2 Samuel - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Bible Treasury: Volume 9, David Dancing Before the Ark

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(2 Sam. 6:12-23.)

This was a great day to David's heart; there was none like it. The day when he conquered Goliath was but a little thing compared with the entrance of the ark. Others danced in his honor then; he dances in honor of Jehovah now. This was just the secret of the joy.

But Michal understood it not. It was but vexation to her; for she thought of herself, and was offended with David and even insulted him, as far as petty pride could injure what was incomparably above itself. But David was just so much the more exalted before God as he honored and sanctified the Lord God of Hosts in his heart; and it is impossible to sanctify Him in the heart without its being manifest in the ways. It was so manifest in David and the power of it was so great that Saul's daughter was ashamed even of her own husband. And she reaped the due reward of her own foolishness and sin.

But as for David on the other hand nothing can be more lovely than his appreciation of God's glory. This was what was at the root of the matter. The ark was the most glorious display of God. It is the type of the manifestation of God in Christ, not merely in meeting us but in glorifying Himself. It was upon the ark that the blood was sprinkled perfectly—before it and upon it. It was the ark that contained the testimonies of stone written by the hand of God, which alone found a resting-place in Jesus Christ the Lord. Everybody else dishonored these testimonies of God: Jesus magnified them and made them honorable; Jesus turned them all to the glory of God. All was met in the ark of the covenant. This accordingly was what so distinguished David. We never find even Solomon with all his wisdom paying such heed to the ark of God. We find him occupied before the great altar: this had more appearance before men. People saw the altar; they had their senses moved by it; they knew that it met their need, and there most are apt to stop. But David saw what lay far within; for he looked upon what was unseen. David felt much more for God than for himself.

At the same time there is no way in which we are really so blest us when we can forget ourselves in the glory of God; and this was what distinguished king David. He had been somewhat troubled before when a man, Uzzah, was smitten for putting forth his hand to the ark and taking hold of it, after the oxen shook it, as if God's ark needed man's hand to hold it up.

God bore with the Philistines when they knew no better than to put the ark on a new cart: in fact it was their way of honoring it. And so with the kine that had conducted the ark long before from the land of the Philistines. God did not make so much of the mistakes of the Philistines: they did their best; they did not know the mind of God. But not so with Israel who had a knowledge of God that they did not possess. “Why bring they oxen to carry God's ark? It ought to have been carried by the redeemed servants of the Lord. They alone were called to identify themselves with the ark. It was their honor to be the servants of the ark of Jehovah. But Israel at this time were by no means up to the mark of the word of God. Hence with good enough intention they put the ark on oxen, and when one of them stumbled, Uzzah put forth his hand to sustain the ark. But the Lord put forth His hand against the presumptuous man who had deemed that the ark of God needed human power to hold it up. He that made heaven and earth could surely hold up His own ark from falling. Uzzah forgot this; and he shows us therefore the folly of our attempting to do God's work out of our own heads or thoughts. Never do we glorify God, we are never even safe, when we are not walking in obedience.

The judgment of God on Uzzah made a great impression on David. He was afraid of Jehovah; he called the place Perez-uzzah, because Jehovah had made a breach upon Uzzah; he was not in communion with God about it; he let in his own thoughts and feelings, which were wrong because they doubted God instead of censuring man. He ought to have taken God's side and have said that Uzzah was justly smitten. What greater wrong is there than to find fault with God? There is no good in us; all our good is in upholding the Lord, in listening to His voice and simply carrying out His will.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Explanation of 2 Samuel 5:8

Question: 2 Sam. 5:8: how do you explain?

C. S. H.

Answer: The blind and the lame seem to have been set as a taunt to the anointed of Jehovah on the supposed impregnable fortress of Zion; and David felt it with all indignant ardor. They were the hated of his soul: Nevertheless Joab took the hill of Zion on David’s behalf, the center of his kingdom, and the prize that secured his own place of command. All in man’s hand fails. How blessedly does the Lord contrast with it, Who, when He cast out those that made Jehovah’s house a den of thieves, received blind and lame that came to Him in the temple, and healed them.

Scripture Queries and Answers, Scripture Queries and Answers: 2SA 5:8; DAN 9:26-27; Heretic and Reject;

Q.-2 Sam. 5:8: how do you explain?

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Q.-Dan 9:26,27. Is Young's version correct, or that of the A. and R. Versions? The latter substantially agree; but Young changes the sense by confounding Christ with the one who confirms in ver. 27. Have the English translators forced the Hebrew? or is Young without warrant? I greatly desire information.

G. A. S.

N. J.,

U. S. A.

A.-There need be no hesitation in accepting the general sense of the A. V., modified by the Revisers. The article of reference is due to " sixty-two weeks," after which Messiah was to be cut off and " have nothing," as the Genevese E. V. had already rightly said. But the force of the next clause is utterly missed by Dr. R, Young. It really means, "And the people of the prince that shall come [in contrast with Messiah the Prince already come and cut off] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood [or overflow], and even to the end war-desolations determined. And he [the coming prince] shall confirm a covenant with the many [the apostate mass of the Jews] for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause sacrifice and oblation to cease; and because of sheltering [lit. wing of] abominations [or idols] a desolator [shall be], even until the consumption and 'that determined shall be poured out upon the desolate." So in fact the Roman people (not yet their coming prince) did come, and destroy the city and the temple [or holy place], followed by a flood of desolations on the guilty people and on Jerusalem for ages. But the time hastens, when the thread must be resumed and the 'last or postponed week of the 70 be accomplished. Then the coming Roman prince; in his incipient form, shall confirm covenant with the ungodly majority of the Jews, " the many," but break it by putting down their worship, and protecting idolatry and the Antichrist as we know from elsewhere. This will bring on the closing scenes of the Assyrian, or king of the north (Isa. 10; 28; 29; Dan. 11:40-45)7 "the desolator; " and the last word of predicted judgment will be accomplished on the desolate Jerusalem. The death of Messiah broke the chain; but that closing link has yet to be joined, and all will be fulfilled in due season. The attempt to foist in the gospel is baseless. To translate the last verse, as Wintle does, following ancient versions, may be grammatically possible, but is unaccountably harsh, if not absurd: "Yet one week shall make a firm covenant, with many, and the midst of the week shall cause the sacrifice and the meat offering to cease " &c. With what propriety or even sense could "one week," or its half, do these remarkable things? The coming Roman prince is to confirm "a" covenant with "the mass" of Jews for seven years; and then breaks it when half the time expires. How strange to attribute either to the Messiah! "The many " rejected Him and shall receive the Antichrist. " Many " and " the many" are by no means to be confused in Daniell any more than elsewhere. Translators (the Revisers among the rest) have not heeded the distinction, nor have Commentators generally. It is the few, or the remnant, who receive the Messiah in faith, and in due time (when their wicked brethren, " the many." meet their doom) become the " Israel " that " shall be saved." This plainly and powerfully refutes the assumption that the last verse alludes to Christ's covenant. It is rather a covenant with death and hell; as Isa. 28:15 also lets us know. This will be for seven years, but broken.

Q.-Titus 3:10, 11, kindly explain, giving the significance of " heretic" and "reject." Is there any reference to reception or to excommunication? W. D.

A.-" Heresy" is used by the apostle for a party of self-will, a faction which severs itself from the assembly. Such is the usage in 1 Cor. 11:18, 19: " I hear that there are schisms among you (i.e., divisions within), and I partly believe it. For there must also be heresies (i.e. external division or sects), that the approved may become manifest among you." (See also Gal. 5:20 and 2 Peter 2:1). The precise meaning here comes out incontestably. Bad doctrine (the later ecclesiastical sense of "heresy ") does not of necessity lead its advocate to form a party without; but schismatic feeling directly tends to this. A split within ere long issues in a split without; whereas heterodoxy seeks shelter within in order to leaven the lump if possible. So in Titus 3 the apostle directs Titus to have done with a man stamped as heretical after a first and second admonition. He had gone outside and was forming a sect. It was no question therefore of putting him without; for he had gone out 'himself, and refused admonition, perhaps repeatedly. He condemned himself in despising and abandoning God's assembly. You cannot put away one who has already gone away, though it may be announced for the profit of all. The word translated "reject" is not to excommunicate, but altogether general, and capable of application to persons inside (as in 1 Tim. 5:11) no less than to the outside maker of a school or sect; also to fables and foolish questions wherever they might be (1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:23). From its primitive meaning of deprecating and making excuse, the word acquires the force of refusing, rejecting, or avoiding. In no case is it applied to putting Out, which is the function of the assembly and expressed by a totally different word. Among the Jews " heresy " was used indifferently for the parties of Sadducees, Pharisees, and Nazarenes.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, 2 Sam. 24:13, 1 Chron. 21:12: Inaccuracies or Mistranslations?

Question: 2 Sam. 24:13 and 1 Chron. 21:12. Dr. Temple lately said on a public occasion that he had no doubt there were inaccuracies in the O. T., though the writers told the truth as far as they knew it! Still more recently he owned the statement, and referred to the verses above as an instance. Is it mistranslation, or what? W. C.

Answer: The superficial looseness and irreverent unbelief of the rationalists is too plain; but there is really a choice of explanations in meeting objections of this kind. 1. Numbers are apt to be mistaken in transcription; but this is the inaccuracy of copyists, not of scripture. In this case the Sept. (far the most ancient of versions) gives three years in 2 Samuel as in 2 Chron. 2 Difference of design explains many an apparent discrepancy, the one statement being as true as the other but not the same. Thus in the earlier book Jehovah is said to have moved David,

whereas in the later Satan is the mover: very different aspects, but equally certain, and neither open to just exception. So we see difference in the sum given by Joab to David; in the first 800,000 of Israel and 500,000 of Judah; in the second 1,100,000 and 470,000 respectively. But the lesser number of Israel we find qualified as “valiant men,” as those of Judah were given in a round number. Again, in 2 Samuel David bought “the threshing-floor and the oxen” for 50 shekels of silver; yet in 1 Chronicles he gave to Ornan for “the place” 600 shekels of gold. It was not the mere floor for the altar site, but the whole of mount Moriah for the house of Jehovah Elohim as well as for that altar.-It may be noticed too that details of interest, are added in each of the accounts, but omitted in the other; and the language, not more notable for similar shades than for dissimilar, is equally striking. Nevertheless who doubts the later writer was familiar with the earlier writing? The one was no less inspired than the other. Had it been a human arrangement, the irresistible impulse would have been to make the two identical. But knowing them both to be inspired of God, neither priest, nor people, nor prophets, nor scribes, dared to lay a sacrilegious hand on either. Assured that Jehovah was the author through the instruments He chose, they left it to faith to receive if they could not explain all the difficulties, and to rationalists to call them “inaccuracies.”

Scripture Queries and Answers, Scripture Queries and Answers: Mistranslation; Organization in Divine Things

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Q.-1 Cor. 7:23, Gal. 1:10. What is organization in divine things such as ministry?

A.-It is arranging the ministry of the word in ways of men without God's will. As the Lord from on high gave the gifts, He controls livingly by His word. His servants are not left to their own discretion, but subject to His direction in scriptures open to all saints. Not only is there doctrine as to its source, character, and nature, but inspired history, that those who walk by faith might have an adequate unvarying standard from God. Well may we cherish the full liberty of the Spirit there laid down; and we cannot depart from the word for the fancied improvements of the age without presumption and error. How far are we from making it good as we ought, even in these islands small as they are, and with so crowded a population, according to that holy precedent! Innovation is fatal; for, however pleasing to the superficial, it can only precipitate declension. One can understand perfervid and erratic ways in those filled with zeal over perishing souls. But those who undertake to instruct the many and needy professors of Christ in Christendom ought assuredly to be patterns of obedience. With what face can they urge the word on others, if they do without it themselves? Do we believe in the sufficiency as well as in the authority of scripture? Is it rich enough in profit, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted unto every good work? Can we add anything of value in God's eyes?

At the meetings called Conferences, prayer and praise, open assemblies, and testimony have scripture warrant and just proportion. For the christian public a discourse or two at most would convey ample material for profit. But where quantity, not quality. of speech to professing Christians has its monopoly, how sad the principle! and what may not be the issue?

Sound Words - 1873, David's Last Words

SA 23:1-7{

It is to be noticed that he lays claim to full inspiration. " The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was on my tongue," and hence his language goes beyond the scenes around his dying pillow, and soars away into the blessed future, where the kingdom of Christ ruleth over all.

But mark his words. First, there are no allusions to his own state. "The God of Israel said; the rock of Israel spoke to me. He that ruled' over men must be just; ruling in the fear of God." lie saw the necessity for this, as in his own case he had not always been just.

Say in the instance of his rebellious son, nor had he ruled in the fear of God in the matter of Uriah. But although he was wanting, and sadly wanting, as man ever is, both in righteousness and the fear of God, he lifts up his eyes, and sees his promised seed, One who was to spring from his loins, and his vision concerning Him is full of blessing and beauty.

" He shall be"-that wonderful He of whom prophets have spoken, and poets sung-" He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds." When the darkness is past, when the evil birds of night have winged their way to their nests; when sin, sorrow, and corruption, under which this earth has been groaning for a long six thousand years shall all pass away, when 'He, David's Lord,

and David's royal son shall take the kingdom and disperse the clouds. When evil shall vanish and its reign be over forever. When Christ the glorious One shall burst upon the astonished view' of His own people, and that, not in a mingled. scene like the present, but in a morning without clouds.

Now the brightest morning has a cloud, and the sunniest day will set in night, and storms arise and overcast the face of God's fair creation, and saints are tried, and the chilling winds of adversity blow, and believers suffer, and call upon their God who is a present help in the time of trouble, and the Lord's own people are a persecuted, oppressed, and a little-thought-of people.

But the day comes when the glorious One appears. No cloud then. Sin and death, with all their black train of horrors, will be done away, and to this epoch, dying David, by the Spirit looked, whatever might be the measure of His own apprehension of those glorious occurrences of which he speaks so beautifully. His heart is full of Christ. His tongue speaks of the glory of the God of Israel, and his language, furnishes a lesson to many who look on death, and going to Christ as the end of their hopes. But there is naught of this in the last utterances of dying David. It is glory fills his heart. It is the glory of Christ; of His reign; of His kingdom. It is His rule; His providence; His giving a new impulse to a sin delivered creation. It is not happiness at death he speaks of, although surely the saint is happy in passing away from-a world of sin and care, to a calm retreat in the presence of Christ, to abide until the resurrection morning. But that he is not occupied with, that he passes over. His faith and his hope overleap the whole distance between his dying bed, in his stately palace at Jerusalem, to a long-wished for day, sung of in Psalms, and spoken of by the prophets, when God's Christ would have it all His own way, and regenerate the creation. It would be a complete renewal, "as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."

For just as a parched and dried up soil delights in a fertilizing shower, and the grass and herbage all bloom anew, and the dusty and rusty earth becomes green again, so shall it he at the coming of the Lord. Satan will be bound, the curse removed, sin put down by righteousness, the desert will rejoice and blossom as the rose. No longer will this be the devil's world, where he made his baleful blighting presence felt in an innumerable variety of ways, but this v, hole scene will he filled with the glory of God. And this Christ, David's Messiah, our Lord and Savior Jesus, lie will reign who once suffered. He will be just, and men wider His blessed sway will remember their misery no more, nor learn war any more. How delightful, perfectly so, to think of this time, the Sabbath rest of God's creation Arid now the dying saint, having spoken of the glory of Christ to us, and to his posterity, turns a glance at the condition of his own affairs. Here there were blots and blemishes. " His house was not so with God." Amnon, Absalom, Tamar. had told a sorrowful tale of lust, revenge and rebelliousness. How humbling to think what occurrences may take place in the family of a man of God.

He had not ruled in God's fear, and therefore evil broke out in his house. Mighty warrior that he was, he was too easy, too lenient within the precincts of his own dwelling. He could take towns and cities, fight battles and conquer kingdoms, but he had not planted the rule of God in his house. Hence the failure. Hence the sad fact that his house was " not so with God." Like Eli, of an earlier day, who saw his sons making themselves vile and he restrained them hot, so David, king as he was, was unable to get his children to follow in his footsteps. Sad recital, but such is man. Lenient where he ought to be severe. Rough and oppressive where he should be gentle and mild. Casting aside the fear of God on account of the fear of man, or the love of a woman, and then looking back, and having to mourn bitterly over the terrible ruin caused by his own pride and folly.

But yet God had made with David " an everlasting^ covenant, ordered in all things and sure." This covenant,' ordered of God, David's heart falls back upon in the day of his need. He feels its certainty, he adores, because, however much he may have failed and transgressed, he knew that God's covenant, God's truth would stand forever, and the God of truth had spoken certain things of David which involved a world of blessing, and these in his dying day his heart sweetly reposed upon.

So now can we, however tossed and tried, fall back on, the everlasting love of God through Christ Jesus. "Although my house be not so with God," although things are crooked in the church, or there have been dark flaws in ones own private history, yet who can separate us " from the love of Christ. Shall trials or famine, or distress" none; and then, as if that were not enough, the apostle, he goes on to challenge heaven and earth to show anything that could separate from the love of God in Christ, Jesus the Lord. Oh earth; oh hell I what can you do against a christian. His salvation is bound up with Christ. His Lord and Savior will never let him go. Ye may hurl your most fiery darts; ye may pour contempt upon his head, but he is safe in spite of all, because of the love. of God, and the precious atoning blood of Jesus.

This everlasting covenant was all David's salvation. But he turns now to the wicked ones in Israel whom he-describes as " thorns thrust away," " Sons of Belial.". And who are the sons of Belial now-a-days, but those who reject the gospel of God? They must perish. All must,, perish who do so. None can escape who neglect the salvation provided by God. Rejecting Christ fastens, a man's wickedness upon him, and he sinks into that hell which was "prepared for the devil and his angels."

Thus does David in these last words go over the bright, morning when Christ will appear, and toughies on his own, hopes; this own failures and sorrows, and the judgment of the rejecters of God in Israel. May my reader have looked into this with profit. W. G.

Christian Friend: Volume 13, 2 Samuel 23:20-21

While it needs great caution in the interpretation of the meaning of scripture names, there may yet be often found in them some very instructive lessons. In this passage the combination of the different names is very remarkable. Benaiah signifies, “Whom God has built;” Jehoiada, “Jehovah knoweth;” and Kabzeel, “God has gathered.” Putting these meanings together, we learn that Benaiah was the son of one whom the Lord knew (“I know my sheep”), and had been built up in the truth by God Himself, and knew his place in God’s assembly (Kabzeel). In the next place his—acts are described. He had slain two lion-like men of Moab. Moab means “progeny;” that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and inasmuch as the men were lion-like, it was the flesh under full Satanic energy. He also slew a lion in the midst of a pit in the time of snow. Satan is compared by Peter with a roaring lion, ‘and thus Benaiah was enabled to overcome Satan himself in his own haunts. He slew, moreover, an Egyptian, a goodly man, the expression of the fairer aspects of the world; and just as David beheaded Goliath with his own sword, so Benaiah, having “plucked the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand, slew him with his own spear.” The spear, like the sword, is a symbol of the power of death, and, as another has remarked, “Death is the best weapon in the arsenal of God when it is wielded by the power of life,” and this was Benaiah’s experience in his conflict with the world (the Egyptian). Taking then the whole history, we learn that this child of grace,

built up on his most holy faith, and gathered out upon the ground of God's assembly, successfully meets and overcomes the flesh, Satan, and the world. This too was of grace; but, while of grace, it reveals the path and possibility for every believer.

E. D.

Edification: Volume 6, Well of Bethlehem., The

(2 Sam. 23:13-17).

THE beautiful story of the three men who drew water from the well of Bethlehem, is preceded by the account of the great exploits of the three mightiest amongst David's mighty men. Whether they are the same three who broke through the host of the Philistines and drew the water from the well, is not very clear, and probably immaterial. It is, however, important to mark the difference between their great deeds, and the service rendered to David in obtaining the water from the well.

Adino was the chief among the captains. His name means "ornament." Doubtless he filled his exalted position with credit to himself, and advantage to the King, for he had successfully attacked eight hundred of David's enemies, at one time (verse 8).

Eleazar defied the Philistines in the day when the men of Israel turned back. Single handed he arose and smote the enemy, and when victory was assured, the people of Israel, who had left Eleazar to face the enemy alone "returned after him," but "only to spoil." The Lord wrought a great victory through Eleazar, and the Israelites reaped the fruits of victory (verses 9,10).

Shammah is famous as having "stood in the midst of the ground and defended it," in the day when others fled (verses 11,12).

In the conflicts of the Lord's people we see these different forms of service. There are times when the Lord calls for an attack upon the forces of evil, as in the case of Adino. There are occasions when there is spoil to be gained through conflict, as in the day of Eleazar's victory. So too there are times when we are called to stand our ground, and act on the defensive, as it was in the day of Shammah's mighty deed.

How important, in their times and seasons, are such mighty deeds. However, whether in David's day, or in our own day, one thing marks such deeds, they are for the benefit of the people, as well as for the glory of the King. When, however, we come to the three mighty men who drew the water from the well, we have a very different form of service. If the victories, we have considered, had the blessing of the people in view, this touching act of service was wholly for the benefit of the King.

These three mighty men "came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam" (13). It seems as if they left the world in the day of its plenty, to identify themselves with David in the day of his poverty and reproach.

David was in the hold, while a garrison of the Philistines occupied the place of David's early home. David, thinking of the well by the gate of Bethlehem, from which doubtless he had often drawn water in his youth, expresses his longing for a refreshing draft from the well. "Oh," says he, "that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" It is no command that requires obedience; it is no call for service; it is only the expression of his longing desire. And yet this expressed desire calls forth this devoted act of love in a way that no command would have done.

Many would have been ready to risk their lives in carrying out some service for the benefit of the kingdom; but these mighty men were ready to face death in order to do something that was wholly for the gratification of the desire of David. They broke through the host of the Philistines, drew water from the well, and brought it to David. This act of devotion delighted the heart of David, and he sees in it a sacrifice of which the Lord alone is worthy. Hence, refusing to drink the water, he pours it out before the Lord.

We, in our day, and according to the spiritual principles of the day, may know at times what it is to attack the powers of evil, to gain spoil from the enemies' ranks, and to stand on the defensive in the conflict for the truth. We, too, may fight the Lord's battles, but how much do we know of this higher service that does something for the heart of Christ alone? "Oh, that one would give me," says David. Are there not occasions when we can give something to the One who gave everything for us? When as at Bethany, in the day of the Lord, they did something for the One who had done so much for them—when "they made Him a supper" who had made a feast for all the world. Do we count it a rare privilege to be able to give to Christ that which will minister joy to His heart?

Was not Mary's service of this elevated character, when, six days before the Passover, she anointed the feet of the Lord with her costly ointment and wiped His feet with the hairs of her head? Was she not, in the face of the hatred of enemies and the murmurings of friends, refreshing the heart of the despised and rejected Son of David, against whom, at that very moment, the world was plotting with murderous hate?

And even as the water secured by these devoted men, was poured out before the Lord, so the odor of Mary's ointment goes up before the Lord as a sweet savor. It filled all the house where they were sitting.

Is not David's "Oh, that one would give me" a faint anticipation of the Lord's dying request, "Do this in remembrance of Me?

When we answer to this request, we are not fighting the Lord's battles, we are not getting spoil, we are not defending the truth, but we are doing something wholly for Christ; we are ministering to His heart by responding to His love. May we know better what it is to draw water from the well and pour it out before the Lord for the joy of His heart.

Hamilton Smith.

Christian Treasury: Volume 10, Devotedness

"The three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord” (2 Sam. 23:16)

There is something peculiarly touching and beautiful in the above scene, whether we contemplate the act of the three mighty men in procuring the water for David, or David's act in pouring it out to the Lord. It is evident that David discerned, in an act of such uncommon devotedness, a sacrifice which none but the Lord Himself could duly appreciate. The odor of such a sacrifice was far too fragrant for him to interrupt it in its ascent to the throne of the God of Israel. Wherefore he very properly and very gracefully allows it to pass him by in order that it might go up to the One who alone was worthy to receive it or able to appreciate it.

All this reminds us forcibly of that beautiful compendium of Christian devotedness set forth in Philippians 2:17-1&: "Yea, and if I be offered [poured on t I upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me." In this passage, the Apostle represents the Philippian saints in their character as priests, presenting a "sacrifice" and performing a priestly ministration to God. Such was the intensity of his self-forgetting devotedness, that he could rejoice in his being poured out as a drink offering upon their sacrifice, so that all might ascend in fragrant odor to God. The Philippians laid a sacrifice on God's altar, and the Apostle was poured out upon it, and all went up to God as an odor of sweet smell. It mattered not who put the sacrifice on the altar, or who was poured out thereupon, provided that God received what was acceptable to Him.

Truly this is a divine model for Christian devotedness. There would, then, be far less of "my sayings" and "my doings" and "my goings." It would be our joy, wherever we saw one or another laying a sacrifice on the altar of God, to allow ourselves to be poured out as a drink offering thereon to the glory of God and the common joy of His saints.

C. H. Mackintosh

"I beseech you therefore, brethren.,by the mercies of God,

that ye present your bodies

a riving sacrifice, holy,

acceptable unto god,

which is your reasonable service

Romans 12:1

Young Christian: Volume 19, 1929, Notes of an Address

2 Samuel 19:9-16

King David was not deceived by the speech of the men of all the tribes of Israel. They represent the fickle multitude. At this time they were saying,

“Why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?” A little later we have them saying,

“We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye;” and a day or so after,

“We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.”

But it is different with Judah. The king said to Judah, that which ought to come home to our hearts: “Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh.”

We read of the Lord Jesus, “He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” It is said of us, “We are members of His body; of His flesh and of His bones.”

I think there is touching grace here on the part of King David. He was away from the throne by reason of rejection just as the Lord has been rejected and cast out of this world. The throne belonged to David. He could have marched in, and taken the throne by right, but he didn’t want to take it that way. Instead of marching in, and taking it as he had the right, he seeks to exercise the hearts of the men of Judah so that they send this word after the king: “Return thou, and all thy servants.”

The Lord Jesus can come, and take the throne of the world. It belongs to Him. God has said of all other schemes,

“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.” “Behold a king shall reign in righteousness.”

The Lord Jesus will come, and take that throne, but in the meantime He wants to exercise our hearts, so we will send that word up into heaven where He is,

“Return Thou, and all Thy servants.”

It is blessed to see how successful David was in his effort to exercise the hearts of his people. We read in the 14th verse,

“So they sent this word unto the king, Return thou and all thy servants.” It was what he was waiting for; and so the king returned and came to Jordan. “And Judah, came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.”

How that corresponds to what we have before our hearts too, when the Lord Jesus comes to take the kingdom, the throne and reign in righteousness. We are going to meet Him first in that blessed place represented by Gilgal and Jordan here, and to return with Him when He comes.

One believes, beloved saints, the Lord has been seeking to exercise our hearts in bringing His coming before us again, that our desire might be towards Him; that our hearts' affections might be centered upon Him; that we might be waiting, watching and longing for Him to come, so that when He says, "Behold, I come quickly," the answer might be given to Him, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The Springing Well: Volume 5 (1902), "O Absalom, My Son, My Son!"

DAVID'S grief over Absalom's death may best be gauged by the words of the sacred historian: "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sam. 18:33).

The love of God for sinful men is reflected in the love of David for his rebellious son—as far as the Divine love can be mirrored in the human. It was the marvelous love of God which yielded His beloved Son as a sacrifice for human guilt. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Notwithstanding that we by choice became the enemies of God, deliberately turning our backs upon Him, and living in rebellion against Him, yet "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us."

In the sacrifice of His Son on behalf of the sinner, and in the acceptance of Christ as the sinner's Substitute, God has shown the depth of His love towards us. It seems incredible that in view of the great salvation, which has been procured at such a cost, men should choose to go down to death, rather than seek the mercy of God, and enter into life eternal through faith in Jesus Christ!

Bible Treasury: Volume 8, David and His Friends

2 Sam. 17:27-29

What solemn changes in all within and around does sin work, what new relationships to places and persons it forces us to take!

This is sorrowfully experienced by David. Nathan, the prophet, had in earlier days been sent to David with words of approval and encouragement and all was in honor between them. But when David had sinned, the same Nathan is sent to him with words of terrible rebuke and conviction. (2 Sam. 7; 12)

So again, in other days David listens to the reproaches of a profane one of the house of Saul, but he could answer such reproaches with holy boldness. But after his sin, he is scorned and insulted again by the profane of the house of Saul, but the spirit of holy boldness has departed from him. He cannot reply to Shimei as he had replied to Michal.1 (2 Sam. 6; 16)

Another illustration of this is seen in David's connection with the house of Machir of Lo-debar. In the day of his integrity David sends to Machir for Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, who had been long and graciously entertained there. With noble heart David then brings the son of his bosom-friend home to him to Jerusalem, and makes him to eat continually at his own table. But afterward, in the time when his sin had found him out, Machir supplies David with the commonest necessaries. (2 Sam. 9; 17)

What bitter changes for the heart were all these! The more vain and proud the nature is, the more would all this be felt; in some cases the trial would be all but intolerable. It would be then "the sorrow of the world which worketh death." With David however it was otherwise. It became "godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of." David did not feel the sorrow as the "sorrow of the world," sinking under it, as in the sight of men. But he bowed his head under the punishment of sin as in the fear of God, and then, as "godly sorrow," nothing less than "salvation" was the end of it.

How beautiful, how precious with God when in circumstances like this the "sorrow of the world" is prevailed over in the soul by "godly sorrow;" when all this is taken up in reference to the Lord, and not to man! That is the difference. But how difficult!

Moral mischief however not only worked all this change in David's own relationships to the scene around him, but it tested others also. This is exhibited in the history. There are three distinguished personages who stand this testing and have their grace and virtues variously but sweetly exercised: Shobi the Ammonite, Machir of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim.2 Shobi was the younger brother of Haman the king of the Ammonites, who had treated David's courtesy at the time of the death of his father with such slight and insult. And, I doubt not, that on this occasion Shobi had deprecated his elder brother's way, and been attracted by the grace and nobleness of David; so that, in the subsequent day of David's guilt and degradation, Shobi has a right mind still, though in changed circumstances. He joins other worthy ones in comforting the poor exiled king of Israel. (See 2 Sam. 10; 17)

Machir was the Son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, a man, we may presume, of note and station, in the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan. In earlier days he had received into his house the lame child of that worthy son of Israel, Jonathan the son of king Saul, and had been a comfort to him in the day of the national trouble when the house of Saul and Jonathan his father was sinking. And so, when David is sinking, and he is suffering the grievous visitation of his terrible iniquity, the same right mind appears again in this true man of God, and he likewise joins in comforting David. David was as in prison, and he visits him. (See 2 Sam. 9; 17)

Barzillai was a great man, a man of note and substance in the land of Gilead, beyond the Jordan. But he never appears in the history till David is distressed; and he is willing to disappear as soon as that distress is over. He was the friend in need. But though unknown before, his mind

had been that of a man of God, in secret, like many in every day of Israel's or the church's history; for he takes the path of the Spirit in a moment when nature in even some of its refined and moral judgments would have gone astray. He treats David's sorrow as a sacred thing, and adds not to the grief of him whom God in holy gracious discipline is wounding. He heartily joins Machir and Shobi in sending to David in his hunger and thirst and nakedness. (See 2 Sam. 17; 19)

We may say, in the review of all this, what a chapter in 2 Samuel is chapter 11! How the whole book morally turns on that, the complexion of David's history thus awfully changing with his conduct!

Hannah, Michal, Abigail, Bathsheba: November 2020, Setting Personal Wrongs Right

“When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he ... gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father” (2 Sam. 17:23).

What a sad end for Ahithophel, who was the king’s counsellor (1 Chron. 27:33)! His counsel which he counselled in those days was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God (2 Sam. 16:23). Evidently he was a man of unusual ability and usefulness to David, occupying a key position in the kingdom and greatly respected for his wisdom. What then had happened to bring him to such a low point? When Absalom had wanted to usurp the throne, we find that he sent for Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:12), who evidently came readily and with full support for Absalom. More than this, when he was asked to give counsel as to the best means of defeating David, Ahithophel not only counselled against David, but wanted personally to lead an army against him (2 Sam. 17:13). Why did this man, so close to David, turn so completely against him? I believe the answer is found in comparing 2 Samuel 11:3 and 23:34.

Family Relationships and Snares

Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. He was probably one of the few who knew the whole truth of David’s sin with Bathsheba and his subsequent attempt to cover it up by arranging for the death of her husband Uriah. We can only imagine the disillusionment and anger that so easily must have filled his soul. Doubtless he felt that David’s sin made him unfit to be king any longer. When Absalom, who seemed to be more righteous, came along, Ahithophel readily lent his support to him against David.

How keenly we feel it when a serious wrong is done, perhaps by those whom we have respected and trusted the most! When the wrong affects a member of our own family, we feel it all the more. Righteous anger arises in our hearts and perhaps our first thought is to avenge the wrong. Unhappily such things have happened many times in the history of God’s people, whether in Israel or in the history of the church.

We cannot defend David’s actions, and we find that the Lord dealt with them most solemnly. The first child born to David and Bathsheba died, and David was also told by Nathan the prophet that the sword would never depart from his house. It is clear that God did not pass over what David had done, although He did put away his sin (2 Sam. 12:13).

Setting Things Straight

Yet how often have we, like Ahithophel, taken matters into our own hands instead of counting on God to set things right! Ahithophel seemed to have plenty of reason for his attitude and actions, but he acted without God’s mind and thus rebelled against God’s rightful king. As David would not lift up his hand against Saul, because he was the Lord’s anointed, so Ahithophel was wrong to support rebellion against David.

Sowing and Reaping

As a result, God allowed Ahithophel’s good counsel to be rejected in favor of that given by Hushai. Knowing full well that the result would be certain defeat for Absalom, Ahithophel commits suicide. May this be a lesson to our own hearts, if we are tempted to try righting a wrong! This does not mean that we are to condone evil, either individually or in the assembly. But let us be careful not to use human energy to accomplish what only the Lord can do.

Forgiving and Serving

Contrast the history of Ahithophel with that of his son Eliam. We are not told much about him, although he was the father of Bathsheba, as we learn from 2 Samuel 11:3. We do not hear of him again until the record is given of David’s mighty men in 2 Samuel 23. It is evident that he remained faithful to David, although he had even more reason to be upset than Ahithophel.

He is not mentioned in connection with Absalom’s rebellion, but he is mentioned in the list of David’s mighty men. Though, no doubt, feeling the harm done to his daughter, he evidently submitted to what God had allowed and continued to serve David. As a result, he occupies a place of honor in a very select list of those who distinguished themselves in David’s service. The wrong done to Eliam remained, and surely he could not forget it. The presence of Bathsheba in David’s court would be a continual reminder of what had happened.

Wrongs Righted Here or There?

It is not until the end of David’s life that Eliam is mentioned and his name honored. So wrongs may be done down here, serious wrongs, yet we may have to wait until the judgment seat of Christ for them to be set right. Surely it will be worth it all in that day, when we receive the approval of our blessed Master for our service to Him. It is easy to be tempted to take another path that might seem to be dealing with the wrong, but if done without the mind of the Lord, it will not prosper. We may well find ourselves like Ahithophel, losing further opportunity to serve our David because we have not left matters with the Lord.

Blessing out of Failures

It is encouraging to see how God brings blessing even out of such serious failure. We know that Solomon, David’s heir to the throne, was born of Bathsheba, and it is recorded that the Lord loved him (2 Sam. 12:24). Also, we notice that David had other sons by Bathsheba, among them one named Nathan (1 Chron. 3:5). We may well suppose that he was named after Nathan the prophet who had faithfully spoken to David

about his failure. This is likely the same Nathan named in Luke 3:31.

It is generally accepted that the genealogy in Matthew through Solomon is Joseph's genealogy, being the lineage of the rightful king. That given in Luke is probably Mary's genealogy, and it is striking that she too is descended from a son of Bathsheba, although not one who sat on the throne.

Well might we say with the Apostle Paul, "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33). May God give us the grace to submit to His ways, knowing that they are not our ways and that true blessing is always in submitting to Him. In that day it will be worth it all!

W. J. Prost

Edification: Volume 1, "Whether in Death or Life."

ONE of the finest expressions of loyalty and devotedness of heart ever uttered was that of Ittai to David, when he said, "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be" (2 Sam. 15:21).

The circumstances leading to the declaration are well known. We may recall them in a few words. Absalom had rebelled against his father and David had to flee for his life from Jerusalem accompanied by such as were true to himself. These faithful ones nobly declared, "Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king may appoint," thus placing themselves at his disposal absolutely. Together with these there were found six hundred men who had come after David from Gath, where he had been as an exile and which he had taken when he had come to the kingdom. He had won the hearts of some of the men of Gath and these had followed him and now were loyal and true to him when he was dispossessed of his throne for a time by Absalom's insurrection.

Ittai was one of them and becomes spokesman for them and declares their faithfulness and allegiance to the rejected king.

David's position at that time is typical of the position of our Lord Jesus as now rejected by the world. He has been refused His rights by His earthly people Israel. The only crown given to Him was one of thorns, the only scepter a reed, the only throne a cross. He is cast out by the world and His position becomes a test for us who are His own. He has said of His loved ones, for whom He laid down His life, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." We belong to Him and the question arises how shall we respond to His love which has made us His own, and own our fealty to Himself.

Let us look at the noble utterance of Ittai and see how far we are like him in faithfulness.

"As the Lord liveth." These words of faith ring down the centuries from the beginning. In every dispensation the truth of the abidingness of God has been the resource of the godly. God lives, and He is not indifferent to the condition of things in the world. He is the Observer of all and records everything. Ittai recognized this and recalls it for the comfort of the outcast king.

"And as my lord the king liveth." He had confidence that God cared for David and would bring him through this time of trial, and re-establish him upon his throne. And we know that God will yet place Christ upon the throne of His father David and will give Him universal dominion. He shall be the "one Lord and His Name one." "And He shall reign from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth." God lives. Christ lives. And it is but "A little while and. He that shall come will come and will not delay."

Ittai's expression of trust in God is followed by his expression of attachment to David.

"Surely in what place my Lord the King shall be, whether in death or life, there will also thy servant be." David's position governed Ittai's. If David was in death, Ittai would be in death with him. If David was in life, there Ittai would be. His "Surely" told of decision and definiteness which nothing should shake. And as we see later David's remonstrance failed to move him in the least. He stood firm and was not to be deflected from the course he had taken.

Can we take up such language with regard to our Lord?

Happy are we in knowing that Christ's place before His Father and God is our place also. We are before God in Christ. And "IN Christ" is as Christ. It was this which the Lord declared in resurrection when He sent the message to His own by Mary Magdalene from the open sepulcher's side, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to My Father, and to your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John 20:17). Through His atoning death He had won for them this place. Every question as to their sins and sinful selves was settled and He could lead them in triumph into His own place of relationship with the Father and of righteousness with God.

Anticipating His work and its results He had said, "My peace I give unto you." "That My joy might be in you." "The words that Thou gavest Me I have given them." "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them." His peace, His joy, His glory, ours, and the Father's communications to Him and the Father's love resting upon Him shared with us. He had said, "Not as the world gives give I unto you." The world gives away what it bestows. It gives a part of its possessions, and usually a small part, and it preserves its own position of superiority to those to whom it gives. Christ gives by bringing us to share with. Him all that it is possible for us to enjoy. As the husband brings his wife into his home to enjoy with himself all that he delights in, sharing his all with her and finding his delight in doing so, thus the Lord introduces His loved ones into the circle of sunshine. and gladness in which He finds His own pleasures. There are His own Godhead glories which no creature can ever share; but all that it is possible for a creature to have with Him, He loves to impart to us, finding His own deep joy in having us with Him appreciating it all, as we find our deepest joy in being with Him, the Giver of it all.

But while it is true that His place before His Father and His God is ours, it is also true that His place before the world is ours; both go together. It is expressed in the epistle to the Hebrews by the position. "Inside the veil" on the one hand, and "Outside the camp" on the other. If it be

ours to enter in with Christ into the Holiest of all by His blood, it is ours also to go forth to Him outside the camp of this world, “outside the gate,” sharing shame and dishonor with Him our rejected Lord.

We may note that Ittai said, “Whether in death or life.” He puts death before life in his thoughts and utterances. He was prepared for the worst. He would die where David died. It was his love for David, flowing from his previous acquaintance with David, which led to this pledging of his troth. And we are to be in death here with Him who is our Lord, as we look to, be in life with Him eternally. “If we have died with Him we shall also live with Him.”

Our death with Him is figured in our baptism. We have been baptized unto His death. We have been thus identified with Him in His cutting off. His life has been “taken from the earth” and we have ours taken from it in figure too. This was done for us by another.

In the partaking of the Lord’s Supper we do for ourselves what was done for us by another in our baptism. We become identified again and again with the death of Christ in the world, as it is said, we “do show forth the Lord’s death till He come.” He is away, but we are here in the place of His rejection and we own His rights and unfurl His flag where He has been and is refused.

In our baptism and in partaking of the Lord’s Supper we say with the Christian poet, “Know ye not that our Lord Jesus died here.” We share with Him in the place of His death, in figure; and are called to, be true to our identification with Him in all our association of life here.

And with us it is but “Till He come.” We know that the moment of His return draws nigh. Then the place of glory will be ours with Him as the place of shame has been ours now.

We are called to devotedness to Him who was devoted to us unto death. He was for us here and we are to be for Him here.

Ittai was honored when David was restored to his rightful throne, and became one of his trusted field-marshals; a third of David’s army being put under his control. And “if we suffer we shall also reign with Him.”

David valued Ittai’s devotedness so plainly expressed. Can Christ our Lord appreciate ours?

I. FLEMING.

Christian Treasury: Volume 9, Righteousness and Peace

It is only God Himself who could bring home a banished one, or provide salvation for a sinner, for to accomplish this, there must be a ransom, a price adequate to the redemption. God alone could furnish that. All the angels in heaven would fail in the attempt: an eternal value must be paid for an offense against God. God alone can yield an offering which shall carry infinite value in it, such as sin demands. Power cannot supply it; love cannot supply it; it is God Himself, whose person has infinite value, that can alone supply it. Power once attempted this, and failed awfully. David on the throne of Israel undertook, by a simple word or decree of power such as his throne carried, to bring back a banished one. But this ended in greater mischief, and the throne that had attempted this was, as it were, forfeited by the act.

God has, however, done it—because He can sprinkle blood on the throne, such as the throne can accept. He can and has allied righteousness with peace in this great matter, and His banished are brought home under sure and clear title to see His face, and to walk in His presence; His own throne is not only guiltless but glorified. New powers array it. Mercy and truth with their several glories, and that too in their brightest shining, adorn it; they have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

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