2 Samuel 7:1-2 (P. Compain) 72002

Bible Treasury: Volume N10, House of Cedar, An (7:1-2)

“And Hiram, king of Tire, sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house” (2 Sam. 5:11). “And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and Jehovah had given him rest round about from all his enemies, that the king said to Nathan, the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar” (chap. 7:1-2).

The life of David may be divided into two periods, the first of which closes with the scriptures just quoted while the second consists chiefly in domestic sorrows and discipline.

The first only we intend to consider here. It might be summed up in this way, “Suffering with Christ,” which necessarily precedes “reigning with Him.” And “suffering with Christ” in the world that rejected Him is the greatest honor a saint can aspire to. So judged Moses. “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect to the recompense of the reward.” He was not one of the very many in our day who esteem it the wisest policy to make the best of both worlds, for he deliberately chose the world above, and did not hesitate to reach it by the way of suffering. This was faith then, and is faith now. In vain will it be said that the times are changed and that reproach no longer attaches to the name of Christ. In all dispensations saints have suffered in spirit with Christ when faithful; it is their honor also. “If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” Only follow close enough in His footsteps, and you will find the truth of this.

The first time that David is fully brought into evidence is mentioned in 1 Sam. 17. Before that it seems that he was known of few as “cunning in playing and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and Jehovah is with him” (16:18). This is a striking testimony on the part of one of Saul's servants, when Saul and pretty nearly all the rest ignored the youth; for a youth he was at that time. This, however, is only a ray cast upon a life otherwise hidden, a life spent in the solitude of the wilderness and in the keeping of his father's flock, but spent with God, as we may infer from his words to Saul, “Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.” This was not achieved by human strength or skill, nor does David attribute to himself the fame of the feat, for he takes care to add, “Jehovah that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.” This speaks of deep acquaintance with God and His power, as well as of thorough confidence in Him, acquired far away from the eyes of man and in the secret of Jehovah's pavilion. Oh, that saints might know more of a like intimacy with God!

What did his family know about it all? Apparently nothing. What was the place he occupied in the home circle? The last. Joseph-like, he was disregarded by his brethren, as was our Lord Himself later on. Here, however, we would notice that both type and Anti-type had subsequent joy in the conversion respectively of their brethren: as with Joseph when in Egypt, and with David in the cave of Adullam, so also with our Lord, not indeed when He was accomplishing His miracles (for in these His brethren did not believe) but rather, if one may be permitted reverently to conjecture, when He went to the cross and rose again. Such is God's way of glorifying Himself.

Thus this early part of David's life seems to correspond to the years that our Lord spent in His domestic circle previous to His manifestation to Israel. It was a life of secret communion with God, where God alone witnessed the exercises of faith, dependence, confidence, all so precious in His sight. It was the wisest and only proper preparation for public action and testimony.

David's encounter with Goliath may be looked at as corresponding to our Lord's entrance on His ministry, as He says, “How can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will Spoil his house.” No victory, no spoil for Israel so long as Goliath could defy them; they were no match for him. Presumption would bah led them to utter defeat, whereas their sense of powerlessness opened the way for God's interposition, for He was Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel. The cause was God's and therefore the power must be of God. But this power which was to subdue the enemy had been acquired in the hidden intercourse with the living God, the God of David and the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But the victory of David over the Philistine giant was not a final triumph. Rather was it the stepping into the way of much suffering, and of suffering far more acute than that which might have been inflicted by the world outside, for it was to come from his own under the leadership of Saul. So was it with our Lord after He had bound the strong man. At once hatred, relentless hatred pursued both the servant and the Son. David found in Saul a worse enemy than Goliath had been; and the Lord, by His mighty deeds and convicting word heaped upon Himself all the wrath of the Jews and their leaders. True, He had a little band to follow Him when He had not where to lay His head, as had David in the cave of Adullam. But this was, for both, the occasion for a fresh start, as it were, in the wilderness life. From this point both become wanderers. The favor into which David was taken by Saul after his victory over the Philistine (1 Sam. 18:2) lasted but a short moment, as did the admiration of the multitude when they said of the Lord, “He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak” (Mark 7:32-37). Not long after they sought to kill Him, as they did eventually effect this when His hour was come. How did David meet Saul's criminal attempts to take his life? By prayer. How did the Lord meet the deadly hostility of the Jews? By prayer. Many are the sweet psalms of the sweet singer of Israel; but none more heart-winning than those composed in the wilderness when he was hunted by his enemy like a partridge on the mountains. One only need we mark out—Psa. 63. Millions of tried souls have found their delight and refreshment in it. There we see David under a heavy trial. The land is dry and thirsty, and without water; the men met with here and there are enemies, either openly or traitors. Where is the refuge? “Thy loving kindness is better than life; my lips shall praise Thee.” And in the enjoyment of God's

goodness the wilderness is lost sight of. It is no longer dearth and privations; it is marrow and fatness; and thus strength is renewed. So, again, was it with our blessed Lord during the day of His ministry. The land of Israel was for Him more barren than the wilderness of Judah; His enemies more implacable than Saul. On several occasions the latter owned his wrong; they, never. There was in Saul, we may say, the exercise of a conscience which we look for in vain, in them. Subtlety, violence, stubborn unbelief is all they show, Cain-like, against the true Abel. In their war against the Lord no truce, no relent. And yet, when He comes to the end of His path of suffering, He speaks of His peace and of His joy, which He so graciously leaves as His legacy to us who are, through God's calling, to follow Him. He knew well that without His peace and His joy, the tribulation that we were to pass through, if faithful, would be more than we could stand. If it be asked, Why did it not please Him to remove the tribulation out of the way of His people? the answer is, Because, if it were removed, there would be no suffering with Christ, therefore no reigning with Him, and, moreover, because tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.

Whence did the Lord get the sustaining power which filled His soul with this peace and joy? Surely not from the world around Him, but from His intercourse with His Father and God, and by prayer was the intercourse carried on. To what end did He so frequently retire to the neighboring mountains? “And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and He continued all night in prayer to God.” Who can tell how refreshing to His soul such moments were? Prayer, thanksgiving and praise were all blended together in His requests.

Up to this point David trod the way of “the fellowship of Christ's sufferings” —an honor immeasurable indeed; but here he takes another road which will lead him to pre-eminence, to Zion, “the city of David,” destined to be some day the city of God and the joy of all the earth. It was God's way for him that he should conquer the stronghold of the Jebusites and lay there the foundation of the future metropolis of the world. Nor was it out of place and season that he should have there a palace, “an house of cedar,” and a throne, thus preparing the way for Solomon to become, later on, the type and representative of Christ in the glory of the kingdom.

But with the Lord it was not to be so. He was to go farther in the path of suffering, yea, to the very end of it, When He goes to Jerusalem for the last time, it was not to have a palace, “an house of cedar” built for Him, nor a throne set up; it was to receive a cross to be nailed thereon. Hence His heart-rending lamentation, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” And desolate it has been since that day. How could it be otherwise as long as she rejects her rightful King? This, however, is not to last forever. Christ cannot be denied the yearnings of His heart towards the rebellious people. In deep pain He said, “I would.... ye would not.” Again will He say, “I will,” and then will come the reply, “We are willing.” “Thy people shall be willing in the day of, Thy power,” and in this divinely wrought willingness they shall say, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” It is due to Him that He should have His deepest joy where He had His deepest sorrow—glory and honor where He had shame, a throne where He had a gibbet. And nothing can be lost of what is due to Him, and nothing lost of what He intends to bestow upon, others in the way of blessing. All is secured, perfectly secured by virtue of His redemption work. It was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross, despising the shame; and no mean part of this joy will it be when all Israel say adoringly with Thomas, their prototype, “My Lord and my God!”

The pathway of suffering, for the Lord, ended in death, the death of the cross. The prophet Daniel had written, “Messiah shall be cut off,” or “have nothing,” and He had nothing indeed, save reproach. But out of death a new path opened up—what is called, in Psa. 16, “the path of life,” endless life, life in resurrection, which led Him straight to the right hand of the throne, of God, where He sits until His enemies are made His footstool. In the meantime all that which concerns Israel, and the world in connection with Israel, is in abeyance, and another work is being carried on, even the calling of a heavenly people to heavenly blessing and glory.

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