

"And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

"And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he."

- I Samuel xvi,11,12

I Samuel xvi,1-13

John x,1-18

#### Psalm 48

New Book of Worship, Psalm 48, pp.57,58

David is, perhaps, the most striking figure in Old Testament history. He was Israel's greatest warrior and greatest poet. Starting as a shepherd keeping guard over his father's flock in the pastures about Bethlehem, he rose to become king over the twelve tribes, completely subduing all of Israel's enemies, and making Jerusalem the capitol of the nation. And through him the Psalms were given, which have ever since his day formed the principal vehicle of praise and thanksgiving, not only for Israel, but for the Christian Church as well.

Because of his victories over the enemies of Israel he represents the Lord, and the Lord is called "the son of David;" David, therefore, even to those who have no knowledge of correspondences, represents the Lord, and for this reason his life is of interest to all Christians.

We must not, however, confound the character of David as a man with that of David as a representative of the Lord. The only example for Christians to follow is the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to follow Him, and Him alone. He is the vine; we are the branches. We derive our life from Him, and without Him we can do nothing.

David indeed, even as a man, had great qualities. He was valiant in caring for his father's sheep. He was a great warrior. He was a great king. But he also had great failings. His polygamy and adultery, the murder of one of his faithful soldiers to cover up his crime, his cruelty to his enemies, and the revenge he breathed out in his dying moments all place him, as a man, far below any Christian standard. So it is not as to his own character that David is called a man after God's own heart, but as the representative king of a representative nation. The real character of David as a man - whether he was on the whole good or bad - must be left to the judgment of the Lord.

David was the son of Jesse of Bethlehem. Jesse was called the Bethlehemite, and when we remember that Bethlehem means "house of bread," we see that all the details in David's life are representative of the Lord. Jesus said "I am the bread of life," and as such He was represented by the Bethlehemite.

Samuel was sent to Jesse to choose a king from among his sons. Seven of them were brought before him, beginning with the eldest, and all these were rejected.

Apparently David, the youngest son, had not even been thought of. But Samuel, seeing that the Lord had caused him to reject these seven sons, asks, "Are here all thy children?" In the Scriptures seven is used to mark the completion of a series. Here the seven sons represent the good things of a previous generation, a series finished, now no longer operative or influential. David, being the eighth and youngest, represents the new spiritual life introduced by the Lord, which would cause old things to pass away and make all things new.

"Behold, he keepeth the sheep." It was for the sake of the sheep and to preserve the sheep that the Savior came into the world. Those who are gentle, kind, charitable are called the Lord's sheep. He is the Good Shepherd. Ezekiel writes of Jehovah, "For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." When the Lord came into the world to fulfill this prophecy, He said, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." For this reason it was said of David, "Behold, he keepeth the sheep."

"And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither;" This means that the Divine Humanity should be King. There would be no settled peace until the Lord should become our Redeemer.

David was sent for and when he appeared, he was described as ruddy, of a beautiful countenance - literally "beautiful eyes" - and goodly to look to. The ruddiness represents the warmth of love in the heart, the beautiful eyes the loveliness of the Divine wisdom. Goodliness, the third quality attributed to David, represents the union of love and wisdom in the Lord's life. The Lord went about doing good. Wisdom was on His lips. Mercy shone forth from His countenance. Virtue went forth from Him, so that the blind were given sight, the sick made well, the lame walked, the deaf heard, the hungry were fed.

To Samuel the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he." Thus was David consecrated as king, and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.

From the outward story of David as recorded in the Word there seems little resemblance between the life of Israel's warrior king and the quiet, outwardly peaceful life of the Lord. Yet, if we stop to think, we know that the Lord was continually engaged in awful conflicts with the powers of darkness, gradually subduing them, and finally overthrowing all the enemies of mankind. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?... I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me."

It has sometimes been thought that the Lord's conflicts were almost wholly confined to the passion of the cross, but we know that this was only the final

conflict and gives us only a partial knowledge of the immense labors that the Lord underwent for us. Evil was about to become dominant. No power could remove it except that of God Himself. The Philistines, the Amalekites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and all those against whom David fought and over whom he was victorious represent the hosts of evil against which the Lord fought and triumphed. The passion of the cross was but the final one of these conflicts. But these battles were inner conflicts, not outward ones. Isaiah writes, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him: and the Redeemer shall come from Zion." The representation here is that of a raging flood. Nothing like this took place in nature; it took place in the mind and soul, where all outward acts have their origin. Evils and falsities, like the surging flood, beat against the conscience, and unless the Lord had come, even the power to know what is good and true would have been swept away.

The Lord Himself gives us a glimpse of His Divine labors on various occasions. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

The throne of David, when established, would represent the Lord's government in heaven and in the church, when every enemy was put down. The story of David is more than the story of David's rule over a comparatively small nation; it is the symbol of the Lord's love and wisdom, ever increasing, and ever to increase, until all nations of the earth shall crown Him Lord of all.

The story has a personal message for each one of us. We must, like David, be keepers of sheep. We must watch over the little flock of innocent and good affections within us, lest they be destroyed or lost. Also, like David, we have to be men of war. We must fight against evils. We must have the love of goodness, the intelligence of faith, and the virtue of integrity of life, and obedience. Then shall we be able to say with David, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Amen