1 Samuel 18:1-4 (Charles Henry Mackintosh) 147299

Short Papers, Jonathan (18:1-4)

(1 Sam. 18:1-4.)

“ And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David: and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.... Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved Mm as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and Ids garments, even to Ids sword, and to his how, and to Ids girdle.”

What an exquisite picture we have here! A picture of love stripping itself to clothe its object. There is a vast difference between Saul and Jonathan in this scene. Saul took David home with him in order to magnify himself by keeping such an one about his person and in his house. But Jonathan stripped himself to clothe David. This was love in one of its charming activities. Jonathan, in common with the many thousands of Israel, had watched, with breathless interest, the scene in the valley of Elah. He had seen David go forth, single handed, to meet the terrible foe whose height, demeanor, and words had struck terror into the hearts of the people. He had seen that haughty giant laid low by the hand of faith. He participated with all in the splendid victory.

But there was more than this. It Was not merely the victory but the victor that filled the heart of Jonathan—not merely the work done, but the one who had done it. Jonathan did not rest satisfied with saying, “ Thank God, the giant is dead, and we are delivered, and may return to our homes and enjoy ourselves.” Ah! no; he felt his heart drawn and knit to the person of the conqueror. It was not that he valued the victory less, but he valued the victor more, and hence he found his joy in stripping himself of his robes and his armor in order to put them upon the object of his affection.

Christian reader, there is a lesson here for us; and not only a lesson but a rebuke. How prone are we to be occupied with redemption rather than the Redeemer—with salvation rather than with the Savior! No doubt we should rejoice in our salvation; but should we rest here? Should we not, like Jonathan, seek to strip ourselves in order to magnify the Person of Him who went down into the dust of death for us? Assuredly we should, and all the more because He does not exact aught of us. David did not ask Jonathan for his robe or his sword. Had he done so, it would have robbed the scene of all its charms. But no; it was a purely voluntary act. Jonathan forgot himself and thought only of David. Thus it should be with us and the true David. Love delights to strip itself for its object. “ The love of Christ constraineth us.” And again. “ But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.” Phil, iii. 7, 8.

Oh! for more of this spirit! May our hearts be drawn out and knit, more and more, to Christ, in this day of hollow profession, and empty, religious formality! May we be so filled with the Holy Ghost, that with purpose of heart we may cleave unto our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!