2 Chronicles - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Christian Truth: Volume 37, Grace and Glory

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2 Chron. 9:1-12

It is grace which is exhibited in David, and glory in Solomon. Grace had a very full display in David. It raised him from being an outcast to a place of honor; it comforted and sustained him in sorrow, restored him from wandering, and kept him to the end in safety. But when the time came for glory to shine forth, grace having thus displayed itself to the full, David delivers the throne into the hand of Solomon.

Each of these, grace and glory, has its peculiar method. Grace only divides the scene with other principles; glory forms it all alone. Grace meets David in his degradation, sorrow, and defilement, and brings honor, comfort, and restoration, leaving the struggle between the former and the latter things in measure to the end, and the whole a divided empire. But glory holds the entire scene at its disposal, and leaves either a trace or a reflection of itself on everything. It is not God's bringing out His resources to mingle with man's circumstances, but it is the supreme presence of the Lord forming the whole sphere of the action itself. This can be seen in the chapter we are considering. There is no darkness at all upon the scene abroad, nor working of nature in the heart within-no trace of man or of his passions; the finger of God and the Spirit of God delineate and animate the whole picture.

The Queen of Sheba is the witness of this. Her consciousness of what she saw tells us of glory being everywhere in the regions of the king of Israel-the stirrings of her own heart tell us of the absence of all the ways and principles of nature. She saw not the slightest thing that did not reflect the glory. As the stars of the heaven differ in their glories, but each of them is glorious and lends something to the sum magnificence, so it is here. There is the house of the king, with the ascent up to the house of God, but there is also the meat of Solomon's table, and the apparel of his servants, and each contributes to the glorious whole. The glory was leaving its reflection on all she saw. It might have a small part in the account, but still it was glorious. And because it was small, it was even more worthy of notice by the Spirit-led soul that delights to put honor on the uncomely member. This enabled the queen to give greater testimony to the fact that glory was everywhere. Just as another voice of the same Spirit, anticipating the sanctity or cleanness of the antitype of Solomon's day, tells us of "Holiness unto the Lord" being, at that time, upon "the bells of the horses," and that "the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar" (Zech. 14). The glory had taken over the whole scene, and there was nothing hidden from the reach of its beams. It was a morning without clouds-there was no shadow anywhere. All was in the light. The very equipage of the attendants and their deportment reflected it. All was delivered into the liberty of the glory (Rom. 8:21) and fashioned by the power of it.

The kingdom within was, however, as excellent in its own way as the kingdom without. If the day dawned around, the day-star had arisen in the heart of the queen of Sheba. There was no blemish of nature or of the flesh in her spirit, as there was no dimness or uncertainty in the scene around her. She was small in comparison with the king in Zion but in spite of this, she delighted in all that she saw, without envy or covetousness. She sought for wisdom, and valued the merchandise of it above gold or rubies. She offered the best of her land to king Solomon, doing all she could to beautify the house of God's glory. She considered nothing that she had too good for him.

0 the blessedness of all this within and abroad! Glory abroad, leaving its memorial everywhere and the beauty of the Spirit's mind within, ordering the whole conversation of the soul! Such scenes may be realized to the enjoyment of our hearts and eyes now, and to the glory of our Lord in the days of the kingdom!

It is well that now grace divides the scene with nature's misery and defilement, and it is well that then glory will know nothing but its own creation, for light and its principles will be triumphant. The light which God has brought in shines, it is most true, but shines in a dark place; the light that He will yet bring in will be light everywhere, the day-dawn around, and the day-star within (2 Pet. 1:19). It is now the valley of Baca with wells of water; soon it will be the courts of unbroken, undivided praise (Psalm 84).

"The Lord will give grace and glory."

Weakness and Strength: October 2019, King Uzziah Strengthened, and Strong

From 2 Chronicles 26:5-16, we learn that king Uzziah “sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper.” He went forth and warred, and “God helped him.” “He strengthened himself exceedingly.” He built towers in Jerusalem and fortified them, and towers in the desert, and digged many wells. He had husbandmen also, and vine-dressers in the mountains and in Carmel. Moreover, he had a host of fighting men that went out to war by bands. “The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valor were two thousand and six hundred. And under their hand was an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones. And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal.” We need not dwell upon the description of the numerous army of King Uzziah; we will turn to God’s instruction for ourselves about it. “And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction.” Of all the words we find put together, there are few more remarkable than these.

One would have thought that the very object to be gained by Uzziah was to be strong, but the strength we naturally covet is independence of God. If we remember that all real strength is derived from the fullness that is in Jesus, we would always be able to say with Paul, “When I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor. 12:10). We need to be deprived of every resource in ourselves, that we may know our strength to be in Him. When Uzziah felt himself to be strong, God left him. There is great danger of our putting multiplied means in the place of the Lord Himself; we may go the whole round of means, and forget that they are not the supply.

Strong

What has been the history of the church? She was marvellously helped till she was strong; when she was strong, her heart became lifted up. The saints at Corinth had multiplied resources, men, wisdom and the like, and were tempted to think that by the exercise of this wisdom they could refute the heathen. But they were told by the Apostle, No; it is only by bringing in the “wisdom of God,” which is foolishness with man, and the strength of God, which is weakness with man. In the book of Acts, the Spirit of God shows us that the church, when few in number, was marvellously helped. But how soon the church began to look to itself, to its own resources and greatness, instead of to the Lord! And has this a voice to ourselves? Our blessing is in our taking the place of weakness, so that God may for His own name’s sake provide help.

There is danger in our supposing that we have attained to something. It is a mark of failure when a Christian looks to his own honor and credit, instead of the honor of the Lord. The great thing is to have regard for His name, for a single eye will be occupied with Christ.

His Heart Was Lifted Up

It is a very strong word that we have here in reference to Uzziah — “His heart was lifted up to his destruction.” But there is as strong a word in the New Testament — “He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.” If any, even a saint of God, “soweth to his flesh,” he will reap only a sorrowful harvest of corruption, all his time having been misspent. We need to give heed to the searching words of Scripture, not turning away the point of them from ourselves under the supposition that they cannot apply to us. This thought has been the source of much mischief in the church. That soul will prosper which trembles at God’s Word and is willing to face the most searching parts of it. The saint of God can sow to the flesh, can walk “according to the flesh,” can “war after the flesh”; but the miserable end will be, that he will “of the flesh reap corruption.” When Uzziah was strong (his strength being in his own resources), his heart became “lifted up” — more like the heart of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon (Dan. 4:20) than that of God’s anointed king of Judah. A heart that is “lifted up” is in a dangerous state and is almost always on the brink of a fall.

Though Uzziah was God’s anointed king, not God’s anointed priest, yet he would have nothing restrained from him. We find him transgressing “against the Lord his God,” and going into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense, which appertained not unto him, but unto the priests only, the sons of Aaron who were consecrated to burn incense. Let us too beware of dealing with the Lord in unholy familiarity; a humble spirit is always a confident spirit, but a humble spirit can trust only in the blood of Jesus; it does not rush into God’s presence as the man who is “lifted up” in heart does. We can come there only through the incense of the Lord Jesus, not on the credit of our own graces, or devotedness, or in fleshly fervor.

The Place of a Priest

Azariah the priest, with fourscore priests, valiant men, withstood the king. “Then Uzziah was wroth ... and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord” (2 Chron. 26:19).

Beloved, this history of king Uzziah is written for our admonition. Lifting up of heart is always self-seeking, not God seeking. We have (blessed be God) liberty to enter into the holiest, for we are priests unto God by the blood of Jesus, but it is ever through the incense of our great High Priest.

In chapter 27:6, we have no mention of Jotham’s great army; he “became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.” This is the way for the saint to grow in practical strength. Thus it was with the Thessalonians; their “work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope” was “in the sight of God and our Father.” Jotham set the Lord always before him and went on in an even tenor of conduct. In the eyes of man, he might not be as mighty as Uzziah, but the Holy Spirit records his name as that of one “mighty” in the eyes of God.

Christian Truth, Vol. 11

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, King of Israel vs. King of Judah

Question: 2 Chron. 21:2. In this verse Jehoshaphat is called King of Israel, not King of Judah as in 2 Chron. 18:3. Why is this? Is it in praise or blame he is thus called Sing of Israel? W.R.K.

Answer: It is clear that historically Jehoshaphat was King of Judah; and this was necessarily stated in the second passage and throughout the chapter where he is shown in guilty alliance with the then King of Israel. But he was a man of faith and ought to have kept clear of so compromising an association. Even after Jehovah’s great intervention against the vast gathering of Moab and Ammon, Jehoshaphat joined with the wicked King of Israel, Ahaziah, and had his fleet broken, and so the joint design came to naught. Was not the name “King of Israel,” attached to Jehoshaphat to mark that he ought to have stood as de jure sovereign, while owning de facto the chastening which broke up their unity? We see how Hezekiah and Josiah (2 Chron. 30:1; 34:33; 35:3) went out in heart to fraternize with the godly in Israel. How much more had Jehoshaphat wrought for Jehovah’s glory, if he had in his life kept aloof as “King of Israel,” the title given to him after death? How sad his son Jehoram’s course in every point of view! The remarkable scripture in Isa. 48:1 may be compared in some respects: “Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah,” etc.

Christian Treasury: Volume 4, Jehoshaphat's Alliance

2 Chronicles 17 to 212Co 17 2Co 18 2Co 19 2Co 20 2Co 21

These scriptures give us a picture of a man who had a good beginning, but a bad ending. He made bad alliances and reaped the consequences. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab was a bad one. The bad seed brought a bad crop. This principle is as true today as it was then and it is as applicable to Christians as to others. Let us beware, therefore, of joining hands with those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to remember that God's governmental dealings, even though we are saved, are the same with us as with the unsaved. With Jehoshaphat there was zeal for God at times, but at this time he was off his guard.

His beginning was a very happy one and he was in God's favor. "The Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David." 2 Cor. 17:3. How wonderful to be in the place approved by God and what satisfaction to rest in His favor! It is a wonderful thing that God loves us. Think who God is, and who we are. The One who made the worlds thinks of us. How wonderful!

The Book

His love to us is revealed in the Bible and there is no book like it. Where else can we find such thoughts as are therein contained? Who could have been the author of such thoughts? We know that only God could reveal such thoughts as we find in that Book and how His love is told out at the cross. There the question of sin was answered and the Bible tells us of that One who stands pre-eminent, and yet was so lowly. Where could we read of such a One but in that Book? How humble were the circumstances of His birth and how lowly His walk. He was a man beyond all others. Finally He was offered as a sacrifice, a Lamb without spot. God gave Him in His compassionate love for us. Oh, such a Book, such a Savior, and such a God! And this was done for us, for God wants us for Himself and cannot allow us to go on in sin.

1 Cor. 10:11 shows that we are right in examining these Scriptures for our own guidance; they were given for our admonition. As we see the failure of Jehoshaphat, we are to take warning. By studying his case we can see where we, too, are likely to fail. Like many Christians, Jehoshaphat had a good beginning but a poor ending. In his alliance with Ahab, we do not see him first in prayer to God for guidance, but instead he went down to Ahab. Yes, he went "down." How different all this was from the ways of our Lord when here as a man. How dependent He was. Praying much, He was all night in prayer before choosing the twelve. So for us, we must take Christ for our example. He did all things well. By occupation with Him, we shall be saved from the failure of Jehoshaphat and truly we should be much occupied with Himself for He is worthy. What a mighty person He is and what a mighty work He has wrought. How great is His love to us!

Underwood's Friend

At the time of Cromwell in England, there was a young man, Bazil Underwood, under sentence of death. He was to be executed at the ringing of the curfew on a certain day. But Bazil Underwood had a young woman who loved him, and who sought his release. Day after day she sought it without success and finally the day of execution came. Throughout the day her efforts, if possible, were increased, but again to no avail. Bazil Underwood was to die unless she could prevent the ringing of the curfew.

She found the old deaf bell-ringer and pleaded with him, but that faithful old servant could not step from duty's path. Curfew must ring. So the woman hurried to the belfry and began the hazardous climb to the bell. At last she reached it and as she grasped its great iron tongue, the bell began to swing to and fro. Each time she was thrown violently against its sides, but no sound rang out. At last the faithful sexton ceased. His duty had been done, but curfew had not rung. Then she dropped from the bell, all bruised and bleeding, but Bazil Underwood was saved. Subsequently, upon Cromwell's return, he was pardoned.

This story illustrates human love, wondrous human love. Wouldn't Bazil Underwood have been most ungrateful if he had spurned the young woman who so loved him? Are you ungrateful, my unsaved one, when you spurn the Lord Jesus Christ who loved you, so much that He gave His life for you? You who have heard of this love so often, you who have grown up in the sound of the gospel, are these truths real to you? Do they not stir your conscience?

Companions

Jehoshaphat turned aside and joined with Ahab. Then there is a feast and Jehoshaphat said, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people." He joins Ahab in battle and afterward he inquires of the Lord, but evidently his inquiry was too late. His first step was taken without guidance from the Lord. In this he failed.

Let us live in the power of the fact that we are a heavenly people. Jehoshaphat had said to Ahab, "I am as thou art." It is the first step that starts the downfall. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." There is not one bit of safety outside of dependence upon God.

Another thing, Jehoshaphat did not stand separated to the Lord. He took up with Ahab and his ways, and soon measured things as Ahab did. To stand separated to the Lord is the only safe place. If we do this, our tempter will turn from us. Separation and testimony for the Lord go together.

In Scotland, soon after a young man had been saved, his companions sought to entice him into wrong ways. But the young man remained faithful to the Lord and began at once to speak to his companions about their souls' salvation. The result was that soon his companions left off their efforts to entice him.

Ahab was a worldly-wise man. His conduct was all apart from God, but God's judgment fell upon him. An arrow "drawn at a venture" caused his death.

My desire for you is that you will not choose as your companions those who do not love the Lord. As you meet those who are out of Christ, yearn over them and tell them about your Savior, but do not go with them as companions. Through the mercy of the Lord, Jehoshaphat was allowed to "return to his house in peace," but not without rebuke. Jehu went out to meet him and put to him the important question: "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord.”

Following this experience with Ahab, Jehoshaphat did better for "he went out again through the people from Beer-sheba to mount Ephraim, and brought them back to the Lord God of their fathers." This was a time of revival.

Second Alliance

But Satan was to test him again. This time he joined himself with "Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly." Again it was an alliance with one who went not in the ways of his father, David. This time the activities were different; they joined to build ships. The building of ships was not wrong, but the joining with Ahaziah was. It was the case of a good thing, but a wrong person.

Is it not true in these days that often the work being done is good, but the association is wrong? Although the work in itself was good, yet it could not be prospered because of the wrong alliance. So it turned out that the ships were broken and they were not able to go to Tarshish. Although Jehoshaphat had escaped after the first alliance, he was not allowed to escape after the second. God stopped his course. May his failures in thus joining with the wicked be guides to us in this dispensation to keep us from displeasing our God and Father by similar wicked alliances.

J.T. Armet

Christian Friend: Volume 9, Attraction of Power, The

After the separation between Israel and Judah, it was impossible that there could be true peace and amity between the two kingdoms. Jeroboam immediately discerned where his danger lay. Judah had the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, where God dwelt between the cherubim, and where alone the perpetual burnt-offering as well as the other sacrifices could be presented, and where only the divinely-appointed priests could draw nigh to God on behalf of the people. The ten tribes were aware of this fact as well as their king, and fearing lest the kingdom should return to the house of David, Jeroboam said in his heart, “If this people go up to sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” (1 Kings 12:26-28) This was a bold and clever, though selfish, project, but one which, reminiscent as it was of the apostasy of Israel in the wilderness, ought to have excited their determined opposition. But so far from this being the case, they readily fell in with the thought of the king, and straightway they had priests and feasts after the pattern of those which had been divinely instituted. The new religion of Israel was one of imitation, leaving God out of the question.

Henceforward there were the two religions side by side-the one founded upon the word of God, and the other, whatever its pretenses, simply idolatrous. In the reign of Abijah, the son of Rehoboam, there was war between him and Jeroboam, and on the eve of the battle Abijah appealed to the consciences of the men of Israel, and used with great force the argument, that whilst Israel had forsaken Jehovah, Judah still clave to Him, and had the true priesthood and sacrifices. Jeroboam answered his appeal by strategy; i.e. by seeking, through human methods in the art of war, to accomplish the overthrow of Judah But Judah cried unto the Lord, and the priests sounded with their trumpets (see Num. 10), and God delivered the Israelites into their hand. (2 Chron. 13:4-20) The Lord’s presence was thus the source of Judah’s strength and victory. And it should be carefully noted that no pretensions, however lofty, and no human wisdom, however clever in its method, can either command the presence of the. Lord, or deliver in the time of danger.

Passing now to the reign of Asa, the son of Abijah, another striking lesson is recorded. Asa, on the whole, did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God (1 Chron. 14:2), and blessing therefore marked the time of his reign. Listening to the exhortation and counsel of the prophet Azariah, the son of Oded, “he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the Lord, that was before the porch of the Lord. And he gathered all Judah and. Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon; for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him.” This is what we have termed the attraction of power. As before pointed out, Judah had the temple which was the dwelling-place of God, the divine priesthood and the sacrifices. They were, in a word, on the true ground, and had the truth; but it was not this which drew so many to them from Israel, but the fact that the Lord’s presence and divine power were displayed in connection with the truth. So now it is not enough to say that we have the truth; for we shall find that the truth as truth will never win souls. It has been said, for example, that you cannot meet Satan with mere truth; that unless the truth is held in communion with a living Christ you will be powerless against Satan’s devices. In like manner, unless, in combination with the truth, the Lord’s presence is seen working with it, and on behalf of those who hold it, there will be no. power to deal with souls, or to attract them to the truth presented; for indeed Christ is the truth, and if therefore He is left out the truth becomes only a formal creed, which, while it may contain nothing but the truth, has neither life nor power.

It is therefore a mistake to expect others to be drawn to us because we have the truth. It must be seen that the Lord is with us; for He is the magnet of His people’s hearts. How then may we ensure the Lord’s displayed presence? Azariah proclaims the condition: “Hear me,” he says, “Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him.” (v. 2) So it ever is. If we are with God-with God in His judgment of ourselves, of everything round about us, in true separation from evil, and in subjection to His word-if we are thus walking with Him, He will never fail to show that He is with us. And just in proportion as His presence is thus manifestly with us, will there be the outgoing of power to attract the hearts of other believers. Our dependence then in our service, position, and conflict, should not be on the possession of the truth, but on having the Lord with us and working for His own glory in bowing the hearts of others to acknowledge His truth.

E. D.

Asa, Asa: No. 1

" The Lord is with you, while ye be with him.' 2 Chron. 15:2.

THE history of Asa, king of Judah, and the Lord's dealings with the remnant who had not revolted from the house of David, is full of instruction for us in these remnant times. There were times when the Lord was with His people most manifestly, and there were times when He was not with that same people. It is so now. Is not the Lord manifestly present to faith in the midst of Christians, when assembled together gathered to His name, according to His promise, in Matt. 18? And are there not instances when there is no manifestation of His presence with His people, not only where all is mere established form and routine, a man, or men, appointed to everything, and no thought of looking for the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and no thought of the Lord Jesus being present?

But where there is the profession of being gathered to His name, and the outward form of owning the presence and guidance of the Lord; where the remnant-separation position is taken, like the separation of Judah from Israel—yes, around the table of the Lord—are there not times and places where there is not the felt, conscious sense of the Lord's presence, either for worship or discipline? Hymn after hymn, scripture after scripture read, and no real divine order, no real manifestation of the Lord with them, and consequently, no power for worship, no going out to win souls, and take spoil from Satan. This is not a question on of the salvation of the soul. Are there not thousands saved who have never known reality of the Lord's presence with those truly gathered to His blessed name?

Now, this inquiry is the more important, when we remember the last two conditions of the seven states of Christendom. (Rev. 2; 3) In Philadelphia we see the state of an assembly truly gathered to Christ, the Holy and the True. He is everything, and everything is approved. In Laodicea Christ is nothing to them, they have everything but Him, and there all is wrong, and all is disapproved. Rich, and increased in goods, but as to Christ, lukewarm indifference. Now, can any one with spiritual discernment question the fact, that there are assemblies sinking into this state? In this sense, then, how solemn the words of Azariah, the son of Oded: “The Lord is with you, while ye be with him."

It is said in chapter xiv. “And Asa, did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his GOD." We would not question, for a moment, that, in these days again, the Spirit has raised up those who have sought only to do that which is good and. right in the eyes of the Lord. Such is the true Philadelphian condition, to have the approval of the Lord. Sadly this is forgotten in the mass of Sardis; but the Spirit of God has led, in these last days, a feeble remnant to desire, above all things, to walk in the sight of the Lord. (Compare Rev. iii. 7-13.)

Verses 4, 5. Strange altars and high places did Asa remove, and built fenced cities in Judah. Strange altars, unscriptural forms of worship, have been removed in our days; and little fenced assemblies have been gathered, holding the blessed security of the Lord's presence for discipline. The land had rest, because the Lord had given them rest.

It has also been wonderful, the deep enjoyment of peace, of rest of soul, after centuries of doubt and perplexity: "Because the Lord had given him rest." Yes we have had rest, the Lord has given us perfect peace, rest of soul, in His dear presence. Having been justified, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And not only so, but how calm the peace of the soul, or of the assembly, that rests in the love of God, and the consciousness of the presence of the Lord—a peace of mind we never new in the organizations of men.

Asa said, Let us build these cities, &c, "because we have sought the Lord our God, we have naught him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built, and prospered." Surely we may learn here how much holy discipline—yes, walls and towers, gates and bars—have to do with the spiritual prosperity of an assembly of Christians. So they built, and prospered.

The army of Asa bare targets and spears, they bare shields, and drew bows. Thus in active gospel service now, we have found the need of the shield of faith, in going forth to war with the powers of darkness. Great was the host of Zerah, the Ethiopian, the host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots. And this great host came against Asa. "And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord oar God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude." Is not this the true Philadelphian state of soul? A feeble company, having little strength, but gathered to, and trusting in, the name of the Lord. Yes, ""Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest in thee/'

Far more in Christendom than the host of Zerah are the determined foes of those who know, and trust in, and rest in the Lord. And the warfare of the feeble remnant now is not to destroy, but to save. It is not to smite, but to heal. They do seek to gather much spoil, but it is to spoil the cities of Satan of precious souls. And, as Asa brought much spoil to Jerusalem, so would they bring much spoil to the place where the name of the Lord is recorded. Yes, they would bring the spoil of precious souls to the feet of their Lord. Yes, chapter xiv. may be used as very aptly illustrating the work of the Holy Ghost, in separating souls to the Lord, in these last days, as found in the last but one state of Christendom, as prophetically described in the address to Philadelphia.

Have you known this rest of conscience, through the infinite sacrifice of Christ? And have you known this rest of heart, as truly gathered to the Lord? If so, we will now look at the warnings and instructions of chapter xv.

It is the Spirit of God who gives the warning. He came upon the son of Oded: " And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The Lord is with you, while ye be with him: and if ye seek him, he will be found of you: but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." We must beware of using these words in reference to the eternal salvation of our souls. In that sense, nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:30-39.) But, as to all fruit-bearing, and real testimony for Christ, and consequent reward hereafter, Jesus says: " If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." To such, how real the privilege! He-says to them, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

In Luke 24:35-48, and John 20:19-23, we have a visible illustration of the Lord in the midst since His resurrection. Yes, Jesus Himself in the midst of them. Do we believe that He is as really present now, though not seen by mortal eyes? Does He open to us the scriptures* by the Holy Ghost sent down to take His place? The question is this—Is it reality, or mere form? In this sense, let us listen to the Spirit speaking to us by the son of Oded. And, to help us in meditating on these solemn warnings and encouragements, let us remember that, though Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea run on to the end, yet Sardis, or Protestantism, came out of Thyatira, or Romanism; and Philadelphia succeeded Sardis. And, in like manner, the awful state of Laodicea follows Philadelphia. And may not this last be the dead and lifeless form of those who have the very truth itself?

If, then, 2 Chron. 14 illustrates the gracious work of God the Holy Ghost during the last fifty years, how timely, then, and searching the words of the same Spirit of God by the son of Oded? He thus addressed the remnant of those days. May his words be blest to those who have an ear to hear in these days.

Asa had an ear to hear, "Asa heard these words." We shall see the effect on him, and on the remnant. Surely every verse speaks to us. They were needed then, they are needed now. The works of the beginning of his reign had to be done again. Is it not so with us? Do we not need also to do our first works? What is the true condition of those professedly gathered to Christ? Let us, then, hear the Spirit, in this chapter, speaking to ourselves. Who can doubt the need of this?

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