

Christ Supreme in the Affections

F. A. Hughes.

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In a recent paper we referred to the love of Jonathan for David as he was moved to an appreciation of *who he was*. Perhaps we might enlarge a little further on the details seen in this section of 1st Samuel.

In 1 Samuel 16 David appears as the anointed of Jehovah, and something of the charm of his person is remarked on by the Spirit of God in verse 12. Men of commanding aspect and of imposing stature had been presented to Samuel and had greatly appealed to him. But there were *inward* features in David which God alone saw and rightly appreciated — "Jehovah looketh upon the heart." It was of David, of none else, that God said to Samuel — "this is he." As we ponder over this beautiful portion of God's word we discern other delightful features of moral worth in David — his humble and yet devoted occupation of caring for the sheep; his ability to sustain a joyous note of refreshment in the very presence of evil itself (1 Samuel 16: 23); his ready obedience to his father's command (1 Samuel 17: 20); his humility and conscious sense of his father's will and the need of others, and that in the presence of the cruel and angry reproach of his brethren. "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" (or, "was it not laid upon me") vv. 28, 29; this referring to his father's will (v. 17); his ability to discern not merely the desperate position of the people but how the situation affected God — "this uncircumcised Philistine . . . hath defied the armies of the living God." The word "defied" or "reproach" embraces the dual thoughts of blaspheming and placing in jeopardy. Goliath not only placed the people in desperate straits — but he defied God Himself — and David alone discerned it.

As we read 1 Samuel 17 we see further beautiful traits coming into evidence. Notice again his humility; he was already God's anointed king, but he says to Saul "thy *servant*" (v. 32). Observe, too, his readiness to restore the confidence of failing hearts — "I will go" — a confidence begotten surely of his experiences with his God and his absolute faith in God's power and protection — "He *will* deliver." Then refusing human aid he meets the enemy — "in the name of the Lord of hosts" — a name so prominent in days when weakness marked God's earthly people! The victory was won! the enemy defeated and destroyed; God's people delivered and above all — the Name of Jehovah of hosts magnified before all. The headship of the enemy was destroyed — but a long pathway of sorrow, hardship and rejection lay before God's anointed before he was eventually recognized as head of his people and kingdom. He was to know hunger and thirst, reviling and cursing; he must experience rejection, walking barefoot into exile, feeling in his soul the bitterness of his own household moving in hatred against him. Thankfully we read of loyal hearts; of one "the king's friend," of those who ministered to him of their substance, and eventually we see him established by God over all the people, "and the fame of David went out into all lands; and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations" (1 Chronicles 14: 17).

That day of acclamation is anticipated in the early verses of 1 Samuel 18. Jonathan's *personal* devotion is most striking, depicting as it did no mere outward appreciation but indicating the deep outgoing of his innermost soul, something which was so fully appreciated by David himself — "thy love to me was wonderful" (2 Samuel 1: 26). Then "the women came out of all cities of Israel . . . and the women *answered one another* as they played, and said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands'." Affections were *united* in their appreciation of the pre-eminence of David, resulting in this *collective* outburst of praise from hearts in perfect harmony. Hearts thus welded together in their

appreciation of the victor's supremacy was the evidence, even to Saul himself, that the kingdom must eventually be David's.

It is not difficult to see in all this a most beautiful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every feature of worth seen in David, and indeed infinitely more, shines in absolute perfection in Christ. His beauty; His words of grace and authority; His words of power; His holy compassions; and yet withal His humility and obedience to His Father's will, all bespeak His worth and glory. Truly as our hearts search for one able to give effect to the desires of God and to meet the need of man, we look upon our precious Saviour and adoringly exclaim — "This is He"! As we think of David carrying out so willingly the desire of his father in 1 Samuel 16 do we not instinctively meditate with holy joy upon the first recorded words of our beloved Lord — "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Do we wonder that Luke's gospel — a physician's case-book in very truth — abounds in situations of need which could be met only by the power of Divine compassion. Precious Saviour — "He came . . . saw . . . He had compassion . . . He . . . touched the bier . . . he that was dead sat up . . . and they glorified God."

And yet, as David, He was rejected, scorned, reviled — "He was despised." He knew hunger and thirst and weariness — He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself — and finally was hanged by wicked hands on Calvary's cross. He conquered death, rose triumphantly and is now crowned with glory and honour. His supremacy is not yet manifested but He is enshrined in the hearts of His own. *He* is God's anointed, the Centre of the Father's counsel, the substance of prophetic witness and the blessed theme of the Spirit's testimony. Obedient to His father's will He entered the scene of conflict, defeated the enemy, bore reproach and in it completely glorified God and established the glory of His Name and throne for ever. *He* has delivered His people and has been exalted as head over all things. *He* is the great Reconciler, of His own now, of "all things" in a day fast approaching. In Him personally was the ministry of reconciliation displayed; by the Holy Spirit's testimony we have the word of reconciliation — and as our hearts meditate upon the preciousness involved in this we exclaim with joy — "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."

As we await the day of Christ's public manifestation in glory, when every intelligence will be responsive to His claims as Lord, we have been accorded, through infinite grace, a peculiarly precious occasion in the which we can as His own recognize and respond to His rights now. He Himself instituted this — His supper — as gathered with His own in the upper room ere He suffered. The truth and blessed import of it is reiterated by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthian saints, and thus to "all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1: 2). How immense the privilege! May we value it increasingly! The simplicity and preciousness of the occasion is outstanding; its profound depth beyond all human thought.

Perhaps we may venture to extract three thoughts from 1 Samuel 18 which bear, in a typical sense, upon the truth of the Supper. In verse 1 we see in Jonathan the feature of *personal devotion* to David. Should not this feature mark us as we come to the occasion of the Lord's Supper. As we have moved during the week in a world which has no appreciation of our precious Lord is it not a joy for us to embrace the sweetness of a moment when we can let all else go and allow our hearts, *each one of us*, to respond to the perfection of love and beauty seen in Christ? Personal devotion to our blessed Lord.

Then in vv. 6 and 7 we see the women coming out of all cities of Israel. The type may fail somewhat at this point, but what is so evident is the *collective* appreciation of David in their song. "*They answered one another*" — there was no divergence — each affection imbued with the sense of David's pre-eminence. Beloved what an atmosphere to be in! Individual devotion to Christ — and the

Spirit's subjective work producing complete fellowship of mind and heart in their expression of Christ's superlative worth. How worthy He is!

Awake each soul! awake each tongue!

The subject is divine;

The Saviour's love demands our song;

Let all His people join.

Lastly in v. 8 we have Saul's reaction. He saw in this expression of appreciation and affection for David — the place of supremacy given to him — a foreshadowing of the fact that David would eventually be king over Israel. He was already God's anointed and affections were beginning to recognize his claims. There is an aspect of the Lord's Supper of which this is suggestive. The blessed God has been pleased to make known to us "the mystery of His will" and this involves the heading up of all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth" (Ephesians 2: 9, 10). The Lord Jesus awaits, in patience that moment — we await it too with earnest longing. The supper is "until He come" — we await His *appearing*. Dominical rights are His — the word "Lord" in 1 Corinthians 11 indicates this. For the moment those rights are denied Him — but those same rights are treasured in hearts that have been deeply affected by the preciousness of a love which went into death to secure a present recognition of and response to Himself. Rejected and disowned of men; chosen and anointed by God; Victor over death and Satan, all power in His blessed hands enshrined in hearts kept loyal to Himself as in devotion to Him we come together and He makes Himself known to us "in the breaking of bread."

Apart from the truth of the Lord's Person nothing has been more attacked by the enemy than the truth of the Lord's Supper. In some professedly Christian circles it is completely ignored; in others ecclesiastical ritual has almost obliterated its precious import; even in circles where it still obtains the word which appears freshly in 1 Corinthians 11 — "*as often*" is apparently neglected and but an *occasional* partaking of this precious ordinance adopted. The blessed God in His infinite goodness has preserved in many parts of the earth those who rejoice in coming together in accord with the words of Scripture to remember their Lord and to announce His death "until He comes." Largely unrecognized in the ecclesiastical sphere, content to be obscure — they seek in their localities to hold the ground for their Lord — awaiting the day when His dominical rights will be publicly established and owned. Blessed indeed to have our portion with them!

Worthy of homage and of praise;

Worthy by all to be adored;

Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays!

Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord.