



*the*  
*Golden*  
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**GOD'S INHERITANCE  
OF GLORY IN SONS**

**Part 4**

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*Volume 199*

## “PRUDENT IN MATTERS”

*“Then answered one of the young men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is skilful in playing, and a mighty man of valour, and a man of war, and prudent in speech, and a comely person; and the Lord is with him” (1 Sam. 16:18).*

In the previous chapter we took the phrase “and a comely person”. Now we revert to the one which we left out, and the Revised Version says, “prudent in speech”, with two marginal notes, “skilful in business”, very much better and truer to the original word. The Authorised Version reads “prudent in matters”, and here that version seems to get really nearer the original than the others. That word ‘matters’ occurs many times in the Old Testament, and we can get to this aspect of David’s life and character by just taking a glance at one of its early occurrences. You will remember that when Moses seemed to be rather overwhelmed with all the problems and all the affairs that people were bringing to him for counsel and decision, his father-in-law hit upon a worldly-wise course of meeting the difficulty. He advised his son-in-law that he should no longer take it all on himself, but that he should select other men to deal with minor things. Then he said “every great matter they shall bring unto thee” (Ex. 18:22), and that is the same word here. A man prudent in matters, or skilful in matters. That is better than prudent in speech, but that may be included. So we get to the heart of this particular feature of David’s life.

David was therefore a man of discretion, a man of good judgment, a man of intelligence, a man of wise counsel, and you will already see what an important feature of true sonship that is. If sonship according to the Word of God is the development of the children of God to full stature, then of course the whole question of intelligence, wisdom, good judgment and discretion becomes one of real importance, and if David’s life really was realised in his son Solomon then it is all of a piece with this. Solomon is the synonym for wisdom. His fame and his kingdom rested upon his wisdom. He was the

very embodiment of wisdom. The chief feature of his glory was his wisdom. They came from the ends of the earth, not to hear, but to see the wisdom of Solomon, and that is a very real distinction. To hear the wisdom of anyone is one thing, but to see it may be quite another. The Queen of Sheba came to *see* the wisdom of Solomon. Wisdom is always the practical aspect of things. We come to that again later.

## **Wisdom indispensable to government**

Now then, the end must be brought to the beginning, and govern everything from the beginning. The end, we have seen, in the purpose of God is a company of sons in His Son in the place of government, to rule with Christ throughout the ages of the ages. And rulership or government demands, perhaps more than anything else, wisdom. It is indispensable to government, and if the object is to turn everything to the glory of God, that requires a lot of wisdom, intelligence and discretion. These are the things clearly bound up with David and the issue of his life in Solomon, but are but foreshadowings, in a very limited way, of David's greater Son, and of that house and that kingdom of the Son of God's love into which we are called.

Now, if this is true (and do not take it as just some beautiful Bible theme, some subject or topic) there is no doubt that many of you do not feel that you dare aspire to anything so high, but I do want you to remember that it is from the lowly places that God has always taken His princes, kings and rulers, and that is something which holds good. You and I in ourselves might never allow ourselves to think in terms of reigning with Christ for ever and ever in this sense of government. Perhaps we have just superficially accepted the idea contained in the words: "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. 2:12). That means being in heaven in glory and sharing His reign in some way, being in it, subjects of His great Kingship and Kingdom. But we have never gone the next step that we also are to govern with Him; we are to be kings with the King of kings. That is in principle our vocation throughout the ages to come. The government of this universe is going to rest with the sons of God.

If I were to diverge for a moment, I could show that to be just the meaning of everything that is in the Bible. It was to that government in the place of God's Son that Lucifer, Satan, aspired to take the kingdom and the throne, and he is still after it and fighting for it, although it is a losing battle. But he has gained the place around this world. He is in a sense the prince of this world. He does influence and affect the course of this world. This world does lie in the Wicked One. Things of this world are being very

largely actuated by those evil forces which have taken the place of Christ in this world and this world system. But the Bible makes it perfectly clear that the day is coming when there will be no more place found for them in heaven, but their place will be taken from them and then it will be that the new Jerusalem, the heavenly city, the people of God, will occupy that position of government. And although it sounds a little fantastic and remote, it is true that if we come to sonship in very truth, we shall be doing then what the powers of evil are doing now in this world, but doing it on very different lines, to very different conclusions. But that is the heavenly calling, that is the eternal vocation of the church, and it is unto that that all our training as sons is leading, and in that training we have to be trained to rule. That calls for a great deal of intelligence and good judgment and discretion, so that we are now in the school of kings and rulers, and in this matter of being prudent in matters or skilful in business, there are some things which have got to be settled before we shall get very far in our education. That is, before we shall advance in sonship, there are some things which are basically essential, and we have to get those settled right away.

### **The need for teachableness**

And the first thing is this — the absolute necessity of teachableness. In all the qualities of David, that one is outstanding. David was among the most teachable of men. If Solomon, the full fruit of David's life, is going to be the greatest teacher — and he is referred to as the wise man — all his proverbs and his songs, the product of his wisdom, came from the teachableness of his father. This is an indispensable thing in anyone who is coming to spiritual government. Of all people who are hopeless in this realm, the self-sufficient are the most hopeless. The person who knows it all, or thinks he or she knows it all, and can do it, is the person who is going to be left in God's contempt apart. Some of you may have felt at times that God can make no use of you because you lack certain qualifications. You do not have natural gifts, nor training, education, status, nor any of those things which men regard as necessary for a qualified person. Therefore you have felt that you must be, so to speak, on the shelf in God's workshop, of little use, with very little prospect. Now do not believe that. If in God's great, universal workshop there were things on the shelf which God had put there and left there and was taking no notice of, they were just in His contempt. Apart they would be the things which thought they could do it, that they knew all about it. There is so much in the Scripture which is the very inheritance of the people who think nothing of themselves. God has so many promises for the meek.

“The meek will He guide in justice; and the meek will He teach his way” (Ps. 25:9). There you are. This is the way of sonship, and meekness is just that you have no opinion of yourself and that you have no self-sufficiency whatsoever. You do not think that you know, and you do not think that you can do it. There are many people who are too clever for the Lord. The Lord is not looking for cleverness at all. Indeed, He overlooks cleverness. See Christ’s premium upon teachableness. Mary stands out as the great vessel of glory in this. “Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42). She was the one who was teachable, the one who was conscious, on the one hand, of her own need of being taught, and on the other hand of how much the Lord had to teach her, what He had to give, and the Lord puts a premium upon teachableness, He puts His seal upon that. It is a tremendous thing to Him. So this is the beginning of sonship towards this great end. You lay this to heart.

The fact remains that the Lord can never get anywhere with anybody until He has prepared them for it, and the Lord’s preparations for everything further are in the direction of a newly created and deepened sense of need. However much there has been, He brings us to the place where quite honestly we know that that, great as it has been, is not sufficient for the new situation. We cannot just trade upon the past. We must have something fresh from the Lord for the new situation, and we are down on our faces as though we had never had anything or known anything. The Lord moves on that way, and teaches us wonderful lessons.

### **The need for adjustability**

The second thing which comes alongside of teachableness is adjustability, that we are amenable to discipline, to correction, and are quite ready and prepared to adjust when the Lord corrects. There are many who are not prepared to be corrected, especially if the Lord does His correcting through some person here. And do not forget that the Lord does not send angels from heaven to correct us. His angels are the people around us in this matter, and very often the people from whom we would not be prepared to take correction. The Lord tests us on this matter so often by the means that He uses for our correction. If only a glorious angel could come and tell us where we are wrong, of course, it would be easy, not difficult at all. If only the Lord Himself would come straight to us and speak into our ears and tell us about it, well then, we should not have such difficulty, but it is a very different thing when the Lord comes by other means. Then so often any kind of correction, being put right, having our faults, mistakes and lack of wisdom pointed out to

us, leads us to go off in a huff. We sulk for days until the thing wears itself out and we get into a better mood, but that is a poor way of growing. Adjustability is a very important thing, that we can be corrected, we can be put right. We should be ready and only too glad if people will show us where we are wrong and thank them for doing so. That is the way of spiritual growth.

This comes out in David so clearly. It is possible to do a right thing with a right motive in a wrong way, and to come to trouble. But very few people who have sought to do the right thing with the right motive, and have come into difficulty, are prepared to think the thing out, to examine the matter, and find out why. They just turn inside of themselves on this ground, that their motive was quite pure and good. They were actuated by a right motive, and the thing that they did was not wrong; it was right. Then self-pity arises, and then this sulkiness results with a long bad time. You know what I am thinking about — David with the ark. Yes, his motive was right, his heart was right before the Lord. He had to find a place for the ark of the covenant, a place for the Lord; that was a right thing to do, and the motive was without question. But David tumbled into trouble on that, and the trouble was exceedingly serious. The whole thing was set back in a tragedy of judgment and death. No doubt David was bewildered and stunned. Yes, for the moment he felt badly towards the Lord.

But David was not of that kind who would nurse his grievance and develop this disease of self-pity. He went back to his Bible, such Bible as he had, and said, 'Now then, there must be some reason for this; I feel bad about it, the Lord does not seem to have been quite fair to me, but nevertheless the Lord is right; I am going to find out the reason for this.' That leads a long way, and when he set his heart upon getting to know the why of this, he discovered in the Word the key to the whole situation, as you know, and adjusted at once. He forsook the ground of his personal grievance. He forsook that ground where he was saying, 'But my motive was quite pure, you know, and it was not a wrong thing that I did. I meant it for the Lord, and I am quite sure that that is the thing the Lord wants.' No, he forsook that ground, came on to the ground of the Lord, and adjusted. He was alright after that. He learned a great deal for his kingship through that. It is no small thing, in the matter of wisdom, to be able to see that it is not enough to have a right and good motive, and it is not enough to do something for the Lord which you are quite sure that the Lord wants done. There is always the extra thing: that what the Lord wants done, He wants done in His own way. The Lord is not arbitrary. He is not just awkward, saying, 'No, this is the way in which I want it done.' The Lord's ways always have spiritual principles in them upon which His whole kingdom stands. The very throne of God rests upon

spiritual principles, and so He has to keep to His principles. That leads us a long way. The knowledge of principles is the knowledge that is necessary for government. Well, let us leave that for a moment.

### **Discrimination between knowledge and wisdom**

There is a discrimination that has to be made, and here it is that this wisdom, this prudence in matters, has its place. This is discrimination between knowledge and wisdom. We are not just talking about a passion for knowledge. Knowledge may resolve itself into a mass of information, but wisdom is always the practical value of knowledge; how to use it, how to apply it for good. That is wisdom. It is possible for us here to have a vast amount of spiritual information, information as to what is in the Word of God, to know it all in our heads or notebooks, and yet for it to be of very little practical value in its outworking. Wisdom is a matter of how you are going to turn it to account for the glory of God, how you are going to use it.

There is all the difference between an animal and a man in this very thing — or there ought to be. Take an animal, maybe a dog, maybe a horse. It tries to do certain things or go to certain places, and with a powerful voice you shout at it, you strike home with your voice and your word. The poor creature shrinks. Perhaps you take a whip and you whip him for it. After you have done that a few times, the creature knows that he may or he may not do certain things, and he does not do them. He may just on an impulse begin to move in that direction, and then remember the whip and come back. He has learned not to do certain things or go to certain places. A lot of Christians are like that. They think they have learned something because they have suffered in certain directions for doing certain things, and they have not learned at all. What they have come to is to be afraid of doing that because of the consequences. That may be some kind of education, but it is only the education of an animal. That dog or that horse has never sat down to ask: ‘Now, why may I not do that? Why may I not go there? What is it that causes my master to take that attitude? I believe he is a rational, reasonable being; I believe he knows better than I do. He must have some reason for that, he does not just thrash me for the sake of doing it. He has a reason, I must know it.’ An animal never does that. He just refrains because of this external application of law. He never refrains by inward revelation of principle, of meaning. There is the difference between that kind of knowledge, which is, after all, objective, although it may have got into us through suffering in a way, and this knowing of the mind of the Lord about this. Why? What is the principle in this? What is the reason for this in God’s heart?

It may be that many of you here today are smarting under the correction of the Lord. You have suffered, and you will not do it again for that reason, but I am asking you, have you wrung the meaning of this thing out? Have you got into the heart of God over this thing? Are you in possession of God's reason for His act? Do you know why that must not be? There is a difference. Wisdom is coming into possession of the Why, not just knowing the act. That is intelligence, that is discretion. Wisdom is much deeper than knowledge, and wisdom always goes for the reason, is never satisfied with just knowing that it must or must not be. It will ask, Why? Why must it not be, why must it be? Until I know that, I have not sufficient strength to do it from the heart. I will just be doing it, or refraining from doing it, by law, because I know if I do or do not, I am breaking some law, and I shall be punished for it in the way of suffering. Oh no, this must come from the heart, and if only I can get the heart of God in this thing, then I can do it from my heart. That is wisdom. We are not to be governed by God's acts; we are to be governed by God's meanings.

Well, David learned the Why of God's ways with him. He got to the heart of God concerning the ark and the numbering of Israel. God had very severe ways, but David wrung the meaning out of them, and we are in the good of that. This coming kingdom, this coming reign to which we are called in Christ, demands men like that, who stand possessed of spiritual understanding of the ways of the Lord. We are in the school for that. Then we go on.

### **Constructiveness the essence of intelligence**

The essence of true intelligence is constructiveness. Some people seem to think that criticism is superior intelligence. If they can put their finger upon the faults and talk about the flaws of others and keep all the wrong things in view, they think that they are very wise, intelligent and understanding. But notice that the whole effect of such people is destructive. If you look at the Word of God throughout, you will find that wisdom is always related to constructiveness. If Solomon is outstanding in the Old Testament, well, look at what he built, and it was for that purpose that God gave him the wisdom. If the Lord Jesus is over the whole Bible the great example of wisdom, look at what He has built. If Paul, the apostle, is a wise master-builder, see what he has built. Wisdom is always shown in its building value. Any child, even a silly child, can take things to pieces, but it requires intelligence to put them together again. Building is wisdom's outworking.

Look at Corinth. Here we have an outstanding example. The apostle



opened his first letter to the Corinthians with an introduction on the matter of worldly wisdom. In effect he was saying to the Corinthians, ‘You have a passion for what you call wisdom, you are just set upon wisdom. The wisdom of the whole Greek world has captivated you, and you think so highly of it; with you wisdom is the thing.’ You know how the apostle deals with that. “Christ crucified ... the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:23-24), a very different conception of wisdom. But then the whole letter springs out of that, and if ever there was an assembly, a company of people who were lacking in spiritual wisdom, that was the Corinthian assembly. Spiritual intelligence seemed to have little or no place there at all. The letter is one of instruction in the most elementary things, things that you would almost take for granted where Christians are concerned. You are amazed that a Christian should not know better than that. There you have the example of the lack of wisdom, discretion, good judgment, calling for instruction, as Paul puts it, as to babes. You must follow through that letter to see what wisdom really is, and over against it what folly really is. The letter is just full of all sorts of things that Christians ought to know; they ought almost to be taken for granted. I am not going to follow through, but you see the very situation there in that assembly was a point in this matter of spiritual intelligence. A lot of people were sick. I do not know whether they had doctors in their assembly, but I think any doctors there were being kept pretty busy. Paul says, “For this cause many among you are weak and sickly” (1 Cor. 11:30). Now, of course, all people who are sick are not sick for the same reason. The fact is that inside this assembly, a lot of people were going down with illness, and there were a number of deaths, one person was dying after another. What was the attitude of the church? ‘Well, these are things common to man; I suppose sickness and death are the common lot of all. Well, everybody has to die sooner or later; this is just things happening, it is a bad time we are going through, perhaps, in this matter’ — but that is about all there was to it. Spiritual intelligence would have said, ‘What is the meaning of this, we are just not going to accept this as events; we are the Lord’s people, we have the Lord, we want to know what the Lord means by this’, but they did not. And the apostle had to point it out and say, “For this cause (or reason) many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.” There is a cause, but there was no sufficient spiritual intelligence to get beyond the happenings to the cause, to get to the Lord for the meaning of this.

It brings us back to this point. Spiritual intelligence does not just take events, happenings, but goes to the Lord, and says, ‘Now then Lord, what do you mean by this? We must know what you have in mind in this; is this thing for your glory, Lord? If not, then we stand against it; if you are going to get

glory out of this, alright, we will stand with you, but we are not just accepting these incidents, we want to know what you mean by them.’

And how many other things like that there were at Corinth. The whole letter is just full of instruction on what spiritual intelligence means, what spiritual discrimination means, and Paul is here operating as the wise master-builder. It is to these people that he speaks of himself as such, a wise master-builder (1 Cor. 3:10). A feature of building, spiritual building, the building of the church, the building of an assembly, is this faculty of discrimination. Look at all the things to be discriminated in that letter to the Corinthians. They were not discriminating between spiritual gifts and spiritual graces, and Paul sought to make it very clear that grace is much more than gift. ‘You are glorying in and gloating over your gifts, but there is something very much more important than that; it is grace.’ Wisdom can discriminate between such things. “The things that differ” was the phrase Paul used to the Philippians (1:10). The question is always arising. What does all this amount to? What does it all lead to? There may be the gift of tongues, but where is it leading, what is it resulting in, what is the upshot of it all? Why confusion here, disorder here, anything but the glory of God? — And wisdom judges everything from the standpoint of God’s glory. Remember that.

In a word, wisdom’s great value is found in defeating the enemy. The book of Judges is constructed upon that. The Lord raised up Judges, and they are supposed to be the people with discretion, discrimination, good judgment, counsel for the Lord’s people and their business. Therefore their wisdom and spiritual intelligence was to defeat the enemy. That is an abiding principle. Wisdom finds its inclusive value in defeating the enemy. And what is the enemy’s object through anything at Corinth, whether it be the disgraceful behaviour at the Lord’s Table, or the women coming into the assembly of the Lord’s people where the Lord was, just as they would anywhere else, without a sign of subjection, (a head-covering), or any of the many other objections? It is the devil taking glory from God, it is the devil seeking to act against that ultimate thing — “Unto Him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus” — to take that glory out of the church, and wisdom operates to defeat the devil in his ultimate object of taking the glory from God. So that wisdom, let me repeat, is always actuated by this question: How does this minister to the glory of God? And nothing else matters. May the Lord take His word, instruct us by it, and bring us under His hand to be men and women prudent in matters.

## THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD

*“Then answered one of the young men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is skilful in playing, and a mighty man of valour, and a man of war, and prudent in speech, and a comely person; and the Lord is with him” (1 Sam. 16:18).*

These are, as we have seen, keys to the whole life of David, and now we come to the last — “and the Lord is with him”. We have been seeing how each of these things, mentioned for the first time, developed in the life of David to fulness, and found their ultimate realisation in his son Solomon, and in the house of the Lord, pointing on to another, the greater Son of David, the Lord Jesus, of whom each of these things could be said in a so much fuller way, and who Himself, the greater than Solomon, hands them all on to the house of God, “whose house are we” (Heb. 3:6). So that the House, through fully developed sonship, becomes the vessel and embodiment of all these things in fulness, and that becomes particularly clear and true when we arrive at this inclusive final feature — “and the Lord is with him”.

You observe what has just taken place. It says a little before: “and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam. 16:13). “Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul” (verse 14). “Then answered one of the young men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is skilful in playing, and a mighty man of valour, and a man of war, and prudent in speech, and a comely person; and the Lord is with him.”

### **The Lord’s presence the crowning feature**

I would like to say first of all in a very simple way that that is the test, after all, that is the crowning feature. So far we have not much history of David, and what we have is quite secret, is what has taken place out of public view, out of the way of any conspicuous position, and yet in the hour of emergency, or the hour of trouble, there was a young man who has taken

note of this other young man, and who says, “I have seen a son of Jesse ... and the Lord is with him.” It was not because David had a public position, was in a conspicuous place, and there were great manifestations of this fact that the Lord was with him so that all could see. And it was not because David was in a place of popularity. In fact, David was anything but in such a place. He was despised by his own brothers and his own father had not thought it worthwhile bringing him to Samuel at the feast in Bethlehem (and remember the feast that Samuel called for was in Bethlehem, and David was right on hand). But he was left out, not considered of sufficient importance to be brought into the family gathering, just left outside. It was for none of these reasons of position, respect, popularity and recognition that the young man came to this conclusion. What I mean is this. It was not because there were all the evidences in his life that the Lord was with him, that therefore he was a popular man, he was respected, he was brought to the fore, he was taken account of by everybody, and highly thought of. Rather it was true that he was having a difficult time and he was in a difficult position.

The point is this, that so often we think that if the Lord is with us, the evidence will be surely that people will be friendly, people will take note of us, we will be given some position and recognition, or that things will generally go well. Put that round the other way. If things are not going well, if we are not being taken account of, and we do not have any place given to us, and things really are difficult, if we are having a lonely and trying time, that surely must mean the Lord is not with us. It means nothing of the kind. It was not for any of those reasons that the young man came to this conclusion. It must be on some other ground altogether. He had observed David, he had come into touch with David — David in the shadows, in difficulty, in adversity, in loneliness, and yet his touch with David brought this to him — ‘The Lord is with that fellow, he is not having an easy time in his home, in his family or anywhere else, but you have to say, The Lord is with him, and that is all there is to it.’ And that is, after all, the thing that matters.

I want to say to you at the outset, before I open this up more fully, that the thing that matters where we are concerned, is not what we are among men, even among the people of God officially, not that things are going prosperously with us, but that when people know us and touch us, they say, ‘When I meet that man or that woman I meet the Lord.’ That is the thing that matters, and I would ask you to lay that to heart. You may be hungering after something else, a place, position, recognition, work, and so on, in the Lord and for the Lord. But the thing that matters more than all that, whether you have that or whether you do not have that, is that when people touch you, they touch the Lord, when they meet you, they meet the Lord, that there is

someone who, observing, is able to pass this verdict — The Lord is with him, the Lord is with her — not because of anything that can be seen, but you just meet the Lord. That is very simple, but it goes to the heart and root of everything. Do you not covet that more than anything else? Surely you do. Well, that is possible for the least, the most despised, among men, the most ostracised among Christians. It is just beautifully possible that people have to say, ‘Well, whatever you say about them, whatever the attitude of other people towards them is, you meet the Lord.’

And that can be, not only true of individuals, but also of companies. They may be ostracised, they may be criticised, there may be any amount of prejudice and despising and evil-speaking, but after all the verdict comes back to this — Do you meet the Lord? And if you meet the Lord, that is all that matters, the rest can go.

### **The anointing of the Holy Spirit**

Well now, we have to look at this more closely for a little while, and see why it was and how it was that the Lord was with David. Of course, inclusively it is gathered into that: “and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward” (verse 13). That is the inheritance of every one of us. The Holy Spirit was never the sole possession or privilege of David or of any one man. The Holy Spirit is as much our birthright as He was David’s. If David was anointed, the sure, clear declaration of the New Testament is that we are anointed in Christ, and what more do you want than that? And that makes the same thing possible.

### **The presence of the Lord a primary matter**

But then there are other things to be said about it, of course. Let us take the whole, full range in which it is set. The presencing of the Lord is a primary matter in the whole Bible from beginning to end. You find that it was an original thought of the Lord to presence Himself with man, and so in the garden when the Lord has finished His creation and is able to say, “It is very good”, in other words, ‘This satisfies my heart, this is what I have been desiring, what I have been wanting, what I have been after.’ When the Lord can pronounce the verdict of good pleasure upon His work, He walks in it and presences Himself there. He comes into the garden, takes His delight. It is His place, He is at rest there, He has His pleasure there. He says, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”, and in principle it is not so far a cry from the garden of Eden to the Lord Jesus.

Although the Lord had to withdraw, the Lord lost that which satisfied His heart, He comes back again through the Old Testament in the great types, in the tabernacle, and the temple, showing that He has not abandoned His thought and desire and intention, not given it up. He is still clinging to it, He is holding on. When all things were made according to the pattern, satisfying the heavenly thought, the Lord filled the tabernacle and the Lord filled the temple. The presencing of Himself is still the deepest desire in His heart. The Old Testament closes, and it does not close with that presence of the Lord in fulness. It is only realised in a little company — “Then they that feared the Lord spake one with another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lords of hosts, even mine own possession, in the day that I make (‘in that day when I make up my special treasure’ A.V.)” (Mal. 3:6-17). Why His special, peculiar treasure? Simply because they answered in some measure to that first thought, providing Him with a place where He could come for enjoyment and rest.

The New Testament opens, the Lord Jesus is here, Emmanuel, God with us. “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). And the verdict later upon His whole life here was: “for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). God has found His place of presencing in His Son.

But that is not the end. The Son brings in the sons, constitutes His house, and on the day of Pentecost the Lord fills it, presences Himself in His church, and finds a great deal of pleasure there. We leave that for the present.

Then the Word begins to open up a new vista. When all that which has been pointing to the ultimate comes to its ultimate fulfilment, in the end when it is possible for an apostle in vision, in revelation, to cry, “The tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev. 21:3). The great heavenly tabernacle, the church, is now filled with glory, the Lord’s presence. That is the setting of this.

### **A consuming passion**

Why was the Lord with David? Because David’s whole life was captivated by this thought, this one purpose — the presence of God. There was one thing that gathered up all that David was and had — that was the house of God. You read again Psalm 132 — “I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids; until I find out a place for the Lord” (Ps. 132:4,5). Here is a man who is consumed with this single idea — a place

for the preserving of the Lord, or, if you like, the presencing of the Lord, that the Lord should be present, that the Lord should have His place, that the Lord should find that in which He can have His pleasure and His rest. “Arise, O Lord”, cries David, “into thy resting-place” (Ps. 132:8). And that is why the Lord was with David, because David was a man of one idea. He had many things in his life, but everything in David’s life had to bend to this thing, that the Lord should be known as present. That is the major factor, and it comes that way. It does not just come automatically. It is a matter of the consuming passion of our life, that over all the other affairs, has one interest and makes all the other things as far as possible bend to that interest. You have got your business, your profession, your home, many things, but your heart is set upon this matter of the Lord’s place, that as soon as you can get away from business, if you can get to the place where the Lord is, you make for it as quickly as you can. You swallow your cup of tea, or go without it, to be there. You are making your business, your profession, your home, bend towards this presencing of the Lord. That is your passion, and if it is, the Lord will be with you. And you get a company of people in any place like that, and you will meet the Lord. That is something more than a congregation going to ‘divine service’. It is a company bound together with one idea, one passion, one master-conception — the Lord, and the Lord here.

That turned out to be the glorious issue of David’s life. Because it was like that all the way through, there came in Solomon and the temple, the glorious house of God. David said, “The house ... must be exceeding magnificent” (1 Chron. 22:5), ‘for it is for the Lord’, and it was so, as things go temporally, but only a shadow, a foreshadowing, of what will be — transcendent glory at last. Do you think it is just going to come about? No, it is going to come through the heart-devotion of men and women to this thing now.

Look again at David, how his heart for the Lord provided the Lord with a ground for His house. That passion, that devotion, that concern involved David in the cost of everything. David was no time-server or man-pleaser. David had no secondary considerations of: How do I stand to gain or lose by the course I am taking, by this step to which I am committing myself? How is it going to affect me, and my interests, and my future? David was never affected at all by public opinion, popular opinion, nor religious opinion. David had no concern for the accepted, established, recognised order of things. If that likes to contribute to this end, well and good, but position, opportunity for self-realization, never came into his mind. He could have had a great deal if he had set his heart upon it and was prepared to compromise. If only he would have compromised with Saul, with Saul’s kingdom, he could have obtained a good deal. But there was something in him that would

not allow him to do that, and so all these things were just brushed aside. If you or I should at any time have a secondary consideration, that is, that we shall lose prestige, position, opportunity, that we shall spoil our future, well, anything like that at all, if that is going to affect or influence us, take it that the verdict will never be “and the Lord was with him”. The Lord was with David because at all costs — though it cost him his home, though it cost him his place in the kingdom, though it cost him comforts and everything else, at all costs he is going on with the Lord; he is after what the Lord is after. That was the man, there is no doubt about it.

### **The proving of the heart**

David did not have the revelation and pattern of the house of God at the beginning; that came to him much later. It is not that David was behaving, acting, deciding and choosing in full view of the great revelation of the house of God. That had not come to him, the pattern was not shown until afterwards. But David’s heart was set upon the Lord and what the Lord wanted was the first thing, and then a period of proving that that was true, and it was a long and terrible period of proving that that after all was true. It is not enough for us to be after what the Lord wants. It is essential that, when everything of that seems to have been rendered impossible and all that our heart has been set upon seems to have been entirely put away, and everything now seems to argue against it, the time is a time of intense trial and difficulty, and it goes on and on. The trial is not made milder, it is through that that we are tried and proved as to whether the Lord can lead us right into the realisation of His purpose. You will have plenty of opportunity to abandon what you have started out for, and if you argue naturally, you will have plenty of reason for abandoning it. Everything will say, ‘Well, you have made a mistake, you have started towards something impossible. It is all a beautiful idea, but you see it was an illusion, it is impossible of realisation, it is not practical’, and all sorts of things like that. Today when you talk about the heavenly church, the church as revealed through Paul, especially in the Ephesian letter, you bring that into view, what is the reaction? — ‘Oh yes, it is a beautiful ideal, but it is not possible of realisation. You are going to spend your strength and time and life for nought, if you think that anything like that, with Christianity as it is now, can be realised in a world like this.’ Everything on the outside argues — and very often there is a lot on the inside that seems to confirm the argument — to say you are a fool, you are on a fool’s errand, you are in a false paradise. David went through that sort of thing, and was proved as to his heart, and when that heart of his for the Lord was proved by deep testings



of many kinds, then the Lord gave him the vision, the revelation, and showed him the pattern. The great, open heaven came to him after a time of deep trying and testing. Then it came. But it does not come in any other way. It does not come until our hearts have been proved as to whether we really do mean business with God at any cost, and the cost is sometimes very great. Read again the life of this man and what his devotion to the Lord cost him, and think yourself into the story; use your imagination a bit. You will find that for many years David had a most terrible time of testing his heart. The Lord answered back.

What are you after, dear friends? That is the point. Are you after position, place, reputation, prosperity, success, recognition, popularity, an easy life, or anything like that? Very well, the end will not be this, that whoever touches you will say, 'I meet the Lord in him, in her.' That is the thing that is in the balances. The point is, are we willing to lose everything for the Lord that is here in this life?

### **David's preparation for the House**

Well, when David did get the pattern, when it was shown to him by the open heaven, he drew everything towards its realisation. It is a wonderful account in 1 Chronicles 28 and 29 of David's preparation for the house, all the things that he says 'I have prepared, I have prepared, I have prepared' — gold for the things of gold, silver for the things of silver, brass for the things of brass, iron for the things of iron. It is a long catalogue of his gathering and preparing for the realisation of this divinely given vision. He is out in all directions to find that which can answer to God's heart, which can fulfil this thing. He is on full stretch in every direction to collect for the house of God. Interpret that spiritually, bring it together.

### **The giving of one's own treasure**

Yes, but that is not all. We can do a great deal by getting things together and getting work done, but the heart of this comes out in that portion that I have just mentioned. When David has done all that, "I have a treasure of mine of gold and silver, I give it unto the house of my God." That is subjective; it is not objective, it is inward. David had stored up for himself his nest egg, something precious to himself. 'I give it — a treasure of my own.' Oh, that might mean many things in the case of many people, but whatever it might mean regarding your personal treasure, something you have treasured for yourself, some hope you have treasured, some prospect you have treasured,

to let it go in the interests of the Lord's house. The point is that it is something that costs us inwardly for the Lord. "Seeing that I have a treasure of mine own". This man stopped at nothing. He let his last possession go in order that the Lord should have His place.

I need say no more. You have the answer as to why the Lord was with David. In looking back upon his whole life now, with all its dark pages, with all that which we are sorry for, looking over his whole life we have to say, God was with that man. He was not perfect, he was not sinless or faultless; he made mistakes, he slipped up, he grievously defaulted, but you cannot get away from it, in the sum total of that man's life you have to say, God was with that man. We are not faultless, we are not perfect, we are very weak, and we make many mistakes, but there is something over all that. If we have a heart for God like this, proved to be a heart for God through testings, discouragement, frustration, persecution, sorrow and suffering, if it is proved that we have nothing too precious to hold back from the Lord, although we may be weak and faulty and all the rest of it, the verdict will be, God is with that man, that woman, God is with them, you meet the Lord in them. The Lord give us grace to be like that.

## THE CROWNING OF THE KING

*“Then all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. In times past, even when Saul was king, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over my people Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the Lord; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel” (1 Chron. 11:1-3).*

*“All these, being men of war, that could order the battle array, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king. And they were there with David three days, eating and drinking; for their brethren had made preparation for them. Moreover they that were nigh unto them, even as far as Issachar and Zebulon and Naphtali, brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, victuals of meal, cakes of figs, and clusters of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep in abundance: for there was joy in Israel” (1 Chron. 12:38-40).*

That is a foreshadowing. There are two counterparts of that. The first was that which took place on the day of Pentecost, and followed on for some weeks or months afterwards. It is not at all difficult to see the spiritual counterpart at that time. It was when the Lord Jesus came into His own, when it was fulfilled that God highly exalted Him, and gave Him the Name which is above every Name, set Him at His own right hand, far above all (Phil. 2:9). It was then that the echo of that was found among the believers on earth, and it was a great time, this day of Pentecost, as they gathered together. The account is one which, in spirit at least, very truly corresponds to what we have here in the crowning of David. But that looks on to another time, the great day when the cry, the proclamation, shall be heard: “The marriage of the Lamb is come.” We have that wonderful picture in Revelation 19, a great

crowd, great joy, the Lord has at last, not only personally and in heaven, but with all His own, come into His own. There is great rejoicing. "Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad ... for the marriage of the Lamb is come" (verse 7).

You will have no difficulty in seeing in these Bible passages which we have read the carrying into fulness of all those six things which have occupied us throughout concerning David, his life of music and praise and worship. Here it breaks out in the people of God, a great rejoicing. As a man of valour, a man of war, as a man of character and personal presence, as a man of prudence in affairs, as a man with whom the Lord was, this is the day when it all comes out in wonderful fulness, the day of his vindication. Yes, that is all true. Our hearts are stirred and moved when we read the story. "There was joy in Israel."

But what is the point for this moment? Well, first of all, is this not what the Lord would have now in between then and that final great celebration? Is it not possible to have some little taste of that now? Are we to wait for it all until then? Is it a beautiful story in the Old Testament? Is there to be nothing like it until we are all in glory? I do not believe that. The Lord would have something like that now. It can be. He would have it. He would have His people, though it may not be where they are all concerned, He would have them in companies in the good of this, enjoying Him, and there being great joy in Israel. And it need not be only at conference times, Easter, Whitsun and August, for example. Should it not be like this whenever the Lord's people are together? It surely should and can be.

### **The end of a period of disappointment**

There are some very beautiful, precious features of this whole thing, and I just want to touch upon them as briefly and quickly as I can. This marked the end of a time which had been full of disappointment, Saul's reign. Saul was man's idea of things. Saul was man's choice, and Saul's kingship and kingdom was after man's mind and after man's will, not according to the Lord's mind. But man had chosen and insisted and persisted and determined, and would take no other, so the Lord allowed it. It is always like that. Make up your mind strongly enough, and the Lord will let you have it. So they did, and the Lord let them have it. But it was a terrible disappointment. Israel was no fundamental unity during all the days of Saul. It was an artificial unity. It was like tying a lot of things together and holding them together. There was no inward basic oneness, and after the first excitement and glamour had passed, it soon began to be manifest that the thing was rotten at the root and core, and it began to fall apart, to disintegrate. Steadily the whole thing began

to split up and divide. In that kingdom division after division became the order of the day. There was no oneness, no real cohesion. It was something that had to be held together, propped up, kept going, a great make-believe of a kingdom, and the people of God were in a state of terrible disillusionment. They had their visions and their hopes, their expectations, but they were steadily being disappointed. The people were becoming disillusioned about this whole thing. Dissatisfaction, growing dissatisfaction: 'This is not it, this is not really what we meant, what we feel should be.' And increasing difficulties and complications came to the nation; debts, because this whole thing was too expensive to keep going, this regime was a very expensive thing, and was undermining all resources. It had to be kept going, and it was getting a bit too much, and so they were getting into debt by the very system that they had set up; they could not pay their way. These were features of it, and at last the whole thing collapsed, and a disillusioned people were left thinking.

But thank God, there was something positive to think about, and it was such a people that came from one direction and another, from the wilderness, from Ziklag and elsewhere, to Hebron. They had remembered, they had known in their hearts that, while this other thing of their choice was not it, they also knew in their heart that there was something that was it, that it was not just a vacuum, a nothing, an emptiness. They knew that it was what they needed. Well, that is really the spiritual background. And so they came.

I think that you are interpreting as I go along because the people who are going to come into this joy of real satisfaction, contentment and appreciation, who are able to say, 'This is it!' have got to have a history by which they come to know that the thing that is not it is not it. God is very practical. He could have prevented the tragedy of all those years taken out of their lives while Saul was king officially. But He did not do it, and God does not do that sort of thing. God works to the positive by perhaps allowing years of our lives to be occupied with the negative so that we may more and more become aware of how negative it is, how empty it is. When we do come into the real thing, we know it by contrast, and no one ever does appreciate the positive who has not bitterly tasted of the negative. In the sovereignty and providence of God, that is the way in which He gets a people who are full of gratitude, praise and appreciation, a people who know because they know the difference. That is basic to a scene like this. They are disillusioned people, they are people who know the emptiness and the hollowness, not only of the world, but of a religious system which does not answer to spiritual need, but is simply an official thing holding the ground, like the kingdom of Saul.

Well, they were a divided people, all over the place, in sections; divisions arose in that realm, and division followed division. As we have

said, there was no fundamental oneness. It was a state of want. There was shortage, limitation, straightness, not enough to keep body and soul together. It was hard work to find enough to live on. Interpret that spiritually. It was a way and a time when all their efforts and endeavours and all their labour and their hard work led to nothing. Saul made them work right enough. Samuel had told them what he would make them do, and they worked, and all their labour was ineffective and unprofitable. It brought nothing back to them, and it was anything but a life of glory. There was no glory in Israel in those days.

### **The way of spiritual fulness**

What is the cure for such a situation, the cure for divisions, the cure for spiritual lack, poverty? What is the way of spiritual fulness? What is the way of effectiveness in life, service and ministry? What is the way of the glory? The answer is quite simple — make Jesus King, bring God's anointed into His place fully, recognise the place that God has given to the Lord Jesus, recognize that until He has His place, all these conditions will obtain, but when He has His place, that is the way out, the way over. All Israel came with a perfect, complete, undivided and unreserved heart to make David king. That is the answer to everything.

It is the answer to our own individual lives if they are disintegrated, broken up, divided. If they are disappointed, hungry, lacking and knowing no spiritual fulness, if their labour attains no proportionate result for eternity, if they lack the glory, well, the answer for us individually is just the Lord having His place in fulness and without any reserve on our part.

That extends to companies of the Lord's people, for you can have a local company that is knowing very little about oneness and spiritual fulness, spiritual effectiveness and glory. What is the cure? That every individual heart in that company has but one thought: the glory and honour and praise of the Lord Jesus. It is the cure.

And what is true for the individual and for the local company is true for conferences and is true for the universal representation. It is just marvellous how, coming from all over the world, various nations and different languages, complexions, outlooks and constitutions, may come, and the Lord Jesus is the only object of your coming, and in view. Why, there is a wonderful unity. All nationalities and everything else that is divisive on this earth simply disappears; it is no longer there. All those things go, and there is wonderful spiritual fulness and great joy. It is true. It is all a matter of the Lord coming into His place wholly.

Well, that sounds a simple statement, but it may mean a good deal more than we realise. These people who came had been a part of that other thing. They had been in that choosing and appointing of Saul. They had been alongside of Saul, they had moved out and in with Saul. But here they are confessing that they had been wrong, that even while Saul was king, he really was not; they were wrong. They were to confess and put right what they had done wrong. It is not always easy. The joy, the glory, the blessed feasting upon the Lord's fulness may all be held up for want of some definite admission and confession of wrong. It becomes very practical. A life may be held up as to the glory of the Lord in it, the song of the Lord in it, because it will not let go and say, 'I have been wrong in this and that.' We may know quite well that things are not right, and yet not be prepared to get right down, in a humble way, and say, 'Look here, I have been holding on to this position all this time, tenaciously refusing to give it up, but now I acknowledge that I have been wrong.' The glory may wait for that. It is just probable that many of these people had been very suspicious and critical of David, had taken Saul's part against him, and perhaps been in the train of Saul in hunting him, and now they are saying, 'We have all been wrong.' It involves us in very practical things. I am not going to pursue that any further, but it is one thing to just say, 'Yes, make Jesus king.' Sometimes that does require the going back upon a whole course, the letting go of a whole position which we have not been prepared to let go, the standing strongly for something which really has not proved to be of God, which has not had the seal of God upon it. We believed it was of God, and we have held to that position, but it has not had the seal of God on it, and all the marks of that withheld seal have been there: dissatisfaction, spiritual limitation, a disintegration of life, no fruitful service. Yes, the Lord's seal is thus seen to be withheld, and yet we may cling to our position. But they came and made this confession, went right back on the whole thing. 'Even when Saul was king, you were the right one, you were the one that the Lord had chosen and anointed.' He might well have said then, 'If you have known that all along, if that is your position, why have you held to that position all this time until Saul is dead and out of the way, and you have no one to take his place?' But no, it is an honest admission. It is not just because they are forced to it. They know in their hearts what God would have.

It is just the gathering up of this whole series into this, that the way of the glory — that is what we have been occupied with — the way of the fulness, is the way in which the Lord has His place, not only as over against the world in our hearts, but over against much that claims to be of the Lord that really is not of the Lord. This whole system of Saul's kingdom is a great

type of what we have even in Christendom today, something in which people are spiritually starved, something that holds the ground officially, something that does not help people to pay their way spiritually. It is something that is resolving into division after division, sect after sect, and section after section. That is not the mark of the Lord's lordship at all. No, I do believe that the Lord would have it in as great a representation as possible, but if He cannot have it in a general way, He would have it in small ways, an expression of this very thing, a people together, eating and drinking, feasting and rejoicing, and it can be and will be if the Lord really has His place. Oh, I know that you are all ready to say that you make Jesus Lord. You use all the language that is available about crowning Him Lord of all, but you know in our lives it is tremendously pointed and practical. We are constantly coming up against something which brings us into collision with the Lord, something we want which our hearts are set upon, something that we like, something that is personal, something that we do not want the Lord to have or to do. That is the issue. No less an issue than the very throne of God, of our Lord Jesus, is involved in things like that. It may be a prejudice. No doubt many of these people were prejudiced against David. It may be a prejudice we have to get out of the way for the Lord's sake. It may be one or more of any number of things, but the point is that the Lord has got to sweep this whole ground with His Lordship, and there has to be a perfect heart to make Jesus King. The Lord help us to do that, and all that this series has been about will become very real and very true, and, not least of all, the music will go on.

*Concluded.*



