the blessing which must surely attend such a course – even though those blessings be accompanied with trials and difficulties – so Saul’s course in a general way illustrates the error of those who measurably ignore the Lord and attempt to direct their own paths. Such will surely find themselves misled by their selfish ambitions as Saul was by his. Saul’s two special transgressions were: (1) his offering of sacrifice, which, according to divine arrangement, he had no right to offer (1 Sam. 13:1-14); (2) his disobedience of another direct command of the Lord, as recorded in 1 Sam. 15:1-13. It may be argued that King David also erred and did contrary to the Lord’s will on several occasions, but we are to notice the wide difference between these two characters, in that David’s heart was apparently always loyal to the Lord, and that when overtaken in a fault his sorrow therefor was sincere and led to greater carefulness in the future. With Saul, on the contrary, the difficulty seems to have been with the heart – that at heart he was not submissive to the Lord’s will but was guided by his own will, and merely repented and apologized through fear of consequences and not from sorrow at having deviated from the Lord’s way.

Herein we may note a great difference between people nominally the Lord’s today: The truly consecrated may stumble, may err, but at heart they are ever loyal to the Lord and wish to serve and please him. These are spiritual Israelites indeed, and the blessing of the Lord is upon them. The other class professes to be the Lord’s people, but at heart are far from him, and merely draw nigh with their lips and outward ceremonies. They have neither part nor lot with the others, and will surely reap the results of their own self-will so far as any opportunities under the

present call are concerned. Another writer has well said:

“When Saul forsook God there necessarily was a separation between him and God; and an evil spirit took possession of his heart. We see no sign of God’s doing anything direct to hasten Saul’s doom. He was left to work out the natural results of an evil heart, and a life guided by passion and selfishness, without the help and direction of God. He spent his time in hunting David instead of overcoming his enemies. His kingdom was thus neglected, his people discontented, many of his best men abandoned him and went over to David, and together were driven into the enemies’ country. His army lost courage, and in the last great battle he was weakened and worn by spending the night in consulting a witch instead of preparing for his work. So that he perished miserably by suicide at last. He ate of the fruit of his own way, and was filled with his own devices.’” – Prov. 1:3.

Our lesson concerns the closing days of Saul’s experiences. The Philistines with an army had penetrated the kingdom of Israel, and Saul, with an opposing army, went forth to engage them in battle. The two armies encamped not far from Nazareth. We can easily imagine the dejection of mind which led King Saul on the night before the battle to consult the witch at Endor. In his self-will he neglected the Lord’s will in general and was filled with hatred for David, because he realized that it was the Lord’s will to ultimately bring the latter to the throne of Israel. He realized, therefore, that in opposing David, who did him no harm, but was really one of his most loyal subjects, he was in fact fighting against God. And now, on the eve of battle, it is no wonder that he felt downcast and dejected, because when he sought to inquire of the Lord he got no response. He bethought him of the witch of Endor and concluded to inquire of her respecting the outcome of the battle on the morrow. Here again he knew that his course was in opposition to the divine will; for he himself had given instructions for the execution of the Lord’s command of Deut. 18:10,12; Exod. 22:18. His course in this matter illustrated the quality of his disposition which the Lord disapproved. Knowing that communication with the evil

spirits through mediums was disapproved of God, he nevertheless pursued the wrong course. Similarly some of God’s people today, notwithstanding the instruction of the Scriptures that they should not seek those having familiar spirits, etc., have attended Spiritualistic seances “just to see how it is done.” Such a disposition to be careless of the Lord’s instruction, self-willed, was the one which got Saul into trouble and surely will make trouble for those who have it today. God is not pleased with those who are careless of his commands: he lets them take their own way as he permitted Saul to take his own way; but, however wise such a self-willed way may appear at the time, the end is sure to be disastrous so far as peace and fellowship with the Lord are concerned. Only those who are fully committed to the Lord and who love the Lord’s will better than their own can expect to have fulfilled toward them the promise, “All things shall work together for good to them that love God.”

The narrative of the lesson is very simple and requires very little comment. Saul and three of his sons and his entire bodyguard perished in the battle, in which the Philistines seemed to have specially pursued the royal party. Saul committed suicide, lest falling alive into the hands of his enemies they would have tortured him, as was not infrequently the custom in that day. The Philistines, of course, rejoiced in his discomfiture, and as an evidence of their victory his head was sent as a trophy to one and another of their cities. They were worshipers of the goddess Ashtaroath, and as a memorial of their victory Saul’s armor was hung in one of her temples. The bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened to the outside wall of the city of Bethshan as a mark of special indignity, but they were soon recovered by men from the tribe of Manasseh, who, probably to prevent further desecration to the bodies, burned them, and subsequently buried the ashes, unconsumed bones, etc.

The Golden Text is worthy of being committed to memory by all. Its lesson is that we are not competent to guide and direct our own affairs; that we need divine counsel. Human judgment would be unreliable even if supported by absolute knowledge; but in view of our

deficiency in knowledge as well as in judgment, very evidently to man many ways seem right and wise and advantageous and desirable which, pursued, lead to disappointment and chagrin and ultimately would lead to death – second death. The wise, proper course for all, therefore, is to realize and acknowledge our own insufficiency, unwisdom, and to look to our great Creator for guidance. Happy are those who heed the Scriptural injunction, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” The earlier this

right course is begun the better will be the results every way, the easier will it be for us to bend our wills to the will of the Lord; and the lessons and satisfaction and peace coming to us through the Lord’s guidance will be the more precious. A full consecration of the heart and life and all our interests to the Lord, that his will may be done in us in all things, is the consecration necessary to the bringing of every justified believer into fellowship in the body of Christ, which is the Church.

KING SAUL’S IGNOMINIOUS END – R. 4234

1 Samuel 31

“Prepare to meet thy God.” – Amos 4:12

SAUL’S career began under most favorable conditions and terminated most ignominiously in suicide. A man of manifest ability, as a general and a ruler he lacked in one thing, which made his career as a whole a failure. As we have seen, he was not irreverent, nor profane and vicious in the ordinary sense of those terms. In many respects he showed a deep reverence for the Almighty and a considerable desire to do his will. His failure, on the whole, was the result of a double mind. The Apostle remarks that “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.” Our Lord states that we “cannot serve God and Mammon.” King Saul was desirous of serving God, but was also desirous of serving self and Mammon. His proper course would have been full consecration, full submission of his will to the divine will. This is the principal difference between his course and that of his successor, David. Outwardly, perhaps, Saul was as noble in character as his successor; but the latter, putting God first and submitting his own will to the divine will, had the advantage, so that whatever natural blunders he made, whatever natural defects he shared in common with the remainder of the human family, these were offset by that heart loyalty to God which never permitted him to stray far, and which, after every transgression caused him to weep bitterly and to seek divine forgiveness and therefore a closer walk with God. Thus David was a man after God’s own heart, not because of his perfection of the flesh, but because of his perfection of

intention and heart desire. Saul’s character is represented today in many worldly people, who by a full submission of their wills to the Lord, a full consecration, might become saints, but who, in endeavoring to maintain their own wills, make a failure of life and accomplish little that is praiseworthy.

MADE MAD BY JEALOUSY

Saul lamented his loss of divine favor, declared by the Prophet Samuel; but apparently the matter did not strike him so seriously until he began to notice that the divine blessing was with the youthful David. Jealousy, one of the most intense foes of human happiness, entered his mind and almost bereft him of reason. The more faithfully David served him, and the better the results obtained, the more did Saul recognize that this marked David as his successor in the Kingdom under the Lord’s providence. This, as we have seen, led to the hate which sought to assassinate him and which later on led to Saul’s hunting him as a brigand, with his troops. Various matters associated with the narrative clearly imply that the evil spirit which entered into Saul in connection with his envy of David was a spirit of an unsound mind, an evil or injurious spirit or disposition. There is a great lesson in this matter, not only for the worldly class represented by Saul, but a lesson also for ourselves of the New Creation. In our journey through life, almost daily we come to places and circumstances which, wrongly received, may change our entire course from fellowship and

relationship to God to sin and opposition to him. What Christian has not realized certain crises in his life in which two voices seemed to speak to him; the one favoring humility and obedience to God at any cost; the other urging self-will backed by pride? If we are advanced Christians, who through numerous victories have gained a position where such besetments are rare, we still need to be on guard and to remember that we have a very wily Adversary, that we have the treasure of the new mind in an earthen vessel, and that in our flesh dwelleth no perfection. These recollections should make us very humble, and lead us to cling closely to the Lord, and to fear and abhor any attitude of conduct and even of thought that would in any measure seem to antagonize the divine will. Even if the Lord's favor seemed to be passing from us to another in certain respects, we should follow the course of Jonathan and know for a certainty that it would be folly to battle with God, for no blessing could possibly lie in that direction.

THE PHILISTINE INVASION

It would not be correct for us to suppose that Saul's persecution of David occupied all of his time and attention. Undoubtedly as a man of ability he exercised quite an influence throughout his Kingdom. This is evident from the fact that for seven years after Saul's death the ten tribes of Israel clung to his successor and declined to recognize David. On the other hand Saul's insane jealousy undoubtedly weakened him personally and also the resources of the people, so that the Philistines considered it an opportune time for an invasion of the land of Israel. The battle was not fought on the borders, and the invaders were not met promptly, but obtained a considerable foothold before the battle began. Meantime the attitude of King Saul's mind may be well judged from the incidents of his visit to the witch of Endor. Poor man! He had sufficient knowledge of God to have faith in him, but equally well for years he knew that he had been cut off from special divine favor, and that he had been vainly striving against God in his opposition to David. But with all this, in his vexation of heart he desired some superhuman counsel. Not only had he been seeking to take David's life, but he had slain the priest for giving

David the shewbread, and in general had done everything he could to cut himself off from God's favor, even though he realized his need of it.

VISITING THE WITCH OF ENDOR

The fallen angels, demons, even back in Saul's time, sought to personate the dead, to hold communion with the living by representing themselves as their deceased friends. The Lord distinctly forbade such communications with demons; and the command throughout Saul's dominion had been that witches and those having familiar spirits, mediumship, should be put to death, with a view to driving them out of the land of Israel and thus to put away temptation from the Israelites. But now in his extremity doubtless, King Saul, disguising himself, sought the witch, that through her he might have communion with Samuel, the prophet. Evidently he had come under the delusion which was very rapidly making headway throughout the world, namely, that the dead are not dead, but merely disembodied. On this supposition he placated the witch and made his request for an interview with the Prophet Samuel.

The manifestation that took place may be accounted for in two ways:

(1) An evil spirit may have personated Samuel and foretold the results of the battle on the morrow. Doubtless it would have been easy for any one of mental acumen to forecast the predicted results. Besides we know not what facilities for information on such matters the demons may possess. Many of the things which today they tell through mediums are remarkable for their accuracy.

(2) It is not said that Saul saw anything nor that he heard anything. His communications were through the witch; she saw, she heard, she told. Saul perceived from what the witch said that it was Samuel, recognizing the prophet from the description of his mantle, etc., which she gave him. But his boldness in still attempting to ascertain his future is remarkable. One would think that, with his knowledge of God and with his realization that already he was under divine disfavor, he should have feared God's further displeasure in doing that which was forbidden. There is a lesson, too, for the Lord's people here. What the Lord is not pleased to give us

through proper channels we should realize we would be better without. It is in vain that any might endeavor to circumvent the Lord, to get ahead of him in any manner. Our Lord's words, "Agree with thine Adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him," would certainly apply in such a case as Saul's, when God had become his adversary. His proper course would have been to throw himself completely upon the Lord's mercy, assured that he is able to make all things work together for good. This should be our course. Faithfulness to the divine will is the only secure and happy course for us.

SAUL AND JONATHAN SLAIN

The next day the battle raged, and the army of the Israelites was worsted, and Saul and his three sons were slain, besides many of his troops. Our lesson tells of the suicide of Saul.



King Saul Threw Himself on his Sword by William Isaacs

He preferred to die by his own hand rather than to come under the control of his enemies alive. Poor man! The poet describes the anguish of his last hour, saying,

*"And the falchion at thy side
To thy heart thy hand did guide;
Crownless, horseless, headless, fall
Son and Sire, the house of Saul!"*

The closing verses of the lesson tell us that the Philistines sent Saul's armor piecemeal to their various cities with reports of their victory, and that they fastened his dead body to the wall of Beth-shan. It will be remembered that at the very beginning of Saul's reign, forty years before this, the Ammonites, having made an attack upon the city of Jabesh, overpowered it and demanded the surrender, and would give no better terms than that the right eye of each Jabeshite should be destroyed; and that then King Saul went promptly to their deliverance and rescued them. It is worthy of note that the men of Jabesh, forty years after, had not forgotten Saul's energy on their behalf; so that when they heard that his body and those of his sons were ignominiously fastened to the outer wall of the city to putrefy and to be devoured by vultures, they went quite a distance and took down the bodies and burned them, so that no such indignity could further be expressed, and carefully buried the charred remains. Thus they attested their recognition of the king's kindness to them. Kind words and kind deeds can never die, and we are often surprised at what a power they exercise even over those who are not in any special degree the Lord's people. Such evidence of a spirit of appreciation, of kindness, illustrates the fact that, although our race is sadly fallen and bruised by the fall, nevertheless elements of the original image of God in the flesh are still traceable in the words and deeds of natural men. Without this, it might be said there would be nothing to work upon. How glad we may be to suppose that when the new dispensation shall have been ushered in, and when by reason of the binding of Satan and the restraint of evil it will be more easy to do right than to do wrong, then many will fall in line with righteousness and eventually learn to love righteousness and to hate iniquity!

Our Golden Text, "Prepare to meet thy God," is appropriate to everybody in every time. But the right way to prepare to meet God and to hear his decision respecting the character is not, as usually supposed, to begin to get pious when we feel the approach of sickness or death or in the presence of calamity. From the moment we become believers in Christ and turn from sin and seek forgiveness and thus become eligible to God's favor, we are urged to present our bodies living sacrifices to him and thus to receive of him an adoption of his spirit to fellowship. This in turn proves to be but the entrance way to the

school of Christ, where they are to be taught as sons of God, to be prepared for the glorious work in association with their Redeemer in his glorious Kingdom. As they grow in grace and knowledge, they grow in appreciation of divine favor. As the poet has said,

*"Oh, let no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes."*

Such as are in this attitude of heart are prepared to meet their God at any time. Indeed their meeting with him has already begun, and anything that will serve in any degree to hinder its pleasurable continuance will be a disaster indeed.

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON – Volume 4, page i (excerpt)

Armageddon is a Hebrew word signifying the Hill of Megiddo, or the Mount of Destruction. Megiddo occupied a very marked position on the southern edge of the Plain of Esdraelon, and commanded an important pass into the hill country. This locality was the great battleground of Palestine, on which were fought many of the famous battles of Old Testament history. There Gideon and his little band alarmed and discomfited the Midianites, who destroyed one another in their flight. (Judges 7:19-23) There King Saul was defeated by the Philistines. (1 Sam. 31:1-6) There King Josiah was slain by Pharaoh-Necho in one of the most disastrous conflicts in the history of Israel. (2 Chron. 35:22-25) There also King Ahab and his wife Jezebel lived, in the city of Jezreel, where Jezebel afterwards met a horrible death. 2 Kings 9:30-37

These battles were in a sense typical. The defeat of the Midianites released the people of Israel from bondage to Midian. Thus Gideon and his band typified our Lord and the Church, who are to release mankind from their bondage to sin and death. The death of King Saul and the over

throw of his kingdom by the Philistines opened the way for the reign of David, who typified Messiah. King Ahab typified the civil government, symbolically called the "Dragon" in the Revelation. Queen Jezebel symbolically foreshadowed the great harlot, Babylon, and as such she is mentioned by name. "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants." Rev. 2:20

In the Scriptures the Lord has evidently seen fit to associate the name of this famous battlefield, Armageddon, with the great controversy between Truth and Error, right and wrong, God and Mammon, with which the Gospel Age will close and the Messianic Age be ushered in. He has purposely used highly symbolic language in the last book of the Bible, evidently with a view to hiding certain important truths until the due time for their revealment. But even in the due time, "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." (Dan. 12:10) None who are out of heart harmony with God shall know; but only the wise among His people – the wise virgin class of the Master's parable. Matt. 25:1-13

KING SAUL'S LAST BATTLE – R. 5673

2 Samuel 1

*"Jehovah is my strength and my Shield; my heart hath trusted in Him, and I am helped."**Psalms 28:7**(continuation of article on page 59)***"THE SONG OF THE BOW"**

When David heard of the results of the battle, his sympathy for Saul and for Jonathan was expressed in a beautiful poem, which is remarkable for the fact that it contains not a single suggestion of how Saul had persecuted him or sought his life. It compliments Saul for what good he had accomplished. It tells of the tender love of Jonathan, surpassing that of women. This ode is recorded in 2 Samuel 1:17-27. The Dead March from Saul is an attempt on the part of the musician to put the sentiment of David's Song of the Bow for Jonathan and Saul into the music of our day; and thus it has become identified with the funeral services of the great today.

In the battle Saul's sons were killed, including Jonathan. Saul himself was wounded. Fearing that if he should fall into the hands of the Philistines alive they would torture him to death, he desired his armorbearer to slay him, and finally suicided with his own sword.

A young Amalekite, thinking to curry favor with David, and knowing something of how he had been persecuted by Saul, brought him the news of the death of Saul and gave him Saul's crown and the bracelet that was on Saul's arm, telling that he had dispatched King Saul at the latter's request – probably, however, manufacturing this part of the story to bring honor to himself. At all events, David received the matter in a totally different way from what was expected, saying to him, "How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" David then commanded him to be put to death. But for Saul and Jonathan he mourned until evening.

David waited upon the Lord those many years, fully confident that in the end he should be the king of Israel, but not hastening the event in any way, simply standing ready for the responsibilities and the power of the office where the Lord should put him. What a wonderful example we have in David's course! How much

Christians can learn of patient waiting for the Lord's time in all their affairs – not only waiting for the Kingdom while they pray, "Thy Kingdom come," but also waiting for the Lord's leading and providence in all their affairs, overruling them all for good! It is one of the too frequent mistakes made by Christians, that they overlook the Lord's providence and promised supervision of their interests, and attempt to do for themselves, often to their own disadvantage.

David realized that the time had probably come for himself and his companions to move from the Philistines' country, and he inquired of the Lord by the priest and the ephod. The answer was that he should go into Judea. Next he made inquiry, Into which city? and the answer was, Hebron. Thither David and his companions removed with their families; and the tribe of Judah, his own tribe, promptly recognized him as their king. It was over seven years after this, however, before he became the king of all Israel. Meantime, one of the sons of King Saul, Ishbosheth, had survived; and Abner, Saul's chief general, had him anointed king of Israel. King David of Judah made no attempt to coerce the other tribes, but continued his waiting for the Lord's due time.

Meantime, however, Abner gathered an army against David's servants, and a fierce battle ensued, in which David's forces were the victors; the others lost the fight. Finally Abner, angered with King Ishbosheth, proposed to David that he would become David's vassal, and would assist in turning the hearts of all the Israelites toward him. King David appreciated the proposition, doubtless considering it to be the Lord's will and in harmony with the Lord's promise. However, the matter did not so carry out; for Joab, David's nephew, the chief man of war, slew Abner deceitfully. Again we see David's conduct in contrast with the average sentiment of his time. Instead of rejoicing in the death of Abner, the king mourned for him, and

denounced his nephew for the wrong course he had pursued. He was courageous enough in the presence of his own ablest soldier to extol the virtues of Abner as a great soldier, saying, "A mighty man has fallen in Israel."

KING OF ALL ISRAEL

But a little while after this, others, misunderstanding King David, slew King Ishbosheth and brought his head to David as an evidence of his death, expecting doubtless that they would be rewarded. On the contrary, they also were condemned. They had slain the king. They were esteemed worthy of the same punishment, and were themselves slain. Thus did the people see exemplified in David's course principles of righteousness quite uncommon in his day, and we might say, uncommon still. All these things served to endear to the people the king, who, they perceived, was not merely self-seeking, narrow, but was broad-minded and even generous toward his opponents, his enemies. He seems to have had a great appreciation of justice and also a breadth of sympathy for his enemies.

King David was thirty-seven years old when finally the eleven tribes sent a delegation to confer with him, indicating that they would appreciate having him as the king over all Israel. This was seven years and a half after the death of King Saul, and probably about seventeen years after David had been anointed first by Samuel. Faith and patience mark every step of those years and show us King David's character as we could not otherwise have known it. Its grandeur was chiefly shown in that it manifested a devotion to God and a submission to the Divine will.

The king's acceptance as king of all the tribes of Israel marked the third time that the holy anointing oil was put upon his head.

Meantime King David had grown stronger and stronger in conquering his enemies – the enemies of the Lord – those whom God declared should be destroyed. We remind our readers afresh that the Lord declared that the iniquity of the Amorites had come to the full, and thus indicated it to be His will that they should be destroyed from the earth. Whether destroyed in battle or by pestilence or famine, mattered nothing to them, as the Divine sentence of death must be carried out.

However, all the while that God has been permitting sickness, war, famine, pestilence, death, to reign in the world. He has been preparing for human redemption, human salvation through the great Redeemer. Messiah's Kingdom is soon to take control of the earth, to cause a cessation of the reign of Sin and Death, to cause the binding of Satan and to cause the sunlight of Divine Truth to flood the earth. Then all the blind eyes will be opened and all the deaf ears will be unstopped, to know, to understand the true God, His true Message.

Meantime, those who died by Israel's sword will know nothing of the lapse of time. They will awake in the Millennial Kingdom, when all that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake. They will then be under the most favorable conditions we could ask for them – freed from the shackles of ignorance and superstition, with Messiah's Kingdom ready to help them out of their weaknesses and degradation back to human perfection, lost in Eden, redeemed at Calvary.

A FRIEND IN NEED A FRIEND INDEED – R. 4224 (excerpt)

A glimpse of David's estimation of Jonathan and his love is given in what is termed "The Song of the Bow," David's touching lament at the death of his friend Jonathan. He exclaims, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan. Very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." (2 Sam. 1:26) But we, dear friends, know of a

still more wonderful love than this, of which we sometimes sing,

*"Love of Jesus, all divine,
Fill this longing heart of mine."*

Love begets love; and so the Scriptures tell us that it was not that we first loved God, but that he first loved us and manifested his love for us in the gift of his Son. So it was the love of

Jesus that attracted us and drew forth our love in response. And day by day, as we come to appreciate more and more the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love of God and of Christ, which passes all human understanding, the more our love toward them will increase and abound. And as it increases we ourselves become more Godlike and correspondingly also from us proceeds a love for others who love us not; and our love for them will excite the love of some in return, and lead them to a greater appreciation of this principle which stands in opposition to the spirit of the world, the love of the

world, the selfishness of the world. Let us then seek to cultivate this godlike quality. Let us notice not only that the Scriptures declare love to be the principal thing in the world, but that it is the very essence of the divine character, the very essence of the divine law which is fulfilled in this one word, Love. Let us remember then that in the exercise of this quality we are preparing ourselves for the glorious possibilities to which we have been invited, and which by our Lord's grace we are seeking to obtain by making our calling and election sure.

The Song of the Bow

Your beauty, Israel, lies slain on your high places!
O, how the valiant have fallen!
Don't make it known in Gath!
Don't declare it in the avenues of Ashkelon!
Otherwise, the daughters of Philistia will rejoice;
and the daughters of the uncircumcised will triumph.
Mountains of Gilboa,
let no dew or rain fall on you,
and may none of your fields be filled with plenty,
because in that place the shield of the valiant ones was defiled,
the shield of Saul without an anointing with oil.
From the blood of the slain,
from the blood of the valiant,
Jonathan's bow would not retreat
nor would Saul's sword return empty.
Saul and Jonathan, loved and handsome in life,
in death were not separated.
Swifter than eagles they were,
and more valiant than lions.
Daughters of Israel, weep over Saul!
He clothed you in scarlet luxury
and decorated your garments with gold.
How have the valiant fallen in the tumult of battle!
Jonathan lies slain on your high places.
I am in distress for you, my brother Jonathan.
You have been most kind to me.
Your love for me was extraordinary—
beyond love from women.
How the valiant have fallen!
How the weapons of war are destroyed!"

2 Samuel 1:17-27 ISV

DAVID, KING OF JUDAH – R.1996

2 Samuel 2:1-11

“The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.” – Psa. 97:1

DAVID was a man of a high and varied order of natural ability, a combination of the rare qualities of the successful statesman, warrior, musician and poet. His disposition was, in the main, noble, generous, humble, kind, enthusiastic and heroic. He was reverential toward God, and seemed from his youth to have almost implicit faith in the promises and providences of God. Yet David was not a model saint: there were some strange inconsistencies in his character which stand out the more prominently in contrast with the beautiful and noble traits which fill us with admiration. But since these, so far as he was able to see them, were most sincerely repented of, we can appreciate the humility that led to repentance, and regard David from the same standpoint of that loving and merciful consideration from which God regards all his fallen and weak followers who struggle against inherent depravity, humbly acknowledging their shortcomings, and leaning upon his tender mercy. While in his youth, when God was about to anoint him king of Israel, it was said of David, “The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14), the same in many respects might also have been said later, notwithstanding his faults, in view of his deep contrition. This statement, however, is not to be regarded as a testimony to the perfection of either the youth or the man, but rather to his fitness for the office to which God had appointed him; and as the office was one of great honor and trust, fitness as God’s choice for the office implied a high order of character and ability, especially at the time he was chosen. So it was also in the case of Saul at the time of his anointing, of whom Samuel the prophet said, “See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?”

The peculiar experiences of David’s early life had much to do toward preparing him for his life work as king over Israel. His encounter with the lion and the bear when a shepherd boy, his later conflict with the giant Goliath, his experience at

court with Saul, his acquaintance and friendship with Jonathan and others, his flight from the pursuit of Saul, all served to develop and prepare the chosen man for the office he was to fill after the death of Saul. In this school of experience he learned the valuable lessons of courage, fortitude, reliance upon God, how to act wisely under peculiar difficulties and under severe temptations and trials. He also became acquainted with the circumstances and conditions of court life; and his subsequent seven years in exile among other nations acquainted him with their characteristics, and were doubtless of service to him later in knowing how to deal with them. In his exile there gathered around him a company of discontented people, mostly victims of Saul’s oppression. Among these were a number of prominent men of the nation, and these were of service to him later.

Thus God not only chose, but trained, his servant for the duties to which he had called him. And this providence in David’s case reminds us of God’s providences in general, how wisely he adapts means to ends and guides in all things to the accomplishment of his will. Many of the most comforting psalms of David were the results of his hard experiences in this time of his exile. In fact, the peculiar and varied experiences of the man, and the lessons derived from those experiences as expressed in his psalms, have been the comfort and blessing of God’s people in all ages since. In a general way, David’s experiences correspond to those of the gospel Church whom God is similarly preparing for the Kingdom of heaven. And doubtless it is for this reason that the lessons of David’s experience find an echo in so many of our hearts.

The record of David’s course from the time of his anointing to his establishment in the kingdom shows an implicit trust in God – that he who had called and anointed him was able also in his own good time to bring him to the throne and to establish his kingdom. He took no measures whatever to displace Saul, nor to

undermine his authority, even when Saul was pursuing him to take his life. And when Saul was unconsciously in his power, so that he could have slain him, he would not put forth his hand to touch the Lord's anointed. He was willing to wait patiently the Lord's time, knowing that what God had promised he was able also to perform; and so, even after Saul's death, he was not in haste to claim the vacated office, but he first inquired of the Lord to know if his time had come.

The Lord's time having come, David was directed to Hebron with his family and the men that were with him and their families, and there, without ostentation or any assertion of his rights, he calmly waited the further indications of providence. "And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah" – thus falling in line not only with the divine anointing, but also with their own preferences. Thus the kingdom came to David, not only by divine appointment, but also by choice of the people.

In David's course in all this and in the course of divine providence with him there is a wholesome lesson for the anointed people of God of this age – the gospel Church. Having been called and anointed of God to be kings and priests unto him, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ of his Kingdom and glory, it is our part to wait patiently the Lord's time for that exaltation; and in the meantime, like David, to patiently endure all the discipline which God in his providence sees to be necessary to fit us for the position of authority and power we are to hold in the future, and to exercise with loving consideration for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

On coming to the throne David's course was marked with the same wisdom and magnanimity that had characterized him previously. Among other wise measures the honor he paid to the memory of his deceased rival and enemy is very notable, and without a precedent on the pages of history. David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead to express his

appreciation of their kindness in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons from the ignominy to which the Philistines had exposed them, and giving them a decent burial. This the men of Jabesh had done in remembrance of a kind service Saul had once done for them. (1 Sam. 11:1-11) And David said to them, "Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. And now the Lord show kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing."

How different is this from that evil spirit which would triumph over the death of a powerful rival and relentless enemy. Instead of doing so, David seemed to call to mind all the good traits of Saul and to lament the evil spirit that had come upon him in his later years and driven him to such a wicked course; and the memory of the love of Jonathan was ever precious to him. In this, more than in anything else, David triumphed over his enemy.

While David was thus the acknowledged king of Judah, the other tribes of Israel, ignoring the divine anointing of David, made Ishbosheth, the surviving son of Saul, their king. In this David set up no opposition claims, and his course with reference to the rival kingdom was merely defensive, not aggressive. However, in various battles and skirmishes his forces were victorious; and his strength and influence grew while those of his opponent declined. Would that the same spirit of forbearance and disinclination to assume authority were general among both political and religious leaders. The usual course is for leaders rather to force themselves upon the people – to seek the office, instead of allowing the office to seek the man.

The golden text – "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice" – is prophetic of that blessed time when the antitype of David's throne, the Kingdom of Jehovah's Anointed, our Lord Jesus, shall be established in all the earth. Then indeed may the earth rejoice; for that king will reign in righteousness, and justice and judgment will be the habitation of his throne.

DAVID ATTAINING KINGSHIP – R. 4235

2 Samuel 2:1-7; 5:1-5

“David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him.” – 2 Sam. 5:10

DAVID was in his 30th year at the time of King Saul's death. During the ten preceding years he had led a varied life. Banished from Saul's court through envy, hunted by the king as a wild beast, David's experiences were far from what have been considered ideal. Chased as a brigand and looked upon with distrust on the part of the majority of the people, who would know little about him except that while once high in the king's favor and having been the king's general, he was now in disfavor, it would be difficult for some to consider him otherwise than with mere envy. Others again, failing to consider that God appointed the rulers of Israel, might think David a usurper, seeking to profit himself at his master's expense. As a matter of fact we find that even in the demoralized condition of things which followed the death of Saul and his three sons in the disastrous battle of our last lesson, still the eleven tribes promptly rallied to the support of Saul's fourth son, Ishbosheth, and never seemed to think a moment of David.

David, as the captain of his band of six hundred men, had been making his home at Ziklag, southwest of Judah. When David heard of the death of Saul, instead of determining what he should do according to his own judgment, he inquired of the Lord. It seems remarkable to us that a young man, driven from home, an exile, hunted as a bandit, and cut off from all the refining influences of life, should retain his reverence for the Lord to such a degree. Alas! how many Christians with every condition favorable, with Bibles in their hands and Bible-study helps, etc., manifest a much less loyal disposition! How frequently the Lord and his will are forgotten, while self decides and directs. Indeed it may be considered an evidence of a quite thorough submission to the Lord and development in grace to find a Christian earnestly seeking to know the will of the Lord in all the important undertakings of his life. “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Although the school in which David was trained may be considered a rude one, nevertheless he evidently learned many lessons in it. His first inquiry was, “Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah”? The answer was favorable. The next question was, “To which city?” Which city shall be my headquarters or capital? The Lord directed to Hebron. David wisely estimated that the people of his own tribe knew him well and understood why he was persecuted by King Saul. David was not without honor in his own country and not without confidence in his own tribe. But with all this he had special confidence in the divine wisdom and the divine power. He recognized that the Lord was directing him and that the anointing oil had already been poured upon him and that it was only a question of time when the Lord would point out the next step. Nevertheless he recognized it to be his duty to wait on the Lord and not attempt to grasp and take hastily the things which were his by promise. He had waited for more than ten years. He could afford still to wait patiently on the Lord.

How important a lesson for the antitypical David – the Beloved – the Christ! The Apostle testifies this respecting our Lord Jesus, that he thought the Kingdom not a thing to be grasped or usurped. He waited the Father's time. He meanwhile humbled himself in harmony with the Father's will and gave evidence that he delighted to do that will at any cost. This faithful and patient waiting was pleasing to God in the One who was to be heir of all things and highly exalted. Similarly we, his followers and members, are to remember the Prophet David's words, “Wait, I say, on the Lord.” Some of us have learned by experience that to attempt to go before the Lord in any matter is dangerous. We are not wise enough to guide ourselves. Indeed, as the poet has expressed it,

*“We fear to touch
Things that involve so much.”*

If we could recognize the delicacy of our situation at times, it would make us more modest and cautious. Not only our own interests and eternal glory are at stake, but also the interests of other fellow-members of the Body of Christ. A rash word, a thoughtless action, inconsiderateness in any sense of the word might lead to unfavorable conditions of heart, and, even though we gained the promise, it might be by tribulation rather than by the way in which the Lord would lead.

LET YOUR MODERATION BE KNOWN

Some, miscalculating David's temperament and sentiments towards Saul, supposed that they would gain his favor by reciting incidents showing how they had assisted in Saul's overthrow, but such met with prompt rebuke, David in every instance speaking of King Saul in considerate language, not merely because it would be wrong to speak evil of any man, but also because, as king, Saul had been God's representative, "The Lord's anointed," as David himself styled it. Quite to the contrary of any exaltation over the death of his enemy, David sent a special message of appreciation to the men of Jabesh who had given decent burial to Saul and his sons. He wished them to know that he did not regard this as an act of enmity to himself, but rather as an act of decency and loyalty in which he himself would be glad to have had a share. He said, Blessed be ye of the Lord that ye have showed this kindness. And now the Lord show kindness unto you and I will also requite you this kindness. Therefore let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant, for your master, Saul, is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

It may be contested by some that David's course was a case of policy and that he was too wise to antagonize the men of Jabesh in giving Saul and his sons decent burial. Even if this were the case it would reflect credit on David instead of discredit. It would show that he had the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of a sound mind. But we think it unnecessary to attack the motive of any person who wishes to do a kind act. Instead of attributing the motive to evil, we should "think no evil." The same principle is applicable to the Lord's people. They should not attribute

wrong motives to business men who contribute money for benevolences, etc. It may, indeed, be true of some (perhaps of many) that the thought of gain associates with the gift, but it by no means follows that the act is destitute of generous motives and wholly sordid. We are the happier when we endeavor to think kindly in all the actions of life. A blind brother recently remarked, "I have no doubt that my blindness saves me from many disadvantages. When I meet people I endeavor to think of them as looking happy and generous and good; whereas if I had my sight I might consider it impossible to think of them as favorably and generously as I want to."

David's adverting to the fact that he was not King of Judah was an intimation to the men of Jabesh that they would perhaps like to have him king over them, as he was now king in the place of Saul who had hunted him for ten years. It was an intimation that they might go farther and fare worse – all of which was true, as we know.

WE WALK BY FAITH

Quite probably King David expected after his recognition by the tribe of Judah that very speedily other tribes would rally to his banner. Nevertheless we are not informed respecting any move he made to accomplish this. He was waiting on the Lord. Surely it was a long wait, too. Abner, as the general of King Ishbosheth of the eleven tribes of Israel, waged war against the enemies of Israel and to some extent gained victories. King David had plenty of opportunity of wondering whether or not the Lord intended to carry out the programme instituted in his coronation. With the prestige of victories over outside enemies, King Ishbosheth turned attention to the tribe of Judah, claiming it was in rebellion against the lawful head. The result was a civil war, instead of an entrance upon a reign of prosperity. Brothers fought against brothers – one party of God's favored people against another. And this continued for two years, gradually, however, bringing successes to David and his army. Thus we read, "David waxed stronger and stronger and the house of Saul weaker and weaker."

In considering the period of civil war and how one section of the Lord's people sought to

injure others, we are reminded of Spiritual Israel and the fact that brethren in it sometimes become so estranged and so out of the leading of God's providence that they also become antagonists to each other. Alas, that this should be so! – that the love of God should at any time fail to constrain us so that we would not only turn from his love and fellowship, but that the sword should be used to smite down brethren! Get the picture impressed in our minds and sealed in our hearts of coming days with Spiritual Israel, when brother shall be against brother, which the Lord will permit just prior to the establishment of the Kingdom. Let us resolve that however others may fight, the weapons of our warfare shall not be carnal and that our battling shall not be against those who are the Lord's by covenant, but against the great Adversary. Carnal weapons are not merely guns and swords – but more injurious and death-dealing is the tongue when used to slander and wound. God forbid that our tongues, wherewith we praise God, should work injury to any man, but particularly to any of the household of faith.

KING OVER ALL ISRAEL

Ultimately King Ishbosheth and his general Abner were both foully murdered and we carefully note that David had no complicity in the matter, and that so far as the sons of Saul were concerned, David's oath of friendship with Jonathan was quite sufficient protection to them. However, the death of these men opened the way for the people of Israel to consider matters further and, as they considered, they perceived that God's favor was with David; that he was a man after God's own heart, and that as a ruler he was doing valiant service to the people who had accepted him as their king. The saner thinking amongst the tribes of Israel brought them to the conclusion mentioned in this lesson – "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel." Finally they had come to hearken to the voice of the Lord. No doubt the Lord could have brought to pass such

a condition of things before. There was no divine purpose in the way. And so it is with all of our affairs, if we only knew it. God, who knows the end from the beginning, is wisely guiding for the good of his people and particularly of those who are individually his of the anointed class.

Our lesson tells us that King David made a covenant or league with the people of Israel. By this is signified that he agreed to serve as king with a limited monarchy, under a constitution. He made a covenant, a constitution which was explicit as to what constituted the rights of the people and a delineation of what were the rights of the king. This institution in Israel indicates that they were the most advanced people in the world, for, so far as we can learn from history, the kings of that time were despots, who governed according to their own ideas, trampling upon the rights and liberties of the people. The interesting ceremonies connected with the exaltation of David as king over all Israel and the joy amongst the people in connection with David is amply recorded in I Chron. 12:23-40.

David's experiences in waiting for the kingdom and the lessons learned and the character developed and the preparation which made him wise and moderate all serve to illustrate a great lesson to the Gospel Church. We also are called to sit upon the throne of the Lord – to rule in his name. We also have been anointed to the office by the holy Spirit, which the Apostle declares is a foretaste of the glory and joys into which we shall enter when the crowning days shall have come. If discipline, self control, faith, moderation and hope were all requisite to make David a king over the Lord's people and to properly represent him in government, how much more severe lessons should be for us, who are called to so much higher a station – to the throne of earth as God's representatives and to the Royal Priesthood, ruling, judging and trying mankind, to the intent that as many as possible of them may be rescued from their degraded condition and be brought into full harmony with God! Surely we may say as David did that our trials and testings are much less than we expected them to be.

If we carefully scrutinize David's character to note what constituted its strongest points,

and what, therefore, we should seek correspondingly to cultivate, we shall agree that the strongest point was his will, which was rightly directed. It is difficult to estimate the power of the human will. Apparently God has placed all the interests of the present life under the control of our wills, and, indeed, much of the success in respect to the future life is similarly under the control of our wills. Apparently the will, rightly exercised against sin, is invulnerable. As we read, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Just what kind of dynamic force the mind, the will, can exercise against the Adversary, against sin, against sickness and disease, it is difficult for us to understand, but we have the Scriptural assurance that there is such a will, and our own experiences in its exercise have fully demonstrated the truth of our proposition. Strong wills are not confined to God's people. Satan and many of the depraved are strong-willed. Indeed, in this fact lies much of the suggestion of the spirit of wickedness. All who are the Lord's should recognize the value of determination and the unsatisfactoriness of vacillation.

The Apostle declares truly, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Such a person makes a success of nothing. Whatever may come to him above the ordinary will surely be by accident. Herein we see the wisdom of the Lord's method of dealing with the Church in this Gospel Age. "He seeks such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth." He tells them of his goodness and gives sufficiency of help to encourage the person to will aright, with assurances that if he will do the willing the Lord himself will give the necessary assistance and succor in every time of need. And although the Adversary is stronger and wiser than we are, he shall not be able to hurt us because He who is on our side is greater than all who are against us. It is to this end that the Lord encourages us to make a covenant with him by sacrifice – to give up our all, our will to his guidance. Happy are they who do this. And these are few comparatively. With the majority there is a continuance of self and much of disputation in respect to things of the Lord – his will. It is in line with this

endeavor to fortify the will and strengthen the character that we recognize such vows as would be of assistance. The Adversary is watching continually to touch the spots most liable to assault and we must make the fortification strong, striving to keep our sacrifice with the Lord and our wills firm to resist the Adversary – to serve the truth and all the household of faith, and to guard our own words, acts and thoughts.

THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB

With the inauguration of King David came the usual mirth and songs and exhibitions of joy. Indeed nearly every nation has its national anthem in which it memorializes the king and the kingdom. And is it not so with our Lord's Kingdom, which is shortly to be introduced with most wonderful demonstrations? Is not the glorious temple of God – the Church – the living stones of which are now being shaped, hewn and polished, hailing the great Capstone? The Head of the Church is Christ. Already we hail and crown him Lord of all in our hearts and look forward with joyful anticipation to the time when "every knee shall bow" to the Lord.

Meantime we who hope to be members of the Bride class and "joint-heirs with him" are here expected to learn to sing the song of Moses the servant and the song of the Lamb, for "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor and glory, and blessing." "And they sang a new song before the throne: and no man could learn that song," except the anointed. And the Lord will be with him in Mount Zion, the Kingdom. Realizing that this song is the tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, we are correspondingly interested to know to what extent we have learned – to what extent we can sing it now. We find indeed that it is a life study to learn this lesson. We rejoice in the privilege to bear witness of our God to all those who have ears to hear, even though doing so brings reproaches, frowns, opposition. Our patience and our faith are to continue, and we are to wait for the Kingdom in its beauty and the glorious "change" in ourselves to tell to others more effectively than ever the blessed tidings.

DAVID, KING OVER ALL ISRAEL – R. 2001

2 Samuel 5:1-12

“David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him.” – 2 Sam. 5:10

THIS lesson is a simple matter of history which needs little comment. It shows how, in God’s own good time and way, his purpose of establishing David as king over all Israel was fulfilled. It was not by David’s might or power, but by the providence of God; and in the meantime David learned how blessed a thing it was to wait upon the Lord, who doeth all things well, and his faith grew strong.

Now that the Lord’s time had come to establish the throne of David, not only over Judah, but over all Israel, David was not only the Lord’s choice, but he was also the people’s choice, and by their representatives they came to him with arguments in favor of his immediate acceptance of the office over the whole nation. His seven years reign in Hebron had manifested his wisdom and ability; he was just the man they needed to order the affairs of the whole nation, and he was also bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, and his courage, fidelity and great ability had been proven even in the days of Saul. So David made a league with them. This league was probably some kind of a charter defining the rights and limitations of the king. And the people on their part pledged their allegiance and support. The government of Israel was not an absolute, despotic government, but a limited authority.

David chose Jerusalem for his new capitol of the now united kingdom, because, while within the boundaries of his own tribe, Judah, it was near the border, and central as a capitol for all Israel. It was a fortress also which had withstood the Israelites from the days of Joshua, and was considered by its possessors impregnable. Jerusalem, however, was still inhabited by the Jebusites, a remnant of the Canaanites, whom Israel was commissioned to destroy out of Canaan. These people, feeling the strength of their position, refused to surrender to David, and defiantly replied that they would not do so, and that even the blind and the lame among them would be able to defend the city. David

surveyed the situation and perceived that, the fortress being situated on top of a steep hill, the best means of attack would be by way of the water courses (here translated gutters); and he promised a reward to those who would scale the height and smite those representing themselves as blind and lame. In all this we have a typical suggestion of the proper course of the Christian in boldly attacking and overcoming in their strongholds the weaknesses and sins of the fallen nature.

This lesson is set forth as a lesson on patriotism. We have nothing to say against a spirit of patriotism on the part of the world towards the kingdoms of this world. Under the existing state of things it insures a measure of peace and order which otherwise would be greatly disturbed; and as men’s minds and hearts are not large enough and generous enough to take in the interests of our common humanity, it is well that there is a measure of common interest that binds the individuals of a country into one homogeneous society or nation, and thus insures their united progress along the various lines of human weal. But the good of all this is, alas, sadly offset by national selfishness, greed, pride and unholy ambition, so that the sentiments of patriotism in each nation indicate generally a bitterness of animosity and hatred toward neighboring nations; and the ardor of patriotism is generally only to the extent that the national interests are believed to affect the interests of the individual. There is little indeed in the politics of nations that is purely unselfish.

This worldly, selfish patriotism, which conserves merely the home interests, and ignores or plays havoc with the rest of humanity, is not the patriotism that should actuate the Christian. The patriotism of the Christian should embrace the interests of all humanity. And since none of the kingdoms of this world are founded in perfect righteousness, nor are able nor willing to devote all their energies toward the elevation and blessing of mankind in general, and since

they are all to a considerable extent under the dominion of the prince of this world, our sentiments of patriotism must be reserved for that one and only righteous government which is worthy of our devotion; viz., for the Kingdom of God, which in due time shall bless all the families of the earth.

True, that Kingdom is not yet established, except in the hearts of God's people. Over them Jehovah's Anointed is now the reigning King, and by and by his dominion will extend over all the earth. To this worthy King they owe all their allegiance; to the lofty principles of his government and to all the interests of his Kingdom they should be devoted with a holy zeal and patriotism which know no limit except their ability to serve it.

The complete separation of the Lord's people from the world, although repeatedly emphasized by the Lord and the apostles, is very generally overlooked by professed Christians, who seem to think they should still be part and parcel of the world and sharers in its aims, ambitions and self-imposed responsibilities – political, social and military. Of his people Jesus said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:16) We are to be in it, not as citizens, but as aliens, – but law-abiding aliens, rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's; owing no man anything but to love one another; rendering to all their dues, – tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor, and being subject always to the higher powers. – Rom. 13:1,7,8.

If we were now under a theocracy, a divine kingdom such as was established in Israel, and of which David was appointed king, then as

Christians we should have the most patriotic feelings toward it. But we should remember that God abolished his typical earthly throne and declared that it should no more exist until Christ should come and set up his Kingdom, the anti-type of the throne and kingdom of David. And to as many as believe this testimony and consecrate themselves fully to the cause of the new King, whose dominion begins in their hearts long before its establishment in the earth, will be granted the privilege of heirship with him when, in due time, his kingdom is established.

But the world does not know or understand this kingdom, nor with the natural, depraved heart are they able to comprehend or appreciate its principles of righteousness and the wide distance between the kingdoms of this world and the Kingdom of God. And for this reason they cannot understand the course of any of God's people who do not join with them in calling these earthly kingdoms the kingdom of God – "Christendom" – and serving them as though they were his.

If we wholly follow the Lord in this as in every thing else and so walk apart from the world in all things, as in it but not of it, we can only expect to be misunderstood and disliked. But we should remember the Lord's words, "If ye were of the world [sharing its sentiments, policy, methods, etc.], the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you....If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord." (John 15:18-20) Let us see to it that we are indeed a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

SAUL AND DAVID IN REVIEW – R. 4255

2 Samuel 5:12

"And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake." – 2 Sam. 5:12

OF the two men in review Saul certainly had the more favorable opportunities at the beginning of his life. Nature seemed to have so specially fitted him for the office of king that when he was brought to the attention of the people, they,

recognizing these natural traits, received him without hesitation. For a little while, he walked in humility, carefully seeking to do the Lord's will, but not having fully submitted himself, it was not long until there was a combination of

his own will mixing with that of the Lord. The result was disobedience, failure, a troubled mind growingly perverse almost to the point of insanity, and finally an ignominious death. The flaw in Saul's character was his lack of a full consecration to the Lord, his maintaining a certain amount of self-will. This seemed to have been the difficulty. A similar difficulty affects all who fail to make their calling and election sure. Whether they go into the Second Death or the Great Company, the fault of the failure lies in neglect to surrender fully to the Lord every interest of life and to accept in faith his leadings, his providences in all the affairs of life, seeking to do his will and ignoring – mortifying – self.

David's character was in sharp contrast to that of Saul. Less favorably circumstanced at the beginning of his career, not so tall and commanding in appearance, probably of a less wealthy family, and possibly with no better mental endowment by birth, David's life and its results are in sharp contrast to those of Saul. Look wherever we will in his checkered career, we see courage and determination exercised along right lines, proper lines. He was not a wild animal hunter, but to protect the flock he slew the lion and the bear. He was not a pugilist nor a gladiator; yet at the proper moment he was ready to risk his life for the defence of his people. He appreciated highly the honor that had been conferred upon him in his anointing for the kingship, yet he held this with modesty – never boasted of it and never rashly attempted to hasten the divine program. He endured patiently the opposition of the king, yet treated the members of the royal family with profoundest respect; and finally, instead of thrusting himself on the nation as king and demanding his acceptance, he still waited patiently the Lord's time. One of the results of studying the lives of great and good men is in seeing the way in which they were able to make the world better.

*"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time."*

Many of those who have risen to prominence in the world have left no footprints that we can see; but when the Lord sets great examples

before us, he shows us the footprints, and how some lead downward and others upward. Saul was of the former class, David of the latter. The important point to be noticed by us all is how much these footprints diverge, that we may avoid the one and profit by the other. The secret of David's success was not the mere fixity of his purpose, but additionally the fact that his purpose was kept fully in accord with the divine will. Even in telling to King Saul the story of his conflict with the lion and the bear, he gave glory to God as having delivered them into his hands. And so throughout his entire career. We notice this same desire, to give God the glory of his successes, and to realize that whatever failures there were in his life were either his own weaknesses or divine blessings in disguise. Thus we see David's whole existence exemplifying the words of holy writ – "In all thy ways acknowledge him," "and he shall give thee the desire of thine heart."

VALUE IN HIGH IDEALS

As we look about us in the world, and in the nominal church, we see vast numbers of mankind without any ideals, without any ambition. Alas, poor things! How can they ever have any pleasure or reach any noble goal when they see none? Looking again, we perceive some with only mean and groveling ambitions, worse than none. Poor creatures! Born in sin, shapen in iniquity, and perhaps reared in unfavorable environments, they are seriously handicapped in comparison with some others of the fallen race, less depraved and more favored. Looking again, we see a third class with noble worldly ambitions, seeking for wealth, influence, power, with a desire to use these honorably, nobly, not to the injury of their fellow-creatures, but to some extent the opposite. These are to be congratulated as having better motives in life than the first two classes. They were possibly better born and possibly had better environment.

We look again and find a fourth class, whose eyes have by the grace of God been lifted from earthly things to the heavenly. To these, "Old things have passed away and all things have become new." The vision of heavenly joy, heavenly fellowship, heavenly service, has so transformed their minds that, although their flesh may still

be weak, nevertheless they overcome by the new mind. This is the class which the earth could never satisfy. A new standard of values has come to them; and they both feel and know that the things of this life are “not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” They find these things in comparison but loss and dross. This is the class which the Lord has under his special care and instruction. Because they have made their consecration to him, he is showing them something of the height and depth, the length and breadth of the “deep things” of God. Thus he is giving to them, through his knowledge and grace, a power divine, which is working in them both to will and to do his good pleasure. The secret of their attainment of this favored position is that, having heard of the grace of God, their hearts responded. They gave themselves to the Lord and the work of grace progressing in them is his work. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” – Eph. 2:10; Jas. 1:8.

A DOUBLE-MINDED MAN IS UNSTABLE

But now again we must recognize a division; for “they are not all Israelites who are of Israel.” Some of this fourth class are more responsible and some less responsible as to the things which the Lord has shown them respecting his character and his plan. Some take a less positive stand and seek to gain the things of this world, its honor, as well as the honor of God and the world to come. In doing this, they are not heeding the words of the Master, who assures all his disciples that such a course would mean failure, that they would neither please the world nor would they succeed in pleasing the Lord. Such may eventually be brought to life eternal, but they are not the wise virgins. They will not reign in the Millennial Kingdom. The Lord is seeking those who worship him with all their hearts, with all their souls, with all their strength, and with all their minds. These whole-souled ones are the class the Lord is specially seeking as the Queen of the Millennial Kingdom, the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife, and joint-heirs with him. He has already foreordained that only such may be members of the royal family and partakers of the divine nature, saying, “Whom he did foreknow,

he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” To these he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them, because they walk uprightly. Their hearts are upright, and their intentions are loyal to God and to his laws of justice and love. Let us get fixed in our minds the peculiar quality of this overcoming class, which is to constitute the Kingdom as Christ’s joint-heirs, that they must be loyal to God, consecrated, determined, and full of faith and trust.

These qualities cannot be expected to come to us instantaneously. Rather they are the gradual growth and development of the new mind, but the principle must be in the heart before development can be made along these lines – the principle of loyalty and determination. The little word “will” has its very important place, then, in the Christian’s character. He must be a willer, and the will must be rightly directed into full harmony with that of God.

CARVING OUT THE IDEAL

We said a moment ago that a high and good ideal is proper, is necessary, in every successful life. But to have the ideal will amount to nothing unless we are patient in its development. It is said of the great sculptor, Michael Angelo, that looking upon a block of soiled marble he began work upon it with hammer and chisel, apparently recklessly knocking off great blocks and pieces here and there. When asked what he was doing, he said, “I see an angel here and must get him out.” He had the ideal in his mind, then laboring strenuously for the attainment of it, sculptured the angel out of the block of marble. So it must be with every successful life. We must have the ideal. We must see the angel. Then we must labor for its attainment, carefully, patiently, and prayerfully. The ideal set before the Christian is not only angelic, it is more; it is divine. Nothing less can be made out of the Apostle’s words, God hath “given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.”

The same thought is elsewhere presented by St. John. Now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear how great we shall be made, what glory and honor shall be ours, but the Apostle assures us, “We know that when he shall appear

we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." If then we are to be made like him by the "change" of the "First Resurrection," if we are to see him as he is, then we may apply to ourselves the glorious things of the Lord and his excellency, respecting which the Apostle says, "Him hath God highly exalted and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth;" and again, "He has ascended far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named." If we shall be like him and share his glory, then all this glory belongs to the glorious ideal which God himself has presented to our gaze. Who with such in view would not be willing indeed to submit himself to the blows of the Lord! Who would not be willing to endure the necessary chiselings and polishings! Who would not be willing to submit himself to tribulation, knowing that "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope"! These things shed abroad in our hearts make us neither barren nor unfruitful in respect to the knowledge of God, but obtain for us an abundant entrance into his everlasting Kingdom, in association with him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood.

THE LORD HAD ESTABLISHED HIM

Our Golden Text is quite in line with what we have just received, and shows us afresh the secret of David's successes and the line along which we also should be exercised in developing character which will be pleasing to the Lord. To some in David's place the thought would have

been, "The Lord is very partial and has simply elected me to be the recipient of his favors. He cares more for me than for any other person in the nation." With this thought would have come a measure of vanity and pride which would have been very injurious to David (and to all others). These might also have said, "The Lord has seen that I am the fittest person in all this nation to be its ruler; and any person who does not fully agree with this sentiment is out of accord with the Lord and should have my frown and disapproval." Had David taken a position such as this it would have worked out a wrong character in him; and such a position taken by others would likewise work injuriously. It makes them boastful, arrogant, unloving, and unfits them for proper service to the Lord.

David's thought on the subject was the proper one. He perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel and that he had *exalted him king for his people Israel's sake*. So, too, we should remember that God has a purpose in the selection or election of the Church. As the Apostle says, "We are chosen for a purpose." God's purpose is a Kingdom which shall bless the world. And he has many others, angels and men, whom he could have chosen for this great purpose, and by his providence could have moulded and fashioned them for the accomplishment of his will. But by his mercy he has chosen "not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty," but "the weak things of this world" for the carrying out of his plans. Let this thought keep us very humble, very near to the Lord. Let us strive to learn the lessons necessary to fit and prepare us for the ruling, judging and uplifting "all the families of the earth."

THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM – R. 2002

2 Samuel 6:1-12

“O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.” – Psalms 84:12

THE special teaching of the incident of this lesson is the reverence of the Lord. “Holy and reverend is his name;” and “the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.” When God appeared unto Moses in the burning bush to speak with him, he commanded him, saying, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” So also when he appeared on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people of Israel, enveloped in a thick cloud, there were great demonstrations of awe-inspiring solemnity, and special restrictions to guard against any irreverent familiarity. Israel was also specially commanded to reverence his law and his sanctuary. – Psalms 111:9; Exodus 20:7; Psalms 89:7; Exodus 3:5; 19:11-13; Leviticus 19:30.

Reverence is defined as a feeling of profound respect, often mingled with awe and affection; a feeling of worshipful regard when directed to the divine or sacred: also conduct inspired by, or conformed to, such feeling. “The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Psalms 111:10) This is the only proper attitude of the creature toward the Creator, the Author of our being, and the Creator, Preserver and Lord of the whole universe. When he speaks, therefore, our ears should be reverently attentive to his voice, and every power alert to do his bidding. Our safety, our happiness, and that nobility of character which prompts to love and gratitude, and which promptly and wisely heeds instruction and advances in knowledge and wisdom, all depend primarily upon our supreme reverence for the Lord. And therefore the Lord would foster and cultivate in us that becoming, filial reverence that is due to his name.

The ark of God was the symbol of the divine presence in Israel, and as such it was the most sacred thing about the typical tabernacle. It was made by divine direction, as was everything belonging to the tabernacle; and its place was in the holy of holies, where only the high priest

(who represented Jesus, the great high priest) was permitted to enter; and that only once a year, on the day of atonement. As the symbol of the divine presence, like the divine presence itself, it was guarded from irreverent handling, and also from the common view. Only the priests, who typically represented the body of Christ, the saints of this age, were permitted to see or to touch it. The Levites, who represented all justified believers of this age, were appointed solemnly and reverently to bear the ark when the Tabernacle was removed from place to place, but it must be first carefully covered by the priests; for even the Levites might not look upon it nor touch it. – Numbers 4:15-20.

Previous to the event of this lesson religion was at a very low ebb in Israel, and for many years the ark of the covenant had been separated from its place in the tabernacle. As the visible symbol of the divine presence, wherever the ark went the power and favor of God went with it; as, for instance, when Israel crossed over Jordan on dry land, the waters parting before them as soon as its bearers reached the brink of the river; and again when the walls of Jericho fell before it and Israel had a great victory. But when Israel sinned against God, no such power accompanied the symbol. It was even permitted to fall into the hands of their enemies, and the Philistines were allowed to capture it while Israel suffered a great defeat. But though Israel was thus punished God did not long permit the sacred emblem of his presence to remain in Gentile hands, and the Philistines were punished for retaining it until they were glad to restore it again to Israel. In returning it there were no anointed priests among the heathen to cover it, nor Levites to bear it; so the Philistines placed it upon a new cart, and left the oxen without a driver to take their own course, and God guided them back to the land of Israel, to Beth-shemesh. Thus was the ark restored to his people. But the people of Beth-shemesh, ignoring the restrictions of the divine law with reference to the ark, presumed to look into it, and God

punished them with a great slaughter in which fifty thousand and seventy men perished. Thus they were taught to fear the Lord and to reverence his commandments; and they said, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God, and to whom shall he [this symbol of his presence] go up from us? And they sent messengers to Kirjath-jearim....And the men of Kirjath-jearim came and fetched up the ark and brought it into the house of Abinadab...and sanctified Eleazer his son to keep the ark of the Lord." There it remained for twenty years. (1 Sam. 6:1-21; 7:1,2) The Lord's dealings with Israel were on the lines of the Law Covenant made with them at Mount Horeb. The lesson to us of the New Covenant is that those favored by one part of God's covenants are held accountable proportionately. We are not, however, to think of those fifty thousand men as destroyed in the Second Death; for the trial of Israel under its Law Covenant was only typical, and did not decide the final destiny of all under it.

But when David was finally established upon the throne of all Israel he purposed to bring the ark up to Jerusalem, and to lead the people as a nation back to the hearty and reverent worship of God, the restoration of the sacred ark of the covenant being necessarily the first step to that end. He gathered together thirty thousand representative men of the nation thus to make the restoration a national act, and in so doing to call the whole people to a revival in the worship of God.

The method chosen for the conveyance of the ark to Jerusalem was not, however, according to the law which prescribed that it should be reverently borne by the Levites, but patterning after the example of the Philistines in returning it to Kirjath-jearim they set it upon a new cart drawn (probably) by oxen. While God tolerated the ignorance and inability of the Philistines, who were not his people, to comply with the requirements of his law in this matter he did not so regard the forgetfulness or carelessness of Israel, but gave them a severe reminder of his displeasure. In the midst of the general joy and rejoicing with music of many voices and all kinds of instruments the sudden jostling of the cart seemed to endanger the position of the ark

so that Uzzah put forth his hand to steady it, when instantly he was stricken down dead.

This was a severe and a most necessary rebuke. It halted the procession, and was understood by the king and all the people as a rebuke to the whole nation in that they had ignored the commandment of the Lord and had failed to properly reverence the symbol of his presence. And the fear of the Lord fell upon the king and all the people; the music and the festivities were hushed; the multitudes dispersed and thoughtfully returned to their homes; and the king, fearing to continue his purpose of taking the ark to Jerusalem, turned aside and bore it to the house of Obed-edom, a Levite, who doubtless reverently received it; for we read that in consequence "the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that he had." – 1 Chron. 13:13,14.

There the Ark remained for three months, while King David, still zealous for the Lord and anxious to lead the people to a closer observance of his worship was quietly studying the lesson of this strange providence. And it was told David, "The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God." Then David read the lesson clearly, and he determined to act upon it at once – to carry out his original purpose of bringing up the ark to the chief, the capital city, to give it the chief place of honor in the whole nation, as he had before intended, and again to call the representatives of all the people together that the restoration might be a national act and lead to a great national revival of religion. But this time he would see to it that the symbol of the divine presence should be reverently borne according to the divine directions.

"And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever... For because ye did it not at first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their

shoulders, with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded, according to the word of the Lord. Thus all Israel brought up the Ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.” – 1 Chron. 15:1,2,13-15,28.

“And it was so that when they that bare the ark had gone six paces he [David] sacrificed oxen and fatlings, and David danced before the Lord with all his might [another expressive symbol of joy], and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.” – 2 Sam. 6:13-15.

While Israel was thus taught the reverence of the Lord, the lesson applies with equal force to the Church of the Gospel age. It is not our part to change one iota of the ordinances of God. We may not turn the ordinance of the baptism

of believers into the sprinkling of infants, nor change the simplicity of the Lord’s supper, or the time of its observance as indicated by its superseding the celebration of the typical pass-over. Nor have we a right to abate the just requirements of his holy law, nor to render null and void the authority of his precepts and instructions in order to please the worldly-minded. The law and the testimonies of God must be received into good and honest hearts without regard to human philosophies and idle speculations. The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and blessed is the man that trusteth in him, and to whom a “Thus saith the Lord” is the end of all controversy on every subject.

*“If our lives were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be all sunshine,
In the sweetness of our Lord.”*

A PROPER SEEKING OF DIVINE FAVOR – R. 3252

2 Samuel 6:1-12

“Blessed are they that dwell in thy house.” – Psa. 84:4

AFTER David had been voluntarily chosen king of all the tribes of Israel, not as a result of his conquest, but as a result of his patient waiting for the Lord’s time to put him into the position of king, he took possession of Jerusalem and made it the capital city of the kingdom. Then followed wars with the Philistines, who again sought to invade the land of Israel. In these wars, under the Lord’s blessing, the Israelites were successful. It was after seven years had passed under such conditions – after the kingdom of Israel had become quite settled, and was not likely to be molested by enemies – that the scene of this lesson opens. King David, at this time about forty-four years of age, recognized the fact that religious matters had been at a low ebb in the nation for many years, and that the Lord having now blessed them by reuniting them and giving them peace, an appropriate time had come to do what he could in the way of reviving the religious sentiments of the people. His own heart ever loyal to the Lord, he desired that others should more fully appreciate the

Lord as their light and their salvation. So it is with all who truly reverence the Lord and trust in him; they are desirous of telling their joys abroad, and helping others into the same condition of peace and rest in the Lord.

The Ark of the Covenant, it will be remembered, was the chief article of furniture in the Tabernacle service which the Lord instituted at the hand of Moses in the wilderness. We have no certain knowledge of the regularity of the Tabernacle worship during the period from Joshua to date. Quite probably the services were maintained with more or less regularity. It is possible that since the Ark was the chief center of interest in connection with that service, its movements, etc., may have included the movement of the other articles of furniture of the Tabernacle, its boards, curtains, lamp, table, altars, etc.

Shortly after Israel entered Palestine Joshua located the Ark at Shiloh, twenty miles north of Jerusalem. (Josh. 18:1) That it was still there at the close of the period of the Judges, and while Samuel lived with Eli, is shown by 1 Sam. 1:3.

The sons of Eli took the Ark with them into battle against the Philistines, thus evidencing their faith in the divine institutions, although their lives were corrupt; but as a result of this misuse of the Ark, the Lord permitted it to be captured by the Philistines. However, while they possessed it a curse seemed to accompany it. In the temple of their god, Dagon, his image fell down before the Ark, and the people of the cities in which it was located were afflicted with plagues. The Philistines were glad to get rid of the Ark, and loading it upon a cart started the oxen in the direction of the Israelites. From the time of its return the Ark was in the custody of Abinadab, the priest, and his sons, one of whom was Uzzah. The Ark had thus been with the house of Abinadab in the hill Gibeah and Kirjath-jearim, otherwise called Baale, seventy years.

Any religious movement amongst the Jews must necessarily center in and about the Ark of the Covenant, for it was the symbol of the Lord's presence and of his mercy and grace toward them as a people. We remember that when in its place in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle a bright light, called the Shekinah glory, represented the Lord's presence between the two Cherubim of its golden lid, which lid was called the Mercy Seat, because upon it the blood of atonement was sprinkled each year, which covered the sins of that people for a year, and was repeated year by year continually, as a foreshadowing type of the blood of Christ, by which the real atonement is made. In the box under this lid or Mercy Seat was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded and the two Tables of the Law, symbolizing the gracious arrangements and promises of the Almighty to his people. Spiritual Israel, thank God, has inherited the realities which were thus typified. Christ is the Ark of the Covenant. In him the Law has full satisfaction. In him is vested the priestly office, represented by Aaron's rod, and in him is provided the heavenly manna. All these things are made ours by the Mercy Seat, and we have access to and are accepted before the Mercy Seat as members of the High Priest's body, by virtue of the blood of atonement shed by our Redeemer as a

propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

King David realized that the Ark of the Lord, representing his presence, should be in the capital city of the nation, making it the city of the great King, and directing the minds of Israel, not only to their earthly king and his laws and regulations, but through him to the heavenly King whom he represented. To have this event notable – to arouse the religious sentiments of the whole people – the king realized that they must all to some extent participate in the movement, and hence he gathered from all quarters thirty thousand of the chief men of the nation – not only its military representatives, but the heads of the tribes. There is a good lesson here for all spiritual Israelites who have any prominence in the carrying forward of religious work. It is not sufficient that a leader, a representative, shall attempt some prominent service for the Lord and for the Truth. It is wiser, better every way, that all of the Lord's people be invited to join directly or representatively in any prominent matter connected with the Lord's service. Even in the affairs of a small congregation it will be found disadvantageous to have one person do all the speaking, all the leading, all the serving. Far better, far wiser is it, far more in harmony with the Scriptural direction, that each should endeavor to take a part in the service, and be encouraged so to do along the lines of his natural talents and in proportion as he shall be found humble, faithful and helpful.

The holy joy and rejoicing of the journey with the Ark from Kirjath-jearim toward Jerusalem was suddenly interrupted by the jolting of the cart, which Uzzah, who had it in charge, feared would overthrow it. When he put forth his hand to steady the Ark he was smitten dead for his error. Consternation took the place of rejoicing. The thirty thousand who had come together specially to honor the Lord, and David himself also, were alarmed. Fear fell upon all, and David at once determined that this was either a mark of divine disfavor concerning the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem, or that increasingly disastrous experiences might come to him and to the city by reason of the presence of the Ark. All

were in fear, and the question now was, what to do with the holy oracle. A courageous man of the tribe of Levi, Obed-edom, was willing to receive the emblem of the Lord Jehovah's presence into his premises – probably the Ark was set up with the Tabernacle, etc., in his yard or court or appropriate place.

“David was displeased because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah” – not displeased with the Lord, we may be sure, from what we know of the man, for David's reverence for the Lord and his confidence in his righteous dealings are clearly manifest in all of his writings. We may properly understand this to mean, then, that David was displeased with his former determination – to take the Ark to Jerusalem; displeased that his good intentions respecting the revival of religion and the honoring of the Lord had thus gone astray through a lack of particularity on his own part and on the part of the priests who had charge of the movement, in that they did not obey the direct and explicit instructions of the Lord concerning the manner in which this sacred emblem of his presence should be moved. See Num. 4:15; 7:9, where it is specified that the Ark was to be carried upon the shoulders of the Levites by poles running through certain rings arranged for the purpose. That this was David's attitude of mind is evident upon the reading of the ninth verse: “David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the Ark of the Lord come to me?” We can imagine the disappointment and chagrin, not only of David, but also of the thirty thousand representative Israelites, when they scattered to their homes, disappointed respecting their good intentions, which apparently had not been fully approved by the Lord.

The statement that “the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah” is not to be understood to signify violent passion on the Lord's part, but evidently is an accommodated expression to bring down to human comprehension the fact that the Lord was displeased with the action of Uzzah, and thought proper to punish him for his neglect. Quite possibly long association with the Ark had bred in Uzzah a familiarity and loss of respect for it as representative of God; and his open violation of the divine

regulation on the highway, and in the sight of the representatives of all Israel, would have brought the divine commands and threatenings respecting the Ark and the various holy things of the Tabernacle into disrespect. The Lord resented this in the interest of his people, and incidentally took the opportunity to teach all Israel, through their representatives there assembled, a great lesson on the propriety of reverence for the Lord and for the particularities of his commands.

The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Whoever has not learned this primary lesson in reverence has not made a proper start in his worship and service. Unless he learns this lesson he is not likely to accomplish anything that will be pleasing to the Lord – he is apt to be a stumbling-block, rather than an assistance in the Lord's service. Indeed, those who are the Lord's consecrated people, and who have been privileged to handle holy things, and to enter into the Most Holy by the blood of Jesus, approaching the throne of the heavenly grace in prayer, have continual need to remember the appropriateness of reverence as they approach the Lord or engage in any service for him. All such should learn from this lesson how they touch holy things, and to do so according to the divine direction and not otherwise. The poet has noticed this tendency of some to “rush in where angels fear to tread.” Such irreverence sometimes manifests itself conspicuously in prayer, where the one who should be a worshiper, overflowing with thanksgiving for mercies received, undertakes to give direction to the great King of kings concerning the management of his work far and near and in all particulars. The Lord does not smite down such today, and make public examples of them for their irreverence, but we may be sure that, as the Apostle says, such petitions will receive no consideration of the Lord. (James 1:7) A lesson in this matter to us is that obedience is better than sacrifice. The carrying of the Ark upon the shoulders of the four Levites might not have been as majestic a procedure as the one attempted with the cart; it would nevertheless have been more pleasing to the Lord, because it was according to his directions. Let us apply this lesson carefully, and see

to it that we not only desire to do the Lord's will, but that we so desire to do it in his way that we will give close attention thereto, hearkening to the statements of his Word, or, as the prophet expresses it, let us be amongst those who tremble at his Word – who are extremely careful to note and particularly follow the Word of the Lord in every matter. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I come to make up my jewels."

To those who discern the Scriptural teaching that death is the cessation of life, and not an entrance into life more abundant, there will be no need to explain that Uzzah's conduct not only justified the Lord in making him an example before the nation, instructing the whole people in reverence, but also that no injury was done to Uzzah's eternal future. He lived before the redemption price had been paid, and before any door to eternal life had been opened. He was one member of the human family for which Christ Jesus our Lord gave his life a ransom. As a consequence, he will be one member of the human family who shall ultimately hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth from the sleep of death – to have it testified to him, in that his "due time," that God has been gracious to our entire race, and has redeemed us with the precious blood. (1 Tim. 2:4-6) It is to those who have gotten the mistaken idea which ignores the resurrection and claims that there are no dead to be resurrected, but that the dead are more alive than they ever were before, and who, therefore, think of Uzzah as being dropped immediately into the hands of devils for eternal torture – it is to these that this narrative seems perplexing and unjustly severe. Thank God for the clearer light now shining upon his character and plan!

During the three months that the Ark was at the home of Obed-edom the Lord's blessing was specially with the family, to such a degree that their neighbors took knowledge of it, and the matter eventually reached the attention of the king. We think it not unreasonable to assume that there was something in the character of Obed-edom, and the conduct of his home, in his reverence of the Lord and his confidence in him, that had to do with the blessing

accompanying the possession of the Ark; because we have no record of any special blessing coming to the house of Abinadab during the seventy years that the Ark remained there. We might draw a lesson from this applicable to spiritual Israel. The Bible in some respects represents the Lord to us, as the Ark represented him to natural Israel. To it we go for the settlement of our questions. From it we hear the message of the Lord speaking peace to our souls, the forgiveness of sins, etc. The Bible has been in many homes in Christendom for more than seventy years without bringing any special blessing to those homes; yet to some, even in a few months, it has brought inestimable favors. What is the difference? We reply that very much depends upon the genuineness of the Israelite and the degree of reverence he has for the Lord and his Word, and his carefulness to consult that Word in respect to all his affairs, and the affairs of his home. Those who have the blessing of the Lord's Word, and especially those who have any light upon its pages in this dawning of the Millennial morning, if they are not receiving great blessing from it in their own hearts, peace, joy, comfort, courage, strength, and finding such blessings also upon the members of their households, have reason to inquire to what extent they are responsible for their failure to profit thus.

Hearing of the blessing of the Lord upon the home of Obed-edom, King David took fresh courage, and realized that these different experiences of Uzzah and Obed-edom taught the lesson that those who reverently and carefully sought to know and to do the will of the Lord would have a blessing in proportion to their nearness to him, while the careless and the irreverent only need be in fear. Again the king assembled the representatives of the nation from all quarters, the chief men of the tribe and the chief representatives of the army, etc., and apparently this day of the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem was the most joyful and the most notable day in David's entire experience. See an account of this in 1 Chron. 15, 16. On this occasion care was taken to follow the divine direction, and the Ark was borne on the shoulders of the Levites, frequent stoppages being made, during which sacrifices were offered to the Lord.

On the whole we discern that the Lord's dealing in this matter taught David and all Israel a great lesson, and was very advantageous to the nation as a whole. Thus it is with all the

corrections in righteousness which the Lord may at any time give to those who are truly his; rightly received they will bring forth peaceable fruits of righteousness, reverence and obedience.

HOMING THE ARK AT JERUSALEM – R. 4258

2 Samuel 6:1-12

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.” – Psa. 100:4

THE Ark of the Covenant, wherein was deposited the tables of the Law, the basis of God's covenant with Israel, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden pot of manna, was the most sacred article of typical Israel's religious emblems. Its lid, consisting of a golden plate surmounted with two cherubs, constituted the mercy-seat – the meeting place between God and the officiating priest, who acted as mediator⁺⁺ between God and the nation of Israel. When in the Tabernacle, the divine presence was manifested upon the mercy-seat between the cherubim by a miraculous light called the shekinah glory. For seventy years prior to our lesson the Ark had been neglected and in considerable degree the religion of the nation had likewise been neglected, though it is presumed that their devotions as individuals were not entirely forgotten, even as in David's case, we note his continued reliance upon the Lord and appeals to him.

It will be remembered that the Ark was in the Tabernacle of the Lord at Shiloh when Samuel was a boy and Eli was high priest, and that later, when the latter was aged and Samuel was grown, in a battle with the Philistines the sons of Eli, who were disreputable, self-seeking, grasping characters, took the Ark into battle as a talisman or mascot, believing that the Lord would protect the Ark and that thus the army of Israel with it would have success. But the iniquity of Eli's sons had reached its full and God willed that they should fall in the battle and that the Ark should be captured by the Philistines and that Eli himself should die of heart failure upon hearing the news of the disaster, and that

Samuel should occupy the place of judge, prophet and priest to the Lord.

It will also be remembered that while the Ark was with the Philistines it brought them no blessing, but on the contrary sickness, trouble, etc., or “bad luck,” as some would say. It was thus sent from one Philistine city to another, each being glad to get rid of it until finally they put it upon a cart and started it eastward to the land of Israel. There it was received by the priest Abinadab and lodged in his own house. There it had remained for several years up to the time of this lesson, when David had become King of Israel.

FERVENT IN SPIRIT

As we have already seen King David possessed a very deep religious nature, whose center or will had been early turned in full consecration to the Lord. Realizing that God was the real King of Israel and that he himself was merely God's vice-gerent or representative, David sought to fulfil the divine will and arrangement by inaugurating the Tabernacle and its religious services, as God had appointed through Moses. Accordingly a royal decree went forth summoning the priests, Levites and tribal princes and religious people of the various parts of the dominion for the reinauguration of the public worship of Jehovah God. The scope of the decree may be judged from the assembled multitude – 30,000. It matters not to us that some are inclined to impugn the motives of the king and to claim that this was merely a policy stroke of the king for the binding of the people to himself through his religious instincts and a revival of ancient customs. If it were merely policy on David's part, it was good policy, wise policy, helpful policy as respects the people, as well as in respect to unifying and solidifying his

⁺⁺ Please see January 1909 Issue where the author says the word “advocate” should have been used instead of “mediator.” – site Editor

Kingdom. To be religious did not necessitate the avoidance of such things as would be good for the people, even though some might impugn the motive. But the love which thinketh no evil should be experienced and the king should be given credit for the best of motives in calling for the fulfilment of divine commands given through Moses.

Indeed, those who have learned to look for the Lord's leading, amongst the Lord's people, in all the affairs of life should be convinced that God did not leave the affairs of his people Israel in the hands of David – that the Lord himself was King and Director of all of the interests of that chosen and covenanted people. In our estimate, therefore, it matters not what motive David may have had in calling this convocation, because God was behind it and David, wittingly or unwittingly was being used as the divine agent in accomplishing the divine purposes. And it will surely do us good to call to mind that similarly the Lord has a special interest in all the matters which pertain to Spiritual Israel and that no great or important matters that pertain to Spiritual Zion take place without his notice, without his permission. Only those who thus recognize the divine supervision of the Church's interest can rest their hearts in faith and confidence or feel assured that God is working all things according to the counsel of his own will.

We feel specially impressed with the special evidences which show that God's supervision was particularly with Israel in their harvest time, at the end of the age, in all of the affairs pertaining to our Lord's first advent: his birth in the "fulness of time," his death "in due time," the number of his disciples, the one that should betray him, his crucifixion as a malefactor, the rejection of Israel because of the rejection of Messiah, the anointing of the "most holy" at Pentecost, the final overthrow of the nation, A.D. 70. And if we note such particular care by the Lord over natural Israel, may we not experience as much faith in his care for Spiritual Israel in the present harvest time? Surely the lessons we have learned in the Scriptures respecting the harmonious parallels between the Jewish Age and the Gospel Age, between the harvest of that age and the harvest of this age, justify fully our

expectation that the Lord will be equally careful in overruling even the smallest affairs in the harvest of this age.

Whoever can by faith reach and maintain this position will surely have a confidence in the Lord which will be very helpful to him. The trials and difficulties of the Jewish harvest seemed like calamities at the moment of their permission, and it is only by hind-sight directed by the holy Spirit and prophetic Word that we are able to discern God's providences there. Similarly calamities, adversities, peculiar conditions, etc., are to be expected in this harvest, which at the time of occurrence will not be understood by any except those of large faith and intimate acquaintance with the prophecies, and even they will be obliged to walk by faith and not by sight. It will be *afterward* that the divine supervision in every detail will be discernible. Meantime the Lord wills evidently that the Spiritual Israelite, instructed in the school of Christ, shall have learned the lessons of faith and obedience from the harvest time of typical Israel.

"OBEDIENCE BETTER THAN SACRIFICE"

The occasion of bringing the Ark of God to the capital city of the nation was to be a gala day of rejoicing, long to be remembered from one end of Israel's land to the other. King David rejoiced at the unanimity of religious sentiment everywhere prevalent with the people who accepted his instructions. The players of musical instruments of every kind had been engaged so as to accompany the procession. An ox-cart, specially prepared, was provided and the Ark was put upon the cart and the two sons of the high-priest accompanied it, the one preceding and the other driving. The good intentions of all concerned are not to be misjudged, but a serious error was made in that the divine order in connection with the matter was neglected.

(1) God had made no such arrangement of transferring the Ark on a cart, however honorable that may have seemed to David and to the priests.

(2) It was not the business of the priests at all to transfer the Ark, for, although they ranked high in the Lord's services, it was the Levites who were commissioned to bear the Ark by its staves on their shoulders. In neglecting these

divine provisions an opening was made for all kinds of irregularity in connection with the services of the Tabernacle, which the Lord designed should not be reinaugurated. It was proper that the king, the priests, the nobles of all the tribes and the religious people of the nation should have a lesson that would not soon be forgotten respecting the importance of carrying out every detail of the divine law in respect to the worship and services of the Tabernacle. The lesson which the Lord gave on this occasion not only was profitable to the king and the nation, but has been profitable in a large degree to Spiritual Israel during this Gospel Age.

When the time came for the manifestation of the Lord's disapproval of the neglect of the Law on the part of those who desired to honor him, the oxen stumbled and, to steady the Ark, Uzzah, an under-priest, put forth his hand, when immediately God's displeasure was manifested in his falling down dead. The gala day was suddenly spoiled. The joy of the king and of the people vanished. Instead came distress and fear – if because of some blunder even one of the priests should be thus smitten down of the Lord, what would be the dangers as respects others! King David promptly concluded that he dare not have the Ark with him and near his own house at Jerusalem, as previously intended. The procession stopped and, turning aside, the Ark was deposited in the home of Obed-edom.

“THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM”

One of the first lessons necessary for every Israelite, natural and spiritual, is reverence. Without this quality we shall be sure to err. There is an old and true adage, “Familiarity breeds contempt,” and this applies to religious things and to God, as well as to earthly things and to men. The worship of God, which King David was to inaugurate in the typical temple built by Solomon, must be founded upon a proper base of respect and reverence. It must be recognized as fundamental, that obedience is a pre-requisite to the offering of acceptable sacrifices to the Lord.

The fact that this lesson was taught at the expense of human life has seemed to us terrible, because of our delusion in respect to eternal

torment, which led us to suppose that poor Uzzah not only ceased from human activities and pleasures but that he was immediately dropped into a seething abyss of hell-flames and torture. Now, by the grace of God, we see that this is not the teaching of the Scriptures, and this relieves the narrative of its distressing features. We perceive that Uzzah lost his life a year or so earlier, as the case might have been, than he otherwise would have lost it, and that it was for the Lord's glory and for the good of the people that he died as he did and not by disease or accident. We are to remember that he was already, like the rest of the race, under condemnation of death and that God had a perfect right to require his life at any moment. We are to remember that all that he lost was of God's purpose and in God's time will be made good to him, in his awakening in the resurrection of judgment, when he shall come forth from the tomb to more favorable conditions than those under which he was living – to the antitypical jubilee of restitution to all who will receive it.

Spiritual Israelites must learn this lesson – that in handling the holy things of the divine Word, the divine plan, the services of the Truth, the ministry of the Church of Christ, they are not at liberty to do as they please, merely assuring themselves that their motives are good. It is their duty to note carefully the divine will and to follow out the program in the order of the directions of the divine Word. Furthermore it is for us to learn, too, that God designs that not all the services are to be performed by one or two persons, but that there is a part in the service of God for all of the consecrated and that each is to be granted the opportunity for such service, as the Lord has planned. Some may occupy the priestly service, which others may not enjoy, and some may occupy the Levites' service, and their opportunities are not to be taken from them. Again another important lesson to be learned by Spiritual Israelites is that God is guiding his own affairs; that he is as much interested in them as we are and more, too, and that he is fully capable of their management. Some of the Lord's people carry great burdens which do not belong to them and which hinder them from the rest and joy which otherwise

might be theirs. Others are **so** active, so zealous, that they fancy that the work of God would not be accomplished at all unless they did it. The Lord wishes us to learn the important lesson, "In all thy ways acknowledge him," "and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart." Only by recognizing the Lord as first in every feature of his work and by recognizing ourselves as honored by him in every opportunity of service shall we be able to bring blessing to ourselves and to others.

PROFITING BY EXPERIENCE

If we think of David's course in refusing to bring the Ark to Jerusalem, as at first intended, as a mark of petulance and anger against the Lord for spoiling the gala day, we shall make a great mistake. David's character was too reverential for anything of this kind. He was the man who could fight Goliath, but not the man who could fight against God. Every act of his life was marked by reverence and humility and a recognition of God's justice and power and love and of David's own humility in the Lord's sight. Meantime the Lord was teaching a great lesson to the whole nation, which heard of the sad disappointment of the people with reference to the great gala day and that God's displeasure was shown in such a striking way that even a priest was stricken down for neglect of the divine supervision, and that the Ark was now in the house of Obed-edom.

King David was watching, and noted these results, and again his heart went out longingly with the wish that the chief emblem of divine worship should rest under the shadow of the Lord, near to the Lord and to the shekinah glory. Evidently he made investigation as to the handling of the Ark and concluded that the mistake was that of himself and of the priests and that God's blessing and not a curse would go with the Ark. So at the end of three months he made arrangements afresh for the bringing of it to his capital. Again the visitors came, the bands of music in order, and the procession accompanied the Ark again towards Jerusalem. We read that David brought the Ark from the house of Obed-edom unto the City of David with gladness and with joy.

A description of the festival procession may be found in I Chron. 15 and 16. It was decidedly the greatest day in David's career. But this time, in harmony with the lesson taught, there were no innovations, no cart driven by priests after the manner of the heathen, but instead a strict adherence to the divine direction. The Ark was borne on the shoulders of the Levites. The lesson was learned that obedience to the letter is better than sacrifice. In the joyous procession the king apparently led, playing upon the harp, while with him the singers and the musicians were divided into several companies which sang parts in alternation. See Psalms 105, 96 and 106. The 24th Psalm is supposed to have been sung as a marching accompaniment as the procession was entering Jerusalem, where a tent or tabernacle had already been placed for the reception of the Ark. Seven choirs formed part of the procession, according to Josephus.

OTHER LESSONS FOR SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

Members of antitypical David – the Christ – are to learn lessons from all the experiences of life; that with them it may be as it was with David in this case, when the proposed gala day was turned into a day of mourning and fear. Similarly our mistakes are to be received rightly and the reasons for them rightly appreciated that, instead of stumbling-stones, they may be stepping-stones which shall draw us "Nearer, my God, to thee." Another lesson is that we should desire to be nearer to the Lord.

The Ark in the Tabernacle near to David's home represented not its glorious resting place, but its present dwelling. The condition of the Church in glory is represented by the Temple of Solomon. We, of course, long to be there and to enter into all those glorious things of the future, but that is impossible until the Lord's time, even as David was not permitted to build the Temple. Thus his life shows a picture not of the Beloved in glory, but of the flesh in the trial state below. As David desired to be near to the Tabernacle, close to the Lord, so we, members of the Beloved, should find ourselves longing for a closer walk with God, a nearness to his arrangement of the mercy-seat – Christ Jesus. This will signify a desire to be near to the members of his Body, the Church, to have fellowship with them,

because the condition of things is represented as being the “holy” of the Tabernacle, with only a vail between this and that glorious condition beyond the vail. And is it not so that whoever desires to be near to the Lord and to those in fellowship with him, along the lines of the new nature, will give heed to the privileges of showing forth his praise by manifesting their love for the brethren and their confidence and faith in the Lord and in his light and wisdom and love?

“ENTER INTO HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING”

In some respects the City of God is the Church – not the nominal system, but the true Church, whose “names are written in heaven.” According to the Apostle the justified believers can enter into this City only by consecration. The Apostle exhorts, “I beseech you, brethren, present your bodies a living sacrifice.” There are some who seem to enter this gateway of sacrifice

in sorrow and with a measure of regret – with a feeling that they are sacrificing too much. They either overestimate the things sacrificed or they underestimate the things which they are securing. It would have been better for such if they had sat down and counted the cost before taking the step of consecration. The proper attitude of all is to take a right view of that which now is and that which is to come and what we have contracted to do as priests, doing it, then, joyfully. And thus this lesson is learned, that we “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.” The appreciative child of God will be able to “count it all joy” when he falls into various difficulties, because it will be a trial of his faith that “Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope,” which maketh not ashamed and is a preparation for the glories of the Kingdom.

CITY OF DAVID – CITY OF GOD – R. 5679

2 Samuel 6:1-19; Psalm 24

“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the House of Jehovah.” – Psalm 122:1

GUIDED by Divine providence, King David sought a new capital after he had been anointed king over all Israel. The city of Jerusalem had for centuries been an impregnable fortress, held by the Jebusites. They claimed that even the blind and the cripples could defend it against any foe, so advantageously was it situated. But when the time came, it was delivered into the hands of King David and became the capital of Israel. One of the first acts of the new king was to provide himself a palace fitting to the dignity of the nation and the court. To this end he obtained from King Hiram of Tyre not only material, but also skilled craftsmen.

Soon King David’s spiritual nature, so marked and represented in his Psalms, began to assert itself in respect to the government of Israel. It was not sufficient that idolatry should not be tolerated amongst God’s Covenant people. The symbols of God’s presence should be honored once more. The Tabernacle at Nob had fallen into disuse when King Saul destroyed the priests because they gave comfort to David; and King Saul had had the Tabernacle removed to

Gibeon; but the Ark was not in the Tabernacle, and had not been for a long time.

We recall that the wicked sons of Eli had taken the Ark with them into the battle with the Philistines; that in the defeat it was captured by the Philistines; that in its presence, Dagon, the Philistine idol, fell down broken; and that in whatever city the Ark rested, there were chastisements from the Lord until the Philistines returned it to Kirjath-Jearim. There it had remained for seventy years, until the events now noticed. King David made the transfer of the Ark to its new Tent, or Tabernacle, a very important affair, sending word to various parts of the nation, assembling some thirty thousand warriors and multitudes of people of deep religious inclination who desired to be witnesses to this great new religious movement, which all hoped would mean the bringing of God’s blessing back to the nation, as of old.

A GREAT LESSON IN REVERENCE

King David, intent upon honoring God, had nevertheless neglected to look particularly into the Divine Law regulating the Ark and its move-

ment – who should touch it, etc. Divine providence now gave him a great lesson in respect to reverence for the Almighty and carefulness in respect to the Laws. He had esteemed the Ark, but not highly enough. Really, it was the most important of all the various furniture of the Tabernacle.

The Brazen Altar and the Laver were in the Court; the Table of Shew-bread, which was overlaid with gold, the Golden Candlestick, and the Golden Altar of Incense were in the Holy. But in the Most Holy the only article of furniture was the Ark. In shape it was like a box – about four feet long, two feet high, and two feet wide. It had a pole at each side, by which the Levites were to bear it on their shoulders. It was overlaid with gold; and inside the box were the Tables of the Law, a Golden Pot of Manna, preserved from the Wilderness times, and Aaron's rod, by which miracles had been wrought. The top of the Ark was its most particular feature. It was a solid plate of gold, wrought out above in the shape of two cherubim, whose faces looked inward and whose wings stretched forward.

The Divine direction was that the priests should cover the Ark in a particular manner, symbolical of certain things; and that then only the Levites should have the care of it, to bear it upon their shoulders. Neglecting these matters, the king had a new cart made and oxen to draw the cart, as though this would be a more dignified way to bring it than any other thought of. But it was not God's way; and a lesson of reverence for God and for the Ark, which symbolized His character and His Mercy-Seat, must be given.

The appropriate time came when the oxen, drawing the cart over a smooth, sloping, stone surface, allowed it to tilt a little. Then it was that Uzzah stretched forth his hand to steady the Ark, and was immediately smitten dead with a bolt of lightning. This evidence of Divine displeasure with the procedure brought all the festivities to a sudden termination; and King David feared to bring it too near to him, lest it should do other injury. The procession stopped; turning aside, the Ark was delivered to the home of Obed-edom the Levite, possibly a priest.

The whole people thus learned the lesson of reverence – a lesson, by the way, which seems to be as much needed today as at any time. Irreverence is frequently manifested by the world; but this does not astound us as much as when we find irreverence manifested by those who profess to be the Lord's consecrated people, His Royal Priesthood. It is sometimes irreverence of manner, sometimes irreverence of language, sometimes the making of jokes on religious things or on passages of Scripture. Everything of the kind is surely injurious to the individual, as well as to his influence with others.

We are not to forget that Uzzah was not sent to eternal torment; but that he merely fell asleep in death, and that his mistake, which taught a good lesson in his time, will not inure to his disadvantage in the future. Meantime, another lesson was taught; for the Ark at the home of Obed-edom began to bring blessings, of just what character we are not informed, but blessings of such a nature that they attracted the attention of many. Among them King David noticed. Again his heart turned to the original thought that Jerusalem should be not only the City of David, but the City of God, God's dwelling-place, as represented by the presence of the Ark and the Shekinah Glory-light which shone between the two cherubim, as indicating the presence of God with His people, Israel.

GOD'S OWN HOLY NATION

We are not situated in the same way as were David and the Israelites. There is no nation in the world today that is God's Kingdom. When He took away the crown from Zedekiah, 606 B.C., He declared through the Prophet, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more until He comes whose right it is; and I will give it unto Him." (Ezekiel 21:25-27) We believe that the time for the giving of the Kingdom to Messiah and the fulfilment of our prayers, "Thy Kingdom come," is near at hand. But, in the meantime, no earthly kingdom is God's Kingdom except in the sense that St. Peter declares the Church to be the holy nation, a peculiar people of God. (1 Peter 2:9) But even then, it is not a sectarian system that is referred to – not the Baptist Church, nor the Methodist, nor the

Presbyterian, nor the Lutheran, the Anglican or the Roman. The true Church of Christ is the unlimited Church, to which properly belongs the name Catholic in the sense that it is general; for that word means general, or universal.

The Church of Christ is the one Church throughout the whole world; and its members are those who are united to Christ by consecration and by Divine acceptance through the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Some of its members may be found in the Roman Church, some in the Anglican, some in the Presbyterian, some in the Baptist, some in the Lutheran, some in the Methodist and others, and some outside of all these. But this is the only holy nation that God recognizes; and it will not be organized as a new nation fully until the resurrection change shall glorify the Lord's people with Himself beyond the

Nor can we even claim that it is a family matter; rather, as the Scriptures show, it is an individual matter. Here one, there another, the Church of Christ is scattered throughout the world. Only the consecrated belong to it or have its privileges and the fellowship with the Father and with the Son which the Ark of the Covenant would imply. One exception to this rule might be noted; namely, the one mentioned by St. Paul – the children of believing parents, who are counted in with their parents as participators in God's favors, blessings and care until such time as they reach a development of mind that would enable them to decide for themselves, either to make a full consecration to the Lord and be individually accepted by Him through the begetting of the Holy Spirit, or to turn aside and be part of the world.



People Sang at Church – Lifeway Collection

When King David was ready for the bringing up of the Ark the second time, some three months after the first attempt, which failed, he had studied the matter more carefully; and this time there was no new cart, but the Divinely directed method – the Levites, bearing the Ark upon their shoulders. It is not for us to be ingenious and inventive in respect to Divine methods and services, but rather to be students of the Divine will, searching the Scriptures that we may know the will of God and do it. The lesson which King David learned is one which all of God's people may well take to heart.

Veil; as it is written, we shall be like Him, shall see Him as He is and shall share His glory.

We can no more expect the world to appreciate the Truth of God and the presence of God than the Israelites could have expected that the Philistines, on the one hand, and the Moabites, on the other hand, would accept the Lord. Only God's Covenant people can appreciate Him and His arrangements. He is in **their** midst only.

DANCING BEFORE THE LORD

The Record tells that, besides the thousands of warriors who acted as a guard and gave dignity to the procession, and the multitudes of people who met the Ark at various villages on the way, there were trumpeters, rattlers, and players on stringed instruments, who made joyful manifestations of appreciation of the great event of God's return to the nation as

represented in the Ark's return. Another arrangement was that of having the Levites chant, one to the other, the different portions of a certain Psalm which King David had composed for this very occasion. It is made a part of this lesson. – Psalm 24.

King David joined with the others in his manifestation of delight, and danced before the Lord. It would appear that this custom of a dignified rhythmic moving of the feet in harmony with music is a common form even today in far Eastern countries. Mr. Clark tells us how there was such a dance at a gathering of the Christian Endeavorers at one of their meetings in India, and how dignified and beautiful it appeared.

As the grand procession neared the city of Jerusalem, it was met by the women of the city with rejoicing. At the head of these should have been Michal, King David's wife, the daughter of King Saul. But not so. She was in a cynical, proud mood. Was she not the daughter of King Saul? Had not her husband David been a poor shepherd boy, and then an outlaw for a time? On his coming home she criticized him for his manifestations of joy in connection with the bringing in of the Ark. She said that it was undignified and reproved him. King David reminded her that the Lord had taken the kingdom from her father and given it to him, and that he thus had the Lord's favor and thus relied on Him. And the proud woman was apparently thereafter left to herself, the bare mention being made that she was thenceforth childless.

THE PSALM WAS PROPHETIC

As the Ark represented Christ, in whom are hidden all the Wisdom and Power of God and in whom center all of God's blessings for men, so the bringing of the Ark into the city corresponded in a measure to our receiving of Christ. All such realize that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" – that every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father and through the Son. The world and all that dwell therein are subjects of these blessings.

God is founding His New Order of things in the midst of the seas of discontent – amongst those who are not established and in harmony

with God – the restless masses. He invites us to ascend into His Holy Hill, His Holy Kingdom, and to be established in His Holy Place, in the spiritual Divine nature. He stipulates that none can be of this class except upon certain conditions; namely, a pure heart, an honest heart, and clean hands, righteous living to the best of his ability. These are all expected to swear allegiance to God. This is styled their Covenant with Him.

Jesus was the first of these Covenanters; and all of the Church must walk in His steps, if they would be with Him in His Holy Kingdom. These must not lift up their soul to falsehood nor swear deceitfully. God will require of them all that they have covenanted with Him. Only such will receive the blessing of the Lord, and only to such will His righteousness be imputed through Christ.

Never more than today has this Lesson seemed to need to be impressed. How many today confess that although they have made a covenant of sacrifice and vowed to the Lord, they are not considering this nor keeping their vows! How many indeed confess that they are speaking falsely in respect to their creeds, denying privately what they publicly have declared to be their faith! Surely such a course must be reprehensible in God's sight and such cannot hope to be of the Kingdom.

Then follows in the Psalm a declaration that the Children of Israel are those who seek the Lord, and who request that the King of Glory come in, even the Lord, mighty, powerful, able to deliver from sin and from the power of sin – death. We are still waiting for the entrance of this King of Glory in the full sense of the word. He declares that He will be revealed in flaming fire, so far as the world is concerned – a great "Time of Trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Daniel 12:1) Many Bible students see this trouble already beginning in the awful war now spreading, and are expecting the fiery anarchy of it to result in the near future. Then quickly will come the still small Voice, the Divine influence, the mighty power of the Savior, which will deliver from sin, from death, and from Satan, who shall be bound for a thousand years.

GOD'S PROMISES TO DAVID – R. 2010

2 Samuel 7:4-16

“In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.” – Psa. 71:1

DAVID was now fairly settled and prosperous in his kingdom, and the nation was enjoying a season of rest and peace; the people were united, the Ark was in Jerusalem and the religious zeal of the nation was revived. For all these blessings David was grateful; and, desiring to give some tangible expression of his gratitude, he thought of the Ark of God, the symbol of the divine presence, dwelling in a movable tent or tabernacle while he himself dwelt in a house of cedar; and he therefore conceived the thought of utilizing the present seemingly favorable opportunity for erecting a house for the Lord where the symbol of his presence might abide continually.

With this thought in mind, David consulted with the prophet Nathan, who encouraged him to carry out his noble purpose. Both men desired to render supreme honor and reverence to the Lord and thought the time to do so had come. In this, however, they were mistaken, as God showed Nathan that night, saying, “Go and tell my servant David,” etc.

God showed David that his time for the erection of the more permanent residence had not yet come, and that he had given no command to

that effect yet, nor inquired, “Why build ye not me a house of cedar?” etc. (Vs. 7) Although for a time the nation was enjoying a season of rest and peace, there was yet much to be done in the way both of conquest and of organization, which would of necessity interfere with the proposed work; besides which, the nation must not consider itself so firmly established in the land of promise, until first, according to the divine direction, they had taken full possession and subdued their enemies. When they had done this, they might consider themselves settled, and build for the Lord a more permanent residence.

It was further shown that this work of preparation would require the entire period of David’s reign; but the assurance was given to David that his purpose was appreciated and that, though God’s time had not yet come, nor would it come in David’s time, yet his son and successor should build the house and should enjoy a peaceful and prosperous reign, while David was permitted to prepare the way for it, both by gathering and preparing the materials for its construction, and also by subduing their enemies and ordering the affairs of the kingdom. This was the work to which David was appointed: he was necessarily a man of war, although a lover of peace.

In this promise concerning the prosperous reign of David’s son and heir to his throne, it is plain that there was more implied than was ever fulfilled in Solomon. True, the reign of Solomon was one of unprecedented prosperity and he did build the house of the Lord; but his kingdom did come to an end, the glory departed, the temple perished, whereas the promise to David was, “Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever.” – Verse 16.

The fact is that the promise or prophecy was of twofold application, referring only partially to Solomon and the temple which Solomon was to build, but ultimately to David’s greater Son and Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, whose kingdom is indeed an everlasting kingdom and of whose



David Purchasing the Threshing Floor by William Hole

dominion there shall be no end, and also to that glorious spiritual temple, the gospel Church, exalted and glorified with her Head, toward which all the world shall worship during the Millennial reign. The reign of David, the man of war, prefigured the preparatory work of this Gospel age – the struggles of God’s people against the oppositions of sin, the preparation of the living stones for the spiritual temple; while the reign of Solomon represented the glorious reign of Christ and the wealth and wisdom and peace and prosperity which shall characterize it.

The purpose of David to build a house for the Lord which should surpass in magnificence the king’s palace and every other structure, and thus be an expression on the part of the people of their supreme reverence for him and the symbol of his presence, and the Lord’s sanction and subsequent execution of the generous purpose, are often referred to to-day in justification of the large outlay of the church’s means in elegant church buildings and furnishings. But apparently the matter did not appear so to the apostles and the early Church; for they met from house to house and in upper rooms and erected no church buildings: they only sought some

convenient place for simple accommodation. Nor do the sacred records give a single intimation that it is the duty of the church to provide in various localities elegant buildings with lofty steeples, chiming bells, grand organs, upholstered pews, stained windows, with elegant pulpit orators and trained choirs.

Nor do the temple structure and furnishment afford any precedent in justification of these things to-day. The Jewish age was a typical age; its temple and all its appointments were types of the higher spiritual things to come; the typical Ark which rested in the typical temple was a symbol of the divine presence in the midst of his future spiritual Israel; and the typical shadows pass away when the realities come.

It is very manifest, moreover, that the church buildings of to-day are more for pride and show, and to attract and hold the rich and influential, and to repel the poor, than to glorify God in any way. Let us not be deceived with the vain pretensions of earthly glory; but, shunning these things, let us remember that wherever two or three are met together in the Lord’s name, that is the house of God, and there his glory is seen and felt. – John 4:23,24; Matt. 18:20.

THE GRACIOUS CALL – *excerpt from R. 1364*

To those who thus heed the invitation there is a special promise given, over and above the promise of life and the satisfaction now, of receiving this gift by faith. It is this: “I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” [He will make an agreement with such that they may share in those sure, holy promises which belong to his beloved Son – the kingdom, power and glory of the world to come.] The name David signifies **beloved**; and the Apostle shows (Acts 13:33,34) that it here refers to our Lord, the Beloved Son of God. And not only is the name David sometimes used in prophecy, as here, to refer to God’s beloved Son, but David himself frequently figures as a type of our Lord, as in Psalm 22:1,17,18. Moreover, “the sure mercies” or holy promises here referred to as belonging to our Lord, and in which we of this Gospel age are invited to share with him, were made to King David (2 Sam. 7:8-16) and will

evidently have a partially literal fulfilment, although the substance is in Christ.

These sure mercies or holy things of David (Christ) are clearly set forth in Psalm 89:20-37:

(1) That the Lord would anoint him to be a great king, and that he would establish his throne forever – as long as the sun and moon endure; (2) That no enemy should have advantage over him, but that all should be made subservient to him; (3) That God’s covenant to bless all the families of the earth should stand fast with him, or be fulfilled by his reign; (4) That his children (by redemption and regeneration) should have such reformatory discipline under his reign as would be necessary for their correction and establishment in righteousness; (5) And that all the willing and obedient who shall profit by the discipline shall endure forever – that thus he might see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT – R. 3258

2 Samuel 7:4-16

“Thy throne shall be established forever.” – 2 Sam. 7:16

DAVID, during the first six years of his reign over all Israel, was kept actively engaged in resisting the enemies of Israel and enlarging the borders of the nation, in harmony with the original divine grant. Having to a considerable extent accomplished these things, and having built for himself a palace in Jerusalem, the reverential elements of his nature noticed the inconsistency of his dwelling in a palace while the typical residence of Israel's great King, Jehovah, was but the Tabernacle tent. His reverential impulses promptly suggested the building of a temple to replace the Tabernacle, and properly enough he consulted the Prophet Nathan, who rejoiced in this manifestation of the King's loyalty to the Lord, and indorsed the program. That same night, however, the Lord gave the prophet a message for the King, which, although it showed appreciation of David's intentions, forbade their execution, explaining that the reason that the Lord's presence was manifested in a tent, and not a permanent structure, was not because the Lord had not thought of this, nor because others of his servants would not have been glad to have erected such a structure at his bidding, but because the divine plan was otherwise. The Tabernacle was for the time being preferred, for certain reasons not explained at the time. The Lord, however, did assure David that by and by he would have a permanent temple, and that David's successor and son should erect it.

The Lord's people may learn a valuable lesson from this incident. We are not to conclude that, because our plans and projects are reverential and designed to be for the glory of God, therefore they must have the divine approval. With spiritual Israel, as with David, it is frequently true that “My ways are not as your ways, nor my thoughts [plans] as your thoughts [plans]; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, saith the Lord.” Those who are of David's disposition – “after God's own heart” – will not only

consult with those whose judgment they would consider helpful, as David consulted with Nathan, but if subsequently the Lord rejects their best judgment, and does not cooperate in the execution of their plans, will do as David did in this instance: they will uncomplainingly acquiesce in the Lord's plans, and cooperate therewith, and thus further attest that they are of the kind the Lord loves to honor and call Beloved. To these also the Lord will grant other special blessings and favors, as he did to David.

The spirit of David in this matter – his desire to honor the Lord and to build him a great house or temple – finds its parallel in the heart sentiments of every true Christian. We do not refer to those who merely take pleasure in erecting grand temples of stone, but specially to those whose ambition it would be to organize the Church of the present time – to glory in its grandeur and completeness of organization and function and service for the Lord. Those not in the right condition of heart, heady, self-willed, confident that their good intentions must be pleasing to the Lord, have proceeded to build various structures, each claiming his to be the temple of the Lord. As they have neither sought nor received divine instruction on the subject, but are following their own ideals, there is necessarily considerable diversity in these buildings, each seeming to its builders to be the right, proper and appropriate temple of God. These temples now number hundreds, the larger and more imposing ones being the Roman Catholic temple, the Greek Catholic temple, the Church of England temple, the Methodist temple, the Lutheran temple, the Presbyterian temple, the Baptist temple, the Congregational temple, etc.

But a small class follow the example of David, and receive instruction from the Lord to the effect that the present is not the time for temple-building; that he could have built his temple heretofore, and found many willing to serve him in this respect, but that he prefers that his representation in the world in the present time

shall be extremely simple and unostentatious. Such receive of the Lord assurances, however, that in his own time and way, under a succeeding form of the kingdom, a much more glorious temple shall be constituted than would be possible for us to build at the present time – an enduring temple which shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. All who are of the Davidic character, of the disposition **beloved** of the Father – acceptable members of his dear, beloved Son – will, as soon as they learn of the divine purpose, promptly submit themselves, and cooperate in the divine plan. That plan in the type was that David, as the man of war, battling for the right, and severely tried and disciplined, should represent the saints of God in the present militant condition, warring with the world, the flesh and the devil, and becoming in their own hearts and faith strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. According to the same type it is the mission of the present time to prepare the gold, silver and precious things for the future temple – ready for its construction. In the type these were literal things, but in the antitype, as the Apostle shows, the Lord's saints are the gold, silver and precious stones, which very shortly now, in the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, will be all thoroughly organized on the plane of glory, honor and immortality, and filled eternally with the life and glory of the Father. As David and his work of preparing for the temple, typifies the Church in this present time, and our work of preparing ourselves and each other for the glories to follow, so Solomon's Kingdom which followed represents the Kingdom of the glorified Christ – the real Kingdom, of which the present is but the embryo, and the construction of Solomon's Temple typifies the resurrection of the Church, in which all the members shall come together in glorious completeness, in the morning of the Millennial day. "Weeping may endure for a night [in connection with our fightings with foes without and within, and suffering for righteousness' sake], but joy cometh in the morning [when that which is perfect shall have come, and when that which is in part shall have been done away]." (Psa. 30:5) "God shall help her [the Church, the Bride of Christ], and that right early" – in the morning. – Psa. 46:5.

In connection with this refusal of David's proposition the Lord gave him very gracious encouragement, reminding him that every step of his onward way had been guided from on high, and that it was because he had faithfully looked to the Lord as his guide and counsellor that he had now reached the degree of development and relationship to the Lord and to the Kingdom occupied. So the Lord encourages all who are of this David class in spiritual Israel today. All who are looking to the Lord, and hearkening to his Word, are reminded that the Lord is attending to his own work in his own way, and that it is a far superior way to anything which we could devise. We are pointed to the low estate we occupied on the animal plane, and how the Lord by his grace has advanced us step by step, until now we are children of God, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him. It is for us to appreciate the lesson of past experiences, and to trust that he who took us from the horrible pit and the miry clay, and placed our feet upon the Rock, and put the new song into our mouths, is able to bless us still further, and that in proportion as we hearken to his Word, through his prophet, the Scriptures.

The succeeding verses of the lesson mingle and commingle the natural blessings upon David and his literal posterity and upon natural Israel, with the still greater blessings that are to uplift all who will come into covenant relationship with God through the antitypical Son of David, the glorified Christ and his Millennial Kingdom. Vs. 10 undoubtedly had a measurable fulfilment in literal Israel, in that for several hundred years they remained in their own land, under their own covenant – an experience very different from that preceding under the rule of the Judges. But the time when the Lord will plant them, and when they shall be moved no more and afflicted no more by the wicked, must apply to the grander restoration of the future, when, as he has promised, he will gather them out of all nations and peoples whither they are now scattered, and bring them into their own land. This later prophecy is in full agreement with the one made to David by Nathan. Then, as another Scripture declares, the Lord will restore

to Israel her lawgivers as at the first, and her judges as at the beginning. Then it will be, too, that the house of David will be firmly established in great David's greater Son, the glorified Christ. Here the promises to the natural and to the spiritual seeds are more or less intertwined, just as they were in the Abrahamic promise. The seed of Abraham was both an earthly seed and a heavenly, as the sand of the sea and as the stars of heaven – the natural seed and the spiritual – and as the Apostle declares, the promise is sure to both of these, its proper part to each. – Rom. 4:16. Compare Rom. 11:25-32.

David's throne was perpetual through the line of Solomon down to Zedekiah, and when the Lord rent the Kingdom from the hands of Zedekiah he did not give it to another family, but proclaimed an interregnum – a suspension of David's Kingdom, which might not go to another. The language of the prophecy concerning Zedekiah is, "O thou profane and wicked prince, whose time is come that iniquity should have an end: remove the diadem, take off the crown; this shall no more be the same. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it unto him." (Ezek. 21:27) There has been no King of Israel, from Zedekiah's day to the present – the overturning of the Kingdom has been very thorough. The kings who reigned over Israel at the time of the first advent, and previously and subsequently, were not Israelitish kings, nor of Israelitish birth, but were appointees of Gentile governments, which, from Zedekiah's day to the present, have trodden under foot the sacred land. The fulfilment of this promise to David is nevertheless secure, sure as the word and oath of the Almighty; and we who were by nature Gentiles, but who have been betrothed to Abraham's great Son and David's great Son and Lord, are still looking forward to and praying and patiently waiting for the fulfilment of this promise, saying, "Thy Kingdom

come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" – even as our Lord taught us to do. As soon as this antitypical David, "Beloved," shall have assumed the reigns of government at the time appointed of the Father, he, as the antitype also of Solomon, on the natural plane, will build the Lord's house, and his throne shall be established forever – for it is the throne of the Kingdom of Jehovah: and although in its mediatorial sense it will terminate at the close of the Millennial age, yet in a still higher sense it will continue to all eternity, because David's Son and Lord has been associated with the Father in his throne, and his Bride shall be with him where he is, and share his glory, according to his promise.

Much of this promise was applicable to Solomon. The Kingdom of David, or rather the Kingdom of the Lord, was established in the hands of Solomon. He did build a typical house or temple in the name of the Lord. God did deal with him as with a son, chastening his iniquity, yet continuing his mercy with him: he did not suffer the kingly power to depart from David's natural seed, as he took it from Saul.

The 14th verse may properly be applied to those begotten of the Spirit to be Sons of God and joint-heirs in the coming Kingdom. "For what son is he that the Father chasteneth not?" Even the Head of the body, although in him there was no sin, needed the experiences called chastisements for his preparation, for his great position in the coming Kingdom. Indeed, he bore the stripes of the children of men, as the Prophet declares, and we, as members of his body, will not be spared by the Father from the needed corrections in righteousness, which would make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light – so long as we receive them in the spirit of sonship, seeking to know and to do the Father's will.

DAVID'S KINDNESS – R. 2010

2 Samuel 9:1-13

“Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love.” – Rom. 12:10

IN considering the incident of this lesson we are reminded of the words of the Apostle James (5:10) – “Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example.” What examples they present – of faith, humility, meekness, obedience, patience, endurance, brotherly kindness, love. We call to mind Moses’ devotion to God and his cause, his tireless zeal and loving ministry through long years of extreme trial; we mark also the obedient faith of Abraham, of Jacob, of Samuel, of David, and of all the noble list of ancient worthies who fought the good fight of faith with unabated energy to the end of their course. While we consider these worthy examples of loyalty and faithfulness to God and to his truth and righteousness, we remember that these characters were developed under only the moonlight of the law-dispensation; and, in this view of the matter, reason suggests what the Apostle Peter also calls attention to, – “What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” (2 Pet. 3:11) – we who are the recipients of the much more abundant grace of this gospel dispensation?

The kindness of David, to which attention is directed in this lesson, is another mark of a noble character. David was now well established and prosperous in his kingdom. The way to it since his anointing had been a rough and stormy one; and in one of the seasons of severest trial the remarkable friendship between himself and Jonathan, Saul’s son, was thoroughly proved and strongly cemented. And while Jonathan freely submitted to the will of God which intercepted his own succession to the throne of Israel and gave it to David, he desired and received of David the assurance that when he should be thus established in his kingdom he should always show kindness to him and his posterity. See 1 Sam. 20:14-17.

When the days of his prosperity came at length, years after Jonathan had gone to his rest, David, remembering his covenant, began to inquire if there were yet any left of the house of Saul to whom he might show the kindness of God. He found but one, the only surviving son of his friend Jonathan, and upon him he lavished the affection and kindness which it would have been his pleasure to bestow upon Jonathan



David, A Good King – Lifeway Collection

himself, had he survived. Gratefully he remembered the love of his friend, and lovingly he endeavored to requite it to the extent of his ability.

There is really no more worthy trait to adorn a righteous character than that of gratitude. It is gratitude that returns to God that filial affection which is due from the creature to the Creator. It is gratitude that encourages and sweetens the cup of loyal devotion between friend and friend. It is always the due reward of loving service and especially of self-sacrificing service, though it is not always the reward rendered. The spirit of the world is, alas! so far removed from this that even loving and self-sacrificing service is more frequently rewarded with cold, thankless indifference, and not seldom with reproachfulness or persecution. Those therefore who will live godly and cultivate the graces of a godly character must not be disappointed in failing of their reward here, and in meeting the rebuffs that are sure to come to them in the line of duty. Let them duly appreciate their opportunity of proving their devotion to righteousness and

truth by taking patiently and bearing with humble fortitude whatever of reproach or ingratitude may be the present reward, content to await God's time and God's way for giving to righteousness its due reward. Such overcomers who count not their lives dear unto them are of the David (beloved) class.

The golden text of this lesson needs no comment except the exhortation that we should each more and more endeavor to put it in practice, and to see that with each passing year we are able to note some degree of advancement in this element of godlikeness, not overlooking that sure proof of brotherly love mentioned in the last clause – "in honor preferring one another;" remembering also the similar counsel of the same apostle on another occasion – "In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." (Phil. 2:3) If we merely say that we love one another and yet pursue a steady course of self-seeking, wherein is the love manifest? Let us not love in word only, but in deed and in truth. – 1 John 3:18.

DAVID AND JONATHAN – *excerpt from R. 1907*

And as David remembered his covenant with Jonathan not to cut off his kindness from the house of Jonathan (2 Sam. 9:1-13), so the glorified Church will remember its covenant to bless the ancient worthies first, and then all the families of the earth who will then be under their

jurisdiction. Their loving ministry through the law and prophecies and their noble examples of godly life and character, which have been so helpful to us, while Satan was hotly pursuing us ("as a roaring lion," 1 Pet. 5:8), as Saul pursued David, shall be held in "everlasting remembrance."

DAVID'S VICTORIES – R. 2015

2 Samuel 10:8-19

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” – Psa. 27:1

WHILE it is true that David's reign was largely a succession of wars, with only occasional intermissions of peace, it should be noticed that these wars were not aggressive wars, or wars for conquest, but that they were always defensive. While David's policy toward the surrounding nations was wise and kind, they were not so disposed toward Israel. They were jealous of Israel's growing power and prosperity, and thus prompted, they made the attacks which David must of necessity repel as a loyal and patriotic servant of the Lord's people. The disposition of those nations was to exterminate or drive out the Lord's chosen people, and therefore the only righteous course for David to pursue was to fight.

While it is written, “Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God,” it is also written, “Blessed be the Lord, my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.” The suggestion is plainly that there is such a thing as an ignoble peace, – a peace which comes from indifference to the principles of righteousness and truth, a peace dearly bought and ignobly maintained. But, on the other hand, it should be remembered that no battle is a righteous battle except when the Lord gives strength and teaches our hands to war and our fingers to fight, when the battle is the Lord's battle, for the maintenance of his honor, the establishment of the principles of his righteousness and the protection of his cause and his people. Under the typical Jewish dispensation this was done, properly, with carnal weapons; but under the dispensation of the spirit of God we are instructed that “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but [nevertheless, they are] mighty to the pulling down of strongholds.” (2 Cor. 10:4) And happy is the man who can always realize that the Lord's strength and skill are given to him while, with heroic Christian fortitude as a good soldier of the cross, he goes forth to fight the good fight of faith against the powers of darkness strongly

intrenched on every side. Thus, indeed, he may win the reward promised to the overcoming soldiers of the cross (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 28; 3:5, 12, 21), and also the blessing that is sure to the peacemaker; for the glorious peace that is won by the good fight of faith is a blessed peace, a peace resting on the sure foundations of the eternal principles of right. But beware, O Christian, that you never go to the battle without the assurance that the battle is the Lord's. Like David's, let your inquiry be, Lord, shall I go up to the battle? (1 Sam. 23:2, 4; 30:7, 8; 2 Sam. 5:18, 19, 22, 23), and then, like him, wait for the answer in the assurance that the battle is the Lord's.

To all who are thus in the conflict, nobly contending – by their words, their actions and their general conduct – for truth and righteousness, against all who oppose themselves, we would say in the words of Joab to the hosts of Israel, “Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.” (Verse 12) If the battle is the Lord's, it is sure to be victorious. “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.”

While the wars of David were not undertaken for conquest or plunder, but in defense of God's people, they nevertheless resulted in the enlargement of their territory, so that now, for the first time, was fulfilled the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 15:18), that his seed should possess the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. The spoils taken from their enemies were also very great. There were shields of gold and vessels of silver, gold and copper. These were dedicated to the Lord, and reserved for the temple that Solomon was to build.

While noting the justice of the wars of David and the spirit of religious zeal in which he undertook them, his reverence for God and his high sense of justice were usually very marked in even the little things of his life. For instance,

when he was hidden in the cave of Adullam, with the enemies, the Philistines, encamped near by, and he thirsted greatly for water, so that three of his captains at the risk of their lives broke through the ranks of the Philistines and procured water for the king, David refused to drink it, saying, "God forbid it me: ...Shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy." Such water he considered too costly to drink, so he poured it upon the ground as an offering to God. (2 Sam. 23:13-17; 1 Chron. 11:15-19) Few indeed among the kings of earth would consider any sacrifice of their fellow-men too costly to be bestowed on them.



David Pours Out the Water by Caspar Luiken

They feel that they are the lords of creation, and proudly claim, *as their right*, the luxuries purchased at the sacrifice of the rights and privileges of their fellow-men whom they regard as inferior beings and only made to serve them. But it was not so with David, whose sober estimate of himself was that he was only a brother to every other man, and that to God only was supreme reverence and honor due.

Another instance of David's lively sense of justice is that recorded in 1 Sam. 30:21-25, where David made an ordinance for Israel to the effect that those who in time of battle remained behind on account of physical weakness, or to guard the stuff, or the home, should share equally the spoils with those who went to the battle. The account is very explicit on this point. We read, "Then answered all the wicked men, the men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us; ... for who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day."

This ordinance in Israel is the statement of a principle which has many applications. The wife, for instance, who cares for the home, should have an equal share with the husband, who, being relieved from such cares, has his time free to earn the money. They are rightfully "*heirs together of the grace of life*," as well as of the burdens of life.

The golden text of this lesson suggests the proper frame of mind for all the Lord's people who are now fighting the good fight of faith. Though the situation may look dark and dangerous, and though foes may multiply and perplexities increase, it bids them fear not – "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" David said, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." – Psa. 27:1-14.

DAVID'S CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS – R. 2016

Psalm 32:1-11

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” – Psa. 51:10

IT is with a good degree of satisfaction that we write as the heading of this lesson, David's confession and forgiveness, when we consider that, had not the good that was in the man reasserted itself, we might have had to write, “David's unrepented fall and its fearful recompense.” Thus far, in considering this notable character in Jewish history, we have been calling attention to those noble traits which marked him as a righteous, just, godly man – a man of high attainments, both morally and intellectually, and one whom God was pleased to honor and bless and to make a chosen instrument in his service.

But with all his attainments, with all his wisdom, and skill, and sound judgment, and with all his humility and godly reverence, the poor fallen nature of even this great and good man succumbed to the temptations of abundant prosperity. It is hard to account for the fall of such a good man and of a character so strong in many respects as that of David; but one writer, we think, reasons on it very correctly, saying, – “In some natures, especially strong natures, both the old man and the new possess unusual vehemence; the rebellious energizings of the old are held in check by the still more resolute vigor of the new; but if it so happen that the opposition of the new man to the old is relaxed or abated, then the outbreak of corruption will be on a fearful scale.”

Evidently this fall of David into gross sin was not altogether sudden. There had been missteps leading up to it; and the process being gradual and each wrong thing searing the conscience more and more, the climax was reached almost imperceptibly, so that two, even of the basest crimes, were at length committed, apparently without any compunctions of conscience; and the sin was concealed unrepented of, although it was yielding its bitter fruit of restless remorse (Psa. 32:3,4), until Nathan the prophet was sent to awaken and arouse the man to a deep sense of his guilt and of the necessity of immediate repentance, confession and

reformation. David had become so intoxicated with the spirit which generally attends power, popularity and great success that he evidently did not recognize his gradual moral decline. As a king his word was supreme among the people; all Israel waited to do his bidding; the greatest men in the nation were at his service; success had everywhere attended his energies on the field of battle; his kingdom was extended and very prosperous; but in the midst of all this success and exaltation lurked temptations subtle and dangerous which should have been guarded against with scrupulous care, and perseveringly resisted.

As the chief magistrate of the nation few indeed were bold enough to be true to the king as to a brother in pointing out his errors and dangers: on the other hand, the tendency was, as it always is toward those in power, rather to endorse and imitate, than to wisely, kindly and respectfully reprove, remembering the highest interests of such a one in preference to any desire for his favor at the expense of those interests. While we mark with pleasure the noble traits in David's character, we must deplore the steps of his decline. He got to looking upon the privileges claimed by other kings about him as his privileges also, in a measure at least, and, contrary to the divine law (See Lev. 18:1-4, 18 margin; Deut. 17:14, 17-20), he multiplied wives to himself. Then in his war with the Ammonites he resorted to unnecessary cruelty, not alone contented to conquer, but desiring thus ignobly to triumph over his foes. (Compare 1 Chron. 20:1-3; 2 Sam. 11) Then his numbering of the people, contrary to the law of God and the counsel of his wisest men and the religious sense of the nation (See 1 Chron. 21:1), showed that a decline of piety was leading him to doubt the divine favor, and consequently to put his trust in numbers and equipments for defense, etc. (Jer. 17:5), rather than in God, whose favor and help could be experienced only while he continued to walk in the paths of righteousness.

It was in the midst of this season of outward prosperity, yet decline of inward piety, that David succumbed to temptation and to the dreadful crime he committed against God and man. (2 Sam. 11:1-27) Poor, fallen human nature! how weak it is, and how prone to sin, even at its best state! Truly, there is no safety from the power of sin except in a close and constant walk with God, and a resolute purpose to continually avoid and resist the intoxicating influences of the spirit of the world. To allow its pride or vain glory or desire for self-gratification to actuate us in any measure is to bring our moral perceptions to that extent under its stupefying influence. And when any one is intoxicated with the spirit of the world (which in large measure is the spirit of Satan), he will blindly do many things which in his sober senses he would shun and despise. So it was with David, a great and wise man, and, until this intoxication came upon him, a good man, and therefore beloved and highly honored of God, yet even he fell; and the previous height of his moral character makes all the more sad his decline and fall.

Well indeed would it have been for David had he remembered the command of the Lord, – “And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book. ...And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left.” (Deut. 17:18-20) If in this matter even such a man as David failed, and therefore was overcome by the power of temptation, let every child of God take heed and profit by the lesson of his folly. The Word of God must be the daily companion, instructor and guide to every one who would be kept in the paths of righteousness, be he little or great. It is not enough that we read it, nor even that we study it, for the sake of mere information or for argument: it is given us to ponder and to feed upon, that its principles may be incorporated into our being, moulding our thoughts and guiding all our actions. This is what it is to have the word of the Lord dwelling

in us as an energizing and moving power; and if we thus have fellowship with God through his Word and the privilege of prayer, we shall not be beguiled into sin, nor partake of the intoxicating spirit of the world.

It has been suggested by some, by way of excuse for David, that a man's life should be judged as a whole, and not by the failures in it, the intimation being that if in such a view of his life the good predominates, then it should be considered a righteous life, or *vice versa*. And so, it is suggested, we should estimate the character of David and numerous others, among them the inquisitors of times past, who burned and tormented those who differed from them. Many of these, it is suggested, were good, but mistaken men.

From this line of reasoning we are obliged to differ, because it is at variance with the judgment of God, as clearly expressed by the Prophet Ezekiel, as follows, – “When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth,... all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.... But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes [which implies also the pondering and study of them], and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.... When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them [unrepentant], for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.”* Ezek. 18:24,21,22,26-28. See also 2 Pet. 2:20-22.

* This eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel relates specially to the time when the Adamic transgression will be offset by the New Covenant as a result of the ransom, so that naught will remain against believers but their own misconduct. The same principle applies to some extent to those of this Gospel age who

are justified by faith; and to the Israelites justified by the typical sacrifices.

It would be a great mistake to presume that the blindness and spiritual stupor that result from intoxication with the spirit of the world constitute a proper excuse for the sins committed while in that state. God did not so judge in the case of David. The beginning of any sin is the first yielding to its intoxicating influence; and therefore we are faithfully warned to abstain from the very appearance of evil. (1 Thes. 5:22) David's sin, like that of all other sinners, began in giving heed to the first suggestions of evil, and having done this the subsequent steps were easily taken. – Compare James 1:14,15.

But, thank God, there is such a thing as repentance and remission of sins. And although David had sinned grievously, and God was very angry with him, yet in his wrath he remembered mercy, and sent Nathan the prophet to reprove him. It was doubtless a difficult task for Nathan to approach the king on such an errand, but he did not hesitate when the Lord commanded, nor did he go about the duty in any other way than that of straight-forward, yet respectful simplicity. He did not first endeavor to offset in David's mind his present evil course with a rehearsal of his past good deeds – of faith and valor and justice and humility, thereby intimating that the latter balanced the former, but, remembering that in God's reckoning all former good deeds would count for nothing unless present sins were repented of, he came straight to the point, and with skill he presented the case in a parable which David mistook for an actual case, and hastily pronounced the sentence of death upon the offender. He probably desired to show the man of God how zealous he would be for righteousness, little surmising that the prophet knew of his unrighteous course until, with heroic fortitude which waved every other consideration but the doing of the will of God, Nathan brought the lesson home to his conscience, saying, **“Thou art the man....** Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah, the Hittite, with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now, therefore, the sword

shall never depart from thine house.... Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will raise up evil+ against thee out of thine own house.” – 2 Sam. 12:7-12.

It was a critical moment for David, and probably for a time silence reigned. What would he do? Would he proudly resist the power of the truth, thus calmly but kindly pressed home by his old and trusted friend, the humble man of God? Probably this was the first impulse of the pride engendered by his thus far successful career; but there was the truth so plainly set before him: how could he deny it? how could he excuse it, or in any sense or degree justify it? Even to his own mind there was evidently no excuse, no palliation. Conscience, which had been more or less restless and even at times remorseful, ever since the crime, was now thoroughly awakened, and a crisis was reached. There were but two courses before the king: one was repentance, confession and reformation; and the other was to plunge deeper into sin by angrily denouncing the prophet and wickedly misusing his power as a king to punish the man of God for presuming to reprove him, and then proudly declaring it to be *the right of kings*, as exceptional individuals, to do as they please, such being the generally acceded custom of kings in all the nations. Thus he would have been claiming that the *customs of the world*, instead of *the law of God*, were to him the standard of privilege. “What king,” he might truly have said, “considers the rights of his fellow-men in preference to his own desires?”

But we are glad that David did not take this latter evil course. On the contrary, he allowed his better nature to reassert itself; and David said unto Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said unto David, “The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die” – although in the judgment of the parable David had unconsciously condemned himself to death.

+ *Evil here is not used in the sense of sin, but as signifying trouble or calamity. This was a feature of God's covenant with Israel as a nation. Their obedience was to have earthly recognition and reward – their disobedience and sins were to receive earthly punishments. No such covenant was ever made with any other nation. See our issue of March 1, '95.*

How gracious is God, how ready to pardon when true repentance is manifest! "Howbeit," said Nathan, "because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." David in his contrition meekly accepted both the reproof and the penalties pronounced against him; and realizing that his sin was very grievous, and that his example before the nation was very detrimental to the moral and religious interests of the people, he resolved, and carried out his resolve, to make the example of his deep contrition and repentance as far-reaching in its effects for good, as his sin had been for evil.

This was a noble resolution, and in nothing does the nobility of the man shine out more clearly than in his humble and public confession of his sin, his efforts to undo, as far as possible, the wrong he had done, and his meek submission to the penalties which God in his wisdom and mercy saw fit to inflict upon him, that thus his wrath against sin might be manifest to all, and that king and people might so be warned against it. "Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32) So in overcoming the pride and selfishness that had taken deep root in his heart, David proved himself a greater hero than even in his youthful conflict with the giant of Gath, or in any subsequent encounter.

That the divine forgiveness does not of necessity imply the remitting of all the penal consequences of sin is manifest in this case and in thousands of others. According to the divine law, the full penalty of David's sin was death. And, judged by the rigor of that law, this sentence was due under two indictments (See Lev. 20:10; 25:17); but in view of his repentance the Lord remitted the death penalty (2 Sam. 12:13) and inflicted only such punishment as was necessary for the full correction of the offender and the warning and instruction of the nation, showing that he was no respecter of persons, and that king and people were on a common level before the divine law. It should also be observed that the penalties inflicted were to a large extent the outgrowth of former sins. The severest troubles came from his polygamous

household, and the sons who gave him most trouble were the children of heathen wives; and the child of Bathsheba died.

In Psalm 51 David makes public confession of his sin and of God's mercy in forgiveness. In Psalm 32 he gratefully records the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile – no deceit, no hypocrisy, but all of whose doings are open and transparent, and manifestly wrought in righteousness. Here he declares, "I acknowledge my sin," and he testifies to the Lord's forgiveness (vs. 5); and for this divine forgiveness he exhorts all sinners to pray to God in a time when he may be found (vs. 6); i.e., before their hearts become calloused and set in an evil course.

Then, even in the midst of the troubles consequent upon his sin, which he meekly and patiently bore, David learned by faith to rejoice in the Lord, saying, "Thou art my hiding place: thou wilt preserve me from trouble, thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance;" for he will not suffer any tribulation to overwhelm his trusting saints upon whom he has set the seal of his pardoning love.

Then David voices the Lord's sentiments toward all his trusting obedient children thus, as though the Lord were answering back to his expressions of humble confidence and trust, saying, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will counsel thee, mine eye shall be upon thee [margin]. Be not as the horse or the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, else they will not come near unto thee" – [R.V.] will not submit to control.

"Many sorrows shall be to the wicked [as long as they remain wicked. David had proved that by sad experience – vss. 3,4.]; but he that trusteth in the Lord [which necessitates also the departing from iniquity], mercy shall compass him about." Therefore, said the confident faith of this repentant one to whom had been restored the joys of salvation, "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart."

If God thus restored to his penitent and believing servant the joys of his salvation, and made the bones which he had broken to rejoice (Psa. 51:8); if he created in him a clean heart, and renewed a right spirit within him (Psa. 51:8,10), who then shall lay any thing to the charge of his beloved? As freely as God forgave, so must all his people; and therefore we rejoice to recognize David as one of the ancient worthies – worthy of our love, our confidence and a noble example for our imitation of the many graces that adorned his character. And in nothing did the king give us a more worthy example than in the victory over himself to which attention has just been called. Especially in considering his exalted station, his prominence before the

nation, the deeply disgraceful crimes of which he was guilty, the acknowledgment of which would be so humiliating, and the consequent loss of esteem and confidence he must expect from the whole nation, and the appreciation which he doubtless had of the esteem he had so worthily held for so many years, and the keen sense of the disgrace which such a nature must have when brought again to his sober senses – when we consider all these things, the victory gained by David over himself in humbling himself and repenting, is one of the greatest and grandest achievements on the pages of history; and his course is one to be commended to every child of God who realizes that he has to any degree departed from the right ways of the Lord.

“THOU ART THE MAN!” – R. 5681

2 Samuel 11:1—12:7

“Create in me a clean heart, O God.” – Psalm 51:10

THE BIBLE is unlike any other book in the world. It is the most honest, the most candid, of all books. The one most approved as a man after God’s own heart is, when he sins, most severely condemned and heavily punished. There is a lesson, however, in the Scriptural statement, “There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mightest be feared.” (Psalm 130:4) The fact that God is not merciless, that He does not disregard the weak and imperfect condition – the fact that He gives us credit for our heart intentions, even when the weaknesses of the flesh are reprov’d and punished – these indications of consideration prompt to the greater reverence for God than if we merely thought of Him as merciless.

No wonder we are surprised that one who manifested so many noble traits should also have manifested such weaknesses as those condemned in this lesson – adultery and murder! We think of David the youth, his reverence for God, his faith, his loyalty, his trials, his difficulties; and we wonder how he could become so changed in so short a time. The secret is not far



Nathan the Prophet Confronts David

to seek. It is easier to live a wholly consecrated life in poverty than when surrounded by wealth and the pleasures, customs and liberties of the court. The king temporarily forgot that the Ark, representative of God’s favor and presence, was now in his city. He realized indeed that the eyes of the Lord were in every place beholding the evil and the good; yet the seeing of the Tabernacle

should have brought freshly to his mind the thought, "Thou God seest me."

We may be sure, however, that King David did not get into so sinful a condition of mind and heart suddenly. The narrative shows that the matter must have gone on for months, gradually reaching a culmination. Nor would it be fair to the king to assume that his heart was as wrong as his conduct. Rather we must assume, from subsequent manifestations, that his heart was still loyal to God and to the principles of righteousness, but somehow his heart had gone to sleep and his flesh had become very much alive. He was awake to sin, asleep to righteousness. He had before him the unfavorable examples of other kings and the liberties which they exercised. His relationship with God had made him keen of intellect; and now, in yielding to temptation, this keenness of mind was all the more effective in the evil course.

A COURAGEOUS SERVANT OF GOD

David first coveted his neighbor's wife. He did not rebuke this sinful condition of mind, but allowed it to proceed until he stole his neighbor's wife. Her husband was in the war, a faithful soldier. The emergency seemed to call for his death in order to protect the king from shame. David's conscience was surely asleep when he ordered his general to put the faithful soldier in an exposed place in the attack being made on a certain city, then to command a retreat and thus leave the most exposed ones to be killed.

The plan carried out. It cost the life of not only the defrauded husband, but several others. We can scarcely imagine how one of King David's loyalty to principle could have arranged such a plan or how he could have had any peace under these circumstances. Surely none of his beautiful Psalms were written during those nine months or more. But Uriah was dead; and his stolen wife had been made the wife of David, and shortly their child was born.

Then appeared the Prophet Nathan before the king. Wisely bringing his reproof in the form of a parable, he told of a poor man who had but one ewe lamb and of how a wealthy neighbor had defrauded him of it. King David's sense of justice was outraged, and he declared that the

man who did that deed must restore four-fold and must also be put to death. Then the Lord's Prophet Nathan pointing to the king, declared, "Thou art the man!" and promptly drove home the lesson. It required courage; but whoever has a message from the Lord must needs have the courage to deliver it – as wisely as possible, of course, but faithfully.

Instantly King David's heart was aroused; immediately his conscience was quickened. He saw his own conduct, not from the standpoint of other kings and what they did, but from the standpoint of the Divine Law of righteousness, truth, kindness, mercy. He beheld himself a sinner. Indeed, under the Law, both the adultery and the murder were punishable by death. The king instantly acknowledged his sin, and prayed, fasted and mourned. Meantime the Prophet, by Divine direction, informed the king that for all this the Lord would not cause his death nor take from him all his loving-kindnesses, because he had confessed and repented; but that, nevertheless, the child of his sin should not live and the king himself would in after time suffer severe punishments for his transgressions.

Here we perceive a principle of the Divine Government in respect to those who are the people of God and are in covenant relationship with Him. Justice would have been required in respect to the sins; but to the repentant soul the Lord's favor would, nevertheless, still be granted. Many Christians have had experience along this line. God does not continue to treat them as sinners; but, accepting their heart contrition, He forgives them in that sense of the word; yet true to His arrangement, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." In this Divine arrangement there is nothing to encourage sin, but, on the contrary, everything to encourage righteousness; and if sin be fallen into, everything to encourage the sinner to accept Divine forgiveness and to reform his life, even though he shall be obliged to bear some severe penalty – perhaps to his tomb.

THE PSALM OF REPENTANCE

Very many Christians have been encouraged to repentance by the Fifty-first Psalm. Surely none have been encouraged by it to sin.

It is said that Voltaire, the infidel, once attempted a burlesque of this Psalm, but became so awed by its solemn tone that he threw down the pen and fell back dazed on his couch, full of remorse. Bishop Hall, commenting, says, "How can we presume of not sinning, or despair for sinning, when we find so great a saint thus fallen, thus risen?" We should remember, however, that noble as King David was, he was not a saint in the New Testament sense of that word. He may have been equally saintly in heart intentions, but he had not been accepted of the Lord and begotten of the Holy Spirit; for "the Holy Spirit was not yet given," as we read in John 7:39.

The giving of the Holy Spirit and its begetting to a new nature began at Pentecost, and has continued since. If we are astonished that King David should be overtaken in such faults, how much more would we be astonished if any saint of God, begotten of the Holy Spirit, should fall into such a trap of the Adversary. The spirit-begotten ones have much advantage every way – not only through the greater enlightenment which comes to them through the better knowledge of the Divine character, the Divine Plan and the Divine promises, but also by reason of having the Lord Jesus as their Helper under the assurance that "All things shall work together for good to them" (Romans 8:28); and that the Lord will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able; but will with every temptation also provide a way of escape. – 1 Corinthians 10:13.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me." These words of honesty assure us that the king was overtaken in some kind of fog which for months obscured his mental vision. Earth-born clouds and fleshly weaknesses arose like a veil between his soul and the Lord, shutting out the light of the Lord's countenance.

The lesson applies to all who have ever been in covenant relationship with God. The poet has expressed what ought to be the sentiment of

every Christian, discerning the slightest shadow between the Lord and himself:

*"Sun of my soul, my Father dear,
I know no night when Thou art near.
Oh, may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes!"*

The important lesson here is that we shall keep close accounts with God. No child of God should go forth in the morning without an earnest petition to Him for Divine supervision of his affairs and for help to walk in the right path. No child of God should retire at night without a retrospective glance on all the day's pathway, to discern to what extent it has been a profitable one and has brought him a day's march nearer the Heavenly Home. Or, if perchance something has occurred of which he should feel ashamed, it is none too soon to go at once to the Throne of Heavenly Grace to obtain mercy and find fresh help for future times of need.

The child of God thus keeping daily accounts with the Father and with the Redeemer, will abide in Their love and not be in danger of falling into any such great sins as these noted in this lesson. Even King David, we may be sure, would have fallen into no such sins had he not allowed gradually to arise earth-born clouds of fleshly hues between the Lord and himself.

"Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."

Although the Holy Spirit was not given to the Ancient Worthies in the same sense that it is given to the Church, it was nevertheless the manifestation of God's favor toward them in their affairs, as the king here intimates. We are to remember that from Moses down to John the Baptist, according to the Scriptures, there was a House of Servants under Moses; but that during this Gospel Age there is a House of Sons, begotten of the Holy Spirit, under the chief Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. – Hebrews 3:5,6.

KING DAVID'S REPENTANCE – R. 3253

Psalm 51:1-17

“Create in me a clean heart, O God.”

PROSPERITY did not work to King David's personal advantage. After years of phenomenal success under the Lord's blessing, when his kingdom was mighty and his name honorable, and the necessity for his personal participation in wars was passed, and his heart had begun to gravitate towards earthly pleasures and was less zealous for the Lord and the Law than at first, the king fell into very grievous sins, which appear all the more black in contrast with the high moral character shown by him in his earlier life, when he was the man after God's own heart. The story of his sins, how he became enamored of Bathsheba and committed adultery with her, and subsequently, to shield himself, caused her husband Uriah to be placed in the forefront of the battle that he might be killed by the enemy, involving the loss of several other lives as well, is told in the Scriptures in a most straightforward manner, without the slightest effort to condone the king's wrong-doing. No excuses are offered in connection with the account; the full weight of these awful crimes is laid directly on the king's head. Whatever excuses may be offered on his behalf must come from the reader of the account. We may suggest some thoughts along this line: In that day the kings of the world exercised a despotic authority, and it was a theory among the people that the king could do no wrong – that whatever he pleased to do was proper to him because of his high position as the head and ruler of the nation. We could in no sense of the word agree with such a thought. Nevertheless we can reasonably suppose that a sentiment so general would have more or less influence upon the mind of the king. He who respected Saul's life, because he was the Lord's anointed, may have to some extent fallen into the misconception that his own anointing by the Lord relieved him in some degree from the responsibilities resting upon others of his nation.

For about two years after these crimes were committed the king sought to stifle his conscience, and to consider that he was only using

kingly liberties in what he had done. Nevertheless his conscience smote him, and he felt an alienation from God and a condemnation under his law such as he would not have felt had he been of a different stamp of character. God was not hasty in reproving him, either. He allowed him to have a full taste of heart bitterness—allowed him to feel the darkness of soul, absence of joy, resulting from the cloud which had come between him and the Lord. It was at the appropriate time, after David had passed through secret mournings and travailings of the soul, that the Lord sent him a reproof through Nathan the prophet to bring the whole matter clearly before his mind. Nathan, under the figure of a parable, excited the king's sympathies and declaration of a very severe judgment – a death sentence – against the person offending, and then the Prophet brought home to him the lesson saying, “Thou art the man!”

King David, we are to remember, did not belong to the spiritual house of sons, and hence had a far less clear view of such matters than that which would properly belong to every member of the house of sons, begotten of the spirit and “taught of God.” We are not, therefore, to expect to draw a lesson to ourselves along similar lines. Rather we of the spiritual house, under the clearer conceptions of the divine will, are to remember the higher interpretation of adultery and murder set forth in the New Testament: that whoever desires adultery, and is merely restrained from it by outward circumstances or fears, is really an adulterer in his heart (Matt. 5:28); that he that is angry with his brother, he who hates his brother, is a murderer – because the spirit of anger is that which, unrestrained, would lead to murder (Matt. 5:22); and that the person who covets the things of another and is merely restrained from taking them for lack of opportunity or fear of consequence, is at heart a thief. If these principles be applied by the New Creation in the examination of their hearts, it is entirely probable that some of the “house of

sons" today may find themselves very near the plane of King David as respects sin, and so viewing matters they will exercise proportionately greater compassion in their judgment of the royal transgressor. Such, too, will find great consolation in the Lord's compassion, provided they are exercised in respect to their offences as David was concerning his. "There is compassion with thee that thou mightest be feared," is the prophet's expression. If God were wanting in compassion, as are many of our fellow creatures, there would be nothing to hope for under such circumstances. It is when we realize that there is forgiveness with the Lord for all who are penitent at heart, and who, therefore, give evidence that their sins are not wilful, but rather of the weakness of heredity and under the pressure of blinding temptations, that we are moved to repentance by a hope for better things.

The 51st Psalm is generally recognized as being the one in which the Psalmist expresses to God his contrition for his sins, and the fact that it is dedicated to the Chief Musician implies that it was the king's intention that it, in common with other of the Psalms, should be chanted in the Tabernacle services, for which he had set apart a large number of singers. We thus perceive that if the sin was flagrant and gross, the atonement which the king endeavored to make was a most public one. Probably many of the nation had felt more or less of the king's condemnation, and its influence must have been very injurious; and now in his public view of it as sin, and his prayer for divine forgiveness, the king would undo so far as possible not only the injury which he had inflicted upon his own conscience, and which as a cloud hung between the Lord and him, but he would undo also the evil influences as respects the conscience of the nation – on the subjects of adultery and murder.

Here again we see why David was described as a man after God's own heart. His sins were not pleasing to God – quite the reverse; but the after appreciation of the enormity of the sins and the hearty repentance therefor to the Lord, and the desire to be cleansed from every evil way, were pleasing to the Lord. Here we have an illustration of how all things may work together for good to those who love God. By reason of his

heart-loyalty to the Lord, and the principles of righteousness, even these terrible sins resulted in bringing a great blessing to David's own heart – humbling him – giving him an appreciation of his weakness and littleness, and of his need to abide close to the Lord, if he would have the Lord's fellowship and compassion and be safe from the temptations of his own fallen flesh. So, too, with the New Creation. How many of them have realized profitable lessons and blessings out of some of their stumblings – not that the stumblings were good nor of the Lord, but that the Lord was able to overrule such circumstances for good to those who are of the proper mind – rightly exercised by them to repentance and reformation.

The first three verses of the Psalm express David's appreciation of his sin and his trust in the Lord, without any attempt to apologize for his shortcomings. He trusted to the Lord to make whatever allowances could be made and merely appealed to his great "loving-kindness." In calling to mind the multitude of God's tender mercies in the past, he expressed faith and trust that in some way the Lord could blot out these grievous transgressions and forgive them. The Lord had not yet clearly defined the way in which he could be just and yet be the justifier of sinners. Only vaguely through the shadows of the Day of Atonement sacrifices had he intimated that he had some way of his own by which in due time the guilty but repentant ones might be cleansed. David grasped the thought of mercy as understood in the types and shadows of the Law, and much more may we of the house of sons grasp the thought of our Father's forgiveness when we see that it is exercised towards us by the Lord Jesus Christ, who already has given himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, and whose sacrifice has been accepted of the Father, – as manifested by our Lord's resurrection from the dead, and by the descent of the holy Spirit at Pentecost. If, therefore, David could trust the Lord for loving-kindness and tender mercies and forgiveness of sins, the members of the house of sons should be able to exercise full faith in the divine character and plan of salvation from sin.

The fourth verse would seem to ignore the fact that wrong-doing had been done to fellow-creatures, but we may preferably understand it to mean that while this wrong to fellow-creatures was recognized by the king, he recognized a still higher responsibility to God, whose laws he had broken and whose kingly office, typifying that of the Christ, he had dishonored. Hence, in contrast between what man might think of his crime as against man and his own still higher consciousness of his sin as against the Lord, the latter seemed so much greater as to practically obscure the former. The greater sin as against the Almighty quite overshadows the wrongs to humanity. David declares his recognition of the fact that God is the great Judge, and that whatever his judgment would be he knew in advance that it would be right.

In the fifth verse he introduces an extenuating thought, as though reminding the Lord that he was born in sin and therefore that perfection was not possible for him. But he does not use this fact as a screen behind which to hide his own responsibilities. Free to will, though a sinner by nature, he was necessarily responsible for yielding as he did to temptation, but he was confident that the Lord would give him the benefit of every mitigating circumstance.

It will be noted that David expected punishment from the Lord for his sins, and was here expressing his confidence that the Lord would send no punishment which would not be reasonable and within the limits of justice. What he was praying for in this Psalm was not a remission of proper punishment, but rather for the cleansing of his heart in the sight of the Lord and for his restoration to the divine favor. As a matter of fact we find that the Lord did send a severe punishment upon the king, and that he restored the sinner to his favor, granting him to experience again the joys of his salvation. According to the sentiments of other kings of his time, evidently acquiesced in by the people of Israel, the king had taken an extremely moderate course in sin, in that he had not directly taken the life of Uriah but merely connived at his death in battle; but the king appreciated the fact that God was looking deeper than this and desired truth – righteousness in the inward

parts – in the heart. Outward crime and a crime allowed in the mind are alike heinous in God's sight: his experience had taught the king wisdom. Now he wished to be thoroughly cleansed, and poetically says, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." Hyssop was used in the sprinkling of the unclean under the Law. David, grasping to some extent the significance of the symbol, desired the antitypical cleansing of his heart. His appreciation of the Lord's thoroughness in dealing with sin and of his compassion in forgiveness are good lessons for some of the still more favored members of the "house of sons." Many of the latter, although having seen with "the eye of faith" the great Atonement for sins made by our Lord Jesus, are still unable to appreciate the fact that the application of the merit of his sacrifice is quite sufficient to cleanse us from all sin and perfect us, that we may be recognized as absolutely pure in the Father's sight and dealt with accordingly – not as sinners, but as sons.

From the statement of verse 8 we may reasonably infer that during the year that preceded this repentance King David was in so miserable a state of mind that even the music of the singers and of those who played skilfully upon the harp and all the joyous songs of Nature were sore to his heart – had no gladness in them to comfort his heart when it was barred from the Lord's presence and fellowship. This is the thought of our hymn, which says of the soul which enjoys the light of the Lord's favor: –

*"Sweet prospects, sweet birds and sweet flowers
Have all gained new sweetness to me;...
His presence disperses all gloom,
And makes all within me rejoice;...
While I am so happy in him,
December's as pleasant as May."*

King David was longing for the joy and gladness which he had experienced in times past, and figuratively he likens himself to one whose bones had been broken. He knew that his joy and comfort would return if he could but have back again the Lord's favor. He knew, too, that the Lord could not look upon sin with any allowance, hence his prayer: "Hide thy face from my sins and blot out mine iniquities [unrighteous-

ness]. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation: and uphold me with thy free Spirit.”

No true Christian can read these words without feeling a deep sympathy with the different expressions; and even though as New Creatures in Christ Jesus we have had no experience with such terrible sins as those which weighed upon the heart of David, nevertheless our higher responsibilities and higher conceptions of sin under the “new commandment” and under the instructions of the holy Spirit, as sons of God, cause us to feel with proportionate weight transgressions which in the sight of the world would appear nothing – such, for instance, as we have just mentioned: covetousness, hatred, slander, which are thefts and murders from the higher standpoint of the divine view appropriate to the New Creation.

In verse 13 the prophet proposes to the Lord that his discomfiture in divine disfavor was used for the instruction of others, – to show transgressors the Lord’s ways and to turn sinners from the evil of their course. How appropriate this thought to us! Not until we know experimentally through faith in the blood of Christ that our sins have been put out of the Father’s sight, not until we have experienced the joys of his salvation and forgiveness, are we in any condition to be servants to the truth or illustrations to others. Hence we see that it is only those who have been begotten of the holy Spirit who are anointed to preach the gospel. To others the Lord says, “What hast thou to do to take my word into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee?” – refusing to submit to the divine requirements.

The 14th verse repeats the same thought in a different form. If the Lord will deliver him from his guilt in connection with his sin, his tongue shall thereafter sing loudly the Lord’s righteousness – not David’s righteousness. This is the song that all the blood-washed may sing, “True and righteous are all thy ways, Lord God Almighty. Thou hast redeemed us from amongst men.” None of us have any right to sing our own righteousness, for as the Apostle declares,

“There is none righteous, no, not one.” The mission of the cleansed ones is to accept and use the Lord’s mercy towards them, to extol his righteousness, to acknowledge their unworthiness and to call upon others to recognize this fountain of righteousness and forgiveness.

“O Lord, open thou my lips: and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.” This expression implies that none need expect to have a proper opening of their mouths to show forth the Lord’s praises, and give the call from darkness into his marvelous light, unless the Lord shall first have opened their lips with his mercy and truth; for otherwise how could any expect to tell the glad tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people? This equally implies that all who have had forgiveness of sins should be in a condition of spirit to make a full consecration of their all to the Lord, and then all such should expect an unsealing of their lips, that the message of God’s truth and grace may flow out from them for the instruction and blessing of others – as it is written, “Grace is poured upon thy lips.” “Thou hast put a new song in my mouth, even the loving-kindness of our God.” While these are appropriate specially to our dear Redeemer, they are appropriate also to every member of “the Church which is his body,” and all claiming to be of “the body,” who have never had their lips unsealed to confess the Lord to the extent of their opportunity, have reason to question everything pertaining to their relationship to the Lord.

In verses 16 and 17 the King shows that he had acquired a deep insight into the meaning of some of the typical sacrifices; – though probably, by inspiration, he wrote more wisely than he understood. As we have seen in our study of *Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices*, only the Day of Atonement sacrifices were sin offerings, the burnt offerings and peace offerings of the remainder of the year representing the consecration to the Lord and his service. Grasping this thought prophetically, to whatever extent he also grasped it intellectually, King David expressed his realization that the Lord is pleased rather with a broken and contrite condition of heart than with burnt offerings, which were but types. So, too, we learn that nothing that we can give the Lord, even after our acceptance in

Christ, has any value in his sight until first of all we have given him ourselves, – our hearts, our wills.

Let us ever keep in memory that a broken and contrite heart the Lord never despises, will never spurn. Therefore into whatever difficulty any of the Lord's people of the New Creation may stumble, if they find themselves hungering for the Lord's fellowship and forgiveness, if they find their hearts contrite and broken, let them not despair, but remember that God has made a provision through the merit of Christ which enables him to accept and justify freely from all sin all that come unto him through Jesus – through faith in his blood. There is a sin unto death – a sin unto the Second Death – from which there will be no recovery, no resurrection; but those who have broken and contrite hearts on account of their sins may know that they have not committed "the sin unto death," for their condition of heart proves this, as the Apostle declares: "It is impossible to renew again unto **repentance**" any who have committed the sin unto death – wilful sinners against full light and knowledge. Let all, therefore, rejoice in the grace of our God, who is able through Christ, his accepted way, to save unto the uttermost all who come to him, laying aside sin and its desires.

"Now, if any man [of the Church stumble into] sin [through weakness and temptation – not intentionally] we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1)

Such, therefore, may come with faith to the throne of the heavenly grace that they may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every (future) time of need. (Heb. 4:16) But, like David, their prayers and hopes should be for a restoration of divine favor and not for escape from chastisements needful to their correction. God forgave David, but also chastened him. – 2 Sam. 12:11-14.

Surely King David must have learned a great lesson in **mercy** from this sad experience. How many times must he have called to mind his response to Nathan's parable, "The man that hath done this thing **is worthy of death**: and he shall restore the lamb four fold, because he did this thing and because he had no pity!" Alas, poor David! these words showed that he had a mind, a heart, that was no stranger to justice and pity in other men's affairs, and hence that he was the more guilty in his much more serious violations of justice and compassion. "Blessed is he that is not condemned in that which he alloweth," – who is not condemned by his own declarations in respect to the affairs of others. Oh, how merciful to the failings of others it should make us when we remember our dear Redeemer's words, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses"; and when again we remember that we may not even pray for forgiveness of our sins unless we from the heart forgive those who have injured us and again desire our fellowship.

THE JOYS OF GOD'S FORGIVING LOVE – R. 3260

Psalm 32

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

THIS Psalm will be quickly recognized as King David's exultant acknowledgment of God's forgiveness of his sins against Uriah. The first verse is the keynote of the entire Psalm. Verses 3-5 record the King's mental distress during the period in which his sins had come as a cloud between him and the sunshine of divine favor which he previously had enjoyed. His distress of mind naturally affected his physical health to such an extent that all of life's duties became burdensome and practically all of its pleasures died. In this fact we perceive that the King was

far from the condition of a hardened criminal. His heart had been set for right and for the Lord, and was still set in that direction, even though under temptation he had grossly violated the simplest laws of justice and friendship. The fact that he had gnawings of conscience, that his soul was not at ease under the burden of divine disapproval, were the hopeful signs in the case.

Since David was not a wilful sinner – since he did not at heart approve and rejoice in sin, but despised it, mourned for it – the Lord very graciously guided his affairs so that the lesson

became more and more severe to him, until finally he could not bear it longer. Then, when the boil of contrition was fully ripe, the Lord sent his message through Nathan the Prophet to lance it, and his sharp reproof and severe sentence marked the culmination of the King's terrible mental distress and brought him to the point of confession to God and before the nation – to the point of prayer for divine forgiveness and restoration of divine favor, without which he realized that his agony of mind would continue.

The King's prayers were heard – God was gracious to him, his transgression was forgiven, his sin was covered, his iniquity was no longer imputed to him, because his heart was repentant – in it there was no guile. His repentance was sincere, full, thorough. The Psalmist exultingly sings of his own restoration to divine favor, and, doubtless under divine guidance, represented his as being a sample or illustration of what God is willing to do for all who similarly have sincere sorrow for sin, true repentance, who confess their faults and make fresh acknowledgment of their faith. It is safe to say that in thousands of God's people, not only in David's own nation but in every nation, kindred, people and tongue familiar with God's Word, the King's experiences and the lessons of this Psalm, showing his reconciliation with God and the exercise of divine favor toward him, have inspired faith and brought peace and rest to those cast down through weaknesses of the flesh – some of them as grievous or more so, if possible, than David's, and some of them for sins less great in the sight of men but realized as being great in the sight of God – sufficient to separate the sinner and his Lord.

As a picture or illustration this does not specially relate to the sinner coming from the alien world and seeking entrance into God's family: it rather represents one who had already enjoyed divine favor and lost it – one who had gotten from the light into darkness. The Scriptures clearly point out to us that even after we have become children of God it is possible to "fall away." They show us two classes of those who fall. One class is described in Heb. 6:4-7; 10:26-31: these we may have no hope for, because at heart they have become sympathetic

with sin; they are wilful sinners, as the Apostle here describes. It would not be appropriate that God should exercise his mercy toward those who, after having come to a clear knowledge of the Truth, wilfully, preferably, approvingly delight in sin. The only thing remaining for these, as the Apostle declares, is judgment which will devour them as adversaries of God and adversaries of righteousness. Of this class the Apostle declares, "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." – 1 John 5:16.

It is of the second class that the Apostle says there is a sin not unto death – one which may be repented of, which may be forgiven, and out of which the transgressor may come with valuable lessons which may ultimately result in blessings of knowledge and experience which will be helpful to him in future conflicts and triumphs. David's sin was of this latter class – not wilful, not approved by him, but of the class of sins referred to by the Apostle when he says, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1) Of the same class of sins the Apostle says, "He is just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," and again, "Though he fall yet shall he not be utterly cast down." The fact is that transgression that is wilful and approved by the heart means an utter fall from divine favor in every sense of the word, while stumbling into sin contrary to the will, through weakness of the flesh and temptation, is to be considered a stumbling from which there is every hope of recovery.

Some one will perhaps argue that practically every transgression is a wilful one, because the Lord's people, however weak in body, have still the power to will aright if they would. Such are inclined at times to accuse themselves of wilful sin, and to fear that they are under the ban of the second death. We point, however, to David's case as an illustration of what is not esteemed of the Lord to be a wilful sin. King David deliberately planned for days and weeks and months in connection with his transgression. It cannot be denied that there was a measure of wilfulness in it, but there was a measure of something else also: namely, of weakness of the flesh, inherited as a member of the race from father Adam. Only

divine judgment could clearly, distinctly discern how much of David's sin should properly be accredited to wilfulness and how much to weakness. That it was not wholly weakness or ignorance is evident, and that it was not wholly wilfulness is equally evident. It was therefore what we might term a mixed sin. The proof that it was not wholly wilful is found in the fact that David's conscience afterward, before being reproved by the Lord through the Prophet, recognized his sin and realized the barrier which it had raised between the Lord and his soul. Had the sin been wilful, instead of feeling sorrow and contrition the King would have felt disposed to go on in the course of sin still farther, and would have had no longings for divine forgiveness and reconciliation. His desires for these prove to us that, although he had deviated so grievously from the proper paths, his heart, his will, was still on the side of the Lord and of righteousness. Let this serve as a lesson and illustration for all who have fallen into sin and who long for divine forgiveness and reconciliation. Let such accept the mercy of the Lord by faith and rejoice therein as did King David. Let them remember that those who have sinned the sin unto death it is impossible to renew again unto repentance – impossible to bring them back to a condition where they would be truly contrite and repentant for their evil course.

True repentance implies a rectification of the wrong to the extent of one's ability. David's sin being a public one, known to the nation, it was appropriate that the repentance should be as public as was the sin, and we have reason to believe that David would not have received restoration to divine favor had he not been thoroughgoing in his confession and his endeavors to make good the wrong he had done. His course had led some to blaspheme God's name (2 Sam. 12:14), and it was appropriate that his repentance should, so far as possible, offset this. And so the story of David's repentance has come down the ages with the story of his crime; and while the one has given occasion to blasphemers, the other has given hope and encouragement to many overtaken in faults, who, like David, at heart were loyal to the Lord.

We are to distinguish sharply between forgiveness of sin and remission of penalties. In this case we see that David's sin was forgiven, yet the punishment which the Prophet had foretold came upon him in due time. Thus we see that forgiveness here stands not for judicial forgiveness, which would have exonerated the forgiven one from all punishment, but it stands merely for the removal of divine disfavor which had come upon the King as one of the results of his transgression. We are to notice also that the King had not in his mind the thought of escaping the punishment which God had foretold and described; his joy was in respect to the restoration of communion between himself and the Lord – the removal of the sin-born cloud which had hidden from him for a time the light of the divine countenance, the smile of heaven, the fellowship of God. And so it will be today with all who, falling into sin wilfully, repent thereof and seek a renewal of the fellowship of the Father and of the Son from the right standpoint. Their moving desire will not be simply escape from punishment, but specially a renewal of communion of soul broken by transgression. It is in full accord with this that the New Creation at the present time rejoices in forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with the Father through the Son, yet live under practically the same conditions as the world, subject to the aches, pains, trials, difficulties and disappointments which belong in general to the fallen race because of original sin. The blessings of our new relationship to God consist not in our release from the burdens and difficulties of the groaning creation, but in the realization that we are no longer under divine condemnation, no longer children of wrath even as others, but brought nigh unto God in fellowship and communion through the blood of Christ. Our hope of deliverance from the burdens which afflict the whole groaning creation are centered in the promised Kingdom blessings at the second advent of our Lord. Inspired by these hopes and promises we sorrow not as do others, but are enabled to rejoice in tribulation and to wait patiently for the Lord's time and for the Lord's way – the First Resurrection.

This thought, namely, that in the present time our sins are merely covered from divine notice through the merit of our Lord, – that they are merely forgiven or given over or set aside, are hidden and not actually **blotted out** – is very clearly stated by the Apostle Peter (Acts 3:19-21) when, preaching under the influence of the holy Spirit, he declared that his hearers should repent and be converted to the Lord, so that their sins might be blotted out when the times of refreshing should come – the times of restitution – the Millennial age and Kingdom.

In that glorious Millennial day the Church, now reconciled, will first pass inspection, and those counted worthy will share in the first resurrection, and the bodies they will then receive will be perfect, without blemish and without flaw – very different from the mortal bodies of the present time, all of which are more or less marred by sin, mentally and physically. The receiving of the new bodies perfected will mean that all the blemishes, all the marks of sin for this class, were blotted out in the tomb, in the flesh, their spiritual bodies being perfect, even as it is written of this first resurrection class: “It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown an animal body, it is raised a spiritual body.”

The world not having received reconciliation, not having received forgiveness of sins, will not receive the blotting out of sins in the Millennial morning. The great blessing that will come to the world of mankind as distinguished from the Church, the body of Christ, the little flock, the elect of the present time, will be the blessing of forgiveness – full, free. The great atonement day (the Gospel age) will then have closed, its better sacrifices will all then be in the past, its blood of atonement will then have been presented before the Father and will have been accepted on behalf of the whole world. As a result of this acceptance, the divine forgiveness will reach the whole world through Christ – a remission of the sentence pronounced upon the world in the person of Adam. This is specifically stated by the Apostle, saying, “As by the offence of one judgment [sentence] came upon all men to

condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift [will come] upon all men unto justification of life.” (Rom. 5:18) But as forgiveness to David did not mean a repudiation of such penalties as were due him because of the measure of wilfulness contained in his sins, and as forgiveness in this Gospel age to the Church does not mean an immediate release from the penalties that are upon the race, so likewise the forgiveness of the world’s sins at the dawn of the Millennium and the beginning of Messiah’s reign will not mean the removal of all the marks of sin, the disabilities, death conditions, which come upon all men partly through their own wrongdoing. As with the Church now, forgiveness of sins means a covering of those sins, that we may be treated as though we were not sinners: so with the world in the next age – the forgiveness of the world’s sins will mean that thenceforth Christ stands for the whole world before God as the covering of their sins, and that on account of the sacrifice paid by Christ on behalf of the world the sentence of everlasting death upon them is annulled. The work of Christ and of the Millennial Kingdom will be to lift up all who will of the world of mankind to the full perfection of their human nature, so that at the close of that age they may be perfect and entire as human beings. The work of the Millennial age will therefore be a work of blotting out sins – blotting out the evidences and traces of sin in body and mind. The weaknesses and impairments which sin has brought upon humanity will be thus overcome, and it is for this reason that that age is called the times of restitution, the times in which gradually the original likeness of God will be brought back to all those who will accept the divine favor through the great redemption.

In verse six King David suggests that his own experience should be helpful to others who at heart were godly – desiring God’s way of righteousness, but who had stumbled in the way. He advises that they pray to the Lord promptly – that they should seek him while he may be found. David’s own experiences seemed to teach him that every day removed him farther and farther from fellowship with the Lord. His exhortation is that in order that the floods of great

waters of trouble should not reach such an one, he would be spared much by going promptly to the throne of heavenly grace to make confession and to obtain mercy and grace to help in future times of need.

In verse seven the King reverts to his own experiences and how he had found peace in the Lord – a hiding-place in which he could have rest; and although he knew to look forward to the prescribed punishments, his heart now being in fellowship with the Lord he could realize that the Lord's presence would be with him in those punishments and preserve him in that trouble, and that he would be, so to speak, enabled to hear the heavenly messengers singing songs of his deliverance even whilst in his affliction.

The concluding verses of the Psalm represent the Lord as the speaker, instructing David and all of his people who, like David, desire the Lord's guidance and feel wretched and troubled when any earth-born cloud intervenes between the Lord and their souls. The Lord engages to be the teacher, the instructor of all such; he will overrule their affairs, he will make all things to work together for good. Even their stumblings shall not prove disastrous; but because they maintain the spirit of devotion to the Lord and

to the principles of righteousness, he will make even their missteps to become valuable lessons, that they may be henceforth less liable to stumble, and learn to look unto the Lord and to be guided in their goings by his eye.

Those whom the Lord instructs, and who will receive his instruction, will not be like the horse or mule that must be turned and guided by force. Their hearts will be so in sympathy with the Lord that he can deal with them otherwise, to their blessing and joy. The wicked shall have their sorrows, but the Lord's people will not be counted in among these; for his mercy shall be with them, restoring their souls. Therefore this class, through the Lord's mercy, will be counted righteous – not that they were righteous of themselves, but counted righteous through the divine provision in Christ. These may be glad in the Lord, though they could not be glad in themselves. These, because upright in heart even though prone to sin and full of weaknesses according to the flesh, may be brought off conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood – may shout for joy as they realize the abundance of the divine provision “for the propitiation of our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” – 1 John 2:2.

THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT – R. 1397

Psalm 51:1-13

“Create in me a new heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

This draws our attention to the darkest stain upon the history of the Prophet David – the matter of the murder of Uriah and the taking of his wife. Skeptics are wont to point to that great, double sin and to sneer: “And that was the ‘man after God's own heart,’ according to the Bible's grand standard of morality.” But the fact is that it was when David was a young shepherd just coming to manhood that he was after God's own heart. And yet in connection with this very matter of this, David's greatest sin, there is something which shows forth his better character which was “after God's heart:” and this is brought before us by this lesson. The commendable features are: (1) He did not attempt to justify his course by saying that all the kings

around about did such things and worse, and that it was generally conceded by their subjects that a king had a right to do as he pleased; (2) he not only did not deny the wrong, but he did not even try to see what he could say in self-defense; he did not plead his peculiar temptation nor that it was above that of others, from the power he exercised as king; but he confessed fully and heartily in such a manner as convinces all that his *heart* was really better than his evil conduct had seemed to indicate. We have no right to condone David's crimes, but we have the privilege of noting those other qualities in him which to some extent were an offset to his weaknesses.

And it is well, too, that the Bible attests its own truthfulness in thus faithfully preserving

the record of the sins of its great characters alongside the records of their faith and service. Of no other book which stands as the foundation of a religion is this true. Others tell only the good and leave the evil untold; but the Bible tells of the weaknesses of its greatest heroes except our Lord Jesus: of Paul's persecutions; of Peter's denial and blasphemy; of David's sins; of Abraham's errors, etc.

Yet this, which worldly wisdom would consider a serious drawback, God saw to be the proper thing; and many of God's people have been greatly blessed by these very records of human weakness and sin. They but corroborate God's testimony that *all* have sinned; that there is *none* righteous; that *all* need the grace of God to forgive the past and to lift them out of the miry pit of sin and its consequences. And many a sinner has thus been taught to have hope toward God for forgiveness and to realize that God who offers him his grace has had compassion upon others who were out of the way when they turned to him with true repentance.

Verses 1-3. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is continually before me."

David thus plead for mercy; and although he realized finally that God's favor was restored to him, he knew nothing of the real philosophy of the matter – *how* God could be just and yet be the justifier of those whose sins merited wrath. Ah, yes! the standpoint of the sons of God, during this Gospel age, is much more blessed. Our Father in heaven not only tells us of our forgiveness and reconciliation to his favor, but he gives us the particulars so that we may see *how* he has done it without sanctioning our sins or excusing them and without violating his own just law on the subject. He shows us that Christ our Lord was the Lamb of God whose death as our substitute and sin offering taketh away the sins of the world; that by his stripes pardon and healing may be granted to whosoever accepts the grace offered through him. Indeed, David's sins were not blotted out nor

forgiven; for although the Lord restored to him divine favor and communion, he punished him severely for his sin, as he had foretold by Nathan the Prophet (2 Sam. 12:11,12), Absalom's rebellion being the means employed.

True, the penalty exacted was not the *full* penalty of sin, for that would have been lasting death. God showed mercy on David (as to all Jews under the Law Covenant established upon the basis of the typical sacrifices) in that he made allowance for his fallen condition and hence punished his sin, not with everlasting death, but with trouble, etc., in connection with Absalom's rebellion, as above stated.

And as with David and others under the typical Law Covenant, so, too, it is with God's children under the New Covenant in Christ. The death of Christ as our *ransom-price* cancels the original sin of Adam, and also such portion or degree of our sins and shortcomings as are *involuntary* and contrary to our real sentiments. But whatever proportion of a sin is wilful, designed and agreed to by us, has a penalty attached to be inflicted in either the present or the future life. And in the case of all who shall be members in the Anointed body, God declares that such sins shall be punished in the present life – saying through the Apostle "Some men's sins go before to judgment [during the present life], others they follow after" into the next life, when some shall be beaten with many and some with a few stripes. And again it is specified that in the cases of all accounted worthy to be of the glorified Church, they are chastened *now* in order that they may not have part with the world in the condemnation (trial) of the world in the next age. – 1 Tim. 5:24; Luke 12:48; 1 Cor. 11:32.

Verses 4 and 5. David's confession here is to God – the wronged Uriah was dead. Anyway, in that day it was esteemed a king's privilege to have the bodies and lives of his people subject to his will; and doubtless other kings habitually did as bad. But David had been enlightened and knew better, and although his offenses would have been lightly passed over by others, David realized his guilt before God and besought his mercy. He confessed his sin that others might know, when the chastisements of the Lord should come, that God's judgments and the

king's troubles were just punishments and not violations of God's covenant promises.

Verses 5-12. After confessing in verse 5 his original sin – his impairment through the fall – he shows in verse 6 his clear appreciation of the divine plan. Although fallen and weak in the flesh, and therefore unable to do perfectly, God looks for and demands purity of *heart* (purity of motive or intention) and this David realized he had not manifested. Hence his prayer in succeeding verses is not that the Lord shall excuse him in sin, but that his heart may be cleansed and brought into harmony with God's character and plan. Alas! how strange that some living under the still clearer light of the Gospel dispensation fail to see what David so clearly expresses,

and instead some even charge God with inspiring and causing all sin and crime and wickedness. But David was right, and these would-be wise ones have become darkened and foolish in their vain imaginations.

Verse 13. What a grand principle is here set forth. It is eminently proper that those who would be used of the Lord as teachers to instruct transgressors, whether in this or the coming age, should be fully consecrated to God – clean – pure in heart. And the only way to get to this condition is to lay hold by faith upon the merits of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, and to have our sins blotted out by him, and then, too, to be renewed in spirit, sanctified through the truth.

Psalm 51 (ISV)

A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.

Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.

Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.

May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION – R. 2024

2 Samuel 15:1-12

*“Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land
which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” – Exod. 20:12*

IN this account of Absalom's rebellion there are several important lessons to thoughtful minds. (1) First of all we notice in Absalom the sin of disrespect to parents. The experience and wisdom of riper years are, when heeded, the safeguards of youth, and specially in the case of parental experience and wisdom, which parental love is ever desirous of utilizing for the benefit of sons and daughters, to protect them from the ills of life of which they have learned either by experience or observation. Youth, alas! too often disregards this divinely provided safeguard until by and by it learns its folly by bitter experience. The hopefulness of youth naturally gilds the future with glory; and, with ardent spirits, undisciplined, unrestrained and self-conscious, it plunges into new schemes, sanguine of the success of its theories until, by and by, its bright visions fade before the stern realities of life.

So it was with Absalom; and so it is with every youth who disregards the commandment of the Lord, “Honor thy father and thy mother;” and again, as expressed by the Apostle, “Children obey your parents.” The duty to “honor” parents, however, extends far beyond the obligation to obey them, which specially applies to childhood, and not to mature years. The duty of honoring parents extends from the cradle to the grave, and when the last honors are paid to the lifeless forms of parents they should still hold an honored place in the archives of memory. Nothing is more beautiful in youth than preferment and deference to riper years, and specially to old age. “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man.” – Lev. 19:32.

(2) We notice in Absalom the sin of disrespect to the God of his father, which was but the natural result of his lack of love and confidence in his father. He entirely ignored the facts that the kingdom was the Lord's, and that the Lord placed whom he would upon the throne, so that his youthful ambition plotted not only against

his father, David, but also against God, who had anointed David to be king, and who also promised to establish his throne and to indicate his successor, and to subdue all his enemies. In his rebellion Absalom vainly thought not only thus to outwit his father, David, but also the Almighty Jehovah. How vain and foolish! what reckless folly! And yet, how many have repeated this folly, and few of the sons of men have paused to consider how puny is the arm of flesh when lifted in defiance of the Almighty!

(3) We see how political intrigue stole the hearts of the people and made the cause of Absalom temporarily very prosperous, so that “the conspiracy was strong and increased continually with Absalom.” But every successful step of the plot was only bringing the young man nearer to the height from which he must eventually fall. So it is in the temporary success of every evil device: the much sought elevation only adds force to the final disaster. In this view it is manifest that the truest friendship to the wayward is resolute, wise and well-planned opposition, which no flattery or political craft can overcome. Such friendship is seldom appreciated except by Him who reads the heart, though it does sometimes turn the sinner from the error of his way and save a soul from death. For such service how necessary is great sobriety, patience, faith, hope and love! especially in any efforts to assist fellow members of the prospective body of Christ, who are now on trial for eternal life and in the race for the prize of our high calling, lest any, becoming wayward, should fail of the grace of God.

(4) We observe the progressive course of evil – how the sin of ingratitude and dishonor to a father brought on ambition and defiance of God; how this led to unscrupulous political intrigue, flattery and lying; and finally to a bold and wicked plot which was treason alike to the king and to God. In all this Absalom was cultivating that haughty spirit which goes before a fall.

While thus noting the course of Absalom and its lessons to the young, there is also a hint of wisdom for parents which they would do well to heed. The example of David to his children was not a faultless one: the sins of his youth and of his later years yielded a most undesirable harvest. Not only had he violated the law of God in multiplying wives to himself (Deut. 17:14-17), but he had further transgressed by taking some heathen wives, the mother of Absalom being the daughter of the heathen king Talmai, king of Geshur in Syria; and the children of a polygamous household, living apart from their father with their several mothers, were necessarily almost without a father's influence and care, so that Absalom was brought up under the influence of a heathen mother and apparently with little reverence or respect for the true God.

The sin of Amnon for which Absalom slew his brother was one deserving of punishment, and yet in view of his own sin with the wife of Uriah how could David become the avenger? The crime doubtless caused him sorrow and tears and bitter reflections upon the past, all of which he recognized as part of his own penalty but, remembering his own folly, he could not punish the offender.

In the slaying of Amnon, whatever purposes of selfish ambition or personal hatred may have mingled with his indignation, Absalom was avenging the crime against his sister with only a lawful vengeance, the prescribed penalty being death. To David, who loved all his children, this was a terrible blow, and Absalom, fearing his indignation, fled to his maternal grandfather where for three years, unrecalled by his father, he remained, under the influence of that heathen land, no doubt restive under unfavorable conditions, with no indication of any favorable turn of affairs and chafing under a sense of injustice, since in avenging his sister he had merely executed the sentence of the Law (Deut. 27:22; Lev. 20:17); and, brooding over his misfortunes and magnifying all the faults and weaknesses of his father, it is no matter of surprise that the spirit of rebellion strengthened; for in the absence of any expression of his father's interest in him, how could he know of his heart yearnings? And when after three years he was

permitted to return to the land, still he was not permitted to see his father's face, nor to know of his continued love for two more years.

It is not, therefore, surprising that the experience of these five years fastened upon the mind of Absalom the conviction that his father no longer loved him or considered his interests; and this feeling rankling in his heart, he prepared to set at defiance his kingly authority, and in the fire of his youth, the self-consciousness of early manhood and his now dominant ambition, he also recklessly ignored the divine authority.

This attitude of David toward his son was a great mistake on the part of David, the realization of which when it was too late to rectify it doubtless greatly deepened the grief which was subsequently expressed in the bitter and tearful lament, "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee. O Absalom, my son, my son!" For five years David had allowed the hard side of his nature to thoroughly conceal his tender emotions; and not only so, but in all that time he had been neglecting his opportunities for exerting a godly influence upon his son, and that at a time when he most needed such influence, and instead of which he was surrounded with the influences of a heathen land. It was a dear price for David to pay for his resentment, and in the light of his son's highest interests it was certainly very poor policy. Yet how often is the mistake of David repeated by fathers! Many seem to forget the temptations, trials and inexperience of youth, and so fail to be gracious, considerate, forbearing and studious of their highest interests. Kind, generous, self-forgetful interest will follow the son long after childhood has matured into manhood, and will make parental counsel very potent long after parental authority has ceased.

There is probably no time in life more fraught with danger than when the young birds leave the home nest and launch out to try their own wings and to carve out their own fortunes. And if they can go with a father's and a mother's blessing; if every rebuff and misfortune they meet from a hard, cold world elicits home sympathy and prayers and loving encouragement; if father's house is felt to be the place of refuge in case of a sudden disaster; if they feel that loving

forbearance there offsets the hard knocks of experience outside, what a power is there for good! It certainly is not a wise father that will long permit any pride of dignity or stiff reserve to forego the privileges of his position for the blessing of his offspring.

Parents should heed well this lesson, that the bitter lament of David over a son whom

kindness, forbearance and loving counsel and sympathy might have saved, may not be theirs; and in every relation of life let us all see to it that love not only exists, but also that it is made very manifest.

In verse 7 the word “forty” evidently should be “four.” It is believed to be a transcriber’s error.

ABSALOM’S SHAMEFUL DISLOYALTY – R. 3261

2 Samuel 15:1-12

“Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” – Ex. 20:12

THE closing years of King David’s life included a series of very trying experiences, which, however, under the Lord’s providential care, apparently worked out for him a ripeness of heart and character exhibited to us in the Psalms of his later writing. These disastrous experiences date from the time of his sin, and to a considerable extent they were used of the Lord as punishments for that sin. Although in the case of Absalom’s rebellion we may trace the evil which there culminated to circumstances which occurred long previous to David’s sin, we are also to remember that it was quite in the Lord’s power to have shielded the King so as to have prevented the success of Absalom’s deceitful machinations. Amongst these earlier influences may be mentioned David’s marriage to Absalom’s mother, who was not a Jewess but a foreigner, the daughter of a heathen king. The counsel of the Lord is to the effect that his people should not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, and this counsel applied to the typical Israelite as it still applies to spiritual Israel. This disregard of the divine wisdom was sure to produce unfavorable results in some manner at some time. Children born to such a mismatched marriage are sure to inherit certain elements of character and disposition from the unbelieving parent which will eventually show themselves. In the story of Absalom we see an illustration of this. His vanity, insubordination, disloyalty, went hand in hand with an ambition which seemed to hesitate at nothing. It killed a half-brother who stood between himself and the throne, and later on stimulated a usurpation

of his father’s throne, and the seeking of his father’s life.

Absalom is a distinguished example of dishonor to a father, and the resultant cutting off in the prime of life. The story of his unfilial conduct is told in this lesson. For the murder of his half-brother under provocation he fled from his father’s dominions, and was three years an exile in the king’s (his grandfather’s) country. Then in intrigues in official circles his father’s love for him was prevailed upon to such an extent as permitted his return to his home land, and eventually to all the privileges of the heir apparent to the throne. It is at this time that our lesson opens. The young man, remarkable for his handsome appearance, introduced a custom from his grandfather’s court, a custom which still prevails in Egypt, namely, that a prince should have a special chariot and a bodyguard of fifty trained men. King David seems to have had so much love for his son that he practically let him have his own way in these matters. The people were pleased with the display, etc., of royalty in the person of their prince, and for several years a great and sobering change had come over the King, who was also advancing in years and who no longer showed himself amongst his people as much as formerly.

The vain young prince was quick to see that his spectacular course pleased the people, and quite probably he heard that his young brother Solomon was David’s choice for his successor in the kingdom, and he concluded to make a bid for the royal honors of his father. His method was a crafty one: he would steal the hearts of

the people from his father to himself. He had no filial affection; only selfish ambition is manifested in his course. He would use his father's indulgence, which had shielded him from the penalty of his crime, to undermine his father's influence. Surely, if it is wrong to render evil for evil, it is a despicable crime to render evil for good – to a father or a friend or to anyone.

The King in these days acted as a superior court, so that cases not satisfactorily adjudicated before the regular judges were appealed to him. As the nation grew these cases of appeal became more and more numerous, and doubtless the King's advancing age and his greater attention to religious things, writing of Psalms, etc., interfered to some extent with his conduct of this court business. Absalom perceived all this and turned it to his own account. Meeting those persons who had appeals and who were delayed, he expressed sympathy for them, assuring them that if he were a judge in their case justice would be speedily meted out – of course implying that his hearer had justice on his side and would therefore be pleased with the results. As a prince it was the order of that day that he should receive homage from the people of the realm, and feigning a love and humility which he evidently did not really feel, he lifted up and kissed these people. A royal kiss would be a matter to be boasted of. To have the fellowship, nay the affection, of a prince would mean to many a complete perversion of their judgment and a binding of them to him as his obedient servants.

Not only was this conduct unfilial, dishonoring to his parent, but it would have been disloyal to any ruler, ignoble toward any benefactor. Indeed the word "stole" is none too strong. In stealing the hearts of the people the theft was not less, but even greater, than if he had stolen money or merchandise. There is a point of morality here which is but faintly discerned by many in our day. We regret to be forced to believe that quite a good many are very willing to steal the affections of another and to misrepresent another to their own advantage. The Lord's people of the New Creation need continually to be on their guard against any such tendency in their flesh, which might disguise

itself so that its real character would not be discerned readily by the new mind. The Golden Rule should be applied by the saints to all the affairs of life every day. It is a safe rule, and those who use it freely and are obedient to it will assuredly grow in the fruits of the Spirit, all of which are branches of the one great spirit of Love.

This conspiracy against his father may be considered as having begun immediately on Absalom's return from exile, or as dating from his full acceptance back to fellowship with his father and a princely position. In the latter case it was four years in progress, in the former case six years. When he considered that matters were properly ripe for action, in order not to excite the suspicion of the King or others he asked of the King permission to go to Hebron, there to offer a great sacrifice unto the Lord in harmony with a vow made years before, and the occasion was thus made so important that the taking with him of many of the chief men of the army and of the city would not be considered remarkable, but rather an honor to the King through his son.

Meantime spies had been sent throughout the twelve tribes, and trumpeters were posted in various quarters, so that when the appropriate time would come and Absalom should proclaim himself king at Hebron, these trumpeters, being heard by others, the whole line of trumpeters throughout the twelve tribes would sound almost simultaneously, and the spies in Absalom's secret service as well as the trumpeters would explain the meaning of this to be that Absalom was now king. The people, who had learned to love Absalom because of his mock meekness, would thus gain the impression that the revolution of the kingdom was complete; that King David was certainly thoroughly vanquished, and that their personal prosperity with the new king would depend upon the prompt manifestation of their loyalty to his cause. The matter worked remarkably well, and as a result practically the entire nation was turned to Absalom in a day.

Some of those who went from Jerusalem to Hebron were totally ignorant of the use that was being made of them, yet their influential names being associated with Absalom would affect the

populace; and they in turn, being with him and favored by him as his friends, and their future being dependent upon his grace, had everything to gain by adherence to his cause and everything to lose by its repudiation.

The conspiracy was successful to a degree that could scarcely have been anticipated. Practically the whole nation gave allegiance to Absalom, and that in so outward and marked a manner that it was necessary for them subsequently, after his defeat and death, to publicly request the King to return to the head of the government of all the tribes. If we wonder that a nation should so quickly forget the valuable services of so eminent a ruler, to whom it owed so much of its prosperity, let us remember that the King's confession would not be viewed by the populace as it is now viewed by God's holy ones. Doubtless some appreciated him in a measure, but more would disesteem him for "showing the white feather," and many would be inclined to consider him an "old hypocrite." His seclusion during those eleven years and his accumulation of treasure for the building of the Temple – perhaps involving taxes upon the people – could all have been viewed from an evil standpoint and have assisted in his unpopularity. It is the fortune of all of the Lord's people to be misunderstood by the worldly, even when conduct and words and intentions are the very best. How careful, then, we all should be to walk circumspectly, and to avoid every appearance of evil!

Here, too, we may have an illustration of how God is able to **overrule** the affairs of the world in such a manner as to execute his designs without interfering with the free agency of any. Had it not been for David's sin and the penalty prescribed for it, Absalom might have had the same evil designs upon the kingdom, – might have made the same effort to accomplish his

designs; but the Lord would not have permitted the matter to reach so successful a climax. An example of this is found in the subsequent attempt by a younger brother of Absalom to take the throne. He proceeded in many respects as Absalom did and under more favorable conditions, in that at that time the King had grown quite feeble with age and was unable to administer the interests of the kingdom personally or to take the field in battle. However, in due time the Lord brought the matter to the attention of David, so that the revolt was nipped in the bud before it had time to take effect, and Solomon instead of Adonijah was anointed king.

Just so it is with the Lord's people today. Conspiracies may arise to threaten the interests of the Truth, but the Lord is at the helm, and will permit these to go no further than in his judgment is wise – only so far as they will work for the Lord's glory and the accomplishment of his plans, for the instruction and disciplining of his people, and for the sifting out of those who at heart are enemies of the cause. The general lesson for us is confidence in the great King of kings and Lord of lords; implicit obedience to him and loyalty to the principles of his government; the law of love in our dealings with all the true Israel of God and with mankind in general. The Lord is able and willing to make the things which would seem to harm us work out for our everlasting good and work disastrously to those who essay the injury of his people and his cause.

The Golden Text is well illustrated in our lesson. Absalom, the disrespectful, ungrateful, disobedient son, selfish, avaricious and grasping, came to a disgraceful end in the prime of life, and marks a lesson to his kind. On the other hand Solomon, the peaceful, the good, the wise son, attained to the kingdom, and attained to it, too, with his father's blessing and the divine favor.

PRIDE, INGRATITUDE, HYPOCRISY, REBELLION – R. 4275

2 Samuel 15:1-12

*“Honor thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long in the land
which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” – Exod. 20:12*

LESSONS may be drawn from the lives of the ignoble, as well as from those of the noble. As the poet says: –

*“Lives of great men all remind us,
We should make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.”*

This being so, then surely it is true also that the footprints of the evil-doers on life's pathway have lessons for us also, indicating to us which paths should be shunned, which elements of character should be restrained, which ambitions should be curbed. Following this course of instruction the divine Word holds up before the Spiritual Israelites not only noble precepts and counsels and examples of heroic devotion to truth and righteousness, but illustrations also of the course of evil-doers. Our lesson today belongs to this latter class. It considers Absalom, the son of King David, who at the time of this lesson was presumably nearly thirty years of age. His father, the Lord's anointed king over Israel, his mother, the daughter of a king of a neighboring realm, Absalom inherited princely qualities and manners and, being very beautiful, became a center of Israelitish pride. “In all Israel there was none to be so much praised for his beauty. From the sole of his foot, even to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him”; and the hair of his head is a proverb to this day.

It is worthy of note that those who are highly favored by nature, richly endowed in appearance or mental ability, are subject to temptations to a far greater degree than their fellows who are less talented, less handsome. Their besetting weakness is apt to be pride, self-esteem, to which ambition is apt to lend a helping hand. Thinking of Absalom and his beauty and his high position in the kingdom, reminds us of Lucifer and the glorious description given of him in the Scriptures – his high position and honor and his pride and ambition and the downfall to

which they led. The very suggestion of these two characters, from this standpoint should bring a thrill of fear to the hearts of all who realize that we today of Spiritual Israel are princes, highly favored of our Father, the Great King, and greatly blessed with the beauty and perfection which come to us through our justification and greatly honored of our Father in the gracious hopes set before us in the Gospel of glory, honor and immortality, and greatly blessed also in the light of divine revelation granted to us, which gives us a wisdom superior to that of the world.

What if these blessings and mercies and favors should have their wrong effect upon us and bring us eventually to disaster, as was the case with Absalom and with Lucifer? The thought is sufficiently appalling to remind us of the Apostle's words, “Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest [of becoming joint-heirs with our Redeemer], any of us should seem to come short of it” – through a lack of loyalty, a lack of allegiance, a lack of faith, a lack of humility.

A MURDERER OF THE BRETHREN

It will be remembered that David's eldest son was Amnon, and that he had defiled his half-sister Tamar, the full sister of Absalom. King David, sorely vexed at the matter, appears to have been at a loss as to what manner of punishment he should properly meet out for the offense, so that two years passed without any being inflicted. Then Absalom took upon himself to be his sister's avenger. He made a feast, to which were invited all the King's children by his several wives. In the height of the feast, in disregard of the rules of etiquette and the claims of natural affection, Absalom slew his brother and then fled, from fear of justice, which, under their code, centered in his father, the King. What lesson is there in this experience for us? What should we copy? What avoid? In Spiritual Israel we are all princes, sons of the Great King, who is also the Judge. The lesson to us would

properly be that the authority and responsibility for meeting out justice is not in our ambitions, but with the Father.

As the Scriptures declare, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." We are not to wait what seems to us a proper length of time, and then, if we see no divine punishment for what we consider to be no longer tolerable, to take the matter in our own hands – to murder one another. Nay, the command of our Great Teacher is, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." The lesson for us to learn is expressed in the Master's words, See to the beam in thine own eye, rather than put thyself to too much inconvenience examining the mote that is in thy brother's eye. To his own Master he standeth or falleth.

The parallel would not imply that literal murder would here be accomplished amongst the Lord's children. No, thank God! The world is too far advanced in civilization to make such a course practicable; but where the Absalom spirit is – the spirit of hatred, anger, envy, bitterness-strife is also. There is a modern method of assassination by the use of slanderous words, by insinuations, by the shrugging of the shoulders, etc. And this modern kind of murder is oftenest committed in the presence of the members of the royal family, the heavenly brotherhood. How terrible! do we say? Let us take heed that such blood-guiltiness, such "works of the flesh and the devil," be not upon us, else we shall never inherit the Kingdom.

THE UNGRATEFUL SON – TRAITOROUS

Absalom remained for three years at the court of his grandfather, Talmai, king of Geshun in Syria. By the murder of his elder brother he had put himself next to the throne of Israel, heir-apparent, and this, possibly, was considerably his inspiring motive in the crime, although he affected that the crime was committed in defense of justice and principle. Alas! how treacherous is the human heart! How frequently do we find double motives operating therein! We see the advantage of those who, as children of God, follow implicitly the Father's Word and leave all the results to him. They thus show their faith in God's power, as well as in God's justice, and

thus, as the Apostle intimates, they show that they have become partakers of a holy spirit of wisdom – "wisdom from above; first pure, then peaceable, easy of entreatment, full of mercy and good fruits," a spirit of wisdom which leaves in the Lord's hands his own matters and trusts fully to his care. This is indeed "The spirit of a sound mind." Let us, dear brethren of the Royal Spiritual Family, apply this principle in all of our dealings and thus receive thereby increasing blessings.

But Absalom realized that as an exiled prince his chances for acceptance as king of Israel would be comparatively small, in the event of his father's death. He therefore instituted an ingenious scheme by which his case was brought to his father's notice under most favorable conditions, and finally a respite or forgiveness or an invitation to return to his homeland was sent to him. As a continued showing of disfavor, his father, loving him the while, refused for two years to invite his wayward son to a personal visit and fellowship. Meantime the ambitious murderer skilfully managed his affairs so that, as the Scriptures declare, he "stole" the hearts of the men of Israel. He did not openly plot mischief against his father, the king, nor speak vilely respecting him, nor manifest any antagonism; he was too deep, too adroit, too wise with earthly wisdom for such a course. He stole the hearts of the people away from the king to himself by feigning extreme humility and extreme zeal for justice, and by careful attention to his personal appearance and by attention to those in influential positions. He got up early, contrary to the usage of princes, and went forth to the King's gate, where he could see the people who, some justly and some unjustly no doubt, were awaiting the king, hoping for contracts and decisions in their favor, etc. These, beholding the handsome and elegantly-dressed prince, bowed themselves to the ground after the manner of the east, only to be lifted up by the hands and kissed and told with affected modesty and love that they should not do that; that it was a king's business to serve his people and that the prince was merely sorry, so sorry, that it was not in his power to do for them all and more than they asked.

Thus for two years Absalom, the hypocrite and sycophant, endeavored (and was considerably successful in so doing) to draw to himself the love, the loyalty of the nation, which had belonged to his father David as the Lord's anointed. Evidently the young man was leaning to his own understanding and forgetting, if he ever knew, that the Lord God was the Ruler of that nation, and he alone had the power to designate who should be and who should not be his representative upon the throne.

ABSALOM'S OPEN REBELLION

Our text says, "After forty years," but scholars are agreed that this is a copyist's blunder and that it should read "four years." Some ancient authorities read this "four years"; so does Josephus. Feeling sure that his mock humility, combined with his handsome appearance, gentle manners and affected love for the people and for justice, worked successfully on the minds of the people, Absalom was ready for his next step – open rebellion against his father, the king of the nation and the appointee of divine providence. Surely he did not realize his situation in the odds of divine power against him. Continuing his practice of hypocrisy he requested of his father the privilege of visiting the neighboring city of Hebron, which had been the capital before Jerusalem was taken.

He said he desired to do sacrifice there in fulfilment of a vow. He affected to be very humble and very religious, while his heart certainly was far from the Lord. "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" The king granted the request, which included the privilege of taking a certain number of companions and chief people from Jerusalem, without anything amiss being thought of it. What worldly wisdom this young man had! And how ignominiously his mock humility stands out to his discredit! And how his ingratitude to his father, and his lack of every element of principle and righteousness are conspicuous! For us, dear friends, to see in ourselves anything in any degree or measure apparently approaching such a picture, or in our course anything in any degree corresponding to this, should be to horrify us, to rebuke us, to quench the kindling fire.

Into the conspiracy was drawn King David's most valued counselor, Ahithophel, whose presence with the prince as one of his friends on the occasion would mean a tower of strength to his position and the attainment of his ambition. Many of the people, deceived for years, were drawn into this conspiracy. Besides, Absalom had carefully appointed men throughout the various tribes and various parts of the land district, who were posted for his designs and in full sympathy with them, and whose business it was to create a stampede in his favor, and to help by expressing evil insinuations against the king and expressing hopes of wonderful things, if Absalom took the kingship. These were to congratulate the tribes that they now had a most worthy king in Absalom, and to explain to them that when the trumpets were heard blowing this meant not that Absalom aspired to the kingship, but that he already was king.

Alas, that history shows so many perfidious characters like Absalom! And alas, dear friends, let us remember that while we have become New Creatures in Christ, we still have to contend with the mean, perfidious dispositions that were ours according to the flesh! Let us remember, too, that "we wrestle not with flesh and blood" merely, but additionally "with principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high positions." Let us on the contrary remember the Apostle's words, "Humble yourselves, therefore, brethren, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." – 1 Pet. 5:6.

*"My soul, be on thy guard,
Ten thousand foes arise;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the prize.*

*"O watch and fight and pray,
The battle ne'er give o'er;
Renew the conflict every day,
And help divine implore."*

To those about to enter, or who have entered the narrow way, as well as to those who have already been on it for a time, there comes a suggestion that we must "mark well the pathway and make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." We are all lame according to the flesh; some more, some less, but all need to observe the heavenly course

and to walk circumspectly, seeing that pride and ambition are the greatest of foes to humanity and faith. We are reminded here of one feature in the story of “Pilgrim’s Progress”: When Christian and Hopeful had escaped from the dungeon of Giant Despair and returned to the Highway leading to the Celestial City, they erected a monument near the entrance to Bypath Meadow, which had led them astray. On the monument they put the following words, “Over this stile is the way to Doubting Castle, which is kept by Giant Despair. He despises the King of the Celestial Country and seeks to destroy his holy Pilgrims.”

Satan is the great giant who through these many centuries seeks to draw us away from the narrow path, away from full confidence in God and away from reliance on God’s power and his wisdom and his Truth, by which alone we can ever become heirs of the Kingdom.

OUR GOLDEN TEXT

While fully commending the propriety of honor to earthly parents, and appreciating the Lord’s promise of blessing to such as obey it, we

have in mind that the Great King Eternal, the Creator, has adopted us into his family and given us the spirit of sonship whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.” He has given us “exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature” and sharers with our heavenly brother Jesus in his Messianic Kingdom. How we should honor him! How it should be the chief endeavor of life to us to glorify our Father in heaven! How we should hearken to his words and keep them before us – “If ye love me, keep my commandments!” How we should realize that the end of his commandment is Love – out of a pure heart, fervently! How we should realize that hereby we know that we love God, if we keep his commandments – and his commandments are not grievous unto us, if we delight to do his will! Of this character are the sons who, as copies of the Redeemer, will be the heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord in his Kingdom. Let us make no mistake, but remember that the “Well-done” blessing will be given only to those who attain such a character development.

THANKLESS, REBELLIOUS ABSALOM – R. 5700

2 Samuel 15 & 18

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.” – Ephesians 6:1

*“How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is
To have a thankless child!”*

OUR Study of today discusses the death of Absalom. It is sufficiently explicit without comment. It will be of value to us, however, to look backward along the life of this young prince and to note some of his failures. In the first place, he was not well-born. His mother, King David’s wife, was the daughter of a heathen king nearby. His mother may have been beautiful, probably was; for the Scriptures indicate that Absalom was a beautiful boy, a beautiful young man, having a fine, courteous manner and being a popular idol. He had the disadvantage of being a member of the royal family and not being required to labor with sweat of face.

Absalom is first brought prominently to our attention by his murder of his half-brother

Amnon, to avenge his sister’s honor. For this he fled to the protection of his grandfather. He was thus still further removed from any good influences associated with his father and with the true religion. After several years’ absence, his father, who had never ceased to love him and mourn him, was induced to invite Absalom back to Jerusalem – where for two years more, he declined to receive his son into his presence. All of these influences were unfavorable to the young man, but none of them can excuse his treachery to his father, Israel’s king.

ABSALOM’S CONSPIRACY

There were judges throughout the Land of Israel for the deciding of the ordinary causes of discontent; but when their decisions were unsatisfactory, appeal was made to the king as to

a superior court. King David was busily engaged in preparing the materials for the Temple, which was not to be built until after his death. This may to some extent have hindered him from his work for the people as a superior judge, so that some of their cases, as in every superior court, were delayed of a hearing – tediously, it seemed to those impatient for desired results.

We are not sure, however, that there was anything lacking on King David's part as respects the administration of justice. We merely know that his crafty son, Absalom, made himself very popular. He was very gracious to the people, very familiar with them, always ready to hear their complaints; and he answered them very cunningly, expressing sorrow for their delay, and saying, Would that I were king! It would be different! Thus by deception, by intrigue, by falsehood, we read, he "stole the hearts of the people" from his father. The people really began to think that if they had such a man for a king, they would be immensely better off. They seemed to have overlooked entirely the fact that God was the King of Israel; and that, as the Bible says, King David merely sat upon the Throne of the Lord. – 1 Chron. 29:23.

Absalom was spectacular, a beautiful prince, with long, wavy hair. He rode in his chariot; and before him were fifty swift runners, his heralds. The thoughtless people admired this; and, apparently, at least one wise man was drawn away by the infectious infatuation of this glitter.

Absalom knew of his father's religious sentiments, which apparently he did not at all share. He realized that he would not probably be his father's choice for a successor; and that the time for a new king was not so very far off, as King David was becoming aged. Following Satan's course of ambition and disloyalty to God, Absalom became disloyal to his father. He recruited an army, proclaimed himself king, and did the matter so quickly and so thoroughly, with the sympathy of so many people whose hearts he had stolen, that King David and his regular army and the loyal ones of his court were obliged to flee for their lives. Our lesson recounts the battle which was fought between the superior forces of Absalom and the smaller forces of King David, who, however, were better

trained soldiers. The victory came to King David. Absalom was slain, notwithstanding David's urgent request of his soldiers that they should not kill the young man, his son.

What a contrast we have here between the man after God's own heart and the man whom the people admired – the flashy, the showy, the ambitious, the deceitful, the intriguing, the rebellious, who sought his father's life! The man of God, notwithstanding his weaknesses, which were acknowledged and repented of, had a heart of loyalty to God, true as the needle to the pole; and he had a sympathetic love for his son which found expression in that notable dirge, "O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee!"

A VERY IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE

The human will is wonderful, so that we might almost say that each boy is responsible for his own career. Our expression, a self-made man, is therefore not far wrong.

This, however, does not excuse the parent whose duty it is to see that a proper child is born into the world, reasonably gifted – not merely outwardly beautiful, but conscientious, just, loyal to God and to the principles of righteousness. Nor does it excuse the parent from giving the child proper conceptions of life, proper instruction; for the Scriptures say, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." – Proverbs 22:6.

It seems pitiful indeed that, with all the preaching and teaching of centuries, so few parents realize their obligations toward the children they bring into the world. So few fathers realize that they are the protectors and caretakers of their wives and of their off-spring; and that not only is it their duty and privilege to select a noble, conscientious wife to be the mother of the family, but it is also their duty to place her under favorable conditions during the period of gestation, and generally to assist her to keep her mind and her heart pure, loving, noble, loyal to God and to righteous principles, to the intent that their child may be well birthmarked, of noble character – less seriously marked and blemished with sin than would otherwise be the case. Well do the Scriptures declare that the people perish for lack of knowledge. – Hosea 4:6.

True, we have eugenics thrust upon our attention everywhere; but to what purpose? Important as this teaching is in respect to health and proper choice of a life-companion, it sinks into insignificance in comparison to the principle we are noting; namely, that the mind of the mother during the period of gestation is stamping and impressing, favorably or unfavorably, the character of her child. It of course would not be possible for a mother to produce a perfect

child; but with her own ideals high and true and unwavering, fixed upon things pure, noble and good, we know beyond question that her child would thus be greatly benefited both physically and intellectually, and also morally. On the other hand, as we have pointed out in the *Photo-Drama of Creation*, the perfect mother, Eve, could and did mark her son Cain with a jealous, unhappy disposition, which eventuated in his murdering his brother.

Psalm 3 (ISV)

A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

Lord, how many are my foes!
 How many rise up against me!
 Many are saying of me,
 "God will not deliver him."
 But you, Lord, are a shield around me,
 my glory, the One who lifts my head high.
 I call out to the Lord,
 and he answers me from his holy mountain.
 I lie down and sleep;
 I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.
 I will not fear though tens of thousands
 assail me on every side.
 Arise, Lord!
 Deliver me, my God!
 Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
 break the teeth of the wicked.
 From the Lord comes deliverance.
 May your blessing be on your people.

ABSALOM'S DEFEAT AND DEATH – R. 2025

2 Samuel 18:9-17, 32, 33

“The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” – Psa. 1:6.

THE successful conspiracy of Absalom, so artfully planned and skillfully executed, finally drove David from Jerusalem and planted Absalom there. But the victory of the conspirators was not yet complete while David, the rightful sovereign, lived. So Absalom and his counsellors conspired further against the life of the king.

But the Lord raised up in Hushai a friend for David, and placed him among the counsellors of Absalom, and thus through his counsel brought to naught the foolish and wicked conspiracy. In the pride and wickedness of his heart, bent on the slaying of his father, Absalom placed himself at the head of a great army and went forth to fight. In contrast with this wickedness mark the father's love, even under these extremely trying circumstances, saying to his men as they went forth to meet Absalom, “Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom.”

How suddenly God brought to naught the evil designs of this wicked young man: elated with his success and proudly riding to expected victory, he was suddenly caught by the head in the branches of a great oak; his mule passed on leaving him helplessly suspended, and the friends of David finished the work. Joab's trumpet of victory is blown, the conspiracy has come to naught, the usurper is dead and buried under

a heap of stones, and those that were with him seek to hide their faces for very shame; and King David, the Lord's anointed, returned again to Jerusalem in peace.

In the lesson which these circumstances afford let us mark well how short is the triumph of evil doers. Though their eyes stand out with fatness and they have more than heart could wish (Psa. 73:7); and tho now the world calls the proud happy and they that work wickedness are set up, and they that tempt God are even delivered (Mal. 3:15), yet soon they will all be as stubble under the feet of the righteous. (Mal. 4:1) The time may indeed seem long to those burdened by oppression; but it is not long in God's estimation. He will bring forth judgment unto victory just as soon as the wisdom of his purposes will permit. If justice be delayed, it is only for the development of some greater good than could be accomplished by a speedy adjustment. In this confidence, therefore, let the Christian rest, assured that all things – even the seeming delays – shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28) “Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward; for ye have need of patience that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” – Heb. 10:36.

“O ABSALOM, MY SON, MY SON!” – R. 3267

2 Samuel 18:24-33

“A foolish son is a grief to his father.” – Prov. 17:25

UTTERLY surprised and unprepared for Absalom's unfilial conduct was King David, when he learned of his son's rebellion and realized its extensiveness and how the hearts of the people had been stolen from him by his son's perfidy. He at once perceived that no other course was open to him than that of flight. It was a time of peace, and he had not a large retinue of soldiers at the Capital, but merely what might be termed

a body guard. With these and the loyal officers of the court he fled across the Jordan, where he had time and opportunity to gather a few reinforcements and where he might feel comparatively secure in the small but strongly fortified city called Mahanaim. Meantime Absalom displayed his contempt for his father and his household and thus, so to speak, showed the people that the rebellion was one in which no

quarter or reconciliation was to be expected. With a large army which had cast in their fortunes with the rebellious prince and expected under his patronage to reap large results of honor and influence and power as successors to the officers of the kingdom, Absalom pursued King David with haste. There seems to have been no doubt whatever that he was bent on capping the climax of his disgraceful course by the murder of his father. His pursuit with a large army meant this.

Although King David's army was much the smaller of the two, they probably had the advantage in that many of the King's guard were men of special ability and large experience as warriors, according to the methods of their time. The King was persuaded not to go with the army, whereupon he divided it into three parts under three of his ablest adherents. These met Absalom's army, and attacking it from different quarters, the battle resulted in the slaughter of 20,000 of Absalom's forces and the routing of the remainder, including Absalom himself, who, being caught by the "head" in the low branches of a tree, was unhorsed and left helpless, and was slain by Joab, the chief of King David's generals.

Here our present lesson opens. Near the watch tower of the wall of Mahanaim King David awaits news of the battle, while the watchman in the tower reports that he sees a messenger running, and, later, another. The first he recognizes as the son of his friend the priest, and according to the custom of the times he interpreted this to mean that the tidings were good, because a good man had been sent with them. This custom should still be in force amongst the Lord's people – that a good man would always seek to bear a good message. The words of the mouth and the meditations of the heart of all who are loyal to the Lord should be good – only good, ever good. Thus it is that God chooses not the worldly wise neither the worldly great, but those who are loyal at heart to him as his mouthpieces; and it should more and more be recognized that the bad tidings of great misery are not of the Lord, that those who bear them are not bearing the Lord's message, and that if they had the right attitude of heart toward the

Lord, and the right spirit of love, they would not have the disposition to bear an evil message which maligns the divine character in a manner that even the depraved would resent if it were charged against them.

When the first runner arrived he announced in a general way the success of the King's army. Then the King – in harmony with his parting words to the soldiers, that they should spare Absalom in any event – inquired first of all, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" As we are shocked with the unfilial conduct of Absalom toward his father, we are deeply impressed with the father love of David for his erring son, who sought not only his throne but his life. What was the difference between the two characters? which was the more noble, the more honorable, the more admirable? There could be but one answer from any quarter on this subject; even David's enemies could not read this record without an appreciation of his grandeur of soul. He was more anxious for Absalom than for his throne apparently – yea, and for his own life. The difference between the two characters can be accounted for in only one way, namely – that David was a man after God's own heart, one who had passed through trying experiences and learned profitable lessons, one in whom the spirit of love had been considerably developed. Absalom, on the contrary, is an illustration of selfishness and ambition which stooped to anything to accomplish its ends. David, although not a member of the house of sons of which Christ is the head, was one of the noble members of the house of servants of which Moses was the head. – Heb. 3:5,6.

Some have esteemed that the answer of Ahimaaz was an untruth, intended to soften the facts so as not to wound the feelings of the King; but we cannot agree to this. We hold that, according to the record, the young man told the truth, and we believe that it would be much better for everybody if all mankind similarly confined themselves in their replies to important questions to the strict meaning of the word "know." The reply was that he had seen a commotion, knew that the battle was ended, knew that the victory was on the King's side, but knew nothing more. True, he had heard Joab say

something about the King's son, but that was hearsay and not knowledge, and the young man answered the King properly when he said that he did not know the answer to the query about Absalom. The Lord's people above all others should be particular to discriminate between knowledge and belief and hearsay, etc.

The second runner, Cushite, or literally a Cushite – that is, a negro – was probably one of the king's household servants who engaged in the battle. He quickly told the whole story, and it was upon hearing thus of Absalom's death that the King was moved to violent grief, and gave utterance to words which stand as amongst the most pathetic on the pages of history. "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

The pity is that the King's love for his son did not take a more practical course at the proper time. He was an indulgent rather than a wise father. Evidently the flash and glitter of the young man's natural talents not only charmed the people but charmed his father, so that he practically had whatever he wanted of everything, the King failing to apply to his son the valuable lessons which he himself would learn, to the effect that the reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that true happiness and true prosperity are only to be found in this path, which wisdom indicates. His unwise love for his son led him to feel that the young man must sow his wild oats and should not be much restrained, and now when he witnessed the

reaping of those wild oats his heart was convulsed with sorrow. And so it has been with many a father and many a mother who, although truly the Lord's fail to apply to their children the lessons which the Lord has taught them by distressing experiences. It is unnecessary to comment upon the unwisdom of such love and to point the moral to Christian parents. It points itself, and Solomon the wise son expresses it tenderly when he said, in the words of our Golden Text, that "A foolish son is a grief to his father," and noted again that "He who spareth the rod hateth his son." From the practical standpoint, however the matter may appear to the superficial observer, the essence of wisdom is contained in his further observation, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Parents seem not to fully appreciate the fact that in the training of their children, either in the right way or in the wrong way, they are laying out for themselves either joys or sorrows for the future.

King David's inquiry respecting his son, "Is the young man safe?" should be the inquiry of every father and every mother respecting their sons and their daughters; but let them not do as David did – wait until sin has sprouted and blossomed and brought forth evil fruitage. Let them begin by realizing their duty toward their posterity in their earliest infancy. The duty of Christian parents toward their children is next to their duty to the Lord, – indeed the Lord has indicated that parental duty ranks first among all the earthly obligations of the saints.

LOVE IN RETURN FOR TREACHERY – R. 4277

2 Samuel 18:24-33

"A foolish son is a grief to his father." – Proverbs 17:25

KING DAVID, thoroughly unsuspecting Absalom's duplicity, was completely taken by surprise with the proclamation that Absalom was King of Israel, with Hebron as his capital. "To the pure all things are pure," writes the Apostle, and as David's heart was guileless towards his son, it was far from his thought to imagine such deceit and treachery as had been practised against him in a cunning and

underhanded manner for two years preceding the opening battle.

Hearing that Absalom had started on his march of twenty miles toward Jerusalem, intent upon the capture of his father and the overthrow of his kingdom, King David hastily retreated, accompanied by his bodyguard of 600 men and a comparatively small number of people who manifested sympathy for him and went with him

to share his fortunes. Doubtless several motives combined to lead up to this decision to retreat. (1) He wished to avoid, especially in his capital, the horrors of civil war. (2) He was overwhelmed with grief that his antagonist, his enemy, was his own son. (3) The evidences were plentiful about him that Absalom had stolen the hearts of the people and that his former friends had become his enemies, who now jeered at his discomfiture, and anticipated with evident pleasure the oncoming of Absalom and the establishment of his kingdom. "God is not in all his thoughts," says the inspired writer. (Psa. 10:4) So evidently the people of Israel failed to think of what would be the Lord's will in the matter, and this was their great mistake.

That must have been the darkest day of King David's eventful life. Accompanied by his bodyguard, most of whom were foreigners – and of his own nation comparatively few with him – he fled from his own family and the capital city of his kingdom, which he had established, and from the people in whose interests he had given the best years of his life in harmony with the divine anointing. He fled from the face of the people who some years before had sung his praises as their deliverer from the hand of the Philistines – "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." Poor old man! The street rabble cursed him and threw stones and dirt at him. Amongst the persecutors was one of Saul's sons, to whom David had shown great kindness, sparing his life and providing for his maintenance and comfort. Here certainly was an occasion for the trial of David's faith and patience and love. What he would have done in earlier life we cannot tell. His history in every place shows him to have been a man of well-balanced mind, but his chief protection was his possession of a Spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of consecration to the Lord, the spirit of faith and trust and loving devotion. Instead of threatening the mob or returning railing for railing, or in any way defending himself, King David gave instructions to his guard that no harm should be done to those who were speaking evil of him, slandering, smiting. "The cup which my father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it," were our Master's words in his dying hour

(John 18:11), and we can see his spirit exemplified in King David, who typified him in some respects.

It is supposed that the fourth Psalm and portions of the third were written from the standpoint of David's experiences as an exile from his capital. Dean Stanley says, "It has been conjectured with much propriety that as the first sleep of that evening was commemorated in the fourth Psalm, so in the third is expressed the feeling of David's thankfulness at the final close of that twenty-four hours." The king's objective point was a fortified city, Mahanaim, on the east side of Jordan; but the little army camped on the west side for the night.

ABSALOM THE HEARTLESS

Starting from Hebron with 200 men, Absalom's army made rapid increase, the population evidently rising en masse to share his sedition. Alas for the weakness of humanity. This scene reminds us of our Lord's experience, of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the multitudes shouting Hosanna to the Son of David, and five days later shouting, Away with him, crucify him, release unto us Barabbas. They were Jews in both cases; but we have no reason to suppose that they were more fickle than others of our race.

Absalom had a triumphal entry into Jerusalem and quite probably was intoxicated with the success. The records of his doings, of the various ways in which he endeavored to cast dishonor upon his father and to arouse the bitter prejudice of the people about him, all correspond with the vain, treacherous, ignoble character which we see displayed in this young man of large opportunities. We, who belong to the King's sons of a higher plane, should search our hearts diligently and scrutinize critically our every thought and word and act to make sure that we are thoroughly loyal to the Lord, our Father, the Great King; that we are not self-seeking, nor humble merely in outward appearance, but humble of heart, and that we are fully desirous of doing the Father's will, and that his will is not grievous to us, but that we can sincerely say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." – Psa. 40:8.

VICTORY FOR THE RIGHT

For three months the rebellion seemed to grow and prosper. The seeds of slander and disloyalty which Absalom had so carefully sowed through others, while quiet himself, had taken deep root in the hearts of many, who joined their cause with Absalom as rebels against the Lord and his anointed. The army of Absalom was increased rapidly from various quarters, while few came to the cause of King David. The size of Absalom's army is not stated, but can be conjectured from the fact that more than 20,000 were slain, while apparently the great mass was discomfited and fled in the battle of the Wood of Ephraim. What may have been David's sentiments during these three months of trial of faith and love, we can merely conjecture; but we have every reason to believe that he was a victor along all these lines. His patience certainly was manifested. His faith must have held secure to the Divine promises that the Lord would not take from him his sure mercies; but that he would deliver him out of all evil. And as for his love, even for his wicked, treacherous son, it surely was very great, as we shall see.

The attack was evidently led by Absalom and his army, while David's forces were divided into three little bands under three of his able generals. Apparently with purpose they drew the battle into the woods, where their smaller forces would have the advantage over the attacking party. The result of the battle was the complete defeat of Absalom's forces, and the death of the latter. Riding on his mule through the woods, his head was caught between the forks of a branch, his mule going on, leaving him hanging by the head while the army was in rout. One of King David's soldiers found him, but would not kill him because the King had strictly charged all the soldiers before they left for the battle that they should do Absalom no harm. But when the soldier reported the matter to Joab, the King's chief general, the latter without hesitation slew the traitor, and at his command he was buried under a huge pile of stones.

"IS THE YOUNG MAN ABSALOM SAFE?"

King David had proposed going with his army, but wiser counsel prevailed, for because of his advancing age (about 62 years), and

because of his grief, and because of his love for his enemy, he would not be so competent as others to have charge of the battle. Conforming himself to the advice of his generals and counselors, he remained at Mahanaim, waiting near the gate for tidings from the battlefield to be brought by couriers, runners. On a lookout, a watchman perceived one of the runners, and, recognizing him by his movements, announced that it was Ahimaaz. King David at once remarked, He is a good man and undoubtedly will have good tidings for us. (v. 27) What a lesson there is in that very expression! As our Lord said, "A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things." (Matt. 12:35) On the other hand, from a bitter heart proceed bitter words, evil speaking, injurious arrows. Our lives should be so that all of our friends and acquaintances would be ready to say of us, He is a good man; his message will have something of consolation in it. He is never a strife-breeder, nor a heart-wounder, nor a betrayer of confidences.

When the runner reached the King, he prostrated himself to the King, saying, "All is well." This was indeed good tidings to the King, but we note his love for his dishonoring, treacherous, enmitous son, evidenced by his first inquiry, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Some may consider that the King had a love for his son to the extent of weakness. We will not dispute that, but we will hold that if he must err on the one side or the other, it was far more pleasing to the Lord that he should love his enemy too much rather than too little. That loving expression gives evidence that the King had under divine discipline learned considerable of the "Love divine, all love excelling." If King David loved and pitied Absalom in his rebellious condition, how much more intently he must have loved him when he was in harmony; and so, if God so loved us while we were yet sinners that he gave his Son to die for us, how much more does he now love us since we are no longer aliens and strangers, but brought nigh by the precious blood and begotten of his holy Spirit through consecration, sanctification! (Rom. 5:8) It does us good to see an illustration of great earthly love, because it pictures favorably to us the great lesson that the

Master impressed by the words, "The Father himself loveth you."

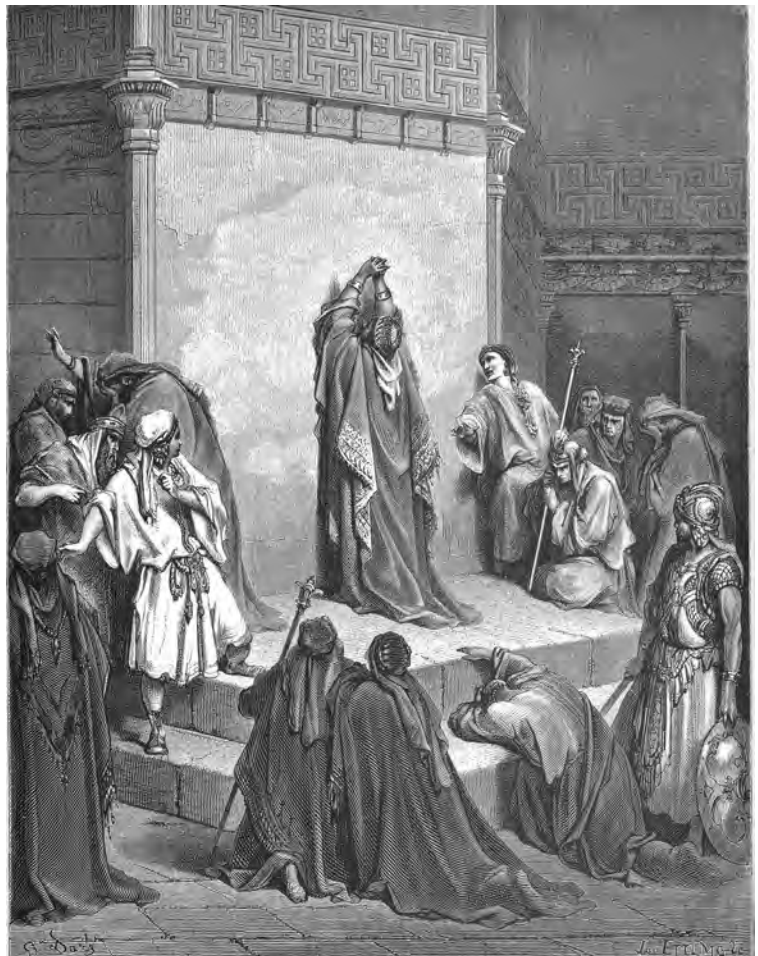
With such an illustration before us of David's love for his son, we may safely surmise that to some extent he misrepresented the sentiments of his own heart during the two years after Absalom had been permitted to return from his foreign exile. The King refused to see him during that time, and thus possibly encouraged Absalom's defiance and hatred. We mention this because we believe there is a lesson in it for many parents. It has seemed to us frequently that for some reason parents are disposed to treat their children much more harshly than they really feel, and thus misrepresent to their children their real heart attitude of affection. Whatever severity or austerity may be necessary, whatever chastisements appropriate in dealing with children, all should be done in such a manner as to fully assure them always of the parent's love, and that the punishments inflicted are given with a view to duty, and for the good of the children. Justice is excellent, Wisdom is valuable, punishments are necessary, but above all, "Love is the principal thing." Let us, therefore, judge ourselves along the lines of this divine standard – our acts, our words, our very thoughts. Whatever acts, words or thoughts will not fully square with the purest of love will be injurious to us as well as to those upon whom they are exercised.

"O ABSALOM, MY SON, MY SON!"

The good messenger broke the news as gently as possible to the King. He knew of the general rout of the enemy and of the concourse in connection with Absalom; but instead of telling all that he knew and, drawing upon his imagination for details, his goodness of heart led him to say little except that there had been a victory and that it seemed a great tumult, but did not know all of the particulars. Presently Cushie, a second runner, came, announcing the death of Absalom. King David's heart was bowed with great grief. This was what he evidently had feared. He betook himself to a room in the tower, on

the way sobbing, "O, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Of these words one writer says, "There is not in all of the Old Testament a passage of greater pathos than this. The simple beauty of the narrative is exquisite; we are irresistibly reminded of him who, while he beheld the rebellious city of Jerusalem and thought of the destruction it was bringing upon itself, wept over it." – Luke 19:41.

The expression, "Would God I had died for thee," finds two parallels in the Scriptures. Moses, Israel's mediator under the Law Covenant, gave vent to a similar expression when the people had come under divine displeasure and were threatened of the Lord because of their sin. St. Paul gave utterance to a similar sentiment when he said, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh." I could wish that I might be separated from membership in the glorious Church of Christ, and have my share



David Mourns the Death of Absalom by Gustave Doré

with the earthly restitution class, if by the sacrifice I could bring to my kinsmen the great blessings of the Gospel privileges which they are missing. (Exod. 32:32; Rom. 9:3) We are reminded here of the words of Longfellow, the poet: –

*“There is no far nor near,
there is neither there nor here;
There is neither soon nor late,
in the Chamber over the Gate,
Nor any long ago,
Nor any cry of human woe,
‘O Absalom, my son!’
“That ‘tis a common grief,
bringeth but sweet relief;
Ours is the bitterest loss,
ours is the heaviest cross;
And forever the cry will be,
‘Would God I had died for thee,
O Absalom, my son!’”*

If in Absalom’s perverse course of vanity, treacherous sedition, and in its ruinous end we find a lesson respecting the undesirable, evil, godless way, in King David’s course we find the opposite lesson of faith and submission and growth in grace, knowledge and love. In a

previous lesson we have noted the fact that David committed a most awful crime, violating three of the divine commands most wantonly and inexcusably – coveting his neighbor’s wife, committing adultery with her, and indirectly murdering her wronged husband. The Scriptures most pointedly condemn those sins, and intimate that the severe experiences which we have just recounted were permitted of the Lord to come upon him as retributive justice. Yet David’s recognition of his sin and his penitence for it testify distinctly that at heart he was not a murderer and not an adulterer. The Lord who looketh at the heart approved him ultimately, while reprobating his misdeeds and permitting him to suffer therefore.

We can draw a great lesson and a profitable one from the lives of these two men without copying either of them. We are not to feel that it is necessary that the man who would preach temperance should be able to say, I was once a drunkard in the gutter; neither is it necessary for us to follow David into his sins in order to profit by the lessons taught us by his experiences.

*“Happy the man who learns to trace
The leadings of Jehovah’s grace.”*

"WHY ARE YE THE LAST TO BRING BACK THE KING?" excerpts from R. 1690

2 Samuel 19

"And King David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house. Ye are my brethren; ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore, then, are ye the last to bring back the king?" – 2 Sam. 19:9-12

IN the scrap of history here recorded we find an illustration of a very similar condition of things in the world to-day. The kingdom of Israel had been thrown into a state of confusion, threatening anarchy, in consequence of being left for a time without any official head or king, by the rebellion of Absalom and the divided sentiments of the people.

Absalom had cunningly managed to alienate the hearts of the people from his father David, and had finally headed a revolt. And David, in fear of the consequences, fled from the city and country to the region beyond Jordan, accompanied by a few loyal and faithful subjects. A great battle took place, which resulted in the prompt subduing of the rebellion and in the death of Absalom, the would-be usurper.

Afterward King David did not attempt to repossess himself of the Kingdom, but waited until the desire of Israel for his return should be expressed.

Meantime, says the record, "All the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom. And Absalom whom we anointed over us is dead in battle. *Now, therefore, why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?*"

Just so it is in the world to-day. Earth's rightful King is not upon its throne, nor has the world recognized his right to it or desired his return. Men have been busy with their own schemes and plans of government. They have anointed various kings of their own choosing: in fact, they have tried every experiment of self-government; and, one after another, all have ended in failure. And now, after six thousand years of human experiment, the

whole world is on the verge of a revolution, in the outcome of which they have nothing to expect but anarchy.

THE RELIEF WILL COME ONLY WITH THE RETURN OF THE KING, IN POWER AND GREAT MAJESTY

We wait not for the King as the sweet babe of Bethlehem, nor yet as "the *man* Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all," but we wait for him who, having been "put to death in flesh, was quickened [made alive] in spirit" – who was raised from death a spirit being – highly exalted above his condition as a man, higher even than his condition as a spirit-being before he humbled himself to become a man, – highly exalted, even to the divine nature, far above human nature and angelic nature and every other nature. Such is the nature and majesty of the King for whom we wait, and whose presence and Kingdom we are assured can and will bring order out of earth's confusion, and bring to the world the blessings purchased with his own precious blood, given when he was a man, once for all and forever as man's redemption-price.

THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO WILL SPEAK OF BRINGING BACK THE KING WILL INCREASE

Ah, yes! That is the remedy, and the only remedy at all adequate to the cure of the disease of selfishness, its eradication from the body – social, political and financial.

"BUT WHO MAY ABIDE THE DAY OF HIS COMING? AND WHO SHALL STAND WHEN HE APPEARETH?"

The coming of the King will mean a personal, as well as a national and a church examination, judgment and treatment. "Who may abide the day of his coming? And who

shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap." (Mal. 3:2.) It will mean the curtailment of vice to a degree never attempted by any earthly reformer. There will be no *license* to be or to do evil in any form or degree. The only liberty will be to do right.

Ah! No wonder that so few to-day look and speak for the coming back of the King! To some it would mean the curtailment of present advantages over the remainder of their fellows. To some others it would mean to check their anticipated rising to a point of advantage or preference or honor above their fellows. To others it would mean the curtailment of sins now indulged and enjoyed.

Nevertheless, both the King and the Kingdom – for which the King taught his Church to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven" – are coming. In fact, they are *here*; and present troubles in church and state are the results of influences emanating from that King and Kingdom. Though men know it not, it is the smiting by this Kingdom of God that is even now preparing for the wreck of all the kingdoms of earth and the preparation thus of the hearts of men for the true King and his righteous government. Thus it was foretold by the Lord through the prophet. – Dan. 2:34,35.

But the King of Glory waits to be prayed to come and take control. He will let the various parties and factions of society cut and lance and amputate each others defects and prepare each others physics. But it will all be under the King's eye, and subject to his

"all-power." And when all are thoroughly sick, and when he, as the Good Physician, does come in and offer "the balm of Gilead," he and his Kingdom will generally be hailed as "the desire of all nations." (Hag. 2:7.) The Jews will be first: "They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son." And when he shall reveal his presence and Kingdom, they will shout, "Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us." (Zech. 12:10; Isa. 25:9.) Then "many people shall go and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." – Isa. 2:3.

Surely, those who know that the King and his Kingdom are the only remedy and the best remedy for all the wrongs and woes of men should be pointing the groaning creation to this, rather than to the poultices of their own contriving which can do no real good. Tell them about the Return of the King! Tell them that he is the Great Prophet and Great Priest, as well as the Great King: that as Prophet [Christ, the head, and his Church, the body] he will cause an accurate knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth; and that as Priest he will be ready to pardon and succor all who, under that knowledge, shall turn from sin to righteousness. Tell them that his death was the redemption price for all, and that the return of the King is to bind Satan and set free all of his captives who will accept the liberty of the sons of God under the conditions of the New Covenant. – Acts 3:22, 23; Gal. 3:29; 1 Cor. 6:2.

DAVID'S GRATITUDE TO GOD – R. 2031

2 Samuel 22:40-51

“The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer.” – 2 Sam. 22:2

THIS entire chapter is one of David's songs of praise and gratitude to God for his goodness and his loving providences which had been so manifest toward him ever since his anointing by Samuel the prophet, and doubtless before that as well. It calls to mind another expression of one of his psalms, – “Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright.” (Psa. 33:1) Indeed, the writings of David, and all the prophets and apostles as well, abound in fervent expressions of praise and thanksgiving to God. They not only praise the Lord themselves, lovingly and gratefully recounting all his mercies, but, with impassioned eloquence and holy enthusiasm, they call upon all the sons of men, and every thing that hath breath, and even inanimate nature, to laud and magnify his holy name. The worshippers are also bidden to bring with them to the concert of praise every musical instrument of human device; and grateful reverence exclaims, – “Blessed be his glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen!” – Psa. 33:2,3; 50:1-6; 72:19. See also Exod. 15:1-21.

As we thus consider that, by the voice of inspiration, the whole human race is called to praise and worship and thanksgiving, we are led to consider further the relationship which the spirit of praise has to the Christian or godly character. David says, it is “comely for the upright.” But why so? It is because loving gratitude is one of the divinely implanted instincts of a soul bearing the image of God, and one which should therefore be cultivated. It is this element of the intelligent creature that is designed to be responsive to the divine goodness and benevolence; and it is this element of character in man which makes fellowship and communion with God possible. If the goodness of God could awaken in us no sense of grateful appreciation; if we were wholly dead to such sentiments, there could be no pleasure on God's part in manifesting his goodness to us, and there would be nothing in us to call out his love; and so also nothing,

of all his goodness and grace, would awaken love in us. But since for the divine pleasure we are and were created (Rev. 4:11), God endowed his intelligent creature with this element of character which, being responsive to his own goodness, institutes a lively and delightful fellowship with himself, which is the chief end of human existence, both on the side of the creature and of the Creator. – Psa. 16:11; Prov. 11:20; 15:8.

Rejoicing and the spirit of praise are thus seen to be indissolubly linked together in the divine economy; and so David links them, saying, “Rejoice in the Lord, for praise is comely,” thus making the two almost synonymous. To see this principle illustrated take as examples the dog and the hog. Neither can have any appreciation of the divine goodness, neither being created in the mental or moral likeness of God, and hence being utterly incapable of knowing or thinking of him. Man is the highest being that they can know in any sense or degree; and that is first, because man is visible and tangible to them, and second, because they have some similar faculties, though very inferior and exercised within a much narrower sphere. The dog has in him to a considerable degree the sense of gratitude: feed and caress him, and he shows signs of gratitude and affection, and a desire to reward you with a manifestation of appreciation. He wags his tail, looks kindly into your face, licks your hand, caresses you with his head and watches to see what errand he can do for you. But the hog, on the contrary, makes no demonstration of appreciation: he takes all he can get without even so much as a look of recognition; his eyes are always downward, and his snout continually rooting in the earth for more; and a grunt is the only sound to which he gives expression. A hog, therefore, can have no pleasure in man; nor can man find any pleasure in the hog. There is no bond of fellowship whatever, and man therefore tolerates his existence only until his flesh is fit for the slaughter and the market, while between the dog and his master there is

strong friendship which, when cultivated, gives pleasure to both, and they become life-long friends, irrespective of any commercial value.

It is plain, therefore, that in the cultivation of the spirit of praise, thanksgiving and loving appreciation of all the manifest goodness of God, is the Christian's secret of a happy life. And in order to the cultivation of such a spirit it is necessary that we continually call to mind his acts of mercy and of grace; that in our prayers we frequently tell him how all his goodness is remembered, how every fresh evidence of his love and care causes faith to take deeper root and makes the sense of his presence and favor more fully realized; and how through such experiences our love and joy are made to abound more and more. We love him because he first loved us; and every time we see some new mark of his love, our love, if we have truly appreciative hearts, is called out more and more, and we are made to rejoice in God, in whose presence is fullness of joy. It is to this end that our Lord encourages our frequent coming to God in prayer with large requests for his favor, saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." – John 16:24.

We observe that in Israel the spirit of praise was cultivated by calling to mind and recounting what the Lord had done for them. "If I do not remember thee," says David, "let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." – Psalms 137:6. See also Exodus 15:1-21; Deuteronomy 7:17,18; 8:2; 15:15; 32:7; 1 Chronicles 16:12; Psalms 20:7; 63:5-7; 143:5, 6; 77:10-12.

So must the Christian continually call to mind the works of the Lord, especially his own individual experience of the Lord's leading and care and deliverances from dangers and snares and the wiles of the adversary. If we keep these things in mind and meditate upon them, our appreciation of God and his goodness grows, and the spirit of love and praise takes possession of the heart, and thus we are made to rejoice in the Lord always, and in everything to give thanks. So also the soul is made to hunger and thirst after God and to realize that God alone is its satisfying portion, and to desire more and more of his fulness. Thus, as the Psalmist suggests, our

prayer will be, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." – Psalm 42:1.

This same principle of gratitude and praise, which reciprocates loving kindness and generosity, is that which also makes human friendship and fellowship possible and delightful. In our intercourse one with another, if the kindnesses we show awaken no sense of appreciation, receive no acknowledgment, and their repetition is expected as a matter of course, there can, in the very nature of things, be no such thing as fellowship. True, as Christians, we may not relax kindness and generosity on this account; for we, like our heavenly Father, are to be kind to the unthankful as well as to the thankful (Matthew 5:44-48); but when this goodness awakens no appreciation, no love, fellowship becomes impossible.

In David's thanksgiving for victories over his enemies we observe that those enemies were the enemies of the Lord and his people, whom David was commissioned of God to conquer. These battles he undertook in the strength which God supplied, and the victories he properly ascribes to God, the rock of his salvation. The words, regarded from the standpoint of the future, are also prophetic of the victories of Christ, of whom David was a type, and to whom Jehovah will grant victory full and complete over all his enemies, – the enemies of God, the enemies of truth and righteousness. The whole strain of thanksgiving, thus viewed in its wider application to the conquests of Christ, is eloquent in its prophecy of his glorious victory, as well as in praise to Jehovah. (1 Corinthians 15:27, 28) The prophecy of a future wider dominion, contained in verses 44-46 can only be considered as fully applicable to the wider dominion of Christ.

The Golden Text is a blessed assurance applicable to all of the Lord's people, and it is amply verified to all those who delight themselves in the Lord, who meditate upon his goodness and render to him the praise that is due to his holy name. – "The Lord is my rock [upon which I may safely build my hopes], and my fortress [in which I may safely hide], and my deliverer [in every time of trouble]."

FORGIVENESS OF ALL SIN – R. 5105 & QB281

2 Samuel 24

QUESTION—"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) How comprehensive is the word "all" here used?

ANSWER—Except sin against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31,32), all manner of sin amongst the sons of men shall be forgiven, either in this Age or in the Age to come. The Holy Spirit here denotes a light, an intelligence, respecting God's purpose. Whoever wilfully and intelligently would sin against Jesus, would be guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. But if he blaspheme the name of Jesus, being deceived in some way, then the sin is not blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and may be forgiven. In the case of the Church, these forgivable sins will be forgiven through the Advocate, who has appeared for us in the Heavenly Court and can restore us to favor with the Father, unless we sin against full light and knowledge. To do this would be to take ourselves out of His hands.

But there might be a sin partly wilful—a sin in which both superstition or weakness and a certain amount of wilfulness had a part. As to how this would be possible we answer that there is a difference between the forgiveness of the moral obliquity and the sin. For instance, a child has committed some trespass and the parent says, "I will punish you for what you have done." There might be two parts of the punishment, one corporal punishment, the other the displeasure of the parent.

With some children the latter part of the punishment, the cloud between the child and parent, would be unbearable. Then the parent might say, "Since you tell me that you are sorry and that you will never do it again, I forgive you. But I told you that there would be a penalty

attaching to disobedience. I will make the penalty as light as would seem best in my judgment, but you must still bear punishment." And that which would be proper for an earthly parent we may consider might be done by the Heavenly Father.

In the case of the Prophet David: he committed two very serious, grievous sins—one in respect to Uriah and Uriah's wife, and the other in respect to Uriah's death. But we remember with what perseverance David pleaded with the Lord; and though the Lord indicated His forgiveness, yet there must be a punishment. David's child died. 2 Sam. 12:15-22.

Again, Satan provoked David to number Israel, contrary to the command of the Lord: God was displeased and smote Israel. Again David repented and prayed earnestly for forgiveness. The Lord offered him three things, one of which he must choose as the punishment for his sin. "Thus," said the Lord, "Choose thee either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, or else three days the sword of the Lord, even the pestilence in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel." (1 Chron. 21:10-14) Realizing his own weakness, David, in humility declined to make a choice. The three days' pestilence was sent upon Israel, and there fell seventy thousand men; but in the meantime before the punishment reached David, he had received the Lord's forgiveness for his sin.

So with the sins of the Lord's people. If there is more or less of ignorance, then the punishment is in proportion to the amount of wilfulness. Temptations come to us and to all mankind. Christ died for man's sin, from which He freely absolves the whole human family—the Church now, and the world in their day of trial.

SIN: DAVID NUMBERING THE PEOPLE – QB832

2 Samuel 24

QUESTION—Why was it a sin for David to number the people (2 Sam. 24 and 1 Chron. 21)?

ANSWER—While it is not stated in the Scriptural account that the Lord did not wish the Israelites to be numbered, yet we are convinced from the reading of these chapters, particularly verses one and eight of 1st Chronicles, 21st chapter, that such was the case and that He had given instructions to that effect. In the third verse of this same chapter, we find Joab, David's chief officer, protesting against this action of the King; saying that it would be "a cause of trespass to Israel." We may reason, too, that as David sat upon "the throne of the Lord"

(1 Chron. 29:23) as the Lord's representative, he was acting without instructions and due authority in taking the census of the people and was therefore presumptuous in the matter, and deserving of punishment as a rebuke in not first ascertaining the Divine will of God, the true King of Israel. There is a valuable lesson here for all who profess to be God's people, and that is, to first seek the Lord's instruction and guidance in life's affairs and not to lean to their own understanding and natural preferences. The reasoning faculties of all are more or less unbalanced; no one has a perfectly balanced mind, and hence it would be the part of true wisdom to follow the instructions of the Lord.



David in Prayer by Pieter de Grebber

DAVID'S LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE – R. 2030

1 Chronicles 22:6-16 Compare 1 Kings 1; Psalm 84

“Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee.” – Psa. 84:4

AFTER the stirring events considered in our last lesson, David, being recalled by the people, returned to Jerusalem and set about bringing order out of the general confusion into which Absalom had plunged the nation. At the time of his returning a usurper, with some show of success, sought to intercept him and secure the throne for himself; but he was promptly dealt with, and David was again established in his kingdom, and several years of peace and progress followed. – 2 Sam. 20:21.

But the king's troubles were not yet ended: again from his own household came the notes of discord, and the experiences with Absalom seemed likely to be repeated in the rebellion of another son, Absalom's younger brother Adonijah, who had laid his plans and skillfully prepared to seize the throne and thus establish himself as David's successor. (1 Kings 1:1-53) This attempt at usurpation and self-appointment led to the immediate anointing and proclamation of Solomon, whom God had indicated as his choice among the sons of David to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord. (1 Chron. 22:9,10; 28:5-7) So Solomon was recognized as king in Israel in the room of his father David. – 1 Kings 1:34,39,40; 1 Chron. 29:22-25.

David had now accomplished nearly all of his earthly mission. He found the dominion small, and now it was much extended. He found it in disorder, and left it thoroughly organized. He found religion at a low ebb, and he had succeeded in greatly reviving and energizing religious devotion and zeal. He found powerful enemies on every side, threatening the destruction of the nation, but he had subdued all the enemies and led the nation to a condition of peace and introduced them to a season of unparalleled prosperity. And not only so, but he had laid the foundation for the more permanent establishment of the service of God and the religious health of the nation in his preparations for the building and service of the temple which God had promised that his son and successor should

build, and in the religious zeal and enthusiasm he had aroused on the part of the whole people, so that as one man they were at the service of Solomon in the great work. His life had been an eventful and a troubled one, not without its grave mistakes, but it had accomplished great things in bringing order out of confusion and establishing peace and prosperity on a permanent footing. The glory of Solomon's reign was but the harvest of David's labors and sufferings. While David was not permitted to build the temple himself, because he was a man of war, this was no reproach against David for engaging in those wars, for he had done so in the name of the Lord and for his people, and not from the unholy ambition of the world's warriors, for plunder and prestige.

To some who think of the building of the Jewish temple as a mere mechanical service, like the building of any other temple, heathen or Christian, it may seem that there was much unnecessary ado about it. How strange, they mentally say, that it should be considered necessary for the whole nation to be at peace before the building could be undertaken! Why could not some be building while others were out fighting the battles? and why should the king be charged with the business? Were there not in all Israel plenty of architects and workmen and men suited to oversee the work, without burdening the king with it?

Let us not forget that the building of the Jewish temple was not a mere mechanical service, the putting together of so much stone and mortar and wood, etc., but let us view it from the standpoint of David, who, in charging the congregation of Israel to diligently cooperate with Solomon in the work, said, “Solomon, my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great; *for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God.*” (1 Chron. 29:1) And the sacred edifice was not one of human designing: the plans and specifications were given to David by the spirit of the Lord: –

"All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern."

"And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God will be with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee until thou hast finished all the work;...also the princes of all the people will be wholly at thy commandment." – 1 Chron. 28:12,13,19-21.

Thus it was to be a building into every fiber of which should be worked the religious devotion and zeal of the whole nation, and which should therefore stand as a monument of such devotion and zeal, and a testimony to coming generations which should awaken and preserve the same in them. Thus viewed, the work was indeed a great work; and, since all the people were to be interested and active in it, it was necessary that it should be undertaken only in a time of peace, when the attention of the people was not absorbed in wars and their attendant perplexities and calamities. It is manifestly appropriate, too, that the Lord's anointed king, in preference to any other individual, should have been charged with this important business, since it was a national enterprise, and he stood as the representative and head of the nation.

In this view, as well as in view of its divinely ordained typical significance, it is also manifestly appropriate that its beauty, its costliness and all its adornments should represent the labor and care and sacrifices of the loving hearts and active hands of a people devoted to God. So David expressed it, when he said, "The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries." – 1 Chron. 22:5.

In the charge of David to his son Solomon concerning the building of the temple, to which our attention is called, we catch a glimpse of the man after long experience and discipline had mellowed and enriched his character. Now, over every other ambition, his zeal for God predominates, and his chief desire for Solomon is that he may prove true and faithful to God and zealous in his service and that so he might abide in the divine favor. Then he bade him be strong

and of good courage in the great work before him, assuring him of abundant prosperity and divine favor if he would only continue to heed and fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel.

This counsel to Solomon may also with equal propriety be accepted by every Christian in the service of the Lord, – "Be strong and of good courage." Both strength and courage are necessary to faithful service and to success in the good fight of faith; and both are developed by patient endurance and faith in God under the various trials to which the Christian is exposed. The counsel of the Apostle Paul to the Church also tallies with that of David to Solomon, when he says, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;" and again, – "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." – Eph. 6:10; 1 Cor. 16:13.

The prayer and thanksgiving of David to God, recorded in 1 Chron. 29:10-19, ascribing praise to him for the privilege of collecting the materials for his temple and humbly acknowledging that all their gifts were only returning to God that which was his own, expressing his joy in the freewill offerings of the people and praying that their hearts might ever incline to him, and that he would give unto Solomon a perfect heart, is full of touching pathos, reverence, meekness and holy enthusiasm. Read it and underscore its touching phrases, that again and again you may be refreshed and instructed by it. Then mark (vs. 20) how he led all the people to fervently bless the Lord, and how the enthusiasm thus kindled anointed Solomon a second time to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord. (vs. 22, 23) This second anointing was like the grand Amen! of the whole nation to the first anointing (1 Kings 1:38-40), which was, comparatively speaking, done in a very quiet way.

Psalm 84, from which the Golden Text is taken, is another expression of David's devotion and zeal for the service of the Lord. While we thus contemplate the typical temple which kindled such an enthusiasm among the worthy saints of the Jewish dispensation, with what intensity of zeal and fervor should we regard that antitypical temple, the Church of the living God,

whose living stones shall to all eternity show forth the praises of him who quarried and polished and fitted them together until it grew into

a holy temple for the Lord in which he is pleased to dwell, and of which Christ Jesus is the chief corner stone. – Eph. 2:19-22.

SOLOMON, KING OF ISRAEL – R. 5701

1 Kings 1:1—2:12

“Know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.”

– 1 Chronicles 28:9

KING DAVID was seventy years of age; Absalom, his eldest son, had died in rebellion not long before the present lesson opens. David’s next oldest son was Adonijah, whom the death of Absalom had made the heir-apparent to the throne, and who is supposed to have been between thirty and forty years of age at this time. Joab, for a long time the head of David’s army, must have been well-advanced in years too, and probably was on the retired list, not merely on account of age, but because he had deeply wounded King David’s feelings in disregarding his instructions that Absalom’s life should not be taken.

Adonijah thought the time ripe for him to proclaim himself king, and especially as he had succeeded in gaining the friendship of Joab, the long-time military leader, and the friendship, too, of one of the prominent priests. He made a feast, to which were invited, apparently, all of King David’s sons except Solomon, who was ostensibly known to be more or less a favorite with his father. The feast was held not far from Jerusalem, and the arrangement was made that in the midst of the feast one of the company should salute Adonijah as king. The others of his company were expected to echo the sentiment; and thus the movement would seemingly be a popular one and not a rebellion. It carried out much as planned thus far.

However, in God’s providence, the matter was brought to the notice of King David, who promptly made the arrangement with the new general, Benaiah, with Nathan the Prophet, and with Zadok the priest, to have Solomon immediately placed upon the king’s white mule, as a sign that the king had approved him as his successor. Then he was anointed in the name of the Lord; and forthwith the military salute was

given, and the people of the whole city of Jerusalem shouted their joy, “Long live King Solomon.” Next in turn, by King David’s direction, King Solomon was brought to the throne and publicly crowned.

Adonijah, whose plans seemed to be working thoroughly, was astounded, and so were those with him, when they heard the clamor of the people, blowing of horns, etc., and later learned that it meant that Solomon had been crowned and enthroned. Adonijah feared for his life and fled; and his adherents melted away. Later, however, Solomon sent word to his brother Adonijah, assuring him of peace.

Thus beautifully King David’s public career ended, not in an eclipse, but at his zenith, in his full maturity of old age, and in his perpetuation upon the throne in the person of his chosen son. To him may well be applied the poet’s words:

*“He sets as sets the morning star,
Which goes not down behind the darkened west,
Nor hides obscured amid the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven.”*

SOLOMON, SON OF PEACE

Solomon’s name has come to signify wisdom; but originally, primarily, it meant Peaceful. It surely was a prophecy of his wonderful life, in which was no war.

Solomon was the son of Bathsheba, after she had legally become David’s wife. Somehow, not explained, the Lord had revealed to David that Solomon was to be his successor; and David had promised Bathsheba to this effect. Solomon was born at a period when King David’s activities as a warrior had very nearly closed and when the great double sin of King David’s life and his repentance from it had, we believe, wonderfully moderated and chastened him. His

loyalty to God in this serious matter, his earnest prayer for forgiveness and his realization of peace from God, apparently had made a new man of King David. Even though before this he had been loyal to God, he apparently was now still more devoted. The peace which he craved, and which was a mark of Divine forgiveness, may have had something to do with the gentle and thoughtful character of King Solomon, and something also perhaps to do with his name. It may have been given him as signifying that his birth marked peace with God on the part of his parents.

In any event, in Solomon we perceive a different character from that manifested by any of his brethren whose histories are recorded. He partook of his father David's religious disposition more than the others. He was thus highly favored, and really probably more gifted. Truly it is time for us to estimate to what extent others and ourselves are handicapped or

blessed by dispositions and character-traits which we inherit.

Another thing favorable to Solomon would appear to have been the fact that his mother was not of a heathen family, but an Israelite, and therefore more in sympathy with the Divine arrangement, Law, worship, etc., than others of David's wives.

Additionally, the Record seems to show that King David, having in mind a successor to his throne, and perhaps by that time having realized that he had not done his full duty by his other children in allowing them to grow up under the adverse influences of the court, rectified the matter in the case of Solomon while he was still young, leaving him partly in his mother's care, and appointing him as the ward and pupil of the Prophet Nathan. This excellent start in life doubtless had much to do with Solomon's career, which we shall examine in our next Study.

THE KING OF PEACE INAUGURATED – R. 4286

I Kings 1:32-40,50-53

"Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind."

– 1 Chronicles 28:9

SOLOMON'S name signifies peaceful. Nathan, the Prophet, who was his tutor, called him Jedidiah, which signifies, "beloved of Jehovah." Apparently he inherited certain natural traits which were much to his advantage, and under special divine blessing gave him properly the title, "the wise man." A writer says of him: –

"His parental inheritance was remarkably strong in several directions. His father David was in the maturity of his age; his mother was the grand-daughter of the Prince Ahithophel, whose advice 'was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God.' He thus inherited from his mother sagacity, quickness of judgment, judicial insight and perhaps some sensual weakness; from his father, thoughtfulness, literary taste, the skill of ruling and an interest in religion. His bodily form and countenance must have borne the graceful characteristics of all David's children; and, if we may follow the description given in the Canticles, he was fair, with bushy locks, dark as the raven's wing, yet not without a golden glow, tall and imposing."

He was about twenty years of age when his reign began. His father, King David, was about seventy years old and quite feeble, and it was manifest to all that a successor to the throne must soon be found. David's eldest son, Amnon, was murdered by Absalom, who was next in years, and the latter was slain in the battle of his rebellion. The next in age, "the heir apparent," was Adonijah, who evidently understood that his father, the king, premeditated that Solomon should be his successor, and this purpose he sought to thwart by himself seizing the kingdom on the pretext that his father was now too old to administer its affairs.

When Adonijah thought his project ready, he invited his adherents with all of the king's sons – except Solomon, who seemed to have shared his jealousy – to a great banquet in the "royal garden." Here, amid the mirth of the festival, a preconcerted cry was raised, "Long live King Adonijah"! Joab, King David's able general, now advanced in years, and Abiathar, the High

Priest, were among his abettors. Thus the second conspiracy was hatched in David's family.

"THE KINGDOM OF THE LORD"

"God is not in all their thoughts," writes the Prophet. This was true of Absalom's conspiracy, and again of Adonijah's. They did not consider that the kingdom of Israel was the special institution of the Lord, different from other kingdoms, so that, as the Scriptures declare, it was God's Kingdom. Thus we read, "Solomon sat upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord in the room of his father David." Had the conspirators realized that they were really attempting an interference with the Divine arrangements, surely neither attempt would have been made. God's people of today should be on the alert to discern in all of life's affairs, the will of the Lord. We surely should know that the Lord's wisdom and power are with the interests of Spiritual Israel in all of their affairs, in such a manner and to such a degree that human conspiracies and oppositions can work only harm to those who foment them. Though the Lord may permit these to go to great lengths and to have apparent success, as in the case of the conspiracy of the high priests and Scribes and Judas against our Lord, or in the case of Absalom and his coadjutors against King David; but the assurance given to all who have the faith to receive it is that "all things must work together for good to them who love God, who are the called ones according to his purpose," and that it must always be true in the case of all the Lord's people; as Jesus said to Pilate, "Thou couldst have no power at all except it were permitted thee of my Father." The Father will permit nothing which would interfere with his glorious plans. He assures us of this, saying, "The word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void; it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it, and accomplish that which I please."

SOLOMON CHOSEN, ANOINTED, PROCLAIMED

In due time, Divine providence drew the attention of King David to Adonijah's conspiracy – in proper time for him to take the necessary steps to accomplish the Divine will. Our lesson tells of how David called another priest, Nathan the Prophet, and Benaiah, another general, and

sent them with his son Solomon to the valley just outside the city gate and near the very place where Jesus later rode on the ass. Solomon was directed to ride on King David's own white mule, an act which would of itself proclaim him David's appointed successor. With this special envoy went the two companies of the king's special body-guard, the Cherethites and the Pelethites. Presently, the anointing performed, the trumpet was blown announcing Solomon king, and the people unanimously confirmed this with great shouts and rejoicing. Thus was Solomon brought in state to the palace, where he reigned jointly with his father David for some six months until the death of the latter.

SOLOMON'S WISDOM AND MODERATION

The king was a very young man for the heavy responsibilities devolving upon him, and the moderation displayed shows him to have been not merely well-balanced but well-trained. Solomon was born when his father was in his 53rd year, and at a time, doubtless, when he had learned from experience that he had been too indulgent to the remainder of his family. David had not brought them up with sufficient strictness. He had not realized sufficiently the need of training them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Great affairs of state had claimed his attention and the children had been left too much to the care of others not so reverential as the king. Himself religious from his youth, he seems to have supposed that his children would possess similar qualities of heart and mind. Evidently he had not sufficiently realized the demoralizing influence of wealth and earthly honors; that these do not make for godliness but, to the contrary, cultivate pride, worldliness, godlessness.

It was doubtless due to David's increasing reverence for the Lord, and his realization of the mistakes made in the training of his other children, and his desire that his successor to the throne should honor the Lord and carry forward the interests of religion – these things doubtless led the king to put his son Solomon under the special care of the Prophet Nathan, with the view to his preparation to serve the Lord and his kingdom righteously, and to build the temple of the Lord which David had purposed to build but

was not allowed. The Prophet Nathan knew of the temple project and of God's promise that it should be built by David's heir, and that Solomon was the chosen of the Lord and of the king. We can imagine the Prophet's faithfulness in the training of Prince Solomon for the duties of the position he was intended to fill.

Respecting Adonijah it is written, "His father had not displeased him at any time." (I Kings 1:6) Evidently he was a spoiled child, and one that probably felt glad that his father had never put him under the tutelage of so religious an instructor as the Prophet Nathan. He no doubt considered that Solomon was specially hampered and hindered from certain pleasures and "sowing of wild oats" and in general had too much restriction. Solomon, however, seems to have been greatly pleased by this experience, which illustrates well the fact that the twig that needs to be bent should be dealt with early. Fain would we impress this lesson upon all parents and guardians – that their wards need supervision and loving religious control, and that it is a mistake to allow the early years of life to be wasted through inattention and lack of training and then expect good results.

WE ARE IN TRAINING FOR A THRONE

Our Father is the Great King and he has promised that the Christ shall sit upon his throne, and we have been invited to become parts of the Christ, the Anointed, the Messiah. Shall we wonder that we need training for this important position; shall we be surprised if disciplines are imposed and requirements made of us more than are imposed upon those not intended for this high position! Surely the arrangements of our Father, the Great King, are wise and righteous altogether. Therefore, those who are in full sympathy and accord with him will be anxious to learn the lessons and to make the preparations necessary for the Kingdom honors. These must not wonder if they are excluded from the companionship and feastings of the Absalom and Adonijah types. They may be disesteemed by their ambitious brethren and may be evil spoken of, from the Head down to the last member of the Body, but if they have the Divine favor, theirs shall be not only the anointing but also the acceptance to the throne. "Have

patience, brethren, the hour of your deliverance draweth nigh"; "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

OUR GOLDEN TEXT

"Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind." There is a golden sentiment expressed in these words. Outward service is not sufficient in our dealing with the Lord. "He seeketh such to worship, as worship him in spirit and in truth." Solomon's excellent start in his high office and the favor of God which then came upon him had been preceded by years of study. Under the Prophet's direction and under his father's suggestions he was enabled to enter into the spirit of his father's plan respecting the erection of the great temple at Jerusalem which would put religion, the true religion and worship of God, in the most prominent position before the nation of Israel. He got, sympathetically, the spirit of his father which discerned that the whole nation of Israel would be specially blessed in putting God and his worship in advance of every other thing and interest. He was informed respecting the stores of material and wealth gathered by his father for the temple purposes and consecrated to that service. In these things Solomon found abundant opportunity for the exercise of his intelligence and his ambitions along proper and helpful lines, which drew him nearer to the Lord and taught him how better to serve the Lord and his people Israel as his father's successor.

So we see, as we seek the Lord with all our hearts as "dear children," and with willing minds, that he makes known to us his great plans and purposes respecting the future. He makes known to us his purpose to have a temple, and preparations already made therefor, and how and when it will be built and its object: the blessing of all the families of the earth. At each step of the way, as we the more fully enter into sympathy with God's great plan of the ages, it serves to develop us the more and to prepare us for the share in that Temple and Kingdom.

SOLOMON'S WISE MODERATION

Our lesson closes with the account of Solomon's magnanimity toward his brother

Adonijah. It seems to have been the custom of that day amongst other kingdoms that as soon as the king was installed in office, others who might become his rivals and opponents were put to death. Adonijah, probably judged Solomon by himself, and concluded that his life would be in danger, and laid hold upon the altar in the tabernacle court as a place of safety until he would get a message from the king assuring him that he would suffer no harm for the rebellion he had almost inaugurated. Solomon's words to him, as well as his conduct, were wise and kind – "If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth, but if wickedness be found in him, he shall die"; and when he presented himself before Solomon the latter said to him, "Go to thine house." In other words, no punishment of any kind was to be inflicted for the past, and as for the future, he was on his good behavior. Generosity is always a good sign wherever it is displayed, and in the children of the heavenly Kingdom it is an indispensable quality; as our Master said, "Be ye like unto your

Father in heaven, for he is kind to the unthankful and causes his sun to shine upon the just and unjust, and sendeth rain upon the good and upon the evil."

God purposes that ultimately all the wicked will he destroy, and he extends his present kindness and mercy to his enemies and the enemies of righteousness by reason of the fact that ignorance and weakness have such a hold upon the human family that they are not so responsible as they would be under full light and ability. It is only when we get this broad view which God's Word emphasizes that we can exercise loving benevolence toward all men, yea, against our enemies also, realizing that they like ourselves are encompassed with weakness, frailties and ignorance, by which their responsibility every way is largely controlled and which God has arranged to cover and ultimately remove through the merit of our Redeemer. As he generously overlooks these inherited blemishes, so we shall – all who have his spirit and are guided by his Word.

SOLOMON ANOINTED KING – R. 2045

1 Kings 1:28-39

THAT Solomon was the Lord's choice among David's sons to succeed him upon the throne of Israel is clear from 1 Chron. 22:8,9. – "The word of the Lord came to me, saying,...Behold, a son shall be born to thee who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days." (2 Sam. 12:24, 25; 1 Chron. 17:11-15; 2 Sam. 7:12-17) And it was in view of the fact that Solomon was the Lord's choice, that David assured Bath-sheba, Solomon's mother, that her son should surely inherit the Kingdom. – 1 Kings 1:13,30.

Solomon was the second son of David by Bath-sheba. His name signifies "the peaceful," thus commemorating the promise of God concerning him. The additional name Jedediah (*the beloved of Jehovah*) seems to have been given by Nathan the prophet as a sign of David's forgiveness and restoration to the divine favor

(2 Sam. 12:25), as the special love thus expressed before the child could know or choose good or evil could not have been for his own merit, and therefore must have been for his father David's sake, whom God had loved and chosen, and of whose posterity was to come the long promised Messiah – King of the antitypical Kingdom of God. Hence the names, Solomon (*the peaceful*) and Jedediah (*the beloved of the Lord*) indicated that David was still the beloved, that he was fully restored to the divine favor, and that the promises of God made to him and his posterity still held good.

Solomon came to the throne at an early age, probably at about nineteen or twenty. Of his personal qualifications at this time we know but little except from 1 Kings 3:3, – "And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed [unto the Lord] and burnt incense in high places." This was prohibited by the Mosaic law (Deut. 12:13,14), but was

accepted of God until the Temple was built. – See 1 Sam. 9:12; 1 Kings 3:2.

It was not long, however, until the seductive influences of position, power, wealth and general prosperity bore down with telling effect upon the character of this favored young man whose future was all aglow with promise. His character had never been developed in the school of experience, for he was reared in luxury from his youth up; nor were his principles put to the test. His principles were not fixed and firm. Though he loved God because of what he had seen and heard of his goodness to his people and to David his father, and because God loved him and had chosen him to be king, yet his heart was not anchored in God. He had not learned to love God for his inherent goodness – because he is the embodiment and glorious exemplification of righteousness and truth. And it is only those who love righteousness, and who *therefore* love God, because he is righteous, who are truly anchored in God, and who, consequently, have any stability of character. That Solomon was sadly lacking in such love to God and the consequent stability of character, his subsequent course soon began to show.

Yet, though God knew the end and all the intervening steps of his career from the beginning, though he foresaw his moral decline and its baneful influence upon the nation, still in his own wise purpose he chose Solomon to be king over Israel; and the purpose of God in choosing him was admirably accomplished, notwithstanding his own degeneracy and the sins into which he led the nation. That purpose and its accomplishment will be more clearly understood from our consideration of the succeeding lesson. But let us observe here that God did not propose always to provide for Israel a king whose reign would afford them the largest measure of temporal prosperity. Indeed, when they demanded a king and he granted them their desire, he faithfully forewarned them of the infringements of kingly power upon the rights and liberties of the people. (Read 1 Sam. 8:9-18) All of this the nation experienced in the subsequent years of their history.

This was not the Lord's idea of government, but it was his foretelling of what he foresaw that

the imperfect and selfish heart of man would do when exalted to power; for he knoweth what is in man. So it was in Israel, and so it has been in all the world: selfishness exalted to power has always used that power, largely at least, for self-aggrandizement.

The Lord's instructions to the kings of Israel were, however, to the opposite of all this; viz., that the king should study the law of the Lord, and put its principles in practice – "that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left." (Deut. 17:18-20) But no king, either of Israel or of any other nation, however wise or good, ever did that. All have been more or less inflated with the pride of power, and their hearts have been lifted up above their brethren. Even David, the beloved of the Lord, succumbed to this baneful influence until, being greatly intoxicated with it, he fell into gross sin. The temptations of power to our impaired humanity in any position are always to the gratification of pride, ambition and self-aggrandizement. The only ruler of the world who will fully meet the requirements of the divine law, turning not aside to the right hand nor to the left, will be Jehovah's Anointed Son, our blessed Lord Jesus, who so loved his (future) subjects that he gave his life for them. His heart is never lifted up by pride, though God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, both of things in heaven and things in earth. – Phil. 2:9-11.

In him there is no scheming for self-aggrandizement, no ambition except lovingly and willingly to serve and bless his subjects, and that not only in theory, but in a blessed reality fully attested by his great sacrifice on their behalf. Though he was rich, for their sakes he became poor; though he had everlasting life, yet for their sakes he freely gave his life a ransom for theirs. Of him it is written, "Behold, a king shall reign *in righteousness*;" and he is called "the Prince of peace." Until his righteous reign is established in the earth the whole creation groans and travails in pain, and neither Israel nor the world could enjoy the blessings of that peace and prosperity which God designs to give

through Christ. The reign of Solomon only pre-figured this; and, as we shall see, the typical peace and prosperity of his reign were very hollow and unsatisfactory, yet the brilliant bubble was a speaking type of the future glorious reality; and when it had accomplished

this mission of shadowing forth the glory to be revealed in Christ, the bubble burst and the groaning creation continued to groan under the heel of the oppressor, and will until he whose right it is shall take the kingdom and possess it.



Solomon is Anointed King by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

“Now as for you, my son Solomon, get to know the God of your father. Serve him with a sound heart and a devoted soul, because the Lord is searching every heart, every plan and thought. He will be found by you, assuming you are seeking him, but if you abandon him, he will abandon you forever.

David continued with these words for his son Solomon:

“Be strong and courageous, and get to work. Never be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor will he abandon you right up to your completion of the work for the service of the Temple of the Lord.

1 Chronicles 28:9, 20 ISV

DAVID'S SON AND DAVID'S LORD – E129

1 Kings 2

IT SHOULD be noticed, first of all, that the discussion of this question does not relate to our Lord's pre-existence, but merely to his relationship to the human family. He became related to the human family, as we have seen, by taking our nature, through his mother Mary. Mary's genealogy, as traced by Luke, leads back to David, through his son Nathan (Luke 3:31*), while Joseph's genealogy, as given by Matthew, traces also back to David, through his son, Solomon. (Matt. 1:6,16) Joseph having accepted Mary as his wife, and adopted Jesus, her son, as though he were his own son, this adoption would entitle Jesus to reckon Joseph's genealogy; but such a tracing back to the family of David was not necessary, because, as we have seen, his mother came also of David, by another line.

But, be it noticed that our Lord's claim to the throne of Israel does not rest upon his mother's relationship to Joseph, as some have inferred. On the contrary, had he been the son of Joseph, he would have been debarred from any ancestral right to David's throne, because, although David's successors in the kingdom came through the line of his son Solomon, and not through the line of his son Nathan, nevertheless certain scriptures distinctly point out that the great heir of David's throne should not come through the royal family line of Solomon. If we shall demonstrate this, it will be an effectual estoppel of the claims made by some, that our Lord must have been the son of Joseph, as well as of Mary. Let us therefore carefully examine this matter.

The divine proposition, clearly stated, was, first, that unequivocally and unquestionably the great heir of the throne of the world, the great King of Israel, should come of David's line. Secondly, it was also declared that he should come

of the line of Solomon, of the reigning family, only upon certain conditions. If those conditions were complied with, he would come of that line; if those conditions were not complied with, he would come of some other line, but in any event must come through David's line and be both David's son and David's Lord.

Note the Scriptural statement:

"The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn him from him: Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. *If thy children* will keep my covenant, and my testimony that I shall teach them, *their children* shall also sit upon thy throne forevermore." Psa. 132:11,12

"And of all my sons (for God hath given me many sons) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the Kingdom of the Lord over Israel. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son shall build my house....Moreover, I will establish his kingdom forever, *if he will be constant* to do my statutes and my judgments as at this day." 1 Chron. 28:5-7

"If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth, with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee [be cut off from thee, from the throne – *margin*] a man from the throne of Israel." 1 Kings 2:4

The promise of the Messianic Kingdom in Solomon's line, and in the line of his posterity according to the flesh, is thus made clearly and specifically *conditional*, contingent upon a certain faithfulness to the Lord; and by all rules of interpretation of language, the implication of this is that unfaithfulness to the Lord would assuredly bar the posterity of Solomon and his line from the throne of Israel, as related to the Messianic Kingdom, according to the flesh. The question therefore arises, Did Solomon and his successors upon the throne of Israel "take heed to their way, to walk before me [God] in truth, with all their heart and with all their soul?" If they did not, they are barred from being of the ancestral line of the Messiah, according to the flesh.

* Joseph is here styled "the Son of Heli," i.e., the son of Eli, Mary's father, by marriage, or legally; or as we would say, son-in-law of Eli. By birth, Joseph was the son of Jacob, as stated in Matt. 1:16.

We must go to the Scriptures to ascertain the answer to this question. There we find most unmistakably that Solomon and his royal line failed to walk after the divine precepts. Hence we know of a surety that that line was cut off and abandoned from being the Messianic line, and that it must come through another ancestral line, from David. Hear the word of the Lord:

“And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father and serve him with a perfect heart....If thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever.” 1 Chron. 28:9

“And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel....Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee....Nevertheless in thy days I will not do it – for David thy father’s sake; but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit, I will not rend away all the kingdom, but will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant’s sake and for Jerusalem’s sake which I have chosen.” 1 Kings 11:9-13

In harmony with this, the record is that the ten tribes were rent away from the Solomonic line, directly after Solomon’s death – ten of the tribes never acknowledging allegiance to Rehoboam, Solomon’s son and successor. But let us hearken to the word of the Lord respecting the tribe of Judah, and its consort Benjamin, which remained for a time loyal to the line of Solomon, and thus apparently associated with the promised antitypical Kingdom, and Messiah, the great King. The last three kings of Solomon’s line who sat upon his throne were Jehoiakim, his son Jehoiachin (called also Jekoniah and Coniah), and Zedekiah, Jehoiakim’s brother. Let us mark the testimony of the Lord’s Word against these men, and his assurance that none of their posterity should ever again sit upon the throne of the Kingdom of the Lord – actual or typical. We read:

“As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee

hence....Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out (he and his seed), and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord: thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.” Jer. 22:24-30

“Thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, he shall have none to sit upon the throne of David.” Jer. 36:30

Concerning Zedekiah we read:

“Thou profane and wicked prince of Israel, whose day is coming, when iniquity shall have an end: Thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is; and I will give it to him.” Ezek. 21:25-27

Here the complete overturning of the Solomonic line is declared: it was the line that was exalted, and which should thenceforth be debased, while the debased or obscure line of Nathan, which had never made any pretensions to the throne, was to be exalted in due time in its representative, the Messiah, born of Mary, according to the flesh.

Who could ask more positive testimony than this, that the Messiah could not be expected through the line of Solomon – all the rights and claims of that line, under divine promises and conditions, having been forfeited by wickedness and rebellion against God? Thus the claim that our Lord must have been the son of Joseph, and thus have inherited his rights and claims through Joseph, are proven utterly false, for no man of that line shall ever sit upon the throne of the Lord.

This changing of the kingdom from the branch of Solomon to another branch of the house of David is clearly foretold in other scriptures, as we read, “Behold the day is coming, saith the Lord, that I will *raise unto David* A RIGHTEOUS BRANCH, and a king shall reign and prosper....In his days Judah shall be saved

and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name that Jehovah proclaimeth him, Our Righteousness." Jer. 23:6 – See Young's Translation.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, seems to have caught this proper thought, or else was moved to speak by the holy Spirit prophetically, when she gave utterance to the remarkable song of thanksgiving quoted by Luke (1:46-55): "He [God] hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart; he hath *put down the mighty* from their seats, and exalted them of *low degree*. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away." Here the favored family of Solomon's line is contrasted with the humbler family of Nathan's line. The diadem and crown were removed from Zedekiah, and from the line of Solomon, to be given to him whose right it is – the Righteous Branch from the Davidic root.

We have seen how our Lord is the branch, or offspring or son of David, and the line through which his genealogy is properly to be traced, and the full accordance of the Scriptures thereto: let us now see in what respect he was David's Lord. How could Jesus be both the Son and the Lord of David?

We answer that he is not David's Lord by reason of anything that he was as a spirit being before he was "made flesh," and dwelt amongst us – no more than he was David's Branch or Son in his prehuman existence. Our Lord Jesus *became* David's Lord or superior, as well as "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36), by reason of the great work which he accomplished as the Mediator of the Atonement. "*To this end* Christ both died and rose and revived, *that he might be Lord* both of the dead and living." Rom. 14:9

True, the *Logos* might properly have been styled a Lord, a high one in authority, as he is styled a God, a mighty or influential one. Likewise the man Christ Jesus, before his death, might properly be styled a Lord, and was so addressed by his disciples, as we read, "Ye call me Lord and Master, and ye do well, for so I am." (John 13:13) As the special messenger of the Covenant, whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world to redeem the world, and whom the Father honored in every manner, testifying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am

well pleased" – it was eminently proper that all who beheld his glory, as the glory of an Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, should reverence him, hear him, obey him, and worship him – do him homage – as the representative of the Father. But, as indicated by the Apostle in the text above cited, there was a *particular* and different sense in which our Lord Jesus *became* a Lord or Master by virtue of his death and resurrection.

This particular sense in which the risen Christ was "Lord of all" – "Lord both of the dead and the living" – is vitally connected with his great work as Mediator of the Atonement. It was for this very purpose that he became a man. Humanity in its depraved condition, "sold under sin" through the disobedience of Father Adam, was helpless – under the dominion of Sin and the sentence of death: and its deliverance from these evils, in harmony with the divine law, required that the penalty of Adam entailed upon his family should be fully met. The race required to be *bought back* from sin, and Christ became its purchaser, its owner – "Lord of all." For this very purpose he left the glory of his prehuman condition, and became *the man* Christ Jesus. And the Scriptural declaration is that he "gave himself a ransom" – a *purchase price* – for the race condemned in Adam. Thus the whole world was "*bought* with a price, even the precious blood [life] of Christ."

But though by virtue of his having *bought the race*, he has, in the eye of Justice, become its *owner*, its *master*, "Lord of all," he did not purchase the race for the purpose of enslaving it, but for the very reverse object of setting at liberty from sin and death all who will accept the gracious gift of God through him. And the very object of the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom is that through it may be bestowed upon the human family the rights and privileges of the sons of God – lost in Eden, redeemed, bought with a price, at Calvary. It was to obtain this *right to release* man that our Redeemer became the purchaser, owner, Lord of all. Thus by his death Messiah became David's Lord, because David was a member of the race purchased with his precious blood.

DAVID AND GOLIATH (excerpts)

by Martin Mitchell

Without armor or sword, in the strength of the Lord;
With blessing of God and of Saul, as he was, then he took
Staff and sling in his hand and five stones from the brook.

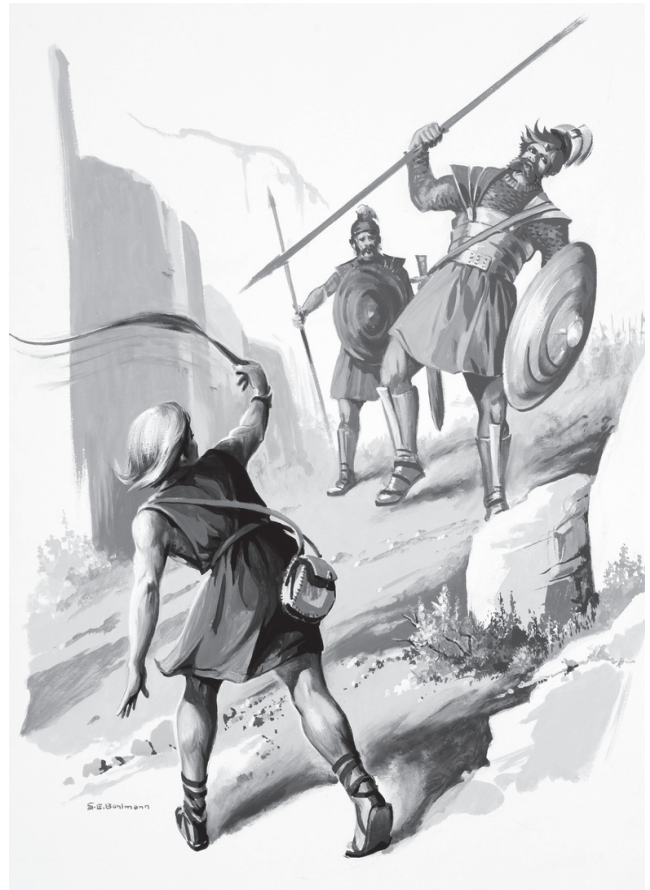
Young David advanceth this forty-first day
Since challenge was issued into the affray.
Goliath doth see him, and thus doth he say;

For the sling is unseen, though the club he doth see
"How art thou come out with a stave to fight me –
As a dog? O thou ruddy and fair nominee

Then David did say, "You would have me to yield
To might of your sword and your spear and your shield.
But not upon these do I have to rely;
I come in the name of Him thou dost defy,
The God of our armies, Jehovah Most High."

Goliath arose, and came on in a rage;
T'ward him David did race and the distance did gauge,
As he swung in a flash a smooth stone from his sling.
Which driven to kill found its mark with great skill
In the skull of Goliath of Gath. What a thrill!

From Goliath's own sheath David drew out the sword
And cut off the head of this Philistine lord.
The Philistine horde when their champion did fall
Did scatter as leaves "fore the wind in the Fall.
So David to Isra'l a triumph did bring
By faith in the Lord and a stone from his sling.

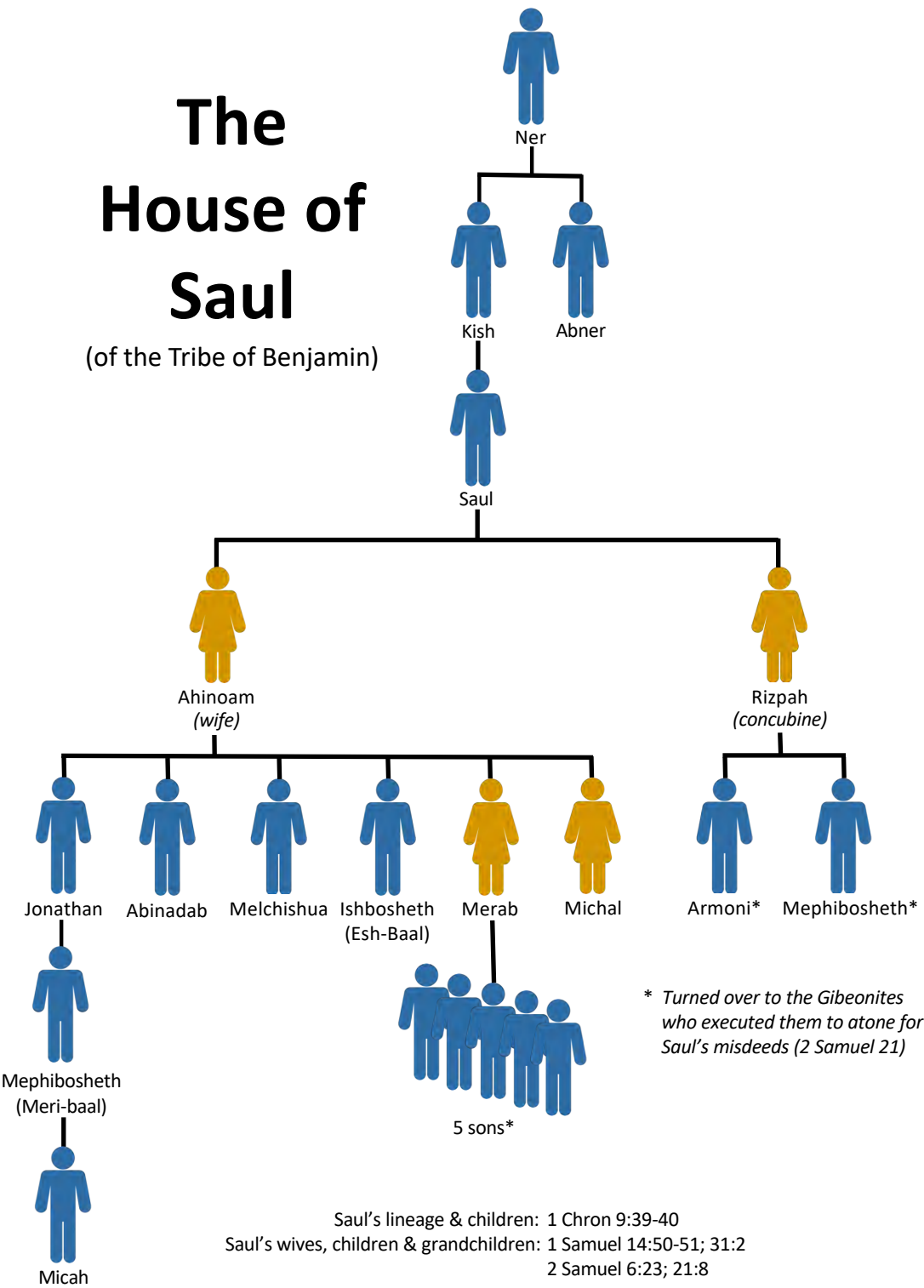


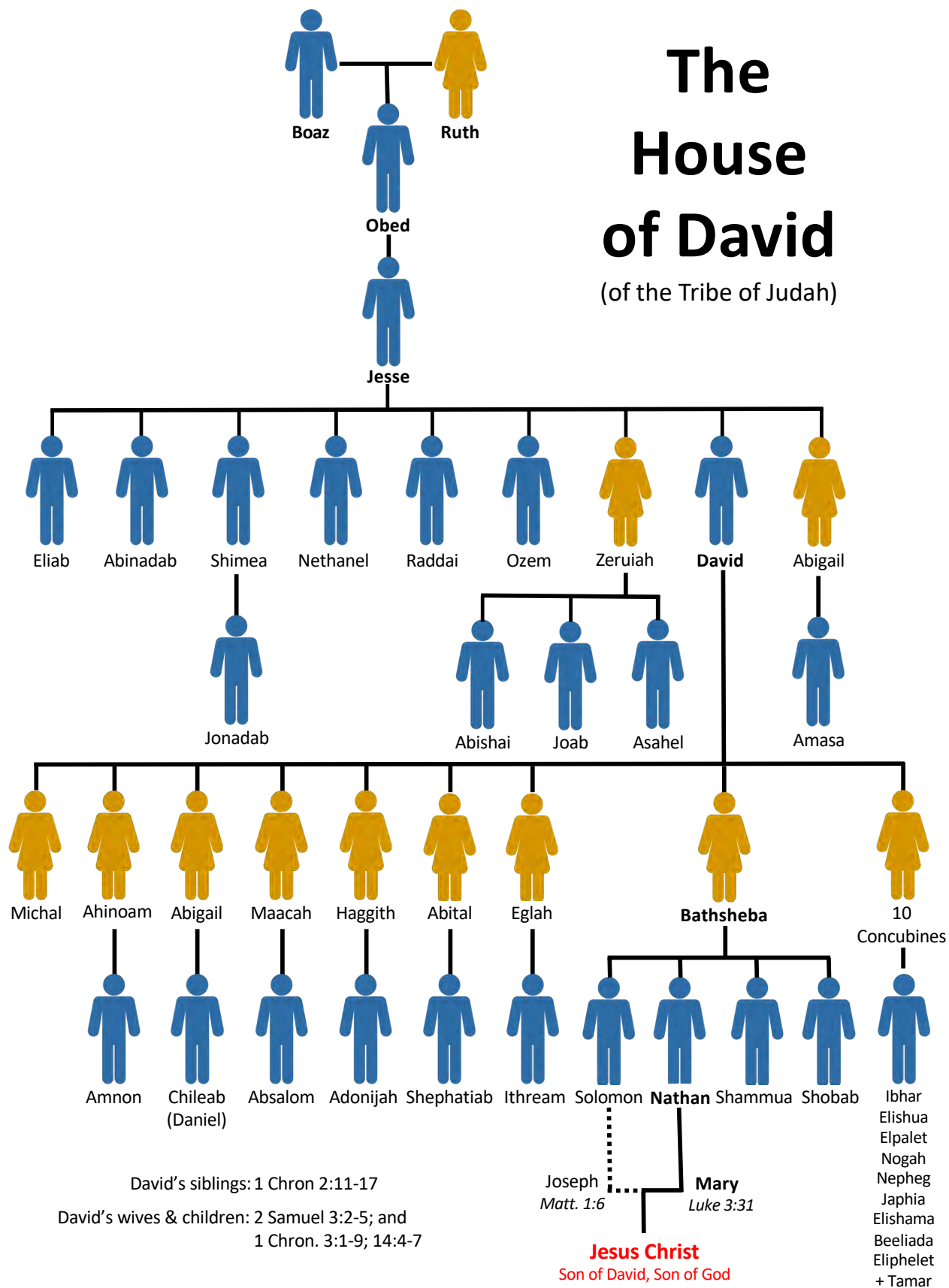
David Slays Goliath – Review & Herald Publishing

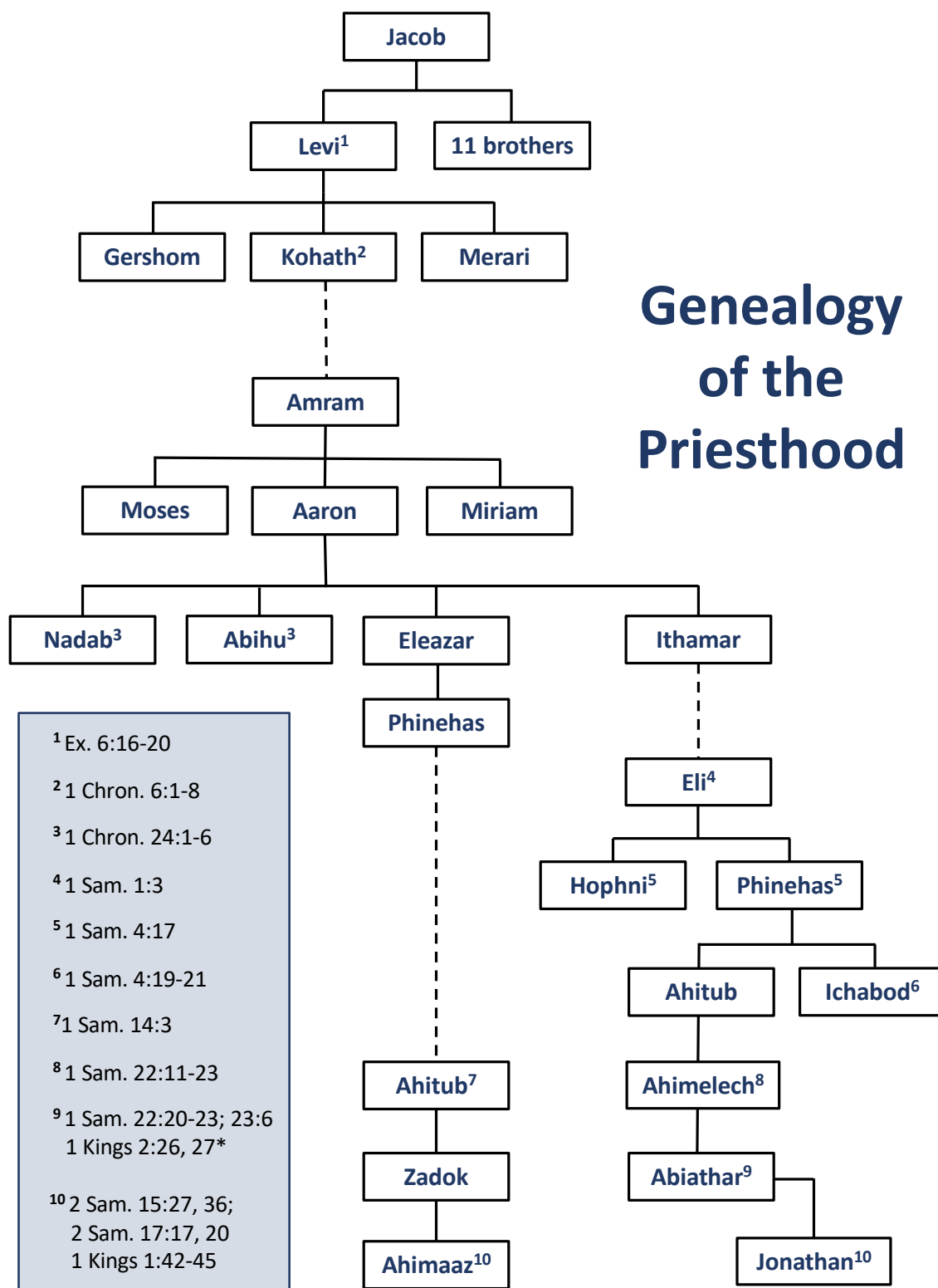
Goliath our foe, is the devil we know,
Who God did defy, and who told the first lie.
In his crafty way, for our life he would play;
And even transform to angelical form
To lead us astray from the true "Narrow Way."
He can be undone, we shall him overcome,
With a stone from the brook, as a quote from the Book.
We shall have him smitt'n with a "thus it is writt'n."











* Abiathar was deposed when he supported Solomon's brother Adonijah for the kingship, while David was on his deathbed. Zadok supported Solomon. When Abiathar was deposed, the priesthood returned to the house of Eleazar (to Zadok).

References to David

The name “David” appears over 1000 times in Scripture:
1080 occurrences in the OT; 59 occurrences in the NT

Phrases Referencing David

City of David

David’s Son and David’s Lord

House of David

In David

Key of David

Kingdom or Throne of David

Root and Offspring of David

Seed of David

Servant David

Son of David

Star of David*

Sure mercies of David

Tabernacle of David

*not found in Scripture

Discourses on David

(available on Bible Resources App)

A=Overview
B=Early Life (youth, shepherd, Goliath)

	Title	Speaker
A	A Glimpse of David	D. Destro
A	A Man After God's Own Heart	T. Marten
A	A Man After God's Own Heart (1976)	B. Kirkham
A	A Man After God's Own Heart (1997)	W. Cramer
A	David, A Man After God's Own Heart (2015)	N. Austin
A	David, A Man After God's Own Heart (2013)	R. Cunningham
A	David, A Type of Christ	F. Shallieu
A	David, Man after Jehovah's Own Heart (2017)	J. Parkinson
A	David, the Beloved of God (1967)	R. Alexander
A	David, Type of the Church	L. Jacobs
A	David's Courage and Service (2013)	E. Bushlus
A	David's Attitude (1997)	W. Blicharz
A	The Golden Ode of David (2015)	E. Bushlus
A	The Key of David	Todd Alexander
A	The Sure Mercies of David	17 speakers
A	Three Kings: King David	J. Leslie
B	A Little David (2007)	J. Black
B	Shepherd Boy (1999 Symposium)	T. Armstrong
B	The Valley of Elah	Andy Oystrik
B	Lessons from the Life of David	T. Ruggirello
B	Of Stones and Giants (2013)	R. Cunningham
C	Vigorous Youth (1999 Symposium)	D. Monette
C	A Brother is Born for Adversity (2015)	J. Baker
C	A Friend Loves At All Times (2014)	J. Baker
C	David and Jonathan	W. Schroeder
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C	Relationship Between David/Jonathan (2002)	T. Ruggirello
C	Three Covenants of Friendship	T. Ruggirello
C	David as a Fugitive and His Mighty Men (2010)	R. Cunningham

C=Youth (Jonathan, fugitive)
D=Kingship (Bathseba)
E=Closing years

	Title	Speaker
C	Lessons From David's Life (2004)	D. Hrechuk
C	Abigail (2010)	L. Griehs
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D	Bringing up the Ark (2014 & 2017)	O.B. Elbert
D	Journey of the Ark of the Covenant (2017)	M. Ensley
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D	Covenants Not Often Discussed (2006)	D. Rice
D	Mephibosheth (2000)	D. Rice
D	Nine Men in the life of Bathsheba	C. Hagensick
D	Question Meeting - Psalm 51	Griehs, Rawson Montague, Gray
D	Blessed is the Man to Whom the Lord Imputeth Not Iniquity	K. Rawson
D	Five Friends of David	D. Bruce
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D	A Look at Shimei	H. Montague
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E	Closing Days (1999 Symposium)	W. Cramer
E	David's Sin of Numbering the People	R. Luke
E	David and Solomon (2011)	M. Ensley
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Additional Reference Sources

A=Overview
 B=Early Life (youth, shepherd, Goliath)
 C=Youth (Jonathan, fugitive)
 D=Kingship (Bathsheba)
 E=Closing years

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	Title	Author	Link
A	Saul	Daniel Kaleta	http://www.heraldmag.org/2010/10nd_5.htm
A	The Sins of King Saul	Wade Austin	http://www.heraldmag.org/2010/10ja_5.htm
A	King Saul's Woes	David Christiansen	http://www.heraldmag.org/2007/07ja_7.htm
A	David	Robert Brand	http://www.heraldmag.org/2010/10nd_6.htm
A	David	Wade Austin	http://www.heraldmag.org/2007/07ma_9.htm
A	A Genuine Christian Life		https://herald-magazine.com/2014/11/16/a-genuine-christian-life/
B	David and Goliath		http://www.heraldmag.org/2003/03jf_2.htm
B	Five Smooth Stones	Jerry Leslie	http://www.beautiesofthetruth.org/Archive/Library/Doctrine/Mags/Bot/90s/BOTNOV95.PDF
C	David at Gath		http://www.heraldmag.org/2007/07ja_4.htm
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D	Nine Men in the Life of Bathsheba	Carl Hagensick	http://www.heraldmag.org/literature/bio_1.htm
D	Nathan the Prophet	Michael Nekora	http://www.heraldmag.org/2003/03jf_8.htm
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D	David's Prayer for Forgiveness	Carl Hagensick	http://www.beautiesofthetruth.org/Archive/Library/Doctrine/Mags/Bot/90s/BOTMAY03.PDF
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- 3 **After God's Own Heart** (Goliath)
- 463 **Thou Art the Man** (Bathsheba)
- 419 **The Shepherd Psalm** (Psalm 23)
- 411 **The Secret Place of the Most High** (Psalm 91)

King David of Israel by Albert O. Hudson: <http://www.biblestudentarchives.com/documents/KINGDAVID.pdf>

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