2 Kings - Commentaries by George Cutting

Incidents and Illustrations of the Gospel: Sought and Brought, When He Thinks.

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“Is it peace?” said Joram’s mounted messenger to Jehu, when, in the king’s name, he met him.

“What hast thou to do with peace?” was the stern reply. Judgment was at hand. Even while the two kings were fraternizing together the avenger was rapidly approaching—driving “furiously.” Moreover, a deadly arrow was in Jehu’s sheath, and his strong hand ready to give it aim and flight.

Then the king himself approaches and asks the question, “Is it peace?” The stern reply is ready, “What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?” ({vi 9775;9779}2 Kings 9:18, 22).

Is it peace with the unbeliever today? We may well answer in Jehu’s words, “What peace?” If he has any peace at all, it is only when he is able to forget the things of eternity and shut his ears to God’s unmistakable warnings concerning the doom of the unpardoned sinner.

When he thinks of his dying hour, has he peace? No. For he knows that his sins are not pardoned, and that to die in his sins is to be banished from Christ’s presence forever. “Ye shall die in your sins [said the Lord to the unbelievers of His day]: whither I go, ye cannot come” (John 8:21).

When he thinks of the Lord’s coming, has he peace?

No. For he knows that no unbeliever will be “caught up.” by the Lord’s power to meet Him in the air. No unbeliever has the Spirit of God dwelling in his heart: no unbeliever has oil in his vessel. Only those who are “Christ’s” will be caught up at His coming. And listen to His solemn words, “Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep” (John 10:26). Outside the door will be the unbeliever’s place.

When he thinks of the resurrection of the just, has lie peace? No. He knows that he would be left in his grave to await the resurrection of the unjust—all who have died in their sins will be raised in their sins ({vi 31045-31051}Rev. 20:6-12).

When he thinks of the day of judgment, has he peace? No. For well he knows that the open books will bring to light two condemning indictments—a lifetime of sin against God and the willful neglect of salvation through Christ, though brought right to him and pressed upon him in the gospel, times without number. He is fully aware, also, that the inevitable sequel to the great white, throne for every unbeliever will be the lake of fire for eternity. Thus it is written: “The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

Oh, unbeliever, what hast thou to do with peace? If thou thinkest thou hast peace, we would earnestly, tenderly challenge thee to answer Jehu’s question, “What peace?” While Christ is rejected and thy sins are unpardoned, WHAT PEACE?

Believers in a triumphant Saviour, what say ye? Is it peace? YES. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Incidents and Illustrations of the Gospel: Sought and Brought, "Shall I Smite?"

IT was night in a small Eastern town. A band of warriors, equipped for the fight, surrounded it. Their object was not so much present conquest as the apprehension of one particular man. It so happened, however, that that one particular man was a man of God, one who feared God more than he feared man, who could be fearless in a day when the prevailing power seemed all against him, and gracious and Godlike when the prevailing power was manifestly on his side. The young man with him, his servant, was full of alarm, both for himself and his master, until his eyes were opened to sec that, with the hosts of heaven on their side, he Might stand as calmly as his master in the face of every earthly foe. “He saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about” his master. (Read 2 Kings 6:8-23.)

Now God has more ways than one of overcoming an, enemy. Instead of cutting him off in judgment, He can overcome his enmity by the power of His own overwhelming grace, and, as we shall see, turn the foe into a friend.

This army of heavenly warriors, crowding the mountain round about, did not summarily crush the Syrian force sent to spy out Elisha with a view to his apprehension. By one heavy blow they could have done so, but Elisha did not ask for this. The only thing that happened to them was the infliction of a temporary blindness, and this only lasted till they had been conducted within the strong walls of fortified Samaria. Then they had even their eyesight restored to them.

Again, their presence within those high walls made it only too manifest that they were entirely in the hands of the king of Israel, entirely at the mercy of the very one they had come to capture. Now is our chance to get rid of them by bringing vengeance, upon their heads, thought the king, and, therefore he cried to Elisha, “Shall I smite them? Shall I smite them?”

“Don’t smite them; feed them,” is the gracious answer of the prophet of God.

Then they “prepared a great provision” for them, we are told: “and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away.”

What a lovely illustration of God's saving grace, and of its blessed results also, for we read in the same verse, "So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel." Grace overcame them. Grace was triumphant. It overcame evil with good.

There is, however, one great contrast to be noted here. In the case of this delivered band they all returned to their old master; while "the grace of God that bringeth salvation" wins the heart of the delivered one to serve his Deliverer, and to quit the service of the old master forever.

You might, centuries ago, have found such a company in the city of Thessalonica. This band of men had heard "the glad gospel of goodwill to men" from the lips of the apostle Paul.

It had reached their souls in the Spirit's power, and forthwith "they turned to God from idols" (the devil, their former master, was hidden behind those idols) "to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, their Deliverer from the coming wrath" (1 Thess. 1:9, 10).

Oh, the triumphs of God's grace! How little man understands it! How lightly he regards his own wicked willfulness as he sets his face and steels his heart against even "the God of all grace"!

A war correspondent, describing the battle of Omdurman, commented strongly on the dogged determination of the Mandi's followers on the field of conflict. "So vicious were these fanatics," he says, "that they would feign death until a column had passed over them, then they would jump up and attack the soldiery in the rear. Even wounded men, craving a drink of water, would attempt the life of the hand that succored them!" Then he adds, "What could you do with such a treacherous foe?"

Has man forgotten what was once done to Him whose hand gave the healing touch to lepers, raised the dead, healed the sick, took the blind by the hand and gave them eyesight, fed thousands, and all this and more without even demanding so much as "Thank you" in return?

Has man forgotten that the very people thus befriended loudly clamored for that hand to be nailed to the gibbet?

Well might wondering angels ask, "What will God do with such a treacherous foe?" And how will the rejected One Himself meet such treatment? Listen, and wonder as you listen: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Oh, is this the way He meets their wickedness? Why, it is even more astonishing than the returns they made for His kindness! Then see Him, after breathing such a prayer, surrendering His own precious life that that prayer might be righteously answered!

Listen to Him once more as the risen One from among the dead. Has He changed in His desire for man's blessing? No. He now manifests greater grace still, for He commissions His servants to go and preach "repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations"; and then, to crown the very grace of that gracious sentence, He adds, "Beginning at Jerusalem."

Divine justice might well have cried, "Smite them, smite them," even before the display of their wickedness at Calvary. But not so. Jesus would Himself be smitten—smitten in man's place. He would suffer in man's room and stead in order that the voice of mercy might be heard and His own wishes gratified. Oh, smite them not, He says. Call them to repentance. Proclaim forgiveness in their ears. Set an eternal feast of love before them, and in "My name" bid them welcome.

Such is the gospel! Who that knows it in reality would not wish to shout it to the very ends of the earth? Dear reader, how do you stand affected by it?

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