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1 Samuel Part 2

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1 Samuel 25:32, 33 Christians Kept From Sin

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“And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.”— 1 Samuel 25:32, 33

These verses are taken from the story of David's coming into contact with Nabal the churl. Nabal was a great sheep-master, and David and his six hundred men had been specially careful not to injure his flocks, but had protected them from any pilfering that might have been practiced by wandering bands of desert rangers. At that time, Nabal was shearing his sheep; and David, who was in some measure of necessity, thought it a suitable time to ask something from him, according to Eastern custom, in return from the services which he had rendered to his shepherds. So he sent ten of his young men to ask Nabal for the backsheesh; but, instead thereof, they received an insulting message to take back to their master. Thereupon, David—who seems to have been always of a quick spirit, whether for right or for wrong;—who made haste to obey God's commandments, but who made equal haste to obey his own impulses,—girded on his sword, and bade every man do the same, and declared that they would march to the house of this churl, Nabal, fall upon him at once, and destroy him, and all that appertained to him, root and branch. While he was marching in haste to carry out his stern determination,—as God's infinite goodness would have it, Abigail, the wise wife of the foolish Nabal, met him, and confessed that her husband was a man of Belial; pleaded that she herself had not seen the messengers whom David had sent, besought him to accept the provisions she had brought, and urged David to leave the avenging of himself to God, so that, when he came to be king, it should be no grief of heart to him that he had shed blood needlessly, or had acted as his own avenger. David who had grace in his spirit although he was on his way to do wrong, felt the force of Abigail's rebuke, sheathed his sword, thanked her, and thanked the Lord, too, that he had thus been preserved from committing a great sin, which might have left a great stain upon his character, and been a source of trouble to him for the rest of his life.

Learn from this, dear brethren, that the best of men need to be always on the watch, lest, in some sudden temptation, they should be carried off their feet. You may fancy that you have no occasion to fear certain forms of temptation, but you do not know what you may do. The wall of resolution may be strong in one particular wind; but let the wind only blow from another quarter, and the wall may speedily fall. You may think yourself to be strong simply because, as yet, you have not been tested and tried as you will be sooner or later; and then, in a single moment, when you are least prepared for it, you may be overthrown. Remember our Lord's words to his disciples, “What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch;” for, in such an hour as ye think not, temptation may come upon you; and woe be unto you if you are not found watching. Therefore, commit yourselves unto the Lord, and “watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”

Here, too, we may observe what a blessed thing it is when, in hours of crisis, the God of all grace is pleased to interpose to preserve us from committing a certain sin into which we had almost fallen. Our steps had well nigh slipped; but, just then, the Lord

sent some angelic messenger to us, even as Abigail came to David. For that almighty love which has manifested itself in restraining grace, let us render grateful songs of thanksgiving as we look back upon our past lives, for we can scarcely tell how often we should have dishonored our character and our profession if it had not been that God came to our rescue, and kept back his servants from presumptuous sins.

The subject upon which I am to talk to you, as the Holy Spirit shall graciously guide me, is the great blessing of being prevented or preserved from sin; I shall speak, first, upon the blessing itself; then, for a few minutes, upon the means which God employs to secure it; and then, thirdly, upon the great blessedness of which we may be partakers if we endeavor, like Abigail, to prevail with others so as to prevent them from going into sin.

First, then, we are to consider The Great Blessedness of Being Prevented from Sin.

It is an unspeakable blessing to have sin forgiven. We cannot measure the heaped-up blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. But, surely, there is a very special favor rendered by God's grace to those who are kept from the grosser sins into which so many others fall, and who are converted early in life after having been hedged about by divine grace, and not suffered to plunge into the foul kennels of iniquity in which others riot and revel. Those who are thus preserved not only have to sing of repenting grace, as they must do however purley they may have lived; but they can also tell of the restraining grace of God which would not let them wander into the paths of the destroyer as others did.

To be kept from sin is to be kept from many evils; for, in the first place, sin has such a hardening effect upon the conscience. There is no man who ever sins without having some trace of it left upon his mind and heart. For one thing, it is more easy for him to sin the next time. An impulse has been given, and a habit begun, which will make it almost inevitable that he shall fall into that particular sin again. He who has served Satan once will be likely to serve him ten times; and, on each succeeding occasion, he will serve him more vigorously and readily. He will not need nearly as much temptation, but will go greedily after evil when the habit of sinning has taken firm hold upon him; but there are some who have been kept from overt acts of evil, and so, when they hear the gospel, they receive it like good ground into which the seed falls, and brings forth abundant fruit; but there are others, who, because of iniquity, are like the highway trodden hard by the feet of many, and when the good seed falls there, the birds of the air find it an easy task to steal away the grain because it has not penetrated below the surface. Do not imagine that you can live for twenty, thirty, or forty years in sin, and yet be just as likely to be converted as anybody else is. I know that God can, if he pleases to do so, call you at the eleventh hour as easily as at the first; but yet, as far as you are concerned, if you harden your neck, you have no right to expect that he will do so, but rather to expect that you shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without this hardening process may not even begin within our mind and heart.

Besides, he who sins in a little way makes that sin, as it were, a stepping-stone to something worse. David wisely prayed, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall innocent from the great transgression." He seemed to feel that he would not go on to the great transgression if he was restrained from presumptuous sins, and he was right in thinking so. You dear young people, who, through the Lord's lovingkindness and tender mercy, have been brought up among gracious influences, know that you have sinned, and that your sin has done your soul such evil as only God's grace can remedy; yet you may thank the Lord that you have not been permitted to learn to sing the song of the drunkard, or to live an unchaste life, or to forsake the assembly of God's people, and so put yourselves out of the reach of the usual means of grace, as perhaps you would have done, by this time, if you had not been checked while you were children. A gentle streamlet, if it be suffered to flow unhindered, becomes at last a foaming torrent that sweeps away its own banks, and causes loss and damage far and wide. Thank God that the current of your life was checked and guided while it was but a streamlet; may the torrent of sin never overflow your character and career.

There is this blessing about being restrained from sin, namely, that it saves us from much sorrow in after life. It should be no grief or offense of heart unto David, said Abigail, to think that he had shed blood causelessly, or had avenged himself. No sinner, when converted, although God has forgiven him, can ever forgive himself; and no child of God, although God has blotted out his sin, can ever blot it out of his own memory as long as he is here on earth. You can see that David was a different man, after his great sin, from what he had been before. He still sang psalms to God, but there was a hoarseness about his voice which was not there before his great transgression. His psalms were psalms of sorrow, whereas before they were glad and joyful psalms that tripped to lightsome music. I remember once hearing a strange sort of preacher say that sin did a believer no hurt;—a more terrible doctrine than that could drop from no man's lips, but then he added,—"except that it destroyed his peace of mind;" and it seemed to me that such a result as that was hurt enough even if there was nothing else. "He that wears the herb called 'heart's-ease' in his bosom," says Bunyan, "is a happy man even though he sings in rags;" but he whose heart smites him, as David's heart did, need want no harder blow. May those of you who are unconverted be preserved from gross sin, and may those of us who are saved be preserved from falling by temptation into any evil, lest we have to wring our hands in anguish, and go with broken bones to our graves.

Further, he who is kept from sinning has to bless God that the consequences of his sin upon others are averted. It is a dreadful thing

to know that there will be some in heaven who were the means of sending others to hell. I have sometimes wondered what must be the emotions of those who have sinned—especially in the foulest sense,—when they themselves are converted, but find themselves quite unable to induce their fellow-sinners even to listen to the gospel. Mr. Whitefield tells us that, as soon as he himself had tasted that the Lord was gracious, he tried to think of all the companions with whom he had been accustomed to play cards, or to indulge in any kind of sinful sport; and he thanked God, he said, that he never gave himself any rest until he had done all that was in his power to bring them to the Savior. You, my friend, were an infidel once, and you are a believer now; but you cannot recall the words that you spoke in those past days. You may refute, to your own satisfaction, the arguments you then used, but you cannot so readily make others see the force of your refutation. You, my brother, were wont, at one time, to use language which was unclean; you abhor it now, and you rebuke it when you hear it from another; but you cannot make others forsake the habit which they learned from you. You cannot get out of your boy's memory that song which you used to sing in his hearing; you cannot get out of your daughter's heart that evil word which she heard you utter; it must go on rankling for ever in her spirit, and doing everlasting mischief unless the sovereign grace of God shall intervene to prevent such a calamity. What a blessing it is to begin with God in our youth before we have helped to pull down the walls of Zion, or even cast a stone against them! It is an unspeakable blessing to be saved in old age, and to be able to sing of triumphant grace which has blotted out innumerable iniquities; but it must be—at least on this side of heaven,—a cause of constant regret to such a late penitent that he should have wrought so much evil which it is not possible for him to repair.

Besides, dear brethren, it is always a blessing to the Christian—to whom I speak now,—to be kept from sin, for thus his character is preserved; and much of his influence for good will depend upon his own character. When backsliders are restored, we cannot help standing in some doubt concerning them; and let them afterwards live as carefully as they may, it will be very difficult for them ever to honor the church as much as they have dishonored it. If there be but one cataract in a river, only one in a thousand miles, everybody hears about it, and it is marked on the map; but if another river should flow on smoothly, gladdening the meads on either hand, and bearing navies out to sea, it would not cause such a noise as that one cataract would make. In like manner, a holy life is not talked of, by an ungodly world, one half so much as one unholy act of an inconsistent professor. How they delight to speak of that! How they roll the story of the sins of God's people under their tongues as sweet morsels! You may repent of your backsliding, you may become even more zealous afterwards, as you should do; but, my dear brethren, after having once stained your escutcheon, it is not easy to wipe out the blot. It is infinitely better to be kept true to our first profession until we enter into heaven, upheld and preserved by the love and grace of God.

And, only once more upon this part of the subject, you may rest assured that even if sin be forgiven, and grace enters the heart, never is it better to sin than not to sin. There is a house on fire. Well, we are grateful if the fire-engine comes rattling up almost immediately, if the water supply is abundant, and if, by great exertions, every life is saved, and much of the property is preserved from destruction. Yet it would have been a greater blessing if there had not been any conflagration at all. There is serious sickness in the home; but the physician is skillful, the nurse is wise and watchful, the disease takes a favorable turn, the man's life is preserved, he is restored to health, and is thankful for his recovery; yet he would rather not have been sick. There is a wounded soldier; he is carried on an ambulance to the hospital, the surgeons extract the bullet that injured him, and bind up his wounds; the man is ultimately restored to the ranks, but he will carry to his grave the scars of the wounds that he has suffered. It would have been a great deal better for him if he had not been wounded at all. So is it with the wounds that sin hath made. Let the results of evil be never so well removed, it can never be better for any of us to fall into sin than to be kept out of it. It if were otherwise, it would look as if sin were not that damning thing that God's Word tells us it is; it would seem as though it were but a trifle, and that there was no need of Calvary's cross, or of all the wondrous arrangements of everlasting wisdom and love for the saving of men from sin and its awful consequences. Let us cry to God, my brethren, that we may be kept from sin. may this be our prayer night and day, "Lord keep us even from vain thoughts; but, above all, keep us from any acts that would be dishonoring to thy holy name!" We do not want to sin in order that we may know what sin is like; we do not want to plunge into evil for the sake of being washed from it; we do not want to go into this horrible pit and this miry clay for the sake of being drawn out of it; our earnest desire is that we may be kept from the grosser forms of sin till we are saved by sovereign grace, and receive the new nature which is the portion of the children of God; and that, after that, we may walk in all well-pleasing to the glory of God our Savior.

Now, secondly, let me remind you of Some of the Ways in Which God Keeps us from Sinning.

He does this, of course, in the grandest way by the work of his grace within our soul. There is no protection against sin like the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If the evil spirit goes out of the heart of man, and it be swept, and garnished, if the good Spirit does not come and dwell there, seven other spirits, yet more wicked than the first, will return to take possession.

There is no way of keeping out the fire of sin except by having the fire of grace blazing within the spirit. We must fight fire with fire. Let thy soul be filled with all the fullness of God, and the, when the prince of this world cometh to thee, he shall not be able to overcome thee.

The grace of God is the great antidote to sin.

But God also uses other means, even before their conversion, to keep some from the grosser sins and vices in which others indulge.

Among these, there is, first, early education. There are some who, happily, have never known the sins which others have for ever to regret. They have been like plants kept in the hothouse; they have never been tried by the frosts of this vile world. Be very thankful for this if it is true concerning you, but do not regard it as a substitute for being born again. Remember that you, who are the most amiable, the most excellent, the most zealous, the most honorable, the most dissolute, and the most profane. Regeneration is an absolute necessity before any soul can enter heaven, and you must not be satisfied with anything short of that; yet you may be grateful if, like Timothy, from a child you have known the Scriptures, or if, like Samuel, you have been brought up in the house of the Lord from your very early years; for, thus, you have been kept from much sin into which others have fallen.

Christian association, too, is of the utmost value in helping to keep us from sin. There may be here a young man, who has just come to London, after leaving that quiet country town where he was accustomed to attend the services at the little meeting-house; and it may be that there is a strong temptation upon him to throw off all the restraints of his past life, and to hide himself among the thick trees of this great wood of London, and there to indulge himself in sin from which he has been hitherto preserved. My dear friend, if you desire everlasting ruin, this may be your fatal choice; but that you may not even wish to make such a choice, I strongly urge you to endeavor to form associations with Christian young men before you have been laid hold of by the active servants of Satan who are lying in wait for you. Come and join one of our Bible classes, or the Young Men's Christian Association, or find out some Christian friends somewhere or other. From associations and acquaintanceships which, if they do not actually bring you to Christ, may at least keep you from going far astray from the path which your godly parents have always desired you to tread. May the Lord grant that, instead of your deciding for Satan now that you are left to yourself, a sense of responsibility may so press upon you that you may decide, through the Holy Spirit's power, for the Lord Jesus Christ! If, this very night, you, as a newcomer into this great city, should surrender yourself to the Savior, what an eternal blessing it would be to you! The Lord grant that it may be so, and he shall have all the praise. Still, if you are not at once converted, Christian association will be very helpful in keeping you from outward sin.

And you, my brethren and sisters who have grace in your hearts, will often find that association with warmhearted Christians is one of the very best ways of keeping you from evil. Some of our church-members have gone to live in the country where they have been able only to worship with a cold and indifferent congregation, where the minister has not been more than half awake, and I have observed very serious declension in their spiritual life. When I have met them afterwards, and have ventured to speak to them about it, they have told me that it seemed like going from hothouse into an ice-well, and they confessed that they did not feel as earnest as once they did. O Christians, do prize any association with God's people that is possible to you! If any of you are in positions where you can enjoy Christian fellowship, and you have the opportunity of earning ten times as much money in another position where you must give up that fellowship, do not do it. It is always a loss to Christians to lose the communion of saints. No amount of worldly prosperity can ever make up for the loss they will sustain by leaving an earnest gospel ministry and an affectionate people. Thank God that he makes use of your brother-believers to help you in the road to heaven, and often to restrain you from sin.

The Lord, too, is pleased very frequently to make use of our position in society to keep us out of evil. I mean this—some men have always been poor, although they have tried again and again to rise above the level of their poverty. Once or twice they have almost succeeded; yet, not from want of ambition nor lack of industry, but as though God's providence were at cross-purposes with them, they have always had to come back to that same spare diet and tiny cottage. My dear friends, the Lord knew that you could not bear to be rich. Had he permitted you to possess more than you now have, you might have become proud and worldly. It was better for you to live near to God in poverty than to be a backslider and be rich. I believe that many of the reverses which God's people suffer in trade are preventives from sin; when the Lord sees them beginning to launch out, and to speculate, and perhaps to become associated with some rich man who has no grace in his heart, the Lord says, "My servant is going on very dangerous ground; I must stop him before he is lost;" and he soon does it. The man's substance takes to itself wings, and flies away, and thus he himself is rescued from the threatening danger.

Some are preserved from sin by physical infirmities. "Well," said one who was lame, "I believe I should never have run in the way of God's commandments if it had not been for my lame leg." "Ah!" said another, "and I sometimes think that I should never have seen Christ if I had not been blind." Just because their infirmities incapacitated them for enjoyment of the world, they were made to look for higher enjoyments, and to seek that spiritual health which is everlasting. Blessed are the lame and the blind who enter into heaven; and blessed are they who have but one eye, yet who enter there, while some who have two eyes are cast into hell.

Others, doubtless, have been kept from sin by severe sicknesses. These come to us, I believe, not by chance, but by divine ordination. We say to one another, "I cannot think where I caught that disease;" or, "I cannot imagine why such-and-such a sickness should have come to me." Perhaps you were more out of danger on your bed than you would have been anywhere else just then. Had you been out of that bedroom, you might have been in a position of very serious trial which you could not have been able to

endure. I can bear my witness that, at least in some of my many sicknesses, I have been able to see the reason for them as plainly as I can see that twice two are four. Even when we cannot see the reason, God knows that there is a reason for it; and if we cannot see it, it may be all the deeper, and may lie all the nearer to the very heart of our Christian life. Your sicknesses, and pains, and griefs, and depression of spirits, and all sorts of trials are often sent to you just to prevent you from sinning; they tether you, like the horse that was in a meadow with a clog on him, and a friend said to the owner, "I wonder that you clog such a fine horse as that; it seems such a pity." "Well," replied the owner, "I would rather clog him than lose him; and if I did not clog him, I should lose him. He has a habit of jumping hedges and ditches, and we cannot keep him unless we clog him." So, my brother, you have a clog, because the Lord would rather clog you than lose you; he would sooner make you suffer here than permit you to suffer for ever in hell.

Once again, God's people have very often been kept from sin by remarkable providences and some, who are not yet the Lord's people, have been kept from certain forms of sins by very remarkable interpositions of divine providence.

You probably all remember the story of the Quaker who, one night, felt an irresistible impulse to rise from his bed and ride to a neighboring town. When he got there, he stopped at a house where he saw a light in an upper room, and he knocked, and knocked, and knocked again, and at last a man came to the door to ask what he wanted at that time of night. The Quaker replied, "Perhaps, friend, thou canst tell me, for the Lord has sent me to thee, but I do not know why he has done so." "Come upstairs," said the man, "and I think I can tell you." There he had fixed a rope with which he was about to put an end to his life, but God had sent his servants to him just in time to prevent the contemplated crime. Such striking providences as that may not happen to all or any of us, for we may not require them; but they do happen to some people to prevent them from sinning against God. It may be also that the providences, which do not appear striking to us, do appear striking to those holy angels who minister to God's people, and who bear them up in their hands lest they should dash their feet against a stone, and who constantly adore the wisdom and goodness of God in interposing to keep his servants from going aside into sin. The wheels of providence, which are full of eyes, have those eyes continually fixed upon us, and those wheels are ever revolving on our behalf to God's glory.

No doubt many have been kept from sin by a message to their conscience, either through a minister, or through a tract, or through a text which they read in the Bible, or a kind remark from a friend. There are members of this church who, in the Lord's gracious providence, owe their salvation to a word spoken to them in the street. There is one especially who was tapped on the shoulder just as he was going into a theater, and who was entreated—by one who did not know him personally, but who had mistaken him for somebody else,—not to go into such a place as that, but to come with him that Thursday night, and listen to the preaching of the Word. It was remarkable that such a mistake as that should have been made, but it was a blessed mistake for him, and he rejoices this night that he finds himself in God's house, numbered amongst the Lord's people.

This brings me to the last point, which is, that It Would be a Very Blessed Thing if Christian People were More earnest to prevent Sin.

This matter was put very plainly under the Old Testament command, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him."

Yet, under the Christian dispensation, I am afraid that we are very negligent in our endeavors to prevent sin. Some of us, it may be, think a great deal too much of our dignity. No doubt we are very respectable people, though everybody does not know it, and does not treat us with the respect we feel is due to us. Perhaps we suspect others of not being all they ought to be; and, then, of course, our attitude towards them is not what it used to be. Then they begin to have hard thoughts concerning us, and in that way Satan has reason to rejoice because Christian people are weaned from each other, and very grievous sin is caused by the roots of bitterness that are thus planted in the soil of the church. Now, my brother, suppose that somebody did treat you very disrespectfully, instead of your saying, "I will be avenged on him," suppose that you say to yourself, "If he were to treat me as I really deserve to be treated, God knows that it is very little respect I should receive from him. The man has slandered me this time; but if he knew what my faults really are, he could hit me in a much more tender part." It is sometimes said that, when a boy is flogged wrongfully, "If he does not deserve it now, he probably has deserved it at some other time when he has not had it, or he will deserve it in the future." So, if a rebuke should come to me wrongfully, I will lay it by in case I need it at another time. A Christian man sometimes says, "If you tread on a worm, it will turn;" yes, I know it will, but I hope you do not consider a worm an example for a Christian man, especially when you have the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Exemplar. If you tread on a worm, it will turn because of the pain you have needlessly caused it; but if you are trodden on by another person, and you are a Christian, you will forgive him, and try to do him good. "Do my lord of Canterbury an ill turn," it was once said, "and he will be your friend as long as he lives." Happy are they who kill their enemies by heaping coals of fire upon their heads. Do so, my brother, whenever it is possible to you, and do not sin by standing if it is necessary, as well as a door-keeper in the house of the Lord; and, in that way, you will be all the more honored, for "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

It may be that, in certain company, we may hear talk that is not what it ought to be, and there may be some wit or merriment connected with that talk; but if so, we must not laugh at it, because, though we might laugh at the wit, others might suppose that we

were enjoying the evil that was mingled with it. It is well for a Christian to put his foot down firmly in such a case as that, and to say very distinctly, "As far as your mirth is proper, and there is nothing in it that is defiling, I am willing to join with you, for I also am a man, and am of a cheerful disposition; but you are going too far now, and I must enter my protest, for I cannot, by my silence, give my consent to such talk as that." You ought to do that, my brethren, and you would often find that there would be some who would thank you for doing it. Have you never heard how Mr. Wesley once stopped a man from swearing? He was riding on the top of a coach, and there was an officer in the army there who kept swearing, so Mr. Wesley at last very gently said to him, "My dear sir, I want you to do me a great favor." "What is that, sir?" asked the officer. "Why," said he, "if you should hear me using profane language during this journey, I wish you would kindly tell me of it." "I see," said the officer, "what you mean, and I appreciate your kindness." You might, perhaps, if you did that, receive a stormy reply, and make the swearing person worse; still, you would have done your duty by rebuking the sin gently and affectionately.

How often we might prevent sin if we could come in just when some are on the very verge of doing wrong. Perhaps you say that you have a pastor to do this work; but I have often told you that, in such a church as this, you must all be pastors. With four thousand two hundred members in one church, what can even two pastors do; what can all the elders and deacons do? The only hope for the church is that God will watch over you all, and that you will all watch over one another. You who are elderly, you who have been kept faithful long, you who have the respect of your fellow-members,—you, perhaps, know of inconsistencies springing up. If so, do not go and talk about them, especially to those outside the church. "It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest;" so, instead of talking to others, go and speak to the offending one. Thou mayest thus, perhaps, be the means of saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins. May God grant thee wisdom, grace, discernment, and affection to deal rightly with such cases! Let it be the resolve of every Christian man and woman to imitate Abigail's wise way of turning David from his evil matter, but use to this end that winning way you have. I expect Abigail pleaded far better with David for Nabal than any man could have done, for she was a woman of understanding, and her beaming countenance caught the eye of the hasty and angry warrior, and he paused awhile to listen to her wise words, and so she won what she set out to gain. I pray that you may all use the powers which God has given you, not to lead others into sin, nor to confirm them in it, but to hold back, as far as you can, all who are about to commit any act of transgression.

1 Samuel 17:47 The Battle Is the Lord's

And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hands. — 1 Samuel 17:47

Here are always two ways of handling the same doctrine. The truth in the text may be used as a narcotic or as a stimulant. Some are so wicked as to say that if it be the Lord's battle, we are excused from fighting: as if, seeing the harvest is the Lord's, we might justly refuse to sow or reap. We see how David used this truth: it fired his soul and nerved his arm. We are all battling on one side or the other, and the worst of all are those who boast their neutrality. To the Christian man these words are so true that he may emblazon them on his banner, and write them as the headline of "the book of the wars of the Lord"

I. THE GREAT FACT: "The battle is the Lord's"

1. Inasmuch as it is for truth, right, holiness, love, and all those things which the Lord loves, the battle is the Lord's (Ps. 45:4).
2. His name and glory are the object of it. It is his honor to see righteousness established in the earth. The gospel greatly glorifies God: men strike at the divine honor when they oppose it, and the Lord will vindicate his own name; thus our conflict becomes God's battle (Isa. 40:5).
3. We fight only by his power. The Holy Ghost is our strength; we can do nothing without the Lord: hence the battle is his in the highest degree (2 Chron. 13:12; 20:12).
4. He has bidden us fight. At our monarch's bidding we go upon this warfare. We are not free-lances on our own account, but warriors under his command (1 Tim. 6:12).
5. He has bound himself to fight this battle. The reward promised to his Son, the covenant of grace, and the distinct pledges of his word, make it his battle. His fidelity is engaged to cause the Lord Jesus to divide the spoil with the strong. He must bruise Satan under our feet shortly (Rom. 16:20).
6. When the battle is fully won, the glory will be unto the Lord alone (Ps. 98:1). "He hath triumphed gloriously" (Exod. 15:1).

II. ITS INFLUENCE ON OUR MINDS.

1. We make light of opposition. Who can stand against the Lord?
2. We are not cowed by our weakness. "When I am weak then am I strong" The Lord will make us mighty in his own fight.
3. We throw ourselves into the work heartily. We owe so much to the Lord Jesus that we must fight for him (1 Cor. 16:13).
4. We choose the best weapons. We dare not fire the Lord's cannons with the devil's powder. Love, truth, zeal, prayer, and patience should be at their best in God's battle (2 Cor. 10:4).
5. We are confident of victory. Can the Lord be defeated? He vanquished Pharaoh, and he will do the same with Satan in due season (1 Cor. 15:25).

III. LESSONS IN CONNECTION WITH IT.

Make it God's cause. Never let it sink into a selfish matter.

By your motive. Aim at his glory only. Keep clear of all sinister designs.

By your method. Contend for the faith as Jesus would have contended, and not in a way which the Lord would disapprove.

By your faith. Can you not trust God to fight his own battles?

Do not forget that it is the Lord's cause.

Or you will bring self into it.

You will begin to judge the conflict; and as it is on too huge a scale for human comprehension, you will fall into many errors, expecting defeat where victory is sure, or hoping for success in ways which lead to disaster.

You will be enervated by fear, for the battle must end in your destruction if the Lord's hand be not with you.

Since it is his battle:

Be happy if personally defeated; for Jesus is still highly exalted.

Be calm and confident always; for there cannot be the smallest cause for fear as to the ultimate issue. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15).

This assembly does know that the battle is the Lord's. Does it not? Are all in this assembly on the conquering side? Why not look to him who is himself our salvation? He needs not our sword or spear; but will himself deliver those who trust in him.

Aids to Attention

Mr. Oncken told me that he was summoned before the burgomaster of Hamburg, who bade him cease from holding religious meetings. "Do you see that little finger?" cried he. "As long as I can move that finger I will put down the Baptists""Yes" said Oncken, "I see your little finger, and I also see a great arm which you cannot see. As long as the great arm of God is lifted on our behalf, your little finger will have no terror for us"

We are like William of Orange, with a few followers and an empty purse, making war against the master of half the world, with the mines of Peru for a treasury. But like William, too, when questioned concerning our resources, we can reply, "Before we took up this cause we entered into a close alliance with the King of kings" — David Gracey, in "The Sword and the Trowel"

When Tarik the Saracen went to vanquish Spain, he informed his followers that he had been favored by Heaven with a dream which had given him the fullest assurance of success. He had seen the prophet Mohammed surrounded by those holy saints and faithful companions who had adhered to his cause while he was an exile in Medina. They stood close by his couch with their swords unsheathed and their bows bent, and he heard the prophet say, "Take courage, O Tarik, and accomplish what thou art destined to perform" He then saw the prophet and his companions entering Spain as if to herald the way for the faithful followers of Islam. With a truer vision and more confident assurance may we enter the lists, go on to the struggle, and engage in the warfare of those who are fighting beneath the leadership of the cross. For, as surely as day conquers night, the cause of Heaven shall prevail, and he shall reign whose right it is to reign. — G. McMichael, in "The Baptist Magazine"

It is not the will of God that his people should be a timorous people. — Matthew Henry

It has been said of the persecuted Quakers, that, looking steadfastly at the strength of their Almighty leader, they —

Said not, who am I? but rather,

Luther's strength lay in the way in which he laid the burden of the Reformation upon the Lord. Continually in prayer he pleaded, "Lord, this is thy cause, not mine. Therefore, do thine own work; for if this gospel do not prosper, it will not be Luther alone who will be a loser, but thine own name will be dishonored."

Our Lord does not expect us to go a warfare at our own charges. No soldier finds himself in rations or ammunition. Our King is never ungenerous: if he sends us to battle he will go with us, both to cover our head and nerve our arm. If we will but care for his cause, he will care for us. Queen Elizabeth requested a merchant to go abroad on her service, and when he mentioned that his own business would be ruined, she replied, "You mind my business and I will mind yours" If it be but the Lord's battle, we may be sure that he will see us through with it.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 Samuel 2

We shall first read, in the first Book of Samuel, the second chapter, the song of Hannah. You remember that Hannah was a woman of a sorrowful spirit. A womanly sorrow preyed upon her heart, and brought her very low; not so low, however, as to prevent her from constantly praying to God. Her prayers were heard, and when she came up to the Lord's house, the joyful mother of son, he took care to remember her former supplication, and to offer unto God thanksgiving. Hannah was a woman of great ability, perhaps the chief poetess of either the Old or the New Testament. I expect that Mary borrowed not of her Magnificat from the song of Hannah, at least, the recollection of that song must have been strong upon her when she sang what we shall presently read.

1 Samuel 2:1

Her deliverance seemed to her to be a type and symbol of the way in which God delivers all his people, so she rejoiced in that great salvation which he works out for his people as a whole.

1 Samuel 2:1-3.

This is a very suggestive and forcible expression. God does not judge our actions by their appearance, but puts them into the scales of the sanctuary, and weighs them as carefully as bankers weigh gold.

1 Samuel 2:4-8.

What a clear view Hannah had of the sovereignty of God, and how plainly she perceived that God overrules all mortal things, and doeth as he wills! How she seemed to glory in the power of that almighty hand whose working unbelievers cannot discern, but which, to this gracious woman's opened eye, was so conspicuous everywhere!

With what jubilation she sings of the way in which God deals with men, putting down the mighty, and lifting up the lowly!

1 Samuel 2:8.

Whatever solid thing it is that bears up the frame of this natural world, it is God's power that cloth support it. He hath made all things that are, and he upholds them with the world of his power.

1 Samuel 2:9.

What an awful picture that is of the doom of the wicked, "Silent in darkness." We read of the one, in the parable of our Lord, who had not on the wedding garment, that he was speechless; and, at the last the wicked will have nothing to say, nothing with which to excuse themselves, nothing with which to comfort themselves, and all around them will be-

"Darkness, death, and long despair."

Vanquished in their fight with God, conquered for ever, "the wicked shall be silent in darkness." I hardly know of a more dreadful picture than that of a spirit sitting amidst the clammy damps of the thick darkness of desolation, for ever silent.

1 Samuel 2:9,10

That is the song of this happy woman; and if we read the last three verses of Psalm 113., we shall see that the writer seems to have studied Hannah's song, and to have moulded his Psalm upon it: "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of

the dunghill, that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord.”

1 Samuel 2:9-12.

Yet they were priests, and when a man stands up to minister in holy things, and by virtue of his office is supposed to know the Lord, yet really does not, he stands, not only in a position of the utmost guilt, but also in a position in which he is never likely to get a blessing. He seems to be beyond the reach of the ordinary agencies of mercy, because he has assumed a position to which he has no right.

1 Samuel 2:12.

What a very dreadful thing it was that these sons of a man of God, the sons of God's high priest, were not themselves sons of God, but sons of Belial, foul-hearted, foul-mouthed, foul-living men, who knew not the very God at whose altar they served, and in whose house they lived!

1 Samuel 2:13, 14.

There was no such rule or regulation given by God; but these sons of Eli had made rules for themselves. It is always wrong to alter the regulations of the Lord's house. Even the least of them should be obeyed exactly as it stands.

God had appointed a proper portion for his priests so that they who ministered at the altar might live of the altar. But these wicked men were not content with the divine allowance, so they must needs rob the altars of God, and show such greed as to make the appointed sacrifices to be obnoxious to the people.

1 Samuel 2:15, 16.

There were sacrifices in which God had his portion in the burning of the fat upon the altar, and the priest had a portion allotted to him; and the offerer himself had a portion upon which he fed, in token of his communion and fellowship with God. The priest ought to have been content with what was an ample portion for him; but the greed of these young men prostituted holy things, and defiled the house of the Lord.

It is a terrible thing when God's servants are domineering and oppressive towards the people of God. They who should be the gentlest of all, and the most self-denying of all must not talk as this priest's servant did, and he no doubt talked as the young men whom he served bade him talk.

1 Samuel 2:17.

They not only grieved God, but they also grieved his people so much that they ceased to come where their consciences were wounded, and where their tenderest sensibilities were perpetually shocked.

1 Samuel 2:18-24

That is all that the godly old man said to his wicked sons. He was far too gentle in his way of reproofing them. He was evidently afraid of his own sons, -not the only man who has been in the same predicament.

1 Samuel 2:18.

What a contrast there was between little Samuel and the sons of Eli! He was not led astray by the evil example of those who were older than himself, and to whom he would naturally look up because of their high office. This dear child escaped contamination because God's grace preserved him and also because his mother's prayers, like a wall of fire, were round about him.

1 Samuel 2:19-21.

She lent one child to the Lord, and she had five others given to her. God always pays good interest on all his loans. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord." It would be well if more would see how much per cent they could get from such a loan as that.

1 Samuel 2:22-25.

That is the way Eli rebuked his sons. "And very gently he did it, dear old man," says someone. Yes, but don't you imitate him; for, if you do, you may also inherit the curse that came upon his house. There are other virtues in this world besides gentleness. There is sometimes needed the power to speak sternly, — to rebuke with firmness and severity; and Eli had not this. He was an easy-going old soul. Ah! but when the honor of God is at stake, such action as his is out of place. It is all very well to have everybody saying, "Mr. So-and-so is such an amiable man; there is no sectarianism and no bigotry about him; he never says a word to offend anybody." Just so, but Martin Luther was not at all that kind of man, and where should we have been without such protests as his?

1 Samuel 2:25.

They had gone so far in their sin that the Lord permitted them to go further still, and to bring punishment upon themselves for their evil deeds.

1 Samuel 2:26.

How vividly the Holy Spirit brings out the contrast between Samuel and these two wicked young men! They grew on in sin, but the child Samuel grew on in favor both with God and with men. The Lord loves to watch his lilies growing among the sharp thorns, and to see how brightly his stars are shining in the blackest night.

1 Samuel 2:26-30

“But I said it conditionally upon thy good behavior. I installed thee into the priest’s office for life, and thy sons might have continued in it after thee if they had kept my commandment.”

1 Samuel 2:28-30.

There was a condition attached to that promise, — a condition implied, if not expressly stated.

1 Samuel 2:30, 31.

That is, “the strength of thy family shall be taken away,” —

1 Samuel 2:31-33.

God does not think little of sin in his ministers, and in his sanctuary. There is a difference between sin and sin. The place where it is committed may make a difference, and the office of the man who commits it may make a difference. Sin makes its culmination when the sinner is highly favored, and brought into close relationship with God by office.

1 Samuel 2:34, 35.

No doubt first referring to Zadok, who succeeded afterwards to the priests office; but looking further forward still to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the ever-faithful High Priest who always does according to that which is in the mind and heart of the Father.

1 Samuel 2:36.

Or, rather, as the margin has it, “Put me, I pray thee, into somewhat about the priesthood.” “Put me into something that has to do with the priesthood.” So the house of Eli passed from its honorable elevation into degradation and poverty. However highly favored any of us may have been, let us never presume upon that, and turn aside to sin. If we do not know the Lord, and do not honor him in all the acts that we perform in his name, it may be that a like degradation to that of Eli’s house may come upon us because we have despised the will and the words of the Most High.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 Samuel 3

The same sad prophecy that the Lord communicated to old Eli was also revealed in a very special manner to young Samuel. Take warning, fathers and mothers, by this experience of old Eli.

1 Samuel 3:1.

Samuel was but a child, yet he was a faithful servant of God up to the light he had received. The grown-up sons of Eli were rebelling against God, but “the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord.” It is a great aggravation of sin for ungodly men to persist in it when even little children rebuke them by their careful walk and conversation; it made the sin of Eli’s sons all the worse. Because “the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli”

God spoke with very few, and his speech to them was private: “There was no open vision.” What was spoken was very rich and rare, but there was little of it. The Lord, in anger at the sin of Eli’s sons, took away the spirit of prophecy from the land.

1 Samuel 3:2

He was a good old man, but he was almost worn out, and he had been unfaithful to God in not keeping his family right. He must have found some comfort in having such a sweet and dear companion and servant as little Samuel was.

1 Samuel 3:3- 5.

Servants and children are to be attentive and obedient to the calls they hear, but masters must also be gentle, and kind, and considerate to them. Eli did not call the child a fool, or speak harshly to him; he knew that Samuel had a good intention, and even if he had been mistaken, and no one had called him, yet it was a good thing on the part of the child to act as if he had been spoken to; and Eli quietly and gently said, "I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down."

1 Samuel 3:6.

He felt sure of it, confident that he had not been mistaken.

1 Samuel 3:6,7

There was the Beginning of the work of grace in his heart, he was well-intentioned; but as yet God had not revealed himself to him: "Samuel did not yet know the Lord," —

1 Samuel 3:7,8

We do not blame Samuel, for he was but a child, and spiritual under. standing had not yet fully come to him; but what shall I say of some to whom God has spoken for years till their hair is grey, and yet they have not understood the voice of the Lord even to this hour? I pray God that he may call them yet again The Lord did not disdain to call Samuel four times, for when he means effectually to call, if one call is not sufficient, he will call again and again and again: "The Lord called Samuel again the third time."

1 Samuel 3:8,9

It was a chastisement to Eli that God did not speak directly to him, but sent him a message by another; and it must have been very humiliating to the aged man of God that God should select a little child to be his messenger to him. Yet, as Eli had not been faithful, it was great mercy on God's part to speak to him at all; and no doubt the old man did not resent the fact that God, instead of speaking to one of his sons, or to himself, spoke by this little child. Eli loved Samuel, and finding that the Lord intended to use this child, he did not grow jealous and angry, and begin to damp the child's spirit; but he gave him wise directions how to act in case God should speak to him again.

1 Samuel 3:9

Come, Lord, my God. My soul invites you earnestly and waits for you eagerly. Come to me, Jesus, my Well Beloved, and plant fresh flowers in my garden such as I see blooming in such perfection in Your matchless character! Come, my Father, who is the Husbandman, and deal with me in your tenderness and prudence! Come, Holy Spirit, and bedew my whole nature, as the herbs are now moistened with the evening dews. Oh, that God would speak to me! "Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3:9). Oh, that He would walk with me; I am ready to give up my whole heart and mind to Him. I am only asking what He delights to give. (Daily Help)

1 Samuel 3:10

From which we learn that there was some hind of appearance to Samuel such as that which was manifested to others. Some spiritual being was before him, though he could not make out the form thereof: "Jehovah came, and stood," —

This time the child's name was spoken twice, as though God would say to him, "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine? It was no doubt to make a deeper impression upon the child's mind that his name was twice called by the Lord.

You observe that he did not say, "Lord;" perhaps he hardly dared to take that sacred name upon his lips. He was impressed with such solemn awe at the name of God, that he said, "Speak; for thy servant heareth." I wish that some Christian men of my acquaintance would leave out the Lord's name a little in their prayers, for we may take the name of the Lord in vain even in our supplications. When the heathen are addressing their gods, they are accustomed to repeat their names over and over again. "O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!" or, as the Hindoos do when they cry, "Ram! Ram! Ram! Ram!" "repeating the name of their god; but as for us, when we think of the infinitely-glorious One, we dare not needlessly repeat his name.

Do you ever get alone and sit still and say, as Samuel did, in the dead of night, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth"? If you never do that, the little child Samuel may well rebuke you. He was willing that God should speak to him. But, oh, we are so busy! So busy! So sadly busy!

Samuel was asleep, yet he heard God's voice. But I know some people who are awake, yet have not heard it.

1 Samuel 3:11-13

What a striking expression,—"the iniquity which he knoweth." There is a good deal of iniquity about us which we do not know; that is a sin of ignorance. But deep down in his heart Eli knew that he had been afraid to speak to his sons about their sins, and that, when he had spoken, it had been in such lenient terms that they made light of them. Possibly, he had never chastened them when they were young, and he had not spoken to them sharply when they were older. Remember that he was a judge, he washing priest, and he ought not to have allowed his sons to remain priests is all if they were behaving themselves filthily at the door of the tabernacle. He ought to have dealt with them as he would have dealt with anybody else; he did not, so God said, "I trowe told him, that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth;"-

1 Samuel 3:11-13

A man said to me, one day, "I never laid my hand upon my children;" and I answered, "Then I think it is very likely that God will lay his hand upon you." "Oh!" he said, "I have not even spoken sharply to them." "Then," I replied, "it is highly probable that God will speak very sharply to you; for it is not God's will that parents should leave their children unrestrained in their sin."

1 Samuel 3:14,15.

I wonder whether he went to sleep; I should think not. After such visitation and revelation, it is a marvel that the child could lie still. One wonders that he did not go at once to Eli, but then the message was so heavy that he could not be in a hurry to deliver it: "And Samuel lay until the morning," —

1 Samuel 3:15

Dear child! There are some of us who, if God had spoken to us as he had spoken to Samuel, would feel a deal too big to go and open doors any more. If God were to come, and speak to some who are poor, they would run away from their trade. If God were to speak to some who are young, they would give themselves mighty sirs. But Samuel meekly accepted the high honor God had conferred upon him; and when he rose in the morning, he went about his usual duties: "He opened the doors of the house of the Lord."

The old man must have felt that it was nothing very pleasant; still, he wanted to know the Lord's messages. I hope he was in such a frame of mind that he could say, "Lord, show me the worst of my case! Let me know all thy mind about it, and let me not go on with my eyes bandaged, in ignorance of thy will concerning me."

Samuel loved his foster father, and for him to mention the tremendous doom pronounced on Eli's house must have caused him great grief of spirit. But he bravely repeated the dread words of the Most High. There are certain truths in God's Word which we tremble to think on. Do you dream that we have any pleasure in the doctrine of eternal punishment? We speak of the wrath to come with fear and trembling, but we speak of it because we cannot escape from the conviction that it is taught in the Word of God. As Samuel was compelled to tell Eli of the unalterable curse that God had pronounced on his household, so must God's faithful servants speak of the doom of the wicked and never flinch from warning them. We must speak all the gospel, or else the blood of souls will stain our skirts at the last great day. However painful a duty it may be, it is nonetheless binding on us.

1 Samuel 3:16-18

Samuel was obeying the divine command which had not then been given: "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully."

1 Samuel 3:18

This was a grand speech of old Eli. Terrible as it might be, he bowed his head to the divine sentence, and owned that it was just.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 Samuel 9

1 Samuel 9:1, 2.

Here we have the pedigree of the great king of Israel, Saul, the son of Kish. He was descended from a noble tribe, though not a very large one, and he appears to have been endowed with a very notable personal appearance: "There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people;" and to the Israelites of that

day, who had got away from looking up to God, and to the more valuable accomplishments of the mind and the heart, the striking personal appearance of Saul would be a great attraction and recommendation.

1 Samuel 9:3, 4.

He was diligent in his father's service, even though that service meant a fruitless journey in search of some straying asses. As he was then faithfully discharging the duties of his station in life; he was the man who was likely to rise to some higher position. He was the son of "a mighty man of power" or substance, and yet, so simple were the manners of the time that he was sent, with one of the servants, to look for the lost donkeys, and he appears to have started at once to carry out the commission which had been entrusted to him. Learn from Saul's obedience, dear young people, never to despise any duty which falls to your lot in the ordinary avocations of daily life; you will be preparing yourselves for some higher position by doing well what you are galled to do now.

1 Samuel 9:5.

There was evidently in Saul, at that time, a great considerateness of spirit; he wished to save his father from having any painful anxiety concerning his son and his servant, for Saul put both together when he said "us." It is most desirable that young men, in the present day, should have a tender regard for those to whom they owe their being, and who have done so much for them in the years of their tender infancy; and that all young people should be careful never needlessly to give their parents one anxious thought on their account.

1 Samuel 9:6.

In this case, as in so many others, the servant seems to have had more grace than his young master had, for the name of Samuel the prophet was not unknown to him, and he knew where the "man of God" lived, and told Saul a good deal about him, and gave him some good advice as to what they should do. In any case where the servant, and not the master, knows the Lord, it is well, when occasion offers, and it can be done prudently and discreetly, for the servant to speak up, and give a good word for the cause of God and truth.

1 Samuel 9:7.

He says nothing about any money that he may have had in his own pocket, and again his servant has to lead the way.

1 Samuel 9:8, 9.

He was a man who looked further ahead than others could; for, under divine inspiration, he could see into futurity.

1 Samuel 9:10

Saul was willing to be liberal at his servant's expense, and to let him give "the fourth part of a shekel of silver" to the prophet for him, and we have known some other folk who have been very generous in giving away the money of other people rather than their own.

1 Samuel 9:10-12.

These young maidens were evidently well informed, they knew where the man of God was, they knew what he was going to do, and they knew the time of the sacrifice or feast. Let us hope that they not only knew all this, but that they entered into the true spirit of it.

1 Samuel 9:13-19.

Saul evidently did not know Samuel, and it appears from this fact that he was not a gracious, religious man. He had the charm of a fine outward appearance, and he probably had many of the domestic virtues, but he was not one who lived in the fear of God.

1 Samuel 9:19-21.

There was a very becoming modesty about him, he was really surprised and startled that such an honor should be in store for him; he had many natural virtues; but, alas the grace of God was not upon him.

1 Samuel 9:22-24.

The right shoulder of the animal that was offered in sacrifice was part of the priest's portion, and this shoulder Samuel now ordered the cook to set before Saul as he sat in the place of honor.

1 Samuel 9:24, 25.

For quietness and seclusion, Samuel took the young man upstairs to the flat roof of the house, and they walked to and fro, in the cool of the evening, talking about the high destiny to which Saul was called, and Samuel doubtless giving him valuable instructions

concerning his new and important duties.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 Samuel 10

1 Samuel 10:1, 2. And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on, but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? When thou art departed from me to day, —

He gave Saul some signs by which he could confirm the truth of all that he had spoken to him: "When thou art departed from me to-day," —

1 Samuel 10:2.

It was well for Samuel to send Saul, with brilliant prospects opening before him, to the sepulcher of the mother of his tribe. Oh, that we were all wise enough to think often of our last hours! Communion with the grave might even help us to communion with heaven. Samuel said to Saul, "Thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulcher," —

1 Samuel 10:2, 3.

Going to offer to God a meat offering and a thank offering. How could Samuel have known all this if God had not anointed his eyes, and made him a seer who could see what others saw not?

1 Samuel 10:4.

"Thou shalt take from them thy first tribute as a king. They shall give thee two loaves of bread, to teach thee to avoid all luxury, and not to be a king who delighteth in delicate and dainty fare. Thou shalt fare as the people do."

1 Samuel 10:5, 6.

"Thou shalt speak with enthusiasm about God; moved with a holy passion, thou shalt speak like a man inspired."

1 Samuel 10:6.

Note that Samuel did not say to Saul, "Thou shalt be turned into a new man," for that is what he never was. He become, for awhile, another man, a different man from what he had been before, but he never became a gracious man.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 Samuel 12

1 Samuel 12:1

In Samuel's old age, the people desired to have a king; and though it went much against the grain, yet, by the Lord's advice, Samuel consented to it. Here he makes his last protest.

"I have not stood in your way. I have not sought mine own honor. I have at once frankly resigned my office among you."

1 Samuel 12:2

"My sons come here to-day, not as my successors, but as fellow-subjects with you of your newly-chosen king; they are not in opposition to him any more than I am."

Like an old servant who is about to be dismissed, Samuel asks them to bear witness to his character; and this he does, partly as a lesson to the king who had taken his place, and partly as a clearance of himself in rendering up his charge.

1 Samuel 12:3

It is so usual a thing, among Oriental judges and rulers, to expect bribes, that you cannot, in those countries, take a single step in a court of law without bribery. It was therefore a very unusual circumstance that Samuel should be able to challenge anybody to say that he had ever wrongfully taken so much as a single farthing. And the great rulers, in those countries, are accustomed to enrich themselves by levying heavy taxes upon the people. But Samuel affirmed that his services had been perfectly gratuitous, so that all he had done for the people had cost them nothing. If they had any fault to find with his government, it could only be because it had been so just and also so cheap; his yoke had indeed been easy to their necks. What a fine sight it is to see an old man able thus to challenge all who had known him, throughout a long life, to testify that he had not led a selfish life, or studied his own interests even in the least degree!

1 Samuel 12:4,5

In the most solemn way, they cleared him; when he rendered to them the account of his stewardship, they all bore witness that everything had been done, not merely according to strict rectitude, but in the most generous spirit of self-consecration. May all of us be enabled so to live that, when our sun goes down, it shall be as cloudless a sunset as was that of Samuel!

1 Samuel 12:6-8

A remembrance of past mercies is very profitable to us. National mercies ought not to be forgotten, and personal favors should always be fresh in our memory. Alas! the old proverb is only too true, "Bread that is eaten is soon forgotten." So is it even with the bread which God gives us; we eat it, yet soon forget the hand that fed us. Let it not be so with us.

1 Samuel 12:9-11

They oft transgressed, and were as often afflicted; but whenever they returned to the Lord with their confession of sin, and again sought his mercy, he was always quick to deliver them. Let us profit by their experience. Have we brought ourselves into trouble through sin? Have we wandered and backslidden, and are our hearts therefore heavy? Let us return unto the Lord, and confess our sin, for he hath not cast us away, He will turn against the voice of our cry; he will forgive us, and graciously receive us unto himself again.

1 Samuel 12:12,13

"He has consented to your request, though it was a foolish one." Remember, brethren, it is not every answer to prayer that is a token of God's favor. If our prayers are very foolish, and even if there is sin in them, God may sometimes give us what we ask in order to show us our folly, and make us smart for having offered such a prayer. Though, under God's government, they had been most highly privileged, they must needs have a king, like the nations which were not so favored. "So now," says Samuel, "God has given you this king, so do your best with him." Samuel had a hopeful spirit; and he hoped that, though the circumstances were not as he would have wished them to be, yet that the people might do well after all.

1 Samuel 12:14-17

This was to be a token to them that Samuel was God's prophet. On a previous occasion, in answer to his prayer, God had thundered against the Philistines but, this time, his thunder was his voice against Israel.

In reading the Bible, we must always remember that it was not written in England but in Palestine. Wheat harvest there takes place about the month of May, when the weather is usually settled, and such things as thunder and rain are almost unknown. It was extraordinary, therefore, as we speak of "a bolt out of the blue."

1 Samuel 12:18,19

That thunderstorm was a powerful preacher to them, and the rain drops, that fell so copiously, brought the tear drops into their eyes. The phenomena of nature frequently impress men with a sense of God's power, and prostrate them before him.

1 Samuel 12:20-22

How gently the old prophet speaks! What a change from the pealing thunder to this gracious voice! It seems like the clear shining after rain.

1 Samuel 18:1.

Jonathan, the brave young soldier who had himself done great exploits, naturally admired the youthful warrior who had slain the Philistine giant, and also admired the modesty of his speech when he returned with the head of Goliath in his hand: "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

1 Samuel 18:2-4.

No doubt, one suitable to his rank as the heir apparent to the throne of Israel.

1 Samuel 18:4, 5.

Probably, Jonathan had previously occupied that position; but now that David is called to supplant him, Jonathan is not jealous of him, but he loves him as he loves his own soul.

1 Samuel 18:5-7.

Singing in chorus, with answering refrains,-

1 Samuel 18:7-9.

This shows how envy will destroy a man's own peace of mind, as well as make him plot against the one of whom he is envious. Instead of being thankful to God for sending him such a valiant champion as David to deliver both himself and his people, Saul is full of malice towards the young hero simply because he receives his due need of praise for his victory over the giant. "Saul eyed David" with an evil and envious eye-looked askance upon him, and determined to do him mischief whenever he could.

1 Samuel 18:10.

Probably, talking wildly and foolishly,-

1 Samuel 18:10. And David played with his hand, as at other times:

That is, as he had, at other times, played upon the harp to chase away the evil spirit.

1 Samuel 18:10-12.

David was not afraid of Saul, although Saul was the man with the javelin, and with the murderous, malicious spirit, which prompted him to hurl it at the young harpist. David, guileless, brave, honest, trustful, was not afraid of Saul, but "Saul was afraid of David,"-

1 Samuel 18:12-14.

And, young man, you also will be wise if God is with you, and you will be able to behave yourself wisely, discreetly, prosperously, as the word seems to mean. Even when malicious eyes are fixed upon you, they will not be able to find any fault in you if the Lord is with you. You will win favor where you least expect it, if you do but so live that God can be with you, if you keep the vessel of your nature so pure that the Master can use it. May it be your portion and mine to have it said of each of us, "The Lord was with him"!

1 Samuel 18:15, 16.

This love of the people only caused Saul's hatred of David to be carried to a still greater excess; but Jonathan still loved David, and promised to cleave to him whatever might happen. In the 20th chapter, we can read still more concerning this faithful friendship.

1 Samuel 18:3 Love Plighting Troth

Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. — 1 Samuel 18:3

And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul. — 1 Samuel 20:17

Why so many sermons on Jonah, and so few on Jonathan? Are the cross-grained more worthy of study than the gentle and generous? This noble prince counted it his joy to further the interests of the man who was to be preferred before him. There was something very beautiful in Jonathan, and this came out in his unselfish, magnanimous love of David. How much more beauty is there in the unparalleled love of Jesus to us poor sinners!

I. GREAT LOVE DESIRES TO BIND ITSELF TO THE BELOVED ONE.

"Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him"

The covenant was made, not so much because of their mutual love, but because Jonathan loved David. "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" (2 Sam. 1:26).

1. Jesus bound himself to us by covenant bonds. He undertook the charge of us as our Surety in the covenant of grace.

He entered into our nature to represent us, thus becoming the second Adam (1 Cor. 15:47).

He pledged himself to redeem us with the sacrifice of himself. "He loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

He took us into union with himself. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30).

He has bound up our future lives with his own. "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19) "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am" (John 17:24) "Ye in me and I in you" Seven golden words.

He has made us share in all that he has, changing garments with us, as in this narrative (1 Sam. 18:4).

He could not come nearer to us, or he would.

In all these covenant deeds he proves his perfect love.

2. Jesus would have us bound to him on our part: therefore he would, have us,

Submit ourselves to the saving power of his love.

Love him for his great love; even as David loved Jonathan.

Own that we are his by choice, purchase, and power; and do this deliberately and solemnly, as men make a covenant.

Join ourselves to his people; for he reckons them to be himself.

Show kindness to all who are his, for his sake; even as David was good to Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9).

More and more merge our interests in his, and find our gain in advancing his honor (2 Cor. 5:14-15). "Bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God" (1 Sam. 25:29). What an expression! Yet how true!

3. If this be our Lord's desire, shall we not fulfill it?

Let the bonds be mutual and indissoluble (Song of Sol. 2:16).

Let us accept the priceless gifts of the Prince, and then give ourselves to him without reserve.

Let us love him as we love ourselves, for he loved us better than himself (Matt. 27:42).

Let this be a time of love, a season for renewing our vows, a time of fuller self-merging into Jesus (Gal. 2:20).

II. GREAT LOVE DESIRES RENEWED PLEDGES FROM ITS OBJECT. "Jonathan caused David to swear again"

Not out of selfishness, but from a sacred jealousy. "The Lord thy God is a jealous God." See also Song of Solomon 8:6.

It is the only return love can receive. We can love Jesus, we can do no more. "O love the Lord, all ye his saints" (Ps. 31:23).

It is for our highest benefit. Bound to the horns of the altar we are free. Wedded to Christ we are blessed.

We are so chill already that we have need to renew the flame of affection with flesh coals of loving communion.

We are so tempted and assailed that the more solemnly and the more often we renew our vows, the better for us.

We are most unhappy if drawn aside: every backsliding is misery, Therefore, let us be bound firmly to our Lord.

Hence he invites us to new pledges (Song of Sol. 9:8).

Our first surrender was attended with a solemn dedication.

Our baptism was his own appointed token of our being one with him in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:4).

Our communions should be hallowed renewals of our covenant:

"Let every act of worship be,
Like our espousals, Lord, to thee;
Like the dear hour when from above,
We first received thy pledge of love.

Our restorations from sickness ought to be remembered with special praise, and we should pay our vows in the presence of the Lord's people (Ps. 116:8, 14).

Our flesh conditions should be attended with extraordinary devotion. Removal, promotion, marriage, birth of children, death of relatives, etc., are notable seasons for rededication.

Our times of spiritual revival, when we are full of hearty fellowship with the Lord and his saints, should be new departures.

Come and let us renew our loves at this good hour.

Let us get alone, and express our pure desires before our well-beloved, when only he can hear.

Let us think of some special act of devotion by which to express our affection, and let us carry it out at once. Have we no alabaster box Can we not wash the Beloved's feet, and kiss them with reverent affection

Windows of Agate

A little girl was playing with her doll in a room where her mother was busily engaged in some literary work. When she had finished her writing, she said, "You can come now, Alice, I have done all I want to do this morning" The child ran to her mother, exclaiming, "I am so glad, for I wanted to love you so much." "But I thought you were very happy with dolly." "Yes, mother, I was, but I soon get tired of loving her, for she cannot love me back" "And is that why you love me — because I can love you back? — That is one why, but not the first or best why." "What is the first and best why?" "Because you loved me when I was too little to love you back" Mother's eyes filled with tears as she whispered, " We love HIM because HE first loved us."

Lord Brooke was so delighted with the friendship of Sir Philip Sydney that he ordered to be engraved upon his tomb nothing but this, — "Here lies the friend of Sir Philip Sydney."

Christ and the believer that loves him live as if they had but one soul betwixt them. It is not the distance between earth and heaven that can separate them: true love will find out Christ wherever he is. When he was upon the earth, they that loved him kept his company; and now that he is gone to heaven, and out of sight, those that love him are frequently sending up their hearts unto him. And, indeed, they never think themselves intelligent in any thing that is worth the knowing, until they have made their souls much acquainted and familiar with their crucified Savior (1 Cor. 2:2). — The Morning Exercises

"Lovest thou me" "Feed my sheep" It was a tender act on our Lord's part to allow Peter three times to speak his love, and then all the rest of his life to exercise that love by giving him work to do. Jesus, the Friend, asks thrice, and then appoints a token: Peter, out of sincere love, answers thrice, and renders the life-long token. Love is conspicuous on either side.

Saints are to look upon themselves as wholly the Lord's, in opposition to all competitors. The Lord will not divide with rivals; if ye take him these must go. The soul till it comes within the covenant is in a restless case, like a bee going from flower to flower, or a bird from bush to bush; but when it is married to Christ it is settled with him, and breaks its league with all others.

Remember, the covenant ye have entered into is an offensive and defensive league. You are to have common friends and common foes with the Lord. His people must be your people, and his enemies your enemies.

Remember that your ears are bored to the Lord's doorposts, you have opened your mouth to the Lord, and you cannot go back. You must be his without end, and without interruption. It is a laudable practice of saints to go over the bargain again, hold by it, seal it afresh, and evermore look at themselves as the Lord's. There is a backsliding disposition in the best; but a renewal of our covenant is an antidote for this poison. Moreover, he that hath truly made such a covenant has given himself to Christ without reserve, and hath put a blank into the Lord's hand, saying, with Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This is well-pleasing unto our God. —

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 Samuel 20

1 Samuel 20:1, 2.

And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: He could not think that his father really intended to take the life of his friend.

David had an enemy upon the throne; and God gave him a friend in the heir to the throne. If thou hast an enemy, thou hast also a friend; God sets the one over against the other in his providence, do thou set the one over against the other in thy thoughts, and be thou comforted thereby. David might have been very heavy at heart about Saul, and so he was; but Jonathan came in to be the makeweight on the other side, and turn the scale in favor of the son of Jesse. Of him David enquired, "What is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?"

1 Samuel 20:2

One admires Jonathan for defending Saul; he will not believe anything bad of his father. Children should never believe anything evil of their parents unless it is forced upon them; this rule is a part of the command, "Honour thy father and thy mother."

1 Samuel 20:2, 3. Behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me; and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so. And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes: and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.

He had so often escaped, as it were by the skin of his teeth, from his cruel persecutor, that he knew himself to be in a position of extreme peril.

1 Samuel 20:3

He wanted Jonathan to believe the truth, namely, that Saul was seeking to kill him, and that he was in great danger from the wrath of the king; therefore he took a double oath that it was even so. It is not for Christians to imitate David in this respect, for our Lord's command to his disciples is, "Swear not at all; but let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

1 Samuel 20:4. Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.

Such was his love for David that he would make no exception; whatever there was that David wished him to do, he would do it for him.

Love promises large things. One is reminded here of the love of Christ, and of how he says, "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

1 Samuel 20:5, 6

The family of David was a godly household, and they had a meeting, not for pleasure-making, but for sacrifice; a special family gathering for worship, and David must needs be there. He spake no untruth; he did desire to go to Bethlehem.

1 Samuel 20:7,8

These two men had entered into a solemn covenant before God that they would be friends for life, so David pleaded with Jonathan. He was innocent, he knew that he had done no ill, and therefore he put it to Jonathan, "If I am what thy father thinks me to be, slay me thyself."

1 Samuel 20:9-11

Quite alone, away from their troops, where they could talk together without being overheard. These two good men sought private fellowship; and do you not think that, if we love Christ, we shall want to get alone with him? Shall we not say to him, "Let us go out into the field"? Where there is no private devotion, there is no devotion at all. If we never get alone with Christ, we are altogether strangers both to himself and also to his love.

1 Samuel 20:5-10

What am I to do in such a case as that? If thy father should turn against thee as well as against me, what is to be done then?

1 Samuel 20:11. And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

To get quite alone, that they might express to one another the feelings of their inmost hearts, and also might consult together without any risk of being overheard.

1 Samuel 20:12-15

In Jonathan's great love, he wished not only to be David's friend himself, but that all his children should be in love with the same valiant hero. Brethren, our love to Christ makes us long to see our children love him, too. I will not believe that you have any love to Christ unless you pray that your boys and your girls may also love him. Dear children of godly parents, our heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may love your mother's God, and trust your father's Savior.

1 Samuel 20:12-17

Thus were these two men bound together by ties of mutual love; may we be thus bound to Jesus! Oh, that there may be such love between us and our Lord as shall even excel the love of Jonathan and David!

1 Samuel 20:16-18

David was not a nobody; if he was away, he was missed. I wish that all attendants at the house of prayer would remember that, when they are away, they are missed. Perhaps some of you have come to-night from some little chapel where you will be greatly missed; I am not going to thank you for coming here, because I am possibly unconsciously causing pain to your pastor, and I do not want to rob him of one of his sheep. David's seat is empty to-night, and he will be missed.

1 Samuel 20:19-23

Thus be arranged how to let David know in case he was in danger. Love is thoughtful, love would keep its object out of harm's way; therefore, as we love any, let us try to preserve them from sin, let us endeavor to warn them when temptation is near, that they may not fall by the hand of the enemy.

1 Samuel 20:24-27

David was the son of Jesse, but he was Saul's own son-in-law; yet, out of contempt, the angry king calls him "the son of Jesse."

1 Samuel 20:28-30

He was in such a passion that he began to abuse his own wife, the mother of his own son. In the East, if you want to sting a man most severely, give ill names to his mother; and surely, in the West as well, if anyone has anything to say against a man's mother, it cuts her son to his heart if he is what he ought to be.

1 Samuel 20:31

Saul knew that David, and not Jonathan, was to succeed him on the throne. He gives Jonathan warning of that fact, yet seeks his rival's life.

1 Samuel 20:32

Very reasonable questions, very properly put.

1 Samuel 20:33-42

Behold the love of Jonathan and David! Here was a brother born for adversity, who clung to his friend in the day of danger, and even jeopardized his own life that he might defend David. Let us see here a faint emblem of what our great Friend, the Lord Jesus, has done for us.

1 Samuel 20:39

I believe a very large majority of churchgoers know no more of what the preaching is about than did Jonathan's lad when he ran after the arrows. Their flight David well understood, but the lad knew nothing of the matter. Too many are merely the stolid, unthinking, slumbering worshipers of an unknown God.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 Samuel 30

David had joined the army of the Philistines; but, as the Philistine lords suspected him, he was obliged to leave, so he went back to the little city of Ziklag, which King Achish had given him.

1 Samuel 30:1, 2

They were roving bands of marauders, and no doubt preserved the women alive to sell them for slaves, the main object of those robbers being gain,

1 Samuel 30:3, 4.

Weary with their marching, they had hoped to rest at home; but now that everything was gone, the strong men, who were not often moved to weeping, wept till they could weep no longer; the very sources of tears were dried up by the exceeding heat of their grief.

1 Samuel 30:5, 6.

These rough men, who had not all joined him from the best of motives, now turned against him for having left the city defenseless.

1 Samuel 30:6.

Blessed faith, that finds a secure shelter even amidst the ashes of his burned home, and when even his own followers have turned against him!

1 Samuel 30:7, 8.

The Hebrew runs, "Pursue, for overtaking thou shalt overtake, and recovering thou shalt recover;" that is to say, the work shall be done perfectly, and so it was.

1 Samuel 30:9-17.

It is noteworthy that the four hundred who escaped were equal in number to the whole of David's attacking force; so that, manifestly, God was with these valiant men, or else they would have been completely outnumbered.

1 Samuel 30:13

"To whom belongest thou?" (1 Sam. 30:13). Let me assist you, reader, in your response. Have you been "born again"? If you have, you belong to Christ, but without the new birth you cannot be His. In whom do you trust? Those who believe in Jesus are the sons of God. Whose work are you doing? You are sure to serve your master, for he whom you serve is thereby owned to be your lord. What is your conversation? Is it heavenly, or is it earthly? What have you learned of your master? If you have served your time with Jesus, it will be said of you, as it was of Peter and John, "They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). (Daily Help)

1 Samuel 30:18-20.

That which was over and above what had been taken from Ziklag was very properly appropriated by David.

I thought, as I read that "David recovered all," how truly it can be said that the greater Son of David has recovered all. All that was lost by sin, our glorious and victorious Captain has recovered. What then shall be his spoil? It was foretold that "He shall divide the spoil with the strong." Let your hearts and mine, and all we are, and all we have, be yielded up to him, and let us say of it all, "This is Jesu's spoil, and to him be glory evermore!"

1 Samuel 30:21.

There are some fainting and sick folk detained at home; I pray our blessed Lord to salute every one of them wherever they are at this moment.

1 Samuel 30:22, 23.

They were poor brethren for David to have. They were brethren by race, but not brethren by grace Yet David was wise in speaking to them as he did. It is always well, when you are opposing people, to do it courteously. You can often prevail with soft words if you have strong arguments. David said, "Ye shall not do so, my brethren,"

1 Samuel 30:20 David's Spoil

This is David's spoil. — 1 Samuel 30:20

We see in David a type of the Lord Jesus, in his conflicts and victories, and as in a thousand things beside, so also in the spoil. To him as a warrior against evil the spoils of war belong. Jehovah saith, "I will divide him a portion with the great; and he shall divide the spoil with the strong" (Isa. 53:12). We may say of him, "Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey" (Ps. 76:4).

I. ALL THE GOOD THAT WE ENJOY COMES TO US THROUGH JESUS. All that we held under the law the spoiler has taken.

By our own efforts we can never gain what we have lost.

Our great Leader has made us share the spoil.

1. It was for David's sake that God gave success to the hosts of Israel.
2. It was under David's leadership that they won the battle.

Even thus is Jesus the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10).

Within us he has wrought a great deliverance. He has overcome the strong man, taken from him all his armor, and divided his spoils (Luke 11:22). He can say with Job, "I plucked the spoil out of his teeth" (Job 29:17).

We had lost all by sin, but Jesus has restored it: "Then I restored that which I took not away" (Ps. 69:4). "David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away" (verse 18).

Our very selves were captive; he has set us free. "David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them" (verses 18-19).

Our eternal heritage was forfeited; he has redeemed it (Eph. 1:14). The prey is taken from the mighty. "David recovered all."

Our enemies have been made to enrich us, and to glorify his name. "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15). Now is fulfilled the promise, "They that spoil thee shall be a spoil" (Jer. 30:16).

II. THAT WHICH IS OVER AND ABOVE WHAT WE LOST BY SIN COMES BY JESUS. "And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drove before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil" (verse 20).

As Jesus has made us more safe than we were before the fall, so has he also made us more rich.

1. The exaltation of humanity to kinship with God. This was not ours at the first, but it is acquired for us by the Lord Jesus.

Election, sonship, heirship, spiritual life, union to Christ, espousal to Jesus, fellowship with God, and the glory of the future wedding-feast--all these are choice spoils.

2. The fact that we are redeemed creatures, for whom the Creator suffered, is an honor belonging to none but men, and not to men except through Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:16).

As ransomed persons we are bound to our Redeemer by special ties. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

3. Our singular condition as creatures who have known sin, and have been delivered from it, comes by our Lord Jesus Christ. Our perfection will be that of voluntary agents, who will for ever abhor the evil from which they have been saved, and love the good unto which they have been wedded by the grace of God. This belongs not to the angels.

**Never did angels taste above
Redeeming grace and dying love.**

4. Our resurrection, which is a gem not found in the crown of seraphs, comes by our risen Lord (2 Cor. 4:14).

5. Our relation to God, and yet to materialism, is another rare gift of Jesus. We are kings and priests unto God on behalf of the universe; the sanctification of mind and matter is consummated in our favored persons.

6. Our manifestation of the full glory of the Lord. Our experience will declare to all intelligent beings the choicest wisdom, love, power, and faithfulness of God (Eph. 3:10).

Truly all these things make us cry, "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil" (Ps. 119:162).

III. THAT WHICH WE WILLINGLY GIVE TO JESUS MAY BE CALLED HIS SPOIL.

1. Our hearts are his alone for ever. Hence, all that we have and are belongs to him. "This is David's spoil"--the love and gratitude of our lives (! John 9:19).

2. Our special gifts. Our tithes and dedicated things are for him. Let us give plentifully (Mai. 3:10). Abraham gave Melchizedek the tenth of the spoil (Gen. 14:20).

3. Our homage as a Church is to him. He is Head over all things to his Church. It is his reward to reign in Zion.

4. Our race must yet bow before him; all thrones and powers acknowledge his supremacy. This also is our David's spoil.

Yield to Jesus now, and find in him your safety, your heaven.

What say you? Are you David's spoil?

If not, sin and Satan are spoiling you every day.

Notabilia

(1) Sin contracts no guilt that grace does not more than remove, (2) sin deforms no beauty that grace does not more than renew, (3) sin loses no blessedness that grace does not more than restore. --Outline of Sermon on Romans 5:20, by the late Charles Vince

In 1741, at the Northampton Assizes, a poor Irishman was sentenced to death for murder. Dr. Doddridge believed him innocent, and so exerted himself in his behalf that a respite was obtained. Nothing could be more touching than the poor fellow's expressions of gratitude. He said, "Every drop of my blood thanks you, for you have had compassion on every drop of it. You are my deliverer, and you have a right to me. If I live I am your property, and I will be a faithful servant."

We all remember the poem of "The man of Ross." Every good thing in the place came from him. Ask who did this or that, "The man of Ross," each lisping babe replies.

Even so, as we survey each blessing of our happy estate, and ask whence it came, the only answer is, "This is Jesus' spoil The crucified hand has won this for us."

A Pastor in Cumberland has formed in his church a Good Intent Society, composed of poor persons who have no money to give, but yet desire to do something for the Lord Jesus. These give one hour in the week to some charitable work, or to some labor by which they earn a few pence which is given to the service of the Lord. Each one, according to her several ability, does something distinctly for Jesus. These people find a blessing in so doing. Should we not each one regularly and systematically set aside a portion for our Lord and Savior, and say, "This is David's spoil"?