

SAMUEL TO SOLOMON

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Chapter 1

Training for the Ministry

"The model religious life." Every reader naturally exclaims at once, "That is the life of Christ, of course," and then as naturally begins, consciously or unconsciously, to put a wide gulf between himself and Christ, assuring himself that nobody can live such a life on this earth as Christ lived.

The life of Christ is indeed regarded by most people as a model to be set up on a pedestal, and looked at and admired from a distance, rather than to be lived every day. This is part of the legacy that we have received from the Church of Rome, which has represented Christ as so far removed from human sympathies that no human mortal can presume to come directly to Him, or expect to receive anything from Him except through the intercession of Mary or the glorified saints. This sentiment, so deeply embedded in the mind, is one of the last Papal fetters to be thrown off.

But Christ himself, who calls us to learn of Him, always identifies himself with us, by the term "Son of man," which He so much loved, and says: "I am meek and lowly in heart." (Matthew 11:29)

He is the living representative of God the Father, who says: "I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." (Isaiah 57:15)

And He has also made the way very simple and plain for us, by setting specially before us as the model, not the man skilled in meeting the sophistries of the scribes and doctors of the law, but the little child subject to its parents. "And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:2-4)

What do we know of the life of Jesus? Only this: "And He went down with them [Joseph and Mary], and was subject unto them." (Luke 2:51)

That is the whole, and it is enough. It shows the little child always ready to run errands or to render such household service as tender hands could perform; the child whose ear was quick to catch the first sound of the call to duty, and whose highest pleasure was found in being useful. That is the religion of childhood, and it is the religion for the mature man as well.

This was the religion of the child Samuel. "Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child." (1 Samuel 2:18) "And the child Samuel ministered unto [served] the Lord before Eli." (1 Samuel 3:1)

What did he do? Just what a little child could do, and nothing more. He was not a priest, he could not enter into the holy place and offer incense. But he could wait on the priest. We read that after God had called him and spoken to him by night he "lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord." (1 Samuel 3:15)

There we get a glimpse of him at his daily service. His work was to make himself generally useful, no matter how lowly the task; and in the faithful discharge of those humble duties he was ministering unto the Lord.

It is not what is done, but how it is done, that determines whether or not one is ministering unto the Lord. The person who slights his task, or performs it unwillingly, wishing that his work were something "more honorable,"--something that would attract more attention, or command greater pecuniary reward,--is not serving the Lord, no matter what nor where his work may be, even though it be in the temple itself. For that person is not a free man, but a slave; and God has no slaves in His employ. All God's servants are free; they are kings. God is King of kings, and he has no one in His service or in His kingdom of lower rank than king. Therefore everyone who is the servant of the Lord is master of his work, and never allows it or circumstances to master him.

Servants, no matter how menial their service, are to obey orders "in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from

the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." (Ephesians 6:5-7) "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: Whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." (Colossians 3:22-23)

This was the characteristic of Jesus, who said: "I delight to do your will, O my God," (Psalm 40:8) and He was doing God's will just as much when He was assisting Mary in her household tasks, or Joseph in the carpenter's shop, as when He was preaching to the multitudes, and healing the sick. The first was the preparation for the last.

Elisha was a prophet of the Lord, performing many wonderful miracles, yet for years he was but a servant, and "poured water on the hands of Elijah." (2 Kings 3:11)

That was his "Training for the Ministry;" for how can one train for any calling better than in the exercise of that calling? and that lowly service, done willingly from the heart, was the true ministry. Elijah never served the Lord better than when he waited on Elijah.

So it was when Samuel was doing his childish tasks with a faithful, willing spirit, that he was called to the highest service that could be given to a man--that of bearing a message from God to the high priest of God. Yet the service was in reality no higher than the other.

What sweet simplicity is seen in the child Samuel! Prompt to answer every call, he rose from his bed without hesitation, time after time, to wait upon the aged Eli, who he supposed was needing assistance. Then, with the artlessness and graceful trust of childhood, he followed Eli's instructions, and said, when he heard the voice, "Speak, for your servant hears." (1 Samuel 3:10)

Yes, he heard, because he was alert to hear, like the "angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." (Psalm 103:20)

In that is summed up the perfect Christian life. How many there are who missed "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," (Philippians 3:14) simply because they despise the day of small things. "Do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not;" (Jeremiah 45:5) for, "with the lowly is wisdom." (Proverbs 11:2)

Oh, give me Samuel's ear!
The open ear, O Lord,
Alive and quick to hear
Each whisper of your word;
Like him to answer at your call,
And to obey You first of all.

Oh, give me Samuel's heart!
A lowly heart that waits
When in your house You are;
Or watches at your gates.

By day and night, a heart that still
Moves at the breathing of your will.

--James Drummond Burns, Hymn: Hushed was the Evening
Hymn, 1874.

--Present Truth, December 4, 1902--International Sunday-
School Lesson for December 14--1 Samuel 3:1-14

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 2

Meeting the Law

We read in the book of Samuel that on account of the apostasy of Israel brought about by the wickedness of the sons of Eli, they were smitten before the Philistines in battle; and that, thinking to make themselves secure against another defeat, they sent to Shiloh and brought from thence the ark of the Lord into the midst of their camp. But they were defeated again by their enemies with great slaughter, and the ark of God was taken by the Philistines.

The Philistines were very glad to get possession of the ark, for they knew there was a supernatural power that attended it, and they supposed that, having possession of that sacred chest, they would also have possession of the power. So they took the ark and set it up in the temple of Dagon, thinking that with the power of the ark of the Lord united with the power of their god Dagon, they would make themselves invincible.

But the experiment did not work to their satisfaction. Dagon fell down on his face before the ark of the Lord and was mutilated to the extent of ruin; and the judgments of the Lord came upon the men of Ashdod, causing a great destruction, so that they soon became as anxious to get rid of the ark as they had been before to get it in their possession. So they sent it to Gath. And, "the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction." (1 Samuel 5:9)

Next they sent it to Ekron, and "there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there." (1 Samuel 5:11)

Then the Philistines took measures to send the ark back again from whence it came, and they set it upon a cart drawn by two milch kine, and it came to Beth Shemesh. And the men of Beth Shemesh (who were Israelites) opened the sacred structure and looked into it, to get a view of the mysterious power that it contained. But terrible was the result; for the Lord "smote the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even He smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter." (1 Samuel 6:19)

All these judgments were not arbitrary acts on the part of God, done to punish the Philistines for taking the ark of the Lord from the Hebrews, or the men of Beth Shemesh for the sin of looking into it. They have a deeper significance than that. They teach us what is the inevitable result when the law of God is brought into contact with sinners.

The ark of the Lord contained the law of the Lord, written on the tables of stone with the finger of God. This was the potent fact which was the secret of the power that went with the ark. It was the power of the life and righteousness of God; for the law of God is nothing less than His life and righteousness. It was indeed a power very desirable to possess, but no less dangerous than it was

desirable. For the sinner to reach out and attempt to take it would be like taking hold of a wire charged with the most powerful electric current. Death, quick and inevitable, would be the result.

And this is just what the Philistines, in their sinful ignorance, did. They took the ark, thinking to gain the power that went with it; but they only brought into their midst the holy and terrible law of the Lord. There could be but one result,--judgment and death upon the sinner.

The men of Beth Shemesh, curious to see more about the power that attended the ark, ventured to open it and look within; when lo, they stood face to face with the terrible law of God, as holy and righteous as himself! And the law spoke death to them; it could not be otherwise. And more than fifty thousand people perished! When the law of God meets the sinner face to face there is nothing for the latter but death.

Happily for us, God has not left sinners to meet His holy law in this way. The plan of salvation is nothing else but the means He has provided whereby sinners may meet the law and live. And that means is Jesus Christ. He stands between the law and the sinner, and in Him, the sinner can meet the law and not die.

In Christ, the sinner exchanges his sins for God's righteousness, which is the righteousness that the law demands. In Christ, also, the penalty for sin has been paid. Christ is the law freed of its terrors, and human flesh divested of its sin. We meet Him as sinners and

lose our sin, and also meet the law without meeting its penalty. This idea is presented by Paul in his letter to the Hebrews. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; ... Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." (Hebrews 10:19-20,22)

Entering into the "holiest," we enter into the presence of the law of God; and well might the sinner fear to enter there and stand face to face with the law which he has transgressed. But the apostle tells us we may enter in with "boldness" through the "new and living way," "His flesh." Jesus Christ is now our High Priest, mediating for us in that temple which John saw "opened in heaven," (Revelation 11:19) and wherein also was seen "the ark of His testament." (Revelation 11:19)

In other words, our Saviour is now "a minister of the Sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." (Hebrews 8:2)

And in the great Judgment day, all who meet the law in Him will be accounted guiltless, and have life throughout the ages of eternity.

Far should it be from sinners to glory in possessing the law of God when it does not come to them in Christ. That was what the Israelites did when they sent and fetched the ark from Shiloh into their sinful camp. When the sacred structure appeared--the symbol

of the power and protection of Jehovah--they raised a shout, as if they had won the victory; but when the battle was joined, they were smitten with great slaughter. With the law of God in their midst, it fared much worse with them than it did before.

But meeting the law in Christ, the law is a blessing; as it was to Obed Edom, of whom we read, "The ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed Edom the Gittite three months; and the Lord blessed Obed Edom, and all his household." (2 Samuel 6:11)--Present Truth, February 8, 1894--1 Samuel 4 to 6

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 3

An Earthly King Chosen

1. Give two proofs that the partial possession of Canaan by the Israelites was not the fulfillment of the promise.

2. If the possession of the land had been complete, would that have been a complete fulfillment of the promise? "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." (Romans 4:11)

3. When the Lord brought them from Egypt, what did He promise to make of them? "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:5-6)

4. How were they governed for many years after that time? "After that He gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." (Acts 13:20)

5. Who was the last of the judges? "And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those

places. ... And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the Lord." (1 Samuel 7:15,17)

6. In his days what did the Israelites demand? "Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, you are old, and your sons walk not in your ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." (1 Samuel 8:4-5)

7. What did the Lord say they had done in making this demand? "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." (1 Samuel 8:7)

8. Then under whose immediate authority must they have been up to this time?

9. What did the Lord say that Samuel should do? "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto you: for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. ... Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. ... And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go you every man unto his city." (1 Samuel 8:7,9,22)

10. Who was chosen as their first king? "And afterward they desired a king; and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years." (Acts 13:21) "And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spoke to you of! this same shall reign over my people." (1 Samuel 9:17)

11. By whom was Saul chosen as king over Israel? "Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man out of the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines; for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me." (1 Samuel 9:15-16)

12. Had the Lord utterly rejected His people because of their rejection of Him? No; this is shown by the fact that He chose their king for them.

Notes:

There is a seeming discrepancy between Acts 13:20 and 1 Kings 6:1. The latter text says that Solomon began to build the temple in the four hundred and eightieth year after the exode, which would not allow all four hundred fifty years of government by judges. The explanation which seems the simplest is that which connects Acts 13:20 with the first part of the seventeenth verse of

the same chapter, and regard the expression: "About the space of four hundred and fifty years," (Acts 13:20) as explanatory of the words, "and after that." (Acts 13:20)

Thus: "The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers. ... and about the space of four hundred and fifty years after that He gave unto them judges, until Samuel the prophet."--Signs of the Times, June 18, 1885--Lesson for the Pacific Coast - July 18--1 Samuel 8

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 4

Rejection of Saul as King of Israel

1. Who was the first king of Israel? "And afterward they desired a king; and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years." (Acts 13:21)

2. By whom was he chosen?" (Acts 13:21)

3. How long did he reign?" (Acts 13:21)

4. On one occasion what message came from the Lord to Saul from Samuel? "Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint you to be king over his people, over Israel; now therefore hearken unto the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." (1 Samuel 15:1-3)

5. How did Saul carry out his instructions? "And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until you come to Shur, that is over against Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good,

and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." (1 Samuel 15:7-9)

6. What excuse did Saul make for thus disobeying the command the Lord? "And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord your God in Gilgal." (1 Samuel 15:20-21)

7. What did Samuel say the Lord values more than sacrifices? "And Samuel said, Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Samuel 15:22)

8. To what was Saul's stubbornness equivalent? "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king." (1 Samuel 15:23)

9. What had he rejected? He had rejected the word of the Lord.

10. Since rebellion is equal to idolatry, had not Saul, in rejecting the word of the Lord, rejected the Lord himself? Certainly

the record shows that Saul was virtually an idolater, and thus as wicked as the Amalekites, whom he had been sent to destroy.

11. Because Saul had thus rejected the Lord, what had the Lord done? "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king. ... And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with you: for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel." (1 Samuel 15:23,26)

12. What had He rent from Saul? "And Samuel said unto him, The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, that is better than you." (1 Samuel 15:28)

13. To whom did Samuel say the kingdom was given? (1 Samuel 15:28)

14. What important lesson may we learn from the narrative in this chapter? From the narrative recorded in 1 Samuel 15, we may learn how particular God is in his requirements, and how dangerous it is for us to presume to deviate from the plain letter of his commandments. Saul flattered himself that God would overlook his disobedience in preserving the best of the flocks of the Amalekites because, they were preserved for sacrifice. But God would not accept such a service. Had He accepted Saul's excuse, it would have

been the equivalent to admitting that Saul knew what would honor the Lord better than the Lord himself knew, and that was not true.

When God tells us to do a thing in a certain way, we are to understand that to do just as He says, will honor Him more than anything else. We are not at liberty to presume that we can honor Him by different course; that would be setting ourselves above God, and consequently we would be idolaters. From this narrative we can see an illustration of: "He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." (Proverbs 28:9)--Signs of the Times, June 25, 1885--Lesson for the Pacific Coast - July 25--1 Samuel 15:7-28

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 5

Importance of Obedience

1. When the angels are sent to gather God's elect, whom will they take? "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5)

2. What does God regard more highly than sacrifice? "And Samuel said, Has the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Samuel 15:22)

3. How is disobedience described? "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king." (1 Samuel 15:23)

4. When Samuel first came to Saul, how did the latter feel respecting what he had done? "And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be you of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord." (1 Samuel 15:13)

5. After Samuel reproved him, what did he say? "And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." (1 Samuel 15:15)

6. How was Saul deceived? He thought that by making a sacrifice to the Lord, He would excuse him for not doing just as He had commanded.

7. Was there any way by which the people would benefit themselves pecuniarily by this disobedience? They could use these cattle for sacrifice, and save their own for themselves. "But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, and the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord your God in Gilgal." (1 Samuel 15:21)

8. What was the final result of Saul's course? "And Samuel said unto him, The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, that is better than you. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent. ... And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the Lord repented that He had made Saul king over Israel." (1 Samuel 15:28-29,35)

9. In what manner was the ark to be conveyed from place to place? "But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none; because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders." (Numbers 7:9)

10. By what means was it carried from the Philistines to Beth Shemesh? "And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied

them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: And they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods." (1 Samuel 6:10-11)

11. How were the men of Beth Shemesh dealt with for looking into the ark? "And He smote the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even He smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter." (1 Samuel 6:19)

12. What arrangements did David make for taking the ark from the house of Abinadab? "And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. ... And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals." (2 Samuel 6:3,5)

13. Why was Uzzah smitten by the Lord? "And when they came unto the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and He smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God." (1 Chronicles 13:9-10)

14. What was the real sin here committed? "For because you did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order." (1 Chronicles 15:13)

15. When the ark was removed from the house of Obededom, in what manner was it carried? "So the priests and Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded, according to the word of the Lord." (1 Chronicles 15:14-15)

16. If God's miraculous care was over the ark when it was brought from the Philistines on a cart, why was He displeased when it was placed upon a new cart prepared expressly for that purpose by David?[1]

17. What practical lesson can be learned from this?

Although men may have zeal and care for God's cause, the Lord will not accept that in the place of obedience.

Notes:

1. It is a great mistake to presume that our property or anything we possess belongs to us to use upon our lusts. Whatever talents men possess, either natural or acquired, are loaned them of God, and those who are not faithful in that which has been loaned them will never receive the true riches which Christ has purchased for us; for

if we have not been faithful in that which is another man's, none will give us that which is our own.

Nothing in this life belongs to us, but an inheritance to eternal life in the kingdom of God has been purchased for us by Christ. We were God's by creation, and after having lost the privilege of children by the fall, we have been purchased, or redeemed, by the blood of Christ. We have no right, therefore, to devote our powers or possessions to our own selfish interests. Every sacrifice made to the glory of God will meet its reward in the kingdom of God. Hence God will accept nothing but that obedience which proceeds from the heart.

Saul was a rash man, and his case fitly illustrates the course of many professed Christians at the present time. Although apparently conscientious, he was impetuous, and could not wait for God's providence when brought into straitened circumstances. He had never learned the important lesson of quiet trust in God, and in consequence, his entire life was one of fitfulness.

"Saul had not a high and exalted sense of the excellence and terrible majesty of God. He had not a sacred regard for His appointed ordinances. With an impetuous spirit because Samuel did not appear at the appointed time, he rushed before God presumptuously, and undertook the sacred work of sacrifice. While equipped for war, he built the altar and officiated for himself and the people. This work was sacredly given to those appointed for the purpose. This act was a crime in Saul, and such an example would

lead the people to have a low estimate of the religious ceremonies and ordinances sanctified and appointed of God, prefiguring the sinless offering of His dear Son. God would have His people have a holy regard and sacred reverence for the sacrificial work of the priests, which pointed to the sacrifice of His Son."--Ellen White, Spirit of Prophecy, Volume One, p. 357-358.

"God proved Saul by entrusting him with the important commission to execute His threatened wrath upon Amalek. But he disobeyed God, and spared the wicked, blasphemous king Agag, whom God had appointed unto death, and spared the best of the cattle. He destroyed utterly all the refuse that would not profit them. Saul thought it would add to his greatness to spare Agag, a noble monarch splendidly attired; and that to return from battle with him captive, with great spoil of oxen, sheep, and much cattle, would get to himself much renown, and cause the nations to fear him, and tremble before him. And the people united with him in this. They excused their sin among themselves in not destroying the cattle, because they could reserve them to sacrifice to God, and spare their own cattle to themselves."--Ellen White, Spirit of Prophecy, Volume One, p. 362.

"Samuel informed Saul that his rebellion was as the sin of witchcraft. That is, when one commences to travel in the path of rebellion, he yields himself to be controlled by an influence that is in opposition to the will of God. Satan controls the rebellious mind. Those who are thus controlled lose a calm trust in God, and have less and less disposition to yield loving obedience to His will. Satan

becomes more and more familiar with them, until they seem to have no power to cease to rebel. In this respect, rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

Saul's stubbornness in persisting before Samuel that he had obeyed God, was an iniquity and idolatry. His love to carry out his own will was more desirable to him than to obtain the favor of God, or the approbation of a clear conscience. And when his sin was opened clearly before him, and his wrong definitely pointed out, his pride of opinion, his excessive self-love, led him to justify himself in his wrong course, in defiance of the reproof of Samuel, and the word of the Lord by the mouth of his prophet. Such obstinacy in a known transgression, separated him forever from God.

He knew that he had gone contrary to God's express command; yet when reproved by God through Samuel, he would not humbly acknowledge his sin, but in a determined manner uttered a falsehood in self-justification. If he had humbly repented, and received the reproof, the Lord would have had mercy and forgiven Saul of his great sin. But the Lord left Saul for his stubbornly refusing to be corrected, and for uttering falsehoods to Samuel, his messenger. Samuel told Saul that, as he had rejected the word of the Lord, God had rejected him from being king."--Ellen White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume One, p. 365-366.

There is one thing noticeable in the case of Uzzah's being smitten before the Lord. It cannot be said that David did not have a proper sense of the sacredness of the ark. It seems that a new cart

was especially prepared upon which to convey the ark. It probably had never been used for any other purpose. David also sang and gave praises before the ark with all his might.

But the sin committed was in the disregard of the law which said that the ark should be borne by the priests. Uzzah was a Levite but not a priest. All the circumstances seemed to be in harmony with the mind of God except this provision for carrying the ark upon a cart, instead of by the proper means, which would have avoided all danger, such as Uzzah apprehended from the stumbling of the oxen, and the shaking of the ark. This incident illustrates the grand truth that a conscientious zeal never can take the place of obedience in God's sight.

Another important truth is brought out by this circumstance, namely, that God does not hold people responsible when they do not have the light. God's miraculous providence was over the ark when it was first sent to Beth-Shemesh, although it was then drawn upon a cart; for the Philistines had no knowledge of how the ark should be carried. But to the people of Israel, God had made known the manner in which He was pleased to have it conveyed.--Signs of the Times, June 2, 1887--Sabbath, June 18--1 Samuel 15; 2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 15

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 6

The Shepherd Boy

Although the Scriptures give a very full account of David's life, but little is told us of his early days. We know, however, that these were spent at Bethlehem, and he is first brought before us as a shepherd, minding his father's sheep.

Bethlehem was a small town, built on one of the highest hills in Palestine, about four miles to the south of Jerusalem. Its name signifies "The House of Bread," and was probably bestowed on it on account of the fertility of the surrounding country. Even at the present time, visitors to the place report that fruit trees and vineyards abound, and that the neighborhood of Bethlehem is not surpassed by any in Palestine for luxuriance and beauty.

It was an ancient city in David's time. The patriarch Jacob had sojourned there in his wanderings and it was near by that Rachel had died and was buried. The monument erected by Jacob to the memory of his beloved wife was still standing. It was in Bethlehem, too, that David's great grand-parents, Ruth and Boaz, had their homes; and it was there, a thousand years later, that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was manifested in sinful flesh to save His people from their sins. "But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall He come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel." (Micah 5:2)

Jesse, David's father, was counted a very old man. He had eight sons, of whom David was the youngest, and two daughters, both of whom had children of their own. These, although David's nephews, were about the same age as himself. They were doubtless among his youthful companions, and we can imagine how, as they minded their sheep together, or practiced with their slings, they would talk of what they hoped to do when they grew to be men.

It is not likely, however, that they anticipated becoming so famous as they afterwards did. One of them became a great king, and all grew up to be famous warriors. Joab, the great general and statesman, brave but crafty and unscrupulous; Abishai, the mighty man of valor; Asahel, "as light of foot as a wild roe;" (2 Samuel 2:18) and Amasa, who afterwards commanded the army of Absalom and was slain by Joab in treachery, were among these nephews of David. Then there was Elhanan who became one of the chief mighty men of Israel. He also lived at Bethlehem.

It must have been a cause of sadness to David in after life to know that so many of the playmates of his youth should destroy one another, and to find them siding with his enemies against him. It was an experience of this kind that made him write the 41st Psalm. "Yea, my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." (Psalm 41:9)

David was not only a shepherd boy, able to run races with the fleet-footed Asahel, and to sling stones like Joab and the others, but was also a musician and a poet. As he listened to the voice of

Nature, speaking all around him, and thought upon the Word of God, he sang psalms to his Maker, and made sweet music on the harp. He had carefully stored up the instruction received from his father Jesse, Samuel the prophet, and other good men, and had hidden the words of God in his heart that he might not sin against Him.

We do not know whether any of the Psalms contained in the Bible were written by David at this time, but it is very likely that some of them were, and even if they were written in after years, we know that the thoughts in them came to him in those early shepherd days. It was then he had the blessed experience of which he sang in the 32nd Psalm: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. ... I acknowledged my sin unto You, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and You forgave the iniquity of my sin." (Psalm 32:1-2,5)

The shepherd's work was not done at sunset. The sheep had to be guarded from the attacks of hungry wild beasts, or these would come and destroy the flock, so that David sometimes had to remain out at night, and watch the sheepfold. It was not always pleasant, but instead of complaining, he composed verses on the beauties of the star-lit heavens. The 8th Psalm was one of the songs he wrote on this subject. "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth! who has set your glory above the heavens. ... When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars,

which You have ordained; What is man, that You are mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:1,3-4)

David knew that although he was young and simple, the Lord could reveal in him the same glory that made the heavens beautiful, and so we find these words in the same psalm: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings have You established strength." (Psalm 8:2,RV)

When Jesus reminded the Jews of these words He said: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings You have perfected praise;" (Matthew 21:16) so that when God was doing this with David, He was "establishing strength" in him. That this was a real strength was seen in David's case. More than once, while he was guarding the sheep at night, fierce beasts came prowling round, and on one occasion a lion, emboldened by hunger, seized one of the lambs, and was dragging it away.

David might have thought of the great danger he would run by interfering with the lion, and perhaps reason that he could not hope to save the lamb, and his own life was more precious. But no, he had the true shepherd heart. He loved his sheep, and his only thought was that the lamb was in danger and must be rescued. Besides, God was his strength, and even though the lion was much stronger than himself, God was stronger still.

So he went in God's strength to do his duty, taking only a shepherd's staff. He overtook the lion and struck it until it dropped

the lamb and turned on David. Then it was seen that God really girded him with strength, (Psalm 18:39) for in spite of its superior strength the lion was slain. Another time a bear attacked the fold, but David pursued it and fought it with the same result. He must have had this in mind when he wrote the 17th Psalm. "He is like a lion that is greedy of prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places. Arise, O Lord. Confront him, cast him down: Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword; From men, by your hand, O Lord." (Psalm 17:12-14,RV)

In after years when crafty enemies were about him, trying to lure him into wrong paths that he might fall into evil and be ruined, he remembered how the Lord had upheld him as he climbed from crag to crag of the limestone rocks of Bethlehem, making him sure-footed and keeping him from falling. So when he was at last delivered from the persecutions of Saul, he sang in the 18th Psalm: "He makes my feet like hind's feet: and sets me upon my high places. ... your right hand has held me up, and your gentleness has made me great. You have enlarged my steps under me, and my feet have not slipped." (Psalm 18:33,35-36)

David knew what it was to be tired and hungry and thirsty. In the hot summer days how he liked to lead the flock to the well which was by the gate of Bethlehem, where they could quench their thirst with the clear, cold water. Many years after, when the Philistines invaded the land, and had taken possession of Bethlehem, David and his men were in a fortress not far off. They ran short of water, and David could not help thinking of the cool, delicious

draughts he used to get at the old well. "And David longed and said, Oh that one would give me a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" (2 Samuel 23:15)

When some of his mighty man heard that, three of them went down to Bethlehem, broke through the Philistine host, drew water at the well and brought it back to David. He did not like to drink water that had been procured at such a risk, so he poured it out as an offering to the Lord. We learn from the incident, however, how highly he had learned to prize the well in his earlier life, and this helps us to appreciate more fully the words of the 63rd Psalm, which he wrote at the time just referred to: "O God, You are my God; early will I seek You: my soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You, in a dry and weary land, where no water is." (Psalm 63:1)

In all the experiences of his life the youthful shepherd learned to see the working of God. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses also, had tended sheep, and as David studied the records of the past, he saw how all men were like sheep, and God was a great Shepherd, feeding and guiding His flock, and leading them to the fountain of the water of life. So he sang in the 95th Psalm: "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker: For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand." (Psalm 95:6-7,RV)

He knew how the very helplessness of the sheep appealed to his own heart, and how carefully he sought to lead them where the pasturage was best and the way was easiest. So the Lord was

guiding him, only with infinitely greater love and wisdom, and the joyful realization of this thought found expression in the beautiful "Shepherd Psalm," which has gladdened the heart of every believer who has read it, and will continue to inspire rejoicing till we all enter the heavenly fold. "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters. ... Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." (Psalm 23:1-2,4)

So the shepherd boy was learning the ways of the Lord. By faithfulness in the discharge of the duties allotted to him, he was developing a character that God could use anywhere. One who does everything to the glory of God, even if it be only minding sheep, is achieving true and lasting greatness, and as we follow the history of God's dealings with him, we shall see how "He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheep-folds: From following the ewes that give suck He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance." (Psalm 78:70-71)--Present Truth, May 5, 1898--1 Samuel 16 (David's early life)

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 7

The Promise to David

1. Relate the circumstances which led to the rejection of Saul as king of Israel. (See 1 Samuel 15)

2. Where is this narrative recorded? (See 1 Samuel 15)

3. When Samuel said that the Lord had taken the kingdom from Saul, to whom did he say it had been given? "And Samuel said unto him, The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, that is better than you." (1 Samuel 15:28)

4. Who was the one whom the Lord chosen the place of Saul? "And Nathan said to David, You are the man. Thus says the Lord God of Israel, I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul." (2 Samuel 12:7)

5. From what occupation was David taken to be made king? "Now therefore so shall you say unto my servant David, Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel." (2 Samuel 7:8)

6. Where do we have an account of the choosing and the anointing of David? " And the Lord said unto Samuel...Fill your horn with oil, and go, I will send you to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for

I have provided me a king among his sons. ... And Samuel did that which the Lord spoke ... And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him; for the Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither has the Lord chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither has the Lord chosen this. Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord has not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all your children? And he said, There remains yet the youngest, and, behold, he keeps the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah." (1 Samuel 16:1,4-13)

7. When the Lord placed David over His people, what did He do for him? "Now therefore so shall you say unto my servant David, Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I

was with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies out of your sight." (2 Samuel 7:8-9)

8. What did He make him? "And have made you a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth." (2 Samuel 7:9)

9. What did the Lord say He would yet do for David? "Also the Lord tells you that He will make you a house." (2 Samuel 7:11)

10. To whom did the Lord say he would establish the kingdom? "And when your days be fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, which shall proceed out of your bowels, and I will establish his kingdom." (2 Samuel 7:12)

11. For how long a time did the Lord say that David's house and kingdom should be established? "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you; your throne shall be established forever." (2 Samuel 7:17)--Signs of the Times, July 2, 1885--Lesson for the Pacific Coast - August 1--1 Samuel 16; 2 Samuel 7

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 8

Called to the Throne

Great changes had taken place in Saul since he was anointed king of Israel. At first he was little in his own eyes, but by the time he had reigned two years his heart was so lifted up that he presumed to offer sacrifices, a work which God had appointed to the priests. He was wise in his own estimation, but the Lord told him that he had done foolishly and that the kingdom should be taken from him.

It was many years after this that Samuel was instructed to go down to Bethlehem and anoint a king among the sons of Jesse. He was afraid that the news of his errand would get to the ears of Saul who would seek to slay him. This shows how far Saul had gone in his evil ways. Like the heathen kings of other countries, he was seeking first to glorify himself and secure his own dignity. His power was given him that he might protect the weak and ensure justice to all, but it was perverted to his own selfish purposes.

If the king did evil, his subjects would feel free to do the same, and would excuse themselves by pointing to his example, and thus encouragement be given to wrong-doing. It is easy to see how Saul's wicked course would set the fashion among the leaders of the nation, and these in turn would influence others, until all Israel would be leavened. When all the people joined in making it easy for every one else to do wrong, every one was making it hard for themselves to do right.

It may have been because the degeneracy had spread as far as Bethlehem that, when the elders of that place saw the faithful old prophet, Samuel, coming into their city, they trembled, and said: "Do you come peaceably?" (1 Samuel 16:4)

Then Samuel proclaimed a sacrifice to the Lord and called Jesse and his sons to take part. All of them came except David, who was left in the field. Perhaps he was considered by the family too young for such things, and besides, there must be something important to bring Samuel to Bethlehem and, as a matter of course, it would relate to one of them.

When Samuel saw the oldest son, Eliab, he felt at once that this was the man to anoint,--just the right age and with an aspect and bearing worthy of a monarch,--and only awaited the Lord's command. But to his surprise the Lord said, "Look not on his countenance or the height of his stature, because I have refused him." (1 Samuel 16:7)

It was not mere inches that was needed in a king. Saul had enough of these and to spare, for he was head and shoulders above everybody else. But the fault was that his heart did not match the splendid proportions of his body, and so, while man, looking on the outward appearance, was thinking what a magnificent leader the king of Israel was, the Lord was continually troubled because He had to look down on the shriveled, darkened, miserable thing that did duty for a heart in Saul. There was no pleasure at all in

contemplating it, and to make matters worse, the other hearts in Israel were getting like it, so the Lord was looking for a different kind to take its place, one like His own, and that was why Eliab would not do.

God does not care so much about our bodies being big if only our hearts are enlarged, and although we cannot by taking thought add one cubit to our stature, or the slightest increase to our own hearts, God can and will do it for those who let Him. "God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore." (1 Kings 4:29) "I will run the way of your commandments, when You shall enlarge my heart." (Psalm 119:32)

Abinadab passed next before Samuel, but he was not satisfactory, nor was any one of the seven sons who came to the sacrifice. After they had all passed by, little thinking that God was judging them, Samuel had to tell Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these." (1 Samuel 16:10)

Samuel was perplexed. The Lord had certainly sent him to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, and yet all had been refused. He wanted to know if there was not another son still. Yes, there was the youngest, minding the sheep. "Send and fetch him, [said Samuel,] for we will not sit down till he come hither." (1 Samuel 16:11)

So they fetched him, wondering what the prophet could want with him, and as he came in at the door, "ruddy, and withal of a

beautiful countenance and goodly to look to...the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he." (1 Samuel 16:12)

Then Samuel anointed him before his brethren, and he who, a few minutes before, was but a humble, unthought-of shepherd lad was now the divinely-chosen king of Israel.

It was a wonderful step and we might think him fortunate above all men, but this was nothing to a far more glorious transition which God wrought for him, and which every one of us may share as well. David tells something of it in the 40th Psalm. "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me and heard my cry, He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." (Psalm 40:1-3)

Hannah, Samuel's mother, in words which would be well known to David, had rejoiced in a similar experience. "The Lord makes poor, and makes rich: He brings low, He also lifts up. He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the needy from the dunghill, to make them sit with princes, and inherit the throne of glory." (1 Samuel 2:7-8)

So, too, can we be glad, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." (Colossians 1:12-13)

Since it was because of David's heart that he had been chosen king, let us look therein and see what we find. "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart has trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoices; and with my song will I praise Him." (Psalm 28:7)

Again, in the 40th Psalm we read: "I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8)

These words were also spoken of Christ, but since David was a man after God's own heart, we would expect to find the same thing in both. This was not because David was better than anyone else, but because he gave his heart to the Lord. He prayed, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my Rock, and my Redeemer." (Psalm 19:14) "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10)

The difference between David and Saul was that David let the Word and Spirit of God come freely into his heart and fill and control it, while Saul kept it to himself and would not let the light into it. "He says in his heart, God has forgotten: He hides His face; He will never see it." (Psalm 10:11) "Thus says the Lord: Cursed is the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord." (Jeremiah 17:5)

We might wonder why David was not immediately proclaimed king and Saul driven from the throne, instead of having to wait so many years. The question troubled David sometimes, but he tells in the 73rd Psalm how his mind was set at rest. At first "my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the arrogant, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ... Surely in vain have I cleanse my heart, and washed my hands in innocency." (Psalm 73:2-3,13)

But as David saw what would be the end of the wicked, and what their envied riches did for them, he realized that the only thing worth having was the saving blessing of God, and, having this, he was willing to do without all else that God in love kept from him. "Whom have I in heaven but You? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside You. ... It is good for me to draw near unto God: I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all your works." (Psalm 73:25,28)

The delay in bringing David to the kingdom was good in many ways. Saul had opportunities for repentance, and Israel had time to learn that it was an evil thing and bitter, that they had chosen to be ruled by man rather than God. David also gained the needed experience and was taught, by his own sufferings, how important it was that "He that rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." (2 Samuel 23:3)

Nor did the advantage end there. The experiences then gained have passed down to succeeding ages a rich legacy of understanding of the character of God. "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for

ever: with my mouth will I make known your faithfulness to all generations." (Psalm 89:1)--Present Truth, May 12, 1898--1 Samuel 16

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 9

Motives

This is a subject which cannot be too carefully considered in connection with our Christian experience. Upon the character of our motives depends the result of the efforts put forth in the Christian life. Motives lie back of all deeds, and are the true index of the condition of the heart. And they are often a source of deception, not only to the friends and neighbors of an individual, but also to the individual himself.

God reads the motives of every heart, and by them measures the standing of each individual. When the prophet Samuel came to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king, and looked upon Eliab, the first-born, he said: "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:6-7)

Men may deceive those around them by their outward appearance and life, and may even thereby deceive himself; but no one can in the slightest degree deceive God. And upon many a one who presents himself, as did Eliab, a confident candidate for Divine honor, God looked as He did upon the firstborn son of Jesse, and unheard by man repeats the sentence of condemnation.

Eliab was doubtless self-deceived; but in this respect he does not stand apart from the generality of mankind, the victim of a strange misfortune, for it is the natural condition of every man to be ignorant of the evil that is within him. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9)

Man cannot in his own wisdom know his heart, and the hidden motives that lie within it. God only can read the heart of man, and only upon the revelation made to him by God can man depend for a correct knowledge of what he is. "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." (Jeremiah 17:10)

Not all motives that prompt the performance of religious deeds are acceptable in the sight of God. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11:6) and, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Romans 14:23)

But much that passes for faith is not true faith. We are told what is the characteristic of true faith: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love." (Galatians 5:6)

This is the motive which God approves, and which makes a deed acceptable to Him. Faith which works by love is that which avails in the service of God. All effort which proceeds from any other motive is thrown away. Without love it is equally "impossible

to please God," (Hebrews 11:6) for love is greater than faith. "Now abides faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

And charity and love by which faith works, are one and the same thing. In the opening words of this 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, the effect of trying to serve God without charity (or love) and the possibility of deception upon this point, are strikingly set forth. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profits me nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

Can a man, then, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and give his body to be burned, and yet not have charity? Evidently, he can; or Paul would not have stated it as he did. The misguided fanatic or the deluded enthusiastic may outwardly go to the very extreme of self-denying labor for God, and yet be without that motive of love which would render his service acceptable. That love is the love of God, the love that comes from and has its origin in Him, and contains no human element in its composition. It is a love in which self is entirely lost. "Not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that

day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:21-23)

These have not been wanting in zeal, and outwardly they have made a very good showing in all respects, having "many wonderful works" to their credit, which have no doubt brought them great admiration and reverence from their fellow-men. But there was something wrong with their hearts. The right motive was not there,-- the faith working by love, which takes no account of self. Their plea gave evidence of this fact. "Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? have we not cast out devils? have we not done many wonderful works?" (Matthew 7:22)

"We" is not the password into the gates of heaven; and "our wonderful works" are not good currency at the bank of Heaven, but only the basest counterfeit.

In that day, the righteous will base no claim upon themselves or anything they have done, or upon the great things accomplished by the religious organizations with which they have been connected. One thing alone will avail the candidate for a position at the right hand of God,--Jesus Christ and His righteousness, received and held by the faith which works by love. "Charity never fails." (1 Corinthians 13:8)

It will continue as long as God continues; for God himself is love. When this love is in the heart God is in the heart, and eternal life can never be separated from Him. This is the one acceptable motive in all work that is done for His name.--Present Truth, September 21, 1893--1 Samuel 16:6-7

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 10

The Champion of Israel

Not long after Samuel's visit to Bethlehem another messenger arrived for David, this time from the King. Saul was in distress and needed help. An evil spirit from the Lord was troubling him.

At his anointing the Spirit of God had come upon Saul, changing him into another man. Under its influence his way had been divinely directed, and so long as he yielded to it, his steps were ordered by the Lord. But he chose his own way, refusing counsel, and so the Spirit of the Lord was driven from him. Without it he was like a ship without a rudder, for "it is not in man that walks to direct his steps," (Jeremiah 10:23) and would certainly make shipwreck of himself and the nation committed to his care.

To prevent this it was necessary that he should be deprived of his influence to some extent. The Lord did not leave him entirely alone, for that would have involved him in immediate ruin, but sent a spirit of evil, or sadness, upon him. Remorse and terror filled his mind, unfitting him for duty, and his state of mind soon became known among his servants.

They counseled him to send for a skillful player on the harp, who should dispel with cheering music his fits of melancholy. David's name was recommended before him as of one "cunning in playing, ... and a comely person," (1 Samuel 16:18) and Saul,

hoping for relief, "sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David your son, which is with the sheep." (1 Samuel 16:19)

So David passed from the cottage at Bethlehem to the court of the king at Gibeah. The lessons learned in communion with the God of nature, the views of His power manifested in the works of His hands, and the experience of His love in the daily round of shepherd life, had given David the needed preparation for his new duties.

His simple faith and love and trust in God would form just the influence that Saul needed to be brought in contact with. The stricken heart of the afflicted king found comfort in David's ministrations, "and he loved him greatly. ... So Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." (1 Samuel 16:21,23)

Unhappily for him, the indecision which appeared in all his life kept him from retaining the blessing now granted.

Although armor-bearer to Saul, David still went to and fro between Bethlehem and the king's house, keeping the sheep in the intervals of his attendance on Saul. During one of his visits home, Israel was again invaded by the Philistines, and the forces of Israel met them a few miles from the border which separated the two countries. At his father's request, David set out for the camp, some fifteen miles distant, bearing provisions for his three oldest brothers, who were among the soldiers of Saul.

While David conversed with his brethren on the field of battle, a strange, imposing figure stalked into the open space between the two armies, and defied Israel to produce a man who could stand before him in single combat. His appearance struck terror to the hearts of Israel, and as he thundered out his challenge they fled before him.

Truly it needed a brave man to face this giant. Standing nearly twelve feet high, with a coat of mail that weighed a hundred weight and a half, and armed with an enormous spear, the iron head of which alone weighed twenty pounds, there seem but little hope of finding a champion bold enough to meet him.

Yet greater things than this had been done in the history of Israel, many a time. It was only one generation ago that the ark of God, captive and undefended by human strength, had gone through the cities of the Philistines like a destroying army, compelling reverence at every stage, and finally returning in acknowledged triumph to its own country; its sole defense being that it bore the name of the Lord.

The Israelites seemed to have forgotten, so it was no wonder that the Philistines failed to remember, that the name of the Lord was a strong tower, (Proverbs 18:10) for all who put their trust in Him. (1 Chronicles 5:20) That was why one army gloried in the confidence which Goliath inspired in them, while the other, looking at his bulk, groaned in despair.

One person alone, probably the youngest and weakest in all the camp, remembered that the battle is the Lord's, and that His arm is not grown feeble. (Isaiah 59:1) David came before Saul and announced his intention of going out against the Philistine. It was Saul's place to go, as leader of the people, but his trust was in his own strength, and now, in that hour of need, it failed him.

He attempted to set before David the perils of his undertaking, but David was not going in his own strength, and felt no doubt as to the issue of the conflict. Refusing Saul's armor, he took his sling and five smooth stones out of the brook and drew near to meet the Philistine. Goliath seemed disgusted at the insolence of a mere youth in coming out to fight with himself, and boasted loudly of what he would do to his adversary, but David declared that: "All this assembly shall know that the Lord saves not with the sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands." (1 Samuel 17:47)

Said he: "You come to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts." (1 Samuel 17:45)

It was a fearfully unequal contest. On one side was a man, bigger and stronger than all others; on the other the great and powerful Creator of heaven and earth, before whom all the nations are as a drop of a bucket. He might have gone forth against Goliath in terrible majesty, shaking the earth with thunder and smiting His antagonist with the lightning, but, being all-powerful, He was able

to accomplish just as much with a smooth stone in the hand of a youth.

There was no reason why Saul, or anyone else in the army, should not have been used by the Lord to lay low the pride of the Philistines, except that they all had too much of it in their own hearts. They thought so much of themselves that the Lord was overlooked, and seemed too far off for any practical purpose. Yet God had called them that they should bear His name, and be His representatives, and in His name, they might have done what David did.

This experience is written for our learning that we may know in what our strength consists, and that we should learn not to fear difficulties or temptations on account of their great size and seeming strength. Our victory or defeat will depend entirely on whether we meet the enemy in the name of the Lord. Christ says: "Whatsoever you shall ask in my name that will I do." (John 14:13)

It was now apparent to all Israel that David was most suited to be their leader. In allowing another, young and inexperienced, to take the place of danger as the champion of Israel, Saul had confessed himself unfit for the post. David was no better in himself than anyone else, as he sadly proved in after years, but while he allowed God to work His will through him, great good would come to others thereby.

God alone could help the people, and only as David revealed God, would his life and reign be a blessing. He realized this when he wrote the 44th Psalm: "You are my King, O God: command deliverance for Jacob. Through You will we push down our adversaries; through your name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But You have saved us from our adversaries, and have put them to shame that hate us. In God have we made our boast all the day long, and we will give thanks unto your name for ever." (Psalm 44:4-8)--Present Truth, May 26, 1898--1 Samuel 16 & 17

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 11

Passing the Love of Women

We would naturally expect that a man after God's own heart would reveal in his life something of the love and tenderness which dwells in the Father's heart, and there was that in David which inspired strong affection in those who knew him. Even Saul "loved him greatly." (1 Samuel 16:21)

Michal, Saul's daughter, bestowed her affections on him, and of Jonathan, Saul's eldest son, it is written that he loved David as his own soul. "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." (1 Samuel 18:1)

The first time that David and Jonathan are mentioned together was after the return of the former from the slaying of Goliath. From that time Saul would no more allow David to return to his home at Bethlehem, but set him over the men of war. "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant ... And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." (1 Samuel 18:3-4)

There was much in common between the two friends. The same spirit of fearless trust in God which had made David bold to take up the challenge of Goliath was likewise strong in Jonathan. Accompanied only by his armor-bearer he had once attacked a

garrison of the Philistines, and the Lord had delivered them into his hand. Saul with six hundred men had not ventured to attack the enemy, but Jonathan said: "It may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few. ... So the Lord saved Israel that day." (1 Samuel 14:6,23)

Jonathan's disposition was a noble one. Even when he learned that the throne which should come to him, as Saul's eldest son, was promised to David, it did not lessen his love. The faith, by which he was victorious over the Philistines, proved him a true child of Abraham, and like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he desired "a better country, that is, a heavenly." (Hebrews 11:16)

His father sought the honor that comes from men only; and could not endure to hear the praises of David sounded louder than his own, or the thought that his kingdom was to be given to another better than he. But Jonathan, in generous, self-forgetful love, could strip off his own princely arms and raiment, and put them upon his friend. One who looks for an everlasting dominion, and who knows that God holds for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," (2 Corinthians 4:17) will not feel hurt and rebellious if others receive a larger portion of earthly honor than falls to himself. It may be that much of the good seen in David's after life was due to the influence of Jonathan's example.

The time soon came when Saul tried to take David's life, and spoke to his son about it, expecting his cooperation in the attempt but instead Jonathan warned David of the danger and succeeded for

awhile in turning Saul from his evil purpose. Jonathan pleaded with his father not to sin against David, "because he has not sinned against you ... For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel: you saw it, and did rejoice: wherefore then will you sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?" (1 Samuel 19:4-5)

Although quieted for awhile Saul's jealous, unreasoning anger was again raised against David, and this time he concealed his intentions from Jonathan. But David learned of his peril and, meeting Jonathan, told him what Saul was doing. Jonathan would not believe that his father could be so treacherous, and it was not until Saul, in his anger at David's escape, cast his javelin at his son, that Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. He met with his friend for the last time, so far as we have any record, and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and you, and between my seed and your seed for ever." (1 Samuel 20:41-42)

So they parted, Jonathan returning to the city, David going forth to seek a refuge from the hatred of the king.

The next mention of Jonathan tells of his death on the battlefield at Gilboa, together with two of his brothers and his father. We may think it sad that Jonathan's life should not have been set in happier times, and that the closing years should have been

embittered by his father's enmity against his dearest friend, but we may hope with confidence that he had learned like David the lesson of trust in God. "Commit your way unto the Lord. Trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass." (Psalm 37:5)

Even if the evil seemed to triumph, he knew the time was coming when "the meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:11)

When David learned of the death of Jonathan he mourned greatly, saying: "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. ... I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant have you been unto me: your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." (2 Samuel 1:23,26)

The Love of Christ

Great, however, as was the love of Jonathan for David, it was but a feeble representation of that which Christ bestows on us. So closely has He knit His soul with ours that "neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

He puts upon us His own raiment, "for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness." (Isaiah 61:10)

He equips us with His own weapons and armor, bidding us, "Put on the whole armor of God, ... And take ... the sword of the Spirit." (Ephesians 6:11,17)

He is the Son of a King and heir to the throne of the universe, but He left everything and "became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich," (2 Corinthians 8:9) and He calls whosoever will (Revelation 22:17) to sit down with Him on His throne. (Revelation 3:21) Truly, His love to us is wonderful, passing the love of women. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget you. Behold, I have graven you upon the palms of my hands." (Isaiah 49:15-16) "I have loved you with an everlasting love." (Jeremiah 31:3) "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you." (John 15:9)

Indeed, "to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, [is to] be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:19)

Thou didst leave Thy throne
And Thy kingly crown
When Thou camest to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home
Was there found no room

For Thy holy nativity.

Thou camest, O Lord,
With the living Word,
That should set Thy people free;
But with mocking scorn,
And with crown of thorn,
They bore Thee to Calvary.

Oh, come to my heart, Lord Jesus!
Thy cross is my only plea;
Oh, come to my heart, Lord Jesus, come!
There is room in my heart for Thee.

--Emily E. S. Elliott, Hymn: Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne,
1864.

--Present Truth, June 23, 1898--1 Samuel 16 to 20

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 12

After My Own Heart

Sometimes scoffers quote the words of the Lord, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart," (Acts 13:22) in connection with David's great sin, in order to show that the God of the Bible is not the God of truth and righteousness, forgetting or not knowing that the words were spoken long before that event, with reference to David's general disposition, and that the sin of David was signally rebuked by the Lord, and acknowledged by David.

Let us, with that same statement about David in mind, study a few points in his character, in order that we may see with what sort of disposition God is pleased. In so doing we shall get profit to ourselves.

A King Tending Sheep

In the 16th chapter of 1 Samuel we have the account of the first public appearance of David. The prophet Samuel had been directed by the Lord to go and anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king in the place of Saul, whom He had rejected. Seven sons of Jesse passed before the prophet, but the Lord's choice was not among them. "And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all your children? And he said, There remains yet the youngest, and, behold, he keeps the sheep." (1 Samuel 16:11)

At Samuel's order, he was sent for, and as soon as he appeared, the Lord said: "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." (1 Samuel 16:12)

Immediately, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David." (1 Samuel 16:13)

What did David do then? Did he assume a lordly air, and demand to be treated as a king? Did he at once place himself before the public, proclaiming the fact that the Lord had chosen him king, and attempt to seize the authority, or demand at least to be consulted in regard to public affairs? Nothing of the kind; he made no claim whatever in his own behalf, simply because the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. If he had put himself forward, he would have shown himself unfit to lead the Lord's people.

Read onward in the chapter, and you will find that some time afterwards a musician was needed to play before Saul. Then someone recommended the son of Jesse, and Saul sent messengers, saying: "Send me David your son, which is with the sheep." (1 Samuel 16:19)

So we see that David had returned to his sheep after he was anointed king, as though nothing had happened. An anointed king keeping sheep! How natural it would have been to persuade himself that he was wasting his talents, and that it was his duty to be leading men instead of sheep. But he did nothing of the kind, because he was a man according to God's heart, and the Lord is "meek and lowly in heart." (Matthew 11:29)

Here we have a sample of the kind of men whom God uses in His work.

A King at Service

"And David came to Saul, and stood before him; and he loved him greatly; and he became his armor-bearer." (1 Samuel 16:21)

At last David is at court. It looks as though there was now more prospect that he might fill the position for which he had been anointed, than when he was tending sheep. But still he is only an armor-bearer, a servant. Now we shall expect to see him begin to work himself forward and push his claims to the allegiance of the people. Ah, that's because we don't know the Lord. David was a man according to God's own heart, and God's heart is love, and love "vaunts not itself, and "seeks not her own." (1 Corinthians 13:5)

Instead of seizing upon the throne, which was his by Divine right, "David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem." (1 Samuel 17:15)

The special object for which he was called to Saul seems to have been accomplished, and the anointed king returned contentedly to his father's sheep in the wilderness.

But he did not stay there. There was war, and three of his brothers were in Saul's army. The brothers, who had been passed by

in the choice of a king, were in the army, where there was some chance of distinguishing themselves and becoming known, while David, the one chosen and anointed, was an unknown shepherd boy. At last he also was sent to the army, but only as a messenger to carry provisions, and to come again. "And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for your brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to your brethren; And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how your brethren fare, and take their pledge." (1 Samuel 17:17-18)

Suppose that David had proudly refused to do such menial service. Why should he,--the anointed king,--act as an errand boy? Thousands of people with far less ability than he, and having no such evidence as he had that the Lord has called them to the work, have refused to do humble work that they thought was beneath them, and have complained bitterly that they were not elevated to the position to which they felt sure that God had called them. But then they were not chosen ones, according to God's heart.

If David had refused to perform that humble task, he would have missed the opportunity of doing a thing which brought his name before all Israel, and fastened the eyes of the nation upon him. We often miss a high place, because we think ourselves already too high to occupy a low place.

Goliath was slain, and David was in high favor. "And Saul took him that day, and would let him no more go home to his father's house. ... And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was

accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants." (1 Samuel 18:2,5)

Here at last was a position more in keeping with his real calling; nevertheless he was only a servant. But, "Favor is deceitful," (Proverbs 31:30) and Saul's regard for David soon cooled. The people's regard for David aroused Saul's jealousy, and so, "Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand." (1 Samuel 18:13)

Although called upon to step down to a lower position than he had occupied, there was no complaint; but: "David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him." (1 Samuel 18:14)

That was why David behaved so wisely; for Christ, when He was in the form of God, "counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." (Philippians 2:6-7,RV)

By his willingness to serve, David was demonstrating his fitness to reign.

A King in Hiding

Finally David was compelled to flee for his life from the presence of Saul. But why did he submit to such injustice? Why did he not stand his ground, and claim his rights? The throne was his by

right, and the people respected and loved him. Why did he not assert his right to the throne, rally the people around him, and take possession of the place to which God had anointed him? The reason why is that: "God was with him," (1 Samuel 18:14) and he was "a man after God's heart." (1 Samuel 13:14)

Christ was the manifestation of God to men, and He, "when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judges righteously." (1 Peter 2:23)

Thus did David. Twice Saul was completely within his power, yet no advantage did he take of it. It was not because David restrained himself, that he did not kill Saul, but because he had no desire to do so. This is shown by the fact that when at one time he had cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, his heart smote him even for that. (1 Samuel 24:5) The Lord had anointed David to be king, and David was determined to leave it wholly with the Lord to bring him to the throne.

It is easy for men to say that their case is in the Lord's hands, and at the same time to persuade themselves that God has left all the details to them. The pagan idea that: "God helps those who help themselves," has a large place in the creed of many Christians. So the friends of David tried to persuade him. When Saul was in the cave where David was, they said: "Behold, the day of which the Lord said unto you, Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your

hand, that you may do to him as it shall seem good unto you." (1 Samuel 24:4)

But David was not to be persuaded to take the Lord's work out of His hands. God had said that David should be king, and it was the Lord's business to perform His own promise.

On another occasion David found Saul asleep. "Then said Abishai to David, God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day; now therefore let me smite him, I pray you, and with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time." (1 Samuel 26:8)

How many of us are there who could have resisted so specious an argument? How natural it would be to persuade ourselves that in refusing to act we should be neglecting the clearly-indicated will of God. But David knew the Lord better than that. He said: "As the Lord lives, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed." (1 Samuel 26:10-11) "Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest." (Hebrews 5:5) [He] made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant,... And ... humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him." (Philippians 2:7-9)

He was the One in whom God was well pleased, and it was because of the same spirit in David that God exalted him.

Let us not forget that no one but a learner is fit to teach, and no one who is not always willing to serve can ever reign with the Lord. God calls us all to a place in His work; but it is that we may be instruments in His hands, and not He an instrument in our hands. There can be no real advancement except directly from God; for: "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." (Matthew 23:12)--Present Truth, October 17, 1895--1 Samuel 16 to 26

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 13

Saul's Armor

"And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them." (1 Samuel 17:39)

Saul was a large man, and his armor had been fitted to him, so that he could use it. David was young and inexperienced in army drill. He could not handle a sword nor use a shield; and the weighty helmet and coat of mail were hindrances to him. He may have looked soldier-like in them; and had there been no foes to fight, he might have amused his friends by parading up and down through the camp with Saul's armor on.

But David realized that he was called of God to that conflict, and that there was earnest work to do. He that had called him had given him skill with the sling and the smooth pebbles from the brook. He needed no shield; for the Lord God was his shield. He needed no sword; for he would not come within sword's distance of Goliath until the giant lay at his feet. Then a sword was furnished with which to sever the giant's head from his body. David was to go out in the strength of the Lord, not in the wisdom and power of military men. He went that way and was victorious.

There are too many efforts made against sin, with another's armor. If a man gains a wonderful victory in the conflict with sin, others run after him, to borrow his armor, so they may get a similar

victory. Many have never put on any armor, because they are not yet satisfied in their own minds after what fashion to make it. They are watching their brethren that are having some success, to see which one will be the most victorious. They never think of the experience that God has given them with the sling and the pebbles from the brook. While waiting to be fitted with another's armor, they are losing the skill God has given them.

If the Christian that has been trying to imitate the Keswick movement, the Salvation Army movement, or aspiring to be a Moody, a Meyer, or some other successful laborer, would go to the Lord for direction, as did Daniel, he would be able to do more with his little sling than with all the methods of the best men on earth. A man's methods are never considered of any special value until he has made them work successfully. Often it is not a man's methods that give him success, but the power of God that enables the man to produce successful methods. Those who study that man's methods, and do not know his power, fail to realize satisfactory results.-- Advent Review, August 23, 1898--1 Samuel 17:39-51

A.T. Jones

Chapter 14

The Fruit of Offended Dignity

Every Bible reader is familiar with the story of the choosing of Saul as king over Israel, and of his fall and sad end. From a modest, gentle youth, who would allow no harm to be done to those who had mocked at his being chosen king, he degenerated into a hard, cruel, vindictive man, who had no scruples as to the means he used to seek to murder one whom he unjustly regarded as his enemy.

Not a man can be found to offer any apology for his persistent efforts to take David's life. Not only did he seek David's life, but his causeless hatred of David was so great that he slew those who even unconsciously aided David to escape from him, as well as those who worked in any way connected with them. The spirit of murder possessed him. Eighty-five innocent and defenseless priests, with their families, were slaughtered by Saul at one time, because one of their number had been hospitable to David.

What was the cause of this? What had he done to Saul, that so roused his enmity? Nothing whatever; he had been Saul's faithful servant, and Saul had loved him for his good qualities. One little thing led to this train of murders. When Saul and David were returning after David had slain Goliath, the women came out with instruments of music to celebrate the victory, and sang, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." (1 Samuel 18:7)

That was enough; envy and jealousy took possession of Saul; "And Saul eyed David from that day and forward." (1 Samuel 18:9)

Hear what he said: "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands." (1 Samuel 18:8)

Well, what of it? No fact was altered by what they said. David himself had laid no claim to any honor. If Saul had been more valorous than David, the song of a few women would not affect the fact; and if he had not, then the envy was so much the more causeless.

But self-love is an extremely sensitive plant. We naturally have an exaggerated sense of our own ability or importance. Then we are anxious to have others think better of us than we know ourselves to be; and if they should by any chance estimate us below our real value, that is fatal.

How often we see Saul's pettishness duplicated. One person is offended because another is preferred before him. Somebody is given a position which he thinks he ought to occupy. "I'm as good as he is," or, "I'm not treated fairly," is said or thought, and bitter feeling is cherished against the favored one, who may be entirely innocent of any self-seeking.

Not just as surely as Saul sought to kill David, and murdered many innocent people in his mad attempt, just so surely is there

murder in every man's heart when he becomes soured because somebody else is honored, and when he has a feeling of envy against one who occupies a place which he thinks he himself ought to have. Hear what the Word says: "If you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." (James 3:14-16)

There we have the truth of the matter. The man whose feelings are ruffled because he is named second, or has to accept an inferior place, has in his heart not only murder, but "every evil work." And withal there is some discontent and dissatisfaction that does not cease even when the coveted honor is gained. Only wisdom's ways are pleasantness; (Proverbs 3:17) and the word of wisdom is: "Be kindly affectioned to one another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." (Romans 12:10)--Signs of the Times, November 23, 1888--Notes on the International Lesson, December 2--Judges 2:7-23

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 15

How To Prosper

"And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him." (1 Samuel 18:14)

We read of David, while at the court of Saul, that he "behaved himself wisely in all his ways," or, as a marginal reading expresses it, "he prospered." This was noticed by those with whom he associated, "and he was accepted in the sight of all the people." (1 Samuel 18:5)

If one would prosper he must behave wisely, but that is what people find it so difficult to do. We sometimes think that if we had only received a better education, or a superior training, or if our surroundings were not so unfavorable, we would not get along so badly as we do. But remember that David had not been brought up among soldiers and statesmen. His training had been among the sheep, and it was a great change to be set over men of war; yet even with his youth and inexperience, "David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul: so that his name was much set by." (1 Samuel 18:30) "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" (Psalm 119:9)

No doubt this question came to David as he found himself surrounded with new and strong temptations, but he had learned the answer: "by taking heed thereto according to your Word. ... Your

Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You."
(Psalm 119:9,11)

It was because David listened to the Word of God, and meditated upon it, that he did wisely and prospered so greatly. Perhaps he was thinking of his experience in Saul's house, among careless and wicked companions, and how God gave him prosperity, when he wrote the 1st Psalm. "Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the wicked,

Nor stands in the way of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; And in His law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatsoever he does shall prosper. The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away." (Psalm 1:1-4)

Moses had told Israel, hundreds of years before, that if they would keep the commandments of the Lord, the nations around them would say: "Surely this great nation is a wise, and understanding people." (Deuteronomy 4:6)

There is a reason why men prosper when they receive the Word of God. The Word itself is bound to prosper. The Lord says of His Word that goes forth out of His mouth, "it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11)

So that when we receive the Word of God into our own hearts, it will prosper there. It is sure to prosper wherever it is, and if we will not have it, it will prosper in others who will receive it. That is why God sends His Word to us, that it may prosper in us, and thus we will prosper too. To Joshua the Lord said: "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success." (Joshua 1:8)

When David's time came to die, he charged Solomon his son to walk in God's ways, to keep His commandments, "that you may prosper in all that you do, and wherever you turn yourself." (1 Kings 2:3)

Many of the kings of Israel and Judah did not walk in the way of the Lord, and none of them prospered, but of King Hezekiah it is written that "He clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him; and he prospered wherever he went forth." (2 Kings 18:6-7)

Christ himself testified: "I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart;" (Psalm 40:8) and so, of Him it is written: "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." (Isaiah 53:10) "And in your majesty ride on prosperously, Because of truth and meekness and righteousness. ... You have loved righteousness

and hated wickedness: Therefore God, your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness above your fellows." (Psalm 45:4,7)

God gives men prosperity in His Word. If His Word dwells in us richly, it will be in all wisdom, (Colossians 3:16) and we shall do wisely and prosper. We shall even have the wisdom and prosperity of God, which is more than mind can conceive. "Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper ... and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness." (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

In Christ we are made not only righteous, but wise and prosperous. "But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30)

Men sometimes think that they are more likely to prosper in this life by not paying any heed to the Word of God. Very likely when Saul was hunting David up and down the country, to take his life, others thought that it was Saul who was prospering and not David, "and Saul became David's enemy continually." (1 Samuel 18:29)

Let us lay hold of God's Word and trust only in that for wisdom and prosperity. "Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall make your righteousness to go forth as the light, and your judgment as the

noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him: fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass. Fret not yourself, it tends only to evil-doing. ... For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the land; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:4-8,10-11,RV)--Present Truth, June 30, 1898--1 Samuel 18:5-30

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 16

The Sure Mercies of David

"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever, with my mouth will I make known your faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; your faithfulness shall You establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Your seed will I establish for ever, and build up your throne to all generations."
(Psalm 89:1-4)

This covenant with David was made after he became king, as we learn from the 7th chapter of 2 Samuel; but it was in effect made long before.

When David was yet a shepherd lad, the Lord sent Samuel to anoint him king over Israel. The anointing was accomplished, and David was the chosen king. Yet for a long time there was no visible evidence of it. Instead of donning royal robes and taking his place at the head of the people, he retained his shepherd's frock and staff, and continued at the head of his father's flock.

Then came the time when he was called to court, but only as the servant of the king. But his position was far from enviable. Not only was he a servant, but he was hated, and his life was in constant danger. So this anointed king was obliged to flee for his life, and hide with a few friends in the caves of the mountains, living as best

he could. The king with all his army hunted him like a partridge, so that he could not remain long in any place, but must continually flee, yet he did not lose courage.

A study of David's confidence in God during these wanderings is a most profitable employment. Let us note two or three instances.

The Slaughter of the Priests

Once in his flight from the wrath of Saul, who was bent on taking his life, David came to the high priest at Nob, and received food. One of Saul's ruffians, Doeg the Edomite was present, and went and told Saul that Ahimelech the high priest had inquired of the Lord for David, and had given him bread and the sword of Goliath.

This was enough for the mad monarch. He at once called to him the high priest, and all the priests that were with him, the entire family of priests, and although they were innocent of the slightest disloyalty, he ordered them, eighty-five in all, to be slaughtered simply because one of them had performed a kindness to David. This shows the bitterness of Saul's rage against David. "And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. And Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of your father's

house. Abide with me, fear not: for he that seeks my life seeks your life: but with me you shall be in safeguard." (1 Samuel 22:20-23)

Such language would have been vain presumption if it had not been for the promise of God. As it was, it showed sublime confidence. David, an outlaw, who was so hated that not only those who showed him a kindness, but even the relatives of such ones, were ruthlessly slain, said to a refugee, "Abide with us, fear not; the same one is seeking the lives of us both; but you are safe with me."

David in the Wilderness of Ziph

At another time, David in his flight from Saul took refuge in a cave in the wilderness of Ziph. But the Ziphites were treacherous, and, desiring to curry favor with Saul, they went to him, and betrayed David's hiding-place. Not only did they tell Saul where David was, but they added: "Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand." (1 Samuel 23:20)

This pleased Saul wonderfully, but as he had often failed to seize David, just when he thought he had him fast, he determined not to be foiled this time. So he sent the Ziphites back with instructions to take particular note of all David's hiding-places, and come again with information, and then, said he: "I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah." (1 Samuel 23:23)

This plan was carried out, and Saul and his men went to the place where David was, and "Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them." (1 Samuel 23:26)

Just then, however, a messenger came to tell Saul that the Philistines had invaded the land, and so he was compelled to turn back, just as David seemed to be in his grasp. Thus the Lord delivered David; but before this deliverance appeared, just when the men of Ziph were leading Saul and his force to his hiding-place, when it seemed as though escape was impossible, David took his harp and sang this song of trust: "To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Does not David hide himself with us? Save me, O God, by your name, and judge me by your strength. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Behold, God is my helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. He shall reward evil unto my enemies: cut them off in your truth. I will freely sacrifice unto You: I will praise your name, O Lord; for it is good. For He has delivered me out of all trouble: my eye has seen His desire upon my enemies." (Psalm 54:1-7)

Note that David did not say: "The Lord will deliver me," but, "The Lord has delivered me."

How was that, since he was in a great danger at the time that the psalm was composed? Why, the Lord had done it by His

promise. The promise to David was just the same to him as though he had already seen the deliverance. Yea, he had seen it, since faith makes one see as present reality the things that are yet to come.

David Fleeing from Absalom

We pass by many interesting incidents, and come to the time when David had been on the throne a long time, and his own son had rebelled against him. In the basest manner Absalom had treacherously turned the hearts of the people from David, and now had only one desire, and that was to take his father's life.

Taken wholly by surprise by the strong conspiracy that had secretly been formed against him, David was forced to flee from his palace, with but a few attendants. And so seemingly hopeless was his case that a miserable creature dared to curse him to his face, and throw stones at him, declaring that God was now punishing him for his sins as he deserved. While thus an outcast, he sang again, as we read in the 3rd Psalm: "A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son. Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, there is no help for him in God. But You, O Lord, are a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and He heard me out of His holy hill. I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about. Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for You have smitten all my enemies upon the cheek bone; You have broken the

teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongs unto the Lord; your blessing is upon your people." (Psalm 3:1-8)

David was not saved nor did he trust in God because of his own goodness, but because of God's mercy. David was a sinful man, as are all men; but his heart was tender, he acknowledged his sinfulness and God's righteousness, and believed God's promise. It is natural for men to think that God is unrighteous because they are; and the more they know themselves to be unrighteous, the more they think God to be the same. Thus it is: It is most common for one to say: "I am so great a sinner, I dare not believe that God forgives my sins."

But God has declared that His righteousness consists in the forgiveness of sins. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Therefore to say or to think that God cannot or will not forgive sins, is to charge Him with being unrighteous. Thus it is that sinners often make God out to be as bad as they are.

Not so with David; sinful as he was, he would insist that God was nevertheless righteous and faithful. God had promised him that he should be king, and not only that, but that his throne should stand for ever. But this promise was through Christ, for the throne of David was the throne of the Lord: "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for

all that is in the heaven and in the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head above all." (1 Chronicles 29:11)

And the promise that he should sit on the throne and that it should be established for ever, was the promise of everlasting righteousness which God would freely give him through Christ. "Your people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." (Isaiah 60:21)

So David's confidence was in God's promise. God had said that he should be king, and no man or men could frustrate God's purpose. It was not for David's sake but for the Lord's own sake, to vindicate His kindness and faithfulness, that God preserved David, and in this David was confident.

The Same Fulfilled unto Us

"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus again." (Acts 13:32-33)

To everyone the call is sent: "Come to the waters! And he that has no money, come, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isaiah 55:1)

The promise is: "To him that overcomes, will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." (Revelation 3:21)

Yea, He has "loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, And has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." (Revelation 1:5-6) "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

And the "Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13) is the anointing oil that assures us of this. Therefore the Lord says: "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." (Isaiah 55:3)

As surely as David was delivered from his enemies, because God had made him a promise, just so surely shall we be delivered, "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Hebrews 3:6)

Therefore let us sing: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He has visited and redeemed His people, And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our

fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; The oath which He swore to our father Abraham, That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." (Luke 1:68-75)--Present Truth, December 30, 1897--Original title: The Throne of David. The Sure Mercies of David.--1 Samuel 22, 23

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 17

Ancient Spiritualism

1. When on a certain occasion the Philistine host came against Israel, how was King Saul affected? "And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled." (1 Samuel 28:4-5)

2. To whom did he seek for guidance? "Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray you, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto you." (1 Samuel 28:7-8)

3. How had Saul previously treated such people? "And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. ... And the woman said unto him, Behold, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?" (1 Samuel 28:3,9)

4. By what authority had he done so? "You shall not suffer a witch to live." (Exodus 22:18) "A man also or woman that has a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them." (Leviticus 20:27)

5. Why had the Lord given such instruction concerning the diviners, consultants of familiar spirits, etc.? "There shall not be found among you anyone that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consultant with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord your God does drive them out from before you." (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

6. With what people were such abominations common? "When you are come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. ... For these nations, which you shall possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for you, the Lord your God has not suffered you so to do." (Deuteronomy 18:9,14)

7. What had the Lord said it would be the result to those who should seek after such persons? "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God." (Leviticus 19:31)

8. Since Saul had obeyed the Lord in putting away those who had familiar spirits, why did he now consult one? "And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." (1 Samuel 28:6)

9. When he went, for whom did he ask? "Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto you? And he said, Bring me up Samuel." (1 Samuel 28:11)

10. Why did he not go directly to Samuel? "Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city." (1 Samuel 28:3)

11. What can you say concerning the part which the dead are able to act in earthly affairs? "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6)

12. Give other Scripture testimony concerning the state of the dead.

13. Then could it indeed have been Samuel himself who carried on the subsequent conversation with Saul?

14. Was Saul at this time in favor with the Lord? "And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." (1 Samuel 28:6)

15. Why had the Lord rejected Saul? "And Samuel said, Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king. (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

16. When people reject the word of the Lord, what are they left to believe? "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12)

17. Then since Saul had rejected the word of the Lord, what must his supposed interview with Samuel have been?

18. Who is the author of the illusions and lies? "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44)

19. Whom did he then worship? "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils." (1 Corinthians 10:20)

20. When the Israelites turned from the Lord, whom did they worship? "They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not." (Deuteronomy 32:16-17)

21. Then what sort of a spirit was it which Saul consulted?

22. How is the devil able to make himself appear? "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14)

23. If he can appear as an angel light, would it not be easy for him to assume the appearance of persons who have died?

24. How could Saul have kept from being deceived?

Note:

The lesson this week is based on the account of Saul's visit to the witch of Endor, recorded in the 1 Samuel 28. In order to keep the connection, the entire chapter should be carefully read. It may not be amiss to say that many good people suppose that Samuel did really

come and talk with Saul, and thus they are strengthened in their belief of the conscious existence of the dead. We shall follow the subject in the order of the questions in the lesson, and see what we find.

The scene opens with the Philistine host prepared to fight against the Israelites. So great was the number of the Philistines, as compared with that of the Israelites, that Saul was very much alarmed. As it is forcibly expressed in the text: "His heart greatly trembled." (1 Samuel 28:5)

When David was surrounded by enemies, he said to the Lord, in his prayer: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in You." (Psalm 56:3)

But Saul was in a pitiable condition, for when he would seek the Lord, he received no answer. In his extremity he had his servants find a woman that had a familiar spirit, and, disguising himself, he went to her for information. It was necessary for him to disguise himself, else he could not have gained admittance to the witch's abode; for in time past, "Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land." (1 Samuel 28:3)

This was in accordance with the command of God, and does not mean simply banishment, but death. Thus: "You shall not suffer a witch to live." (Exodus 22:18) "A man also or woman that has a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard shall surely be put to death." (Leviticus 20:27)

In Deuteronomy 18:9-12 we learn that witchcraft, and consulting with familiar spirits, was very common among the heathen that inhabited Canaan and before it was conquered by the Israelites. Under direction from the Lord, Moses said to Israel: "When you are come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord your God does drive them out from before you." (Deuteronomy 18:9-12)

The woman at Endor was one who had, by some means, escaped the proscription.

In order to a perfect understanding of this incident, it is very necessary to know the relation that existed between Saul and the Lord. Why would not the Lord listen to Saul? The answer is founded 1 Samuel 15. The Lord had given Saul a commission, and he had not fulfilled it. He deliberately disobeyed the Lord. And this was only one of a long series of disobedient acts. So the prophet Samuel announced the will of the Lord, in these words: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king." (1 Samuel 15:23)

From that time, we learn that Samuel came no more to see Saul. So we see that Saul's rejection by the Lord was due to the fact that he himself had first rejected the Lord.

When Saul came to the witch, he said: "Bring me up Samuel."
(1 Samuel 28:11)

Why did he not seek directly to the prophet himself? Because: "Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city." (1 Samuel 28:3)

In response to this request the woman told him that she saw an old man, covered with a mantle, coming up out of the earth. "And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what did you see? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man comes up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself." (1 Samuel 28:13-14)

The reader will notice that in this case Saul did not seek the apparition at all, but "perceived that it was Samuel," from the woman's description. Notice, also, that the pious Samuel was called "up," and came up "out of the earth," instead of down from heaven. Saul knew nothing about the doctrine of the good going to Heaven at death, and the heathen, one of whom he was consulting, had all souls, good and bad alike, in the lower world--in Hades.

Now what reasons have we for saying that Samuel did not converse with Saul on that occasion, and was not there at all?

1. It is not reasonable to suppose that, if Samuel would not during his life-time listen to Saul, whom he loved, when personally urged do so, he would come to him after death, at the solicitation of a despised heathen.

2. It is the height of absurdity to suppose that God, who had rejected Saul, and had refused to answer him in His own appointed way,--by dreams, by Urim, or by prophets,--would communicate with him through one whom He had said should be put to death as an abominable thing.

3. That which settles the matter beyond all controversy, is the word of inspiration: "The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished. ... Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go." (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6,10) "[Man's] breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." (Psalm 146:4)

Satan has the power of death; but the Lord alone has life. Satan can seize men, and shut them up in his prison house, the grave; but Satan cannot liberate them; Christ alone has the keys of the grave; He alone can set Satan's captives free. For these reasons, we say we

know that Samuel had no more to do with the occurrence narrated in 1 Samuel 28, than the stones under their feet. "If Samuel was not there, who personated him so successfully as to deceive Saul?"

Satan, or one of his evil angels. And this also is susceptible of Bible proof. First, we learn that: "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14)

It was as an angel light, his true form and character concealed, that he came with his temptations to Christ in the wilderness. Had he come as the chief of the powers of darkness, he could not have hoped to make any impression on the Saviour. He hoped to deceive Jesus into thinking that he was an angel sent with a message from heaven. The Lord, however, saw through the disguise at once. But the point is, if Satan may appear as an angel light, how much more may he not personate a human being? To successfully personate another is nothing more than many man are able to do.

Second, Saul had put himself on the devil's ground. Long before, he had first cast off, and then been cast off by the Lord. Now there is no neutral ground between the Lord and Satan. As soon as Saul was entirely out from under the influence of God, he passed under the influence of Satan. His frenzied attacks on the innocent David showed the influence under which he had fallen.

Then what more natural than that he, being under the influence of the devil, should go to the devil for help? A "familiar spirit" is: A demon or evil spirit supposed to attend the call.--Webster

"Witchcraft" is: Intercourse with evil spirits.

See also the definition of "sorcery," and "enchantment." This was what the heathen practiced. Their worship was devil worship. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils." (2 Corinthians 10:20)

Whenever the Israelites forsook the Lord, they engaged in devil worship. "They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not." (Deuteronomy 32:16-17) "They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils." (Psalm 106:34-37)

No wonder that they were an abomination to the Lord. Therefore, since Saul had voluntarily put himself under the devil's power, we are forced to conclude that the devil deceived him in this instance. Deceived him, indeed he did; for if space permitted, we could show that Saul did not die on the morrow, as was intimated to him. "How could Saul have kept from being deceived?" By heeding the word of the Lord. "Strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," (2 Thessalonians 2:11) is not sent to men until they reject the truth. And in that case, how could it be otherwise? If a man does not

believe the truth, what is there but lies for him to believe? Remember, also, that it is "an evil heart of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:12) that first leads men away from God, and under the devil's power. And now we will give a sure rule for detecting all evil spirits. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:20)

Christ at once detected Satan's attempted imposture because he acted contrary to the written word. So when we hear of men who pretend to communicate with the dead, we may know that there is no light in them, because the Bible says: "The dead know not anything." (Ecclesiastes 9:5)

If we strictly adhere to God's word, we cannot be deceived; if we cast any portion of it aside, we need not hope to stand.--Signs of the Times, December 11, 1884--Lesson for the Pacific Coast - January 3--Subtitle: Saul and the Witch--1 Samuel 28

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 18

A Devouring Fire

After Saul was slain, the Philistines thought to do away also with David, who was anointed king in his stead; but when they attempted it, they were smitten; and in the record David says: "God has broken in upon my enemies by my hand like the breaking forth of waters; therefore, they called the name of that place Baal Perazim," (1 Chronicles 14:11) which means, literally, "breaking forth." In Isaiah 28, this incident is made mention of by the prophet to show the manner of Christ's coming. "For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim." (Isaiah 28:21)

For many centuries God has been hidden from the children of men; yet not wholly, for He has revealed himself and His workings to the people in messages of salvation. But His hiding will not be for ever. There will come a time when He "shall rise up as in mount Perazim," bursting upon an astonished world in all His glory. "As the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matthew 24:27)

That will be His coming "the second time without sin unto salvation;" (Hebrews 9:28) when He will come "In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God." (2 Thessalonians 1:8)

But this vengeance is not against the individual, as such, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." (Romans 1:18)

Men are destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming, (2 Thessalonians 2:8)--His glory that is about Him as a consuming fire,--because they are inseparably connected with ungodliness and unrighteousness. There are others who will "dwell with everlasting burnings," (Isaiah 33:14) and the reason that they can dwell there is because in them is no ungodliness nor unrighteousness. It is a comforting thought, that though "the day of the Lord's fierce anger" (Isaiah 13:13) "is near, even at the doors," (Matthew 24:33) yet we need not be of them who cry for the rocks and mountains to "fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." (Revelation 6:16)

Having made the Lord our refuge, and the Most High our habitation, (Psalm 91:9) we can with joy look up and say: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." (Isaiah 25:9)--Present Truth, June 15, 1899--1 Chronicles 14:11

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 19

Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem

"Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand." (2 Samuel 6:1)

The 6th chapter records two great victories gained by the army of David,--one over the Jebusites, and one over the Philistines. Now he once more assembles the chief of his men, but for another purpose. The ark of God was to be brought to the capital of the kingdom.

In order to understand this chapter, it is necessary to go back in the history of the Jews about a hundred years. In the 4th chapter of 1 Samuel we have the account of a great battle between the Israelites and the Philistines, in which the Israelites were conquered, and the ark, on which they had depended for safety, was captured. At that time God showed the people that the mere possession of the tables of the law would afford them no protection when they were trampling upon the law itself; that to have the thing from which God was accustomed to manifest himself, was a vain thing unless He himself was enshrined in their hearts.

From this overthrow the Israelites did not recover for many years. The possession of the ark, however, proved disastrous to the Philistines, as we learn from 1 Samuel 5 and 6. God showed them

that the things pertaining to His worship must not be handled irreverently.

They were glad to purchase rest from the afflictions which He sent upon them, by returning the ark. When it arrived at Beth Shemesh, the men of that place were smitten, because they presumed to look into the sacred chest, and they sent to the citizens of Kirjath Jearim, requesting them to come and get it. Here it remained until the time of the present lesson.

"And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, (The reader will notice, by the margin of this verse, that "Baale of Judah," from which David sent to bring the ark, is but another name for Kirjath Jearim) to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwells between the cherubims." (2 Samuel 6:2)

The margin of this verse gives the more literal rendering, and the one that makes sense:

"To bring up the ark of God, at which the name, even the name of the Lord of hosts, was called upon" "that dwells between the cherubim." (2 Samuel 6:2)

In Exodus 25:10-22, we have a full description of this ark, and the object for which it was used; there we find the statement that God would commune with the people from between the cherubim that were upon the mercy-seat--the cover of the ark. "And they set the ark of God upon a new cart." (2 Samuel 6:3)

This was contrary to the instructions given by the Lord: that the ark was to be borne by the staves; (See Exodus 25:12-14) the sons of Kohath were appointed to carry it and the other holy vessels, but even they were not to touch or look upon any of them. (See Numbers 4:4-15) In no case was the ark to be placed upon a wagon. (See Numbers 7:7-9) "And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals." (2 Samuel 6:5)

As Dr. Clarke says, this place should be corrected from the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 13:8. There it is said that they played with all their might, on harps, etc., and that makes good sense. The Hebrew letters of the two passages are nearly identical, which doubtless accounts for the difference. The Septuagint has in this place the reading as in 1 Chronicles 13:8, "with might." "And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God." (2 Samuel 6:6-7)

In this we have another illustration of how God, regards His work and worship. It may seem to some that Uzzah's punishment was too severe for so small an act, but such judgment comes from setting up our standard instead of God's. How do we know that Uzzah's error was a small one? From the punishment that followed

we would suppose that God regarded it as a great sin. Indeed, we must so regard it unless we are willing to admit that God was unjust.

God is just; the punishments which He inflicts are always proportionate to the sin committed; therefore Uzzah's error must have been a grievous one. The whole proceeding was irregular, but Uzzah, in presuming to lay hands on the sacred ark; overstepped all bounds. Had not that swift punishment been meted out to him, the worship of God would have been degraded, as a common affair, and reverence for sacred things would have entirely died out among the people.

What was it that made that little box of wood and gold so sacred? Why was it to be approached with such awe and reverence, and only by persons duly set apart for that purpose? It was because it contained a copy of the law of God. That which God declares to be His own righteousness--a transcript of His own character--was enclosed in that ark. That law is the foundation of the government of God; it is that by which the loyalty of all creatures is tested. When men lose their reverence for that, they lose their reverence for God's Government, and for God himself. It was on this account that God had given such specific directions concerning the ark.

How do we know what is right and what is wrong? It is evident that it is only by being told. And what warrant have we for calling any violation of one of God's commands a little sin? Do we not by so doing become judges of God?

The lesson to be learned from this circumstance is that to disregard any one of God's requirements is a heinous sin; that sin of any kind is exceedingly displeasing to God. Familiarity with sin hardens us; we learn to excuse it, and our standard is lowered to correspond with existing circumstances.

But God is sinless, and the more sin there is committed the more odious it becomes to Him. If we, then, desire to do what is right, and thus to please God, it is evident that we must in all cases accept the standard of right and wrong which God gives. Our feelings are no criterion whatever, for that which we look upon as trivial, may be regarded by God as a terrible sin.

It is by His law that God reveals His will. Two texts will prove this. "I delight to do your will, O my God; yea your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8)

Here we find that to have the law of God in the heart, is to cheerfully do all His will. Again Paul says: "Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest in the law, and make your boast of God, And know His will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law." (Romans 2:17-18)

Here we learn that those who know the will of God are those who are instructed out of the law. But God does not change; we have His word for this. (Malachi 3:6; I am the Lord, I change not) His will concerning men is just the same now as it ever was. This being the case, it follows that His law is always the same. And so it

is. Christ said: "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." (Luke 16:17)

And what has this to do with the lesson? Simply this: If God regarded it as so terrible an offense merely to touch the receptacle which contained His law, how much to look upon those who dare to trample upon the law itself? The pope of Rome has impiously presumed to change the law, especially that portion which enjoins the observance of the seventh day of the week, and millions of people have accepted his act. It is considered all right to labor upon the day which God sanctified, because "everybody does so." But the Lord says: "You shall not follow a multitude to do evil." (Exodus 23:2)

We are to make God's law, and not our feelings, or the practice of the multitude, our standard of right and wrong. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily [as in the case of Uzzah], therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Ecclesiastes 8:11)

But judgment, though long delayed, is sure to come, and when it does, it will be according to righteousness, or, in other words, according to the law of God.--Signs of the Times, June 26, 1884--Notes on the International Lesson, July 13--2 Samuel 6:1-12

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 20

David's Purpose to Build the Temple

"And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies." (2 Samuel 7:1)

At what time this was it is impossible to determine; probably not long after the events recorded in the preceding chapter. "That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within curtains." (2 Samuel 7:2)

This is the first mention of Nathan the prophet, who seems to have been David's constant adviser. He must have been considerably younger than David, for we read that he wrote a history of the acts of David, and that he did the same for Solomon's reign. (1 Chronicles 29:29; Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.)

It is not certain, however, from this latter passage, that he outlived Solomon, for it may be that the writings of the two writers referred to are supplementary. That he was a true prophet is evident from the plain rebuke which he administered to David, as recorded in the 12th chapter.

It may not be amiss to notice, in passing, the statements in 1 Chronicles 29:29 and 2 Chronicles 9:29. None of these records by Nathan, Samuel, and Gad, Ahijah, and Iddo, are now extant. Nothing more is known of them than the brief mention in the above verses. Yet there is not the slightest doubt but that they were just as much inspired as were any of the records that we have. Why they were allowed to be lost, we cannot tell, nor does it concern us. The simple fact is that much has been written by inspiration that has not been given to us.

In Jeremiah 36 we have an instance of a message directly from the Lord, which was not preserved for us. Of course these things were not of especial importance to us, else they would have been preserved. God has given us, in His word as committed to us, everything that is necessary to enable us to do His will; until we have put in practice all that we have received, it ill becomes us to find fault with Him for not giving us more of the same kind of instruction. "And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in your heart; for the Lord is with you." (2 Samuel 7:3)

Nathan was a true prophet, and one who was intrusted with important messages from the Lord; yet on this occasion he gave advice that was directly contrary to the mind of the Lord. This does not show any evil intention on his part, but simply that prophets were not inspired at all times. David's plan was a laudable one, and reasoning from a human standpoint no objections to it could be seen. But Nathan did not know the mind of the Lord on this subject. If

there was any blame attaching to him, it was simply in giving his own opinion before asking counsel of the Lord.

At all events we read of no rebuke administered; but that very night "the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying: Go and tell my servant David, thus says the Lord, Shall you build me a house for me to dwell in?" (2 Samuel 7:4-5)

The words, "Shall you build me a house?" are equivalent to: "You shall not build me a house."

Thus in Psalm 95:10, margin, we have the literal rendering: "If they shall enter into my rest," meaning: "they shall not enter into my rest." (Psalm 95:11)

From 1 Chronicles 22:5-10, it is evident that much more was told to David than is here recorded. David there tells Solomon that the reason why he himself was not allowed to build a house of the Lord was that he had shed blood abundantly, and made great wars. From the further statement that Solomon, to whom would be intrusted the work of building the temple, would be a man of peace, and that there should be rest and quietness in Israel all his days, we may suppose that it was not simply the wars that David had made, but also those which he was yet to make, that made it improper for him to build the Lord's house. Besides the fact that David had shed much blood, the fact that the kingdom was not yet fully established, was an objection, because he would be liable to interruption in the work by enemies. To him it was given to conquer the enemies of

Israel, and settle the affairs of the kingdom on a solid basis, so that his successor might prosecute the work undisturbed.

The readiness with which the prophet recalled his first advice, at the command of the Lord, is worthy of note. He did not let a false pride keep him from telling the Lord's message, even though he was compelled to contradict his previous advice. As we look at the case, we can readily see how much better it was for Nathan to do so than to demur; for in the latter case he would suffer the additional qualification of having his counsel contradicted by some other prophet, and he himself perhaps degraded from his office. Yet we are not always able to reason so clearly in our own cases. We should ever be thankful to God when He gives us an opportunity to correct our own mistakes, and should esteem it one of His greatest blessings that He points them out to us.--Signs of the Times, July 3, 1884--Notes on the International Lesson, July 20--2 Samuel 7:1-16

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 21

Promise Concerning the Kingdom of Israel

1. Why was Saul rejected from being king of Israel? "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king." (1 Samuel 15:23)

2. Who was chosen in his stead? "Now therefore so shall you say unto my servant David, Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel." (2 Samuel 7:8)

3. By whom was David chosen to be ruler?

4. Where do you find the record of his anointing? (1 Samuel 16:1-13)

5. Repeat the promise which the Lord made to David concerning his house and kingdom. "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you; your throne shall be established forever." (2 Samuel 7:16)

6. What promise did the Lord make at the same time concerning His people Israel? "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place

of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them anymore, as beforetime." (2 Samuel 7:10)

7. What did He say He would appoint for them?" (2 Samuel 7:10)

8. Where should they dwell?" (2 Samuel 7:10)

9. From what should they be free?" (2 Samuel 7:10)

10. From 2 Samuel 7:10, quoted above, what conclusion must we draw concerning the promises made to Abraham, and to the Israelites at Sinai?

We must conclude that those promises were not fulfilled in the possession of the land of Canaan by the Israelites. If they had been, we would not at this time find the Lord renewing the same promise, when they were already in the land that the Lord had given to them.

11. In what condition was the kingdom of Israel when the Lord made the promise recorded in 2 Samuel 7:10? "And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies" (2 Samuel 7:1)

12. Then what must we conclude concerning that promise of rest and peace?

Since the Israelites were already dwelling in the land that the Lord had given them by Joshua, and were at peace with all around them, it follows that the promise of a land of their own, and of rest and peace, must refer to something in the future, something far greater than anything yet known. This can only be found in that perfect inheritance when "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom." (Daniel 7:27)

This will be the perfect rest that remains for the people of God, for when "the meek shall inherit the earth, [they] shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:11)

13. Who was David's immediate successor? "And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. Then you shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so too. As the Lord has been with my lord the king, even so be He with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David. So Zadok the priest,

and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadok the priest took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon." (1 Kings 1:32-39)

14. What had the Lord said concerning him? "And when your days be fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, which shall proceed out of your bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever." (2 Samuel 7:12-13)--Signs of the Times, July 16, 1885--Lesson for the Pacific Coast - August 8--2 Samuel 7

E.J. Waggoner

Chapter 22

Solomon: From Glory to Shame

In the present lesson our attention is turned:

- from Solomon in his uprightness, when he was the beloved of the Lord, (Nehemiah 13:26) to Solomon in his degradation, when "the Lord was angry with" (1 Kings 11:9) him;

- from Solomon building a temple for Jehovah, which the Lord accepted and hallowed for His own name, to Solomon building temples for Ashtoreth, and Chemosh, and Molech, (2 Kings 23:13) and for the gods of all his strange wives, the abominations of heathendom, which God abhorred;

- from Solomon worshiping the God of Heaven in such a height of purity and faith, and with such wondrous acceptance that it brought the very presence of Heaven down upon the earth, (2 Chronicles 7:1) to Solomon in such depth of iniquity worshiping idols, and joining in the murderous and licentious rites of all the heathen nations round about;

- from Solomon in the fear of God, and from a deep sense of sin, burning sweet incense to the Lord, offering to Him the acceptable sacrifices of sheep and oxen, and praying to Him for forgiveness, for light, for strength, and for wisdom, to Solomon burning incense to devils, helping on the sacrifice to them of smiling

babes and innocent children, and opening the gates of iniquity by which the whole land should be stained with innocent blood.

In short we are turned from the contemplation of "Solomon in all his glory," (Matthew 6:29) to the contemplation of Solomon in all his shame. "King Solomon loved many strange women." (1 Kings 11:1)

It seems that at this time Solomon cared for nothing but to have his own way. Contrary to the express command of the Lord, in Deuteronomy 17:16, he multiplied horses to himself and he carried on with Egypt a regular traffic in horses and chariots, until he had for himself one thousand four hundred chariots, which with three horses for each chariot--two to work and one in reserve--would make four thousand two hundred horses; then he had twelve thousand horsemen--cavalry--besides.

But he did not conduct this trade for himself alone. He had horses and chariots brought out of Egypt for the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of Syria, and there can be hardly a doubt that this traffic in horses with the Hittites and the other nations led him into his sinful connection with these "strange women," for seven hundred of his wives were "princesses," the daughters of these heathen kings with whom he was trading in horses. "And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart." (1 Kings 11:3)

Had Solomon been obedient to the Lord, he would have been saved from all this, for Deuteronomy says: "And it shall be when he sits upon the throne of this kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life." (Deuteronomy 17:18-19)

In this which he was to write, and read for himself was contained particularly in the two foregoing verses forbidding the very thing which Solomon did. "He shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses; for as much as the Lord has said unto you, You shall return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself that his heart turn not away." (Deuteronomy 17:16-17)

Solomon did send into Egypt, and multiplied horses unto himself; this led to the traffic with the heathen around him; this led him to the gathering to himself of the many strange women, and these led him to the final and fatal step, and his heart was turned away from his God. "When Solomon was old." (1 Kings 11:4)

The text says. Not old in years, for he was only about forty-nine, but the dissipation consequent upon having seven hundred wives, every one of them shamefully licentious, besides three hundred concubines, who could have certainly been no better,--all this made him "old" though only in the prime of his years. "His wives turned away his heart after other gods." (1 Kings 11:4)

And what fearful gods they were! Devils, the psalmist calls them: "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood." (Psalm 106:37-38)

And devils they were: "Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians." (1 Kings 11:5)

The "queen of heaven" of Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:19, the Astarte of the Greeks, the Venus of the Romans, and under different names worshiped by all of the ancient East, and though having different names, and yet was always worshiped in the same manner, and which is fully expressed in one word--lasciviousness.

- She was the female Baal, and corresponded to the moon as Baal did to the sun.

- She represented the female principle in generation as Baal did the male.

- She was always worshiped in connection with him, and the rites of her worship corresponded to that idea. Her priests were men dressed in women's clothes; her priestesses were harlots, and the only worship was prostitution. "And after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ... Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before

Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon." (1 Kings 11:5,7)

Milcom of the fifth verse is identical with Molech of the seventh, and Molech of the Ammonites is the same as Chemosh of the Moabites, and both are the same as Baal of the Canaanites and other Eastern nations generally.

It is with Baal as with Ashtoreth above, although called by different names, he is the same god, and his worship the same among all the ancient nations. He represents the sun; and the worship of Baal, Molech, Chemosh, or by whatever name, was sun-worship.

The form of his worship is described in the words of the Bible about Ahaz: "For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel." (2 Chronicles 28:2-3)

Baalim in the text is the plural form of Baal, and signifies the images of Baal in connection with Ashtoreth, set up and worshiped together. So we see that children born of the licentious worship of Ashtoreth, were burned in the fire in the worship of Baal. Not all of the children, of course, but such as they should choose to sacrifice.

The priests of Molech (Baal) ranked above the princes, and were next to the king, and sometimes even the king himself was a priest, as in the case of the father of the infamous Jezebel, who was himself a priest of Ashtoreth, and was also dedicated to Baal. It was such daughters, of such men as these, from whom Solomon took his seven hundred wives. No wonder they turned away his heart from the Lord. No wonder that in cleaving to these in their impurity he did it at the expense of forsaking Jehovah, who will be worshiped in purity alone. No wonder that now we read in quick succession: "And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon. ... And God stirred up another adversary. ... And Jeroboam ... even he lifted up his hand against the king." (1 Kings 11:14,23,26)

No more can Solomon write as he did in his youth to Hiram: "But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent." (1 Kings 5:4)

Adversaries on all sides, from the kings abroad and from his own subjects at home. Evil "occurrent" everywhere. From his own sowing of evil, springs and abundant harvest, and he has to begin the reaping. No more can he be called Solomon--peace--but rather Magor Misabib (Jeremiah 20:3)--fear round about, for there is fear on every side, and God above all against him, to rend the kingdom from him as though no longer fit to rule over men.

And in closing we may quote the words used ages after by Nehemiah in correcting sins in Israel: "Among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made

him king over all Israel; nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin." (Nehemiah 13:26)

Solomon's life is an example and a warning. In his youth an example of how good God is to all who seek Him in humility, and in entire dependence upon Him, an example of how. "The blessing of the Lord it makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it." (Proverbs 10:22)

In his latter days his life is a warning to all, of man's helplessness when he forsakes the path which the Lord has marked out for us to walk in. It shows that, however great a man's wisdom may be, or however grand may be his success, while serving the Lord in sincerity, all the wisdom that he had acquired will not keep him from becoming a fool, and that all the success that he had achieved will not prevent his making a miserable failure, when he ceases to serve the Lord. Therefore cling close to the word of God. "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." (Job 28:28) "Good success have all they that do His commandments." (Psalm 111:10,margin)

The words of David to Solomon are still the words of the Lord to every one of the children of men. "Know...God..., and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts: if you seek Him, He will be found of you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever." (1 Chronicles 28:9)--Signs of the Times, October 30, 1884--Notes on the International Lesson, November 16--Original title: Notes on the International Lesson--1 Kings 11:4-13

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