

## "A place for the Lord."

F. B. Hole.

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At first sight it has been to many a matter of surprise that the Lord should speak of David as "a man after Mine own heart," seeing he sinned so grievously, and gave such occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. Yet, on the other hand, the Scriptures do show that he was characterized by many excellent features, of which one of the most striking comes to light in the early part of Psalm 132, where we are given a glimpse of him in his earliest days.

Many a youth, possessing a strong character, vows that when fairly launched in life he will do this or that, in order to secure wealth or fame, and so establish for himself a secure place in the world. As a youth David made a vow, but it was to "find out a place for the Lord," and not a place for himself. In this he was in strongest contrast to his predecessor, who was made to "sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden" by Samuel, when the Lord had told him that Saul was to be king. That chiefest place Saul clung to, and for it he fought with bitterness. Saul's motto was "A place for myself." David's was, "A place for the Lord."

"Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah" (verse 6), and Ephratah was the ancient name of Bethlehem, and David's birthplace. But what was the "it"? Clearly, the ark, which is mentioned in verse 8; for verse 6 adds, "we found it in the fields of the wood;" for thus he describes Kirjath-Jearim, whence ultimately he did bring up the ark to Jerusalem.

This Psalm therefore reveals to us that David, knowing that the ark which was God's throne in Israel, had been lost to the Philistines, and though recovered had never been properly reinstated, vowed in his earliest days that he would give himself no rest until he found that place for the Lord, where the ark of His presence might rest. Now that is the kind of man that suits the heart of God, and not the man that is merely seeking a good place for himself.

Shall we test our own hearts and live in the light of this as another year opens before us? We shall find it spiritually healthy to do so. The earth was never more full of place-hunters than it is today — nations, classes, individuals are all in the furious competition. Moreover, there are not a few who have considerable ground for their place-seeking, for they belong to the unhappy category of "displaced persons," for whom we may all feel the sincerest sympathy.

The fact is that in the present epoch everything is out of place, as far as the earth is concerned. Christ is not yet in the place which is rightly His, reigning as King of Israel, and over the whole earth as Son of Man. The church is not in the place of her destiny — the heavenly places — but still in the place of her pilgrimage. Israel is not in the land where her place is. The Gentile nations are not in the places which God has assigned them as subsidiary to Israel. Nothing will be in its place until the Lord gets His place. We may well cry "Come, Lord Jesus!"

But we do well to remember that while we wait for Him there is a way in which we may give Him His place, for has He not said, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them", (Matt. 18: 20). When He comes there will be "our gathering together unto Him" (2 Thess. 2: 1); but while we wait we may gather together in His Name, to the exclusion of all other names; owning His authority, and recognizing His presence in the midst. In doing this, we shall in a spiritual way be happily finding "a place for the Lord." Having so done we must carefully see that He has His rightful place in all our thoughts, our heart's affections, our service, our lives. This will be

pleasing to Him, and to the Father from whom once He came.

The men of the world will look upon us as fools. They will tell us that if we do not bend all our energies to establishing our place in the world no one is going to do it for us, and we shall lose our footing. We quite understand their thinking and speaking thus. How foolish the disciples must have looked as the Lord drew to the end of His earthly path. They had given up all — fishing boats, the table for the receipt of custom, and other things — to follow Him. They had lost their footing in Palestine, and now what was before them! Their Messiah was going to die!

Amongst His closing words, however, were these: "Let not your heart be troubled . . . I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14: 1, 2). And the place He prepares and guarantees is infinitely preferable to any place any of them lost. And we can say the same.

Let us then step forward with good courage. The place He has prepared for us is sure and excellent beyond words. Be it ours to catch a little more fully the spirit of David, and, while we wait for His Advent, neither to seek our ease nor to slumber, but rather to seek our Lord's interests and be concerned to find **a place for Him.**