
THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The two books of Samuel and the two books of Kings bear in the Greek Version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) the name First, Second, Third, and Fourth Books of Kingdoms. In the Latin Version, known as the Vulgate, they are called the Books of Kings. In Hebrew manuscripts and the earlier printed editions of the Hebrew text, both the books of Samuel appear as one; the same is true of the book of Kings. It must also be remembered that in the Hebrew Bible, the books of Samuel belong to that section which Jewish authorities have named "The Former Prophets." The books of Samuel are, therefore, classed by the Jews with the writings of the Prophets.

The Authorship

The books bear the name of Samuel. This, however, does not mean that Samuel is the author of these books. That would be impossible, inasmuch as the greater part of them contains events which transpired after the death of Samuel. The only hint in Scripture about the authorship of these two books is found in 1 Chronicles 29:29: "Now the acts of David the King, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the Seer, and in the book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the book of Gad the Seer." Ancient tradition among the Jews assigns to Samuel the authorship of the first twenty-four chapters of the first book of Samuel. These chapters contain what may be termed the life of Samuel up to the time of his death. The twenty-fifth chapter begins with the record of his death. It is reasonable that Samuel wrote these opening chapters of the first book which

bears his name. That Samuel did write is fully established by chapter 10:25: "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the Kingdom, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the LORD." The same Jewish tradition credits Nathan the Prophet and Gad the Seer with having written the remainder of the two books. The passage in the first book of Chronicles seems to support this view. Evidently Samuel began to write these books, which, for this reason, were called by his name. Modern criticism rejects this view and claims that the books of Samuel could not be the work of men who lived during the reign of Saul and David. We do not give their speculative theories and conflicting opinions, which are of no value whatever in the spiritual study of the text. The best scholars believe that these books belong to a very early period, and that the critical view of a compilation of certain documents and fragments, immediately before the exile, cannot be sustained. "The minute sketches and vivid touches with which these books abound prove that their author speaks what he knows and testifies what he has seen" (John Eadie). Some of the more important objections higher criticism has raised against the early date of the books of Samuel and the alleged discrepancies we shall point out and answer in our annotations.

The Continuation of Israel's History

These books contain the continuation of the history of the people Israel. The opening chapters cover the period of the Philistine oppression, during which Samson began to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistine (Judges 13:5). As stated in our introduction to the book of Judges, Samuel's first operations fall into the same time when Samson was acting as judge. Samuel assumed the office of judge after the death of Samson. In the beginning of the Philistine oppression these two boys were born, both devoted to the Nazariteship and both to a definite work. There is, however, a difference between the two, as Edersheim puts it: "Samuel was God-granted, Samson God-sent; Samuel was God-dedicated, Samson was God-demanded. The work of Samson ended in self-indulgence, failure and death; that of Samuel opened up into the royalty of David."

The final statement with which the book of Judges closes is the following: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This shows that Israel was looking forward towards having a king; the need of a king was recognized, for the government by judges had wrought no deliverance for the people. The ruin into which Israel had fallen, besides being described in the closing chapters of judges, is also seen in the opening chapters of Samuel. The priesthood is corrupted. Eli is old and weak, his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were wicked men. The Philistines smite them again. Then they used the ark of the covenant to overcome the foe; but instead there is more defeat. The ark of God is captured by the Philistines and taken to Ashdod. After the return of the ark Samuel called the people to repentance. "Then the children of Israel put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD" (1 Sam. 7:4). The result was victory over the Philistines. Samuel then judged Israel; he also made his sons judges. Like Eli's sons, they were ungodly. "They turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment" (1 Sam. 8:3). It was at that time that the elders of Israel made their demand. "Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways, now make us a king to judge us like all nations" (1 Sam. 8:5). With this the crisis is reached. A king is demanded and the Lord grants their request.

They had rejected Him as king over them.

The two institutions which we find now definitely introduced among Israel are the prophetic order and the monarchy. Samuel heads the order of the prophets and is also chosen to crown the first two kings. That the kingly office in the midst of Israel had been anticipated is learned from Deut. 17:14-15. "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shall dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose; one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, who is not thy brother." Thus the demand was anticipated and provision made for it in the law.

Foreshadowing the True King and His Kingdom

Israel had to have a monarchy established in her midst to foreshadow the true King and His Kingdom. That true King of Israel, the promised One, and His dominion had already been mentioned by Balaam. "A sceptre shall rise out of Israel"--"Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion" (Numbers 24:17-19). Hannah in her inspired outburst of praise and her prophetic vision beheld that true king. "He shall give strength unto his King and exalt the horn of his Anointed" (1 Sam. 2:10). It is Israel's true King, the Anointed, the Christ, she beheld.

Saul, the first king, is the people's choice and ends in complete failure. Then David comes upon the scene; he is God's choice; the king after His own heart. But he also fails. However, he is a type of Him who is both David's Lord and David's son, the root and offspring of David, our Lord Jesus Christ, the true King of Israel. David and Solomon are faint shadows of the true King and His work both in judgment and in the Kingdom of peace. The historical records in the books of Samuel are especially rich in typical and dispensational lessons and teach many spiritual truths. We hope to point out many of them as we follow the text in the annotations.

The Division of First Samuel

Inasmuch as the first book of Samuel contains the record of Samuel's labors and the anointing of the first two Kings of Israel, Saul and David, Saul's reign and David's exile, we divide the book into three sections. In the first section we find the birth, childhood and judgeship of Samuel; in the second, the anointing and coronation of Israel's first King, Saul, his reign and rejection. In the third section David, his anointing, and exile are before us. We give these sections and subdivisions as we shall follow them in our analysis and annotations.

I. SAMUEL THE PROPHET AND JUDGE

1. The birth and Childhood of Samuel (1:1-28)
2. Hannah's Prophetic Song (2:1-10)
3. The Failure of Eli and His Sons (2:12-36)
4. Samuel's Call and Prophetic Ministry (3:1-21)
5. The Judgment of Eli and his Sons--Ichabod (4:1-22)
6. The Ark in the hands of Philistines and Its Return (5:1-7:2)

7. The Return unto Jehovah and the Deliverance (7:3-14)
8. Samuel Exercising His Office and His Failure (7:15-8:3)

II. KING SAUL--HIS REIGN AND REJECTION

1. The King Demanded (8:4-22)
2. The Story of Saul and His Anointing (9:1-10:16)
3. The Open Acclamation of Saul as King (10:17-27)
4. The King's First Victory: the Kingdom Renewed at Gilgal (11:1-15)
5. Samuel's Witness and Warning (12:1-25)
6. The First Failure of Saul and Its Results (13:1-23)
7. Jonathan's Heroic Deed of Faith (14:1-52)
8. War with Amalek: Saul's Disobedience and Rejection (15:1-35)

III. DAVID, THE KING AFTER GOD'S HEART--HIS EXILE AND SUFFERING

1. David Anointed King and the Departure of the Spirit from Saul (16:1-23)
2. David and Goliath (17:1-58)
3. Jonathan and David and Saul's jealousy (18:1-30)
4. Saul's Renewed Attempt and David's Escape (19:1-24)
5. Jonathan Protects David and Their Separation (20:1-42)
6. David's Varied Experiences (21-27)
7. Saul and the Witch at Endor (28:1-25)
8. David and Achish and Ziklag Destroyed and Avenged (29-30)
9. The Death of Saul (31:1-13)

Chapter 1

Analysis and Annotations

I. SAMUEL THE PROPHET AND JUDGE

1. The Birth and Childhood of Samuel

CHAPTER 1

1. Elkanah and his wives (1:1-8)
2. Hannah's prayer and vow (1:9-18)
3. The prayer answered and Samuel born (1:19-20)
4. The child weaned and presented unto the Lord (1:21-28)

The descent of Samuel opens the book. The names are of striking significance. Elkanah means "acquired of God." He was the son of Jeroham (tenderly loved), the son of Elihu (my God is He), the son of Tohu (prostration), the son of Zuph (honeycomb). They were pious generations from which the great man came. Elkanah had two wives. Hannah (grace) the much beloved was barren; Peninnah (pearl) had children. The fact that Hannah's name stands first makes it probable that her barren condition led Elkanah to marry a second wife. (See Deut. 21:15.) Elkanah was an Ephraimite. But from 1 Chronicles 6:20-28 we learn that Samuel and his father were of levitical descent. This has been pointed out as a discrepancy. It is however not at all inconsistent with the statement that Samuel's father was of Ephraim. He was one of those Levites to whom cities

were assigned in the portion given to the tribe of Ephraim (Josh. 21:20).

Each year Elkanah went to Shiloh to sacrifice unto the LORD of Hosts. It is noteworthy that the name of God as "LORD of Hosts" (Jehovah Zebaoth) appears here for the first time in the Bible. (It is found 281 times in the Bible. It is not found in the Pentateuch; it occurs some 80 times in Jeremiah and 50 times in Zechariah.) It is the name of God as the Lord of power, the Lord of all the hosts of heaven and earth. That it is used the first time in the book which reveals the Kingdom is especially appropriate.

Hannah in her visits to Shiloh presents a sorrowful picture. She is beloved and receives a double portion from Elkanah, while Peninnah, her adversary, provoked her on account of her childless condition, so that she wept and did not eat at the feast. Then she arose from the sacrificial feast which she had not tasted and sought the presence of the Lord. There she wept and vowed a vow that if the Lord of hosts would grant her a man-child she would give him back to the Lord and he should be a Nazarite. She cast herself upon the Lord and laid hold on Him. Samuel therefore was the child of prayer, asked of the Lord; his whole life afterwards manifests the spirit of prayer and dependence.

Then Eli the priest is mentioned for the first time. He was astonished seeing her thus engaged in silent prayer and accused her of drunkenness. His astonishment and accusation are a witness to the sad state of Israel. Evidently few ever sought the presence of the Lord, and his reproof makes it evident that it was not an uncommon thing that drunkenness prevailed during the feasts at Shiloh.

Hannah's prayer was answered. The son is born and was called Samuel, which means "heard of God." Little did she know of the mighty work her son was called to do; her prayer was answered far beyond her thought. She did not go up again to Shiloh till the child was weaned. Then she went up to fulfill her vow and presented him unto the Lord. Before Samuel could begin to serve the Lord he had to be weaned. "As a weaned child no longer cries, frets, and longs for the breast, but lies still and is content, because it is with its mother, so the soul must be weaned from all discontented thoughts, from all fretful desires of earthly good, waiting in stillness upon God, finding its satisfaction in His presence, resting peacefully in His arms." (Perowne, The Psalm.) He began to minister at once unto the Lord before Eli the priest (2:11). He was brought up in the sanctuary and became that solid, earnest, prayerful man of God. It is the weaning and the sanctuary every servant of Christ still needs. And Hannah had given back to the Lord what He so graciously had bestowed upon her. This should be the case with all our prayer-answers.

Chapter 2

2. Hannah's Prophetic Song

CHAPTER 2: 1 - I 0

1. The praise of Jehovah-God (2:1-3)
2. Jehovah's power and grace in deliverance (2:4-8)
3. The prophetic outlook (2:9-10)

Hannah's heart filled with the Holy Spirit overflows with a marvellous utterance. Higher criticism claims "that this beautiful sacred lyric could not have been sung by Hannah in the circumstances as described. The words of verse 5 alone approach her situation, and doubtless led to the insertion of the psalm in its present context." They also say "that the Virgin's song (Luke 1:46-55) is largely modeled on the song of Hannah" (Prof. A.R.S. Kennedy). Such statements deny inspiration. Hannah's and Mary's songs are so much alike because the same Spirit spoke through both. Why should it be thought impossible for pious Hannah to give forth such sublime and far reaching words which stand so closely related to all subsequent prophecy, if we believe that the Holy Spirit inspired her as He did Isaiah and other prophets?

As every other song given by the Spirit of God, so her song begins with extolling the Lord, glorifying His name. The first four stanzas give her own experience. She knows Jehovah and rejoices in His salvation. Especially beautiful are the utterances the Spirit of God makes through her in describing Jehovah's power and grace in deliverance. We must think here first of all of our Lord Jesus Christ. He went down into the dust of death and was raised from the dead. He was brought down to the grave and brought up; He became poor and is made rich; He was made low and is lifted up (verses 6-7). And therefore He reaches down to our misery and raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill to set them among princes to inherit the throne of glory. What a glimpse she, whose name means "grace," had of grace which stoops so low and lifts so high! Her words came nearest in the Old Testament to the gospel of grace as revealed in the New. With the middle of the eighth verse she speaks of the future. The day of the Lord with its judgment bursts into view. The feet of His Saints will be kept; the wicked will be in darkness; the adversaries broken to pieces. Then heaven is no longer silent. The Lord judges. The King, Israel's true and once rejected King, our Lord Jesus Christ, will be exalted. In the beginning of the books of Kingdoms heaven's true King is seen in prophetic vision.

The ministering child Samuel before the Lord is a most beautiful and sweet picture. Faithfully his little hands did whatever they could do, and Jehovah was well pleased with it.

3. The Failure of Eli and His Sons

CHAPTER 2:12-36

1. The wicked sons of Eli (2:12-17)
2. Samuel before Jehovah and Hannah blessed (2:18-21)
3. The empty warning of Eli (2:22-26)
4. Judgment announced (2:27-36)

The corruption of the sons of aged Eli is next exposed. They were sons of Belial; they knew not Jehovah, and yet they ministered in the outward things of the sanctuary. It could result only in the worst corruption. They handled holy things and were wicked in heart and life. It has been well said "a holiness that is but external is the worst unholiness." It is so today in Christendom. Men who know not Jehovah, who are not serving the Lord but themselves and are thus under the control of Satan, the god of this age, minister in the things of God. It results in all kinds of departures and corruption. It is the curse of Christendom. "The sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for the men despised the offering of Jehovah." Beholding such wicked conduct in the priests men became disgusted with all religious performances and the truth they foreshadowed. They turned away from the offering of Jehovah. It is so still. An unholy, selfish ministry is the greatest stumbling block to the great mass of the people.

And then the contrast! The child Samuel in his little ministry is mentioned once more. What a charming picture he must have been in his little ephod and the little robe finished by his loving mother! Upon him a mere child, so innocent and simple, the white linen robe had been bestowed. Everything else in Shiloh was corrupted.

Eli makes an attempt to warn his sons of their immoral and wicked conduct. His weak effort but reveals the state of his own soul. The law demanded as a penalty the death of the offenders. The lack of zeal in Eli's remonstrance made no impression upon his wicked sons. Then an unnamed man of God came to Eli and carried to him the message of judgment. Hophni and Phinehas are to die both in one day. Then there is the promise of the raising up of a faithful priest. Such a priest was Zadok, but the promise finds its ultimate fulfillment in Him who is the King-Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3

4. Samuel's Call and Prophetic Ministry

CHAPTER 3

1. Samuel's call (3:1-9)
2. The message from Jehovah (3:10-18)
3. Samuel the prophet (3:19-21)

After the priesthood had so completely failed and divine judgment had been pronounced, Samuel receives his call to the prophetic office. He continued his ministrations as a Levite during the time that the word of

the Lord was precious (literally, rare); there was no vision. Up to this time Samuel had not known the Lord nor had the word of the Lord been revealed to him (verse 7). It must have been near the hour of dawn, for the tabernacle lamp was not yet gone out, when the voice of Jehovah called Samuel by name. He knew him, as He knows all His own by name. Three times the voice called and three times he ran unto Eli. Then Eli understood that Jehovah called the child and he instructed him to answer at the next call--"Speak, Jehovah, for thy servant heareth." Jehovah then appeared and stood and called again. Samuel in answering omits the word "Jehovah" Eli had told him to use. He may have omitted the name Jehovah out of reverential fear. He hears thus from Jehovah's lips the message of doom for Eli and his house, which he faithfully transmitted to Eli in the morning. He kept nothing back and Eli bowed to it in resignation; however, he did not repent. "By the faithful discharge of a commission so painful, and involving such self-denial and courage, Samuel had stood the first test of his fitness for the prophetic office. Henceforth "the word of the LORD" was permanently with him. Not merely by isolated commissions, but in the discharge of a regular office, Samuel acted as prophet in Israel. A new period in the history of the kingdom of God had commenced, and all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, knew that there was now a new link between them and their God, a living centre of guidance and fellowship, and a bond of union for all who were truly the Israel of God." (A. Edersheim, Bible History.)

Chapter 4

5. The judgment of Eli and His Sons--Ichabod

CHAPTER 4

1. The fulfilled prediction: The death of Eli's sons (4:1-11)
2. The death of Eli (4:12-18)
3. Ichabod (4:19-22)

Israel then renewed the conflict with the Philistines and suffered defeat. It seems that they acted in self-confidence, and when the battle was lost they readily acknowledged the hand of the Lord in the disaster: "Wherefore has the LORD smitten us today before the Philistines?" But there was no self-judgment, no repentance, no crying unto the Lord. The ark of the covenant of the LORD is brought out of Shiloh. They trust in the ark instead of Jehovah; they expect salvation from the ark of gold and wood: "it may save us out of the hand of our enemies." Alas! "the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God" (verse 4). They forgot Jehovah whom they had offended and insulted. How could He bless and deliver His people when such sons of Belial were associated with the sanctuary? A worse defeat followed. Thirty thousand Israelites fell, among them the sons of Eli. The Philistines, first terrified by the presence of the ark, gain a great victory and capture the ark.

On the words "these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with every plague in the wilderness" Wellhausen, the well known critic, remarks: "Either an excusable inaccuracy, or a copyist's slip." He meant that the

Egyptians were not smitten in the wilderness, but in their own land. However, Wellhausen did not see that the Philistines said this. They expressed their inaccurate knowledge of what had happened and Samuel reports it as if it was spoken by the Philistines.

The tidings of the awful disaster reach Eli, ninety-eight years old and totally blind. When he heard that the ark of God was taken, he fell backward, broke his neck and died. Significant is the final paragraph of this chapter. The wife of Phinehas in child-birth also hears of the capture of the ark and the death of Eli, her father-in-law, the death of her husband and his brother. Dying, she named her baby son "Ichabod," which means "no glory." The glory had departed from Israel. Israel had indeed brought forth, by her departure from God, the condition of "Ichabod." The ark as the glory of God's manifest presence among His people was gone. "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand" (Ps. 78:60-61). In a higher sense the word "Ichabod" is written over that which professes to be the church, but which has departed from the truth. The power and the manifest presence of Jehovah are lost. And many individual Christians have drifted into the same conditions by their sinful and worldly ways.

Chapter 5

6. The Ark in the Hands of the Philistines and Its Return

CHAPTER 5

1. The ark in the house of Dagon (5:1-5)
2. The Philistines smitten by Jehovah (5:6-12)

The ark was brought to Ashdod, the leading city of the Philistines, and set up in the temple dedicated to Dagon, the chief god of the people. It was half fish and half man, the symbol of fertility. Before this idol the ark was set up. In their blindness they imagined that Dagon had conquered the God of Israel. The next morning they found Dagon fallen with his face to the earth before the ark. It was the Lord who did it and not an accident. The next morning the whole idol-image, except the fish-part, is fallen upon the ground. "The head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands lay cut off upon the threshold." The God of Israel demonstrated His power over the gods of the Philistines, yet they continued to reverence even the threshold where the fragments of their idol had lain. Such is the darkness of fallen man.

A severer visitation came upon the Philistines; they were smitten with malignant boils. At the same time a plague of field mice destroyed the fields and the harvest (4:4, 11, 18). It reminds us of the plagues of Egypt. Yet the Philistines did not repent of their sins, but carried the ark of God about, but wherever it was carried the same punishment came upon the people. Yet there was no repentance from the side of the Philistines. All this becomes still more interesting if we consider what the Philistines as the enemies of the people of God represent. (See annotations on Judges.)

The world is to experience the judgments and plagues of God in a future day foreshadowed in these plagues which came upon the land of the Philistines; and there will be no turning to God. In the book of Revelation, where these final judgments upon a wicked world and an apostate world-church are described, we hear not a word of repentance. The answer God receives will be blasphemy of His name. "And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and repented not of their evil deeds" (Rev. 16:11).

Chapter 6-7:2

CHAPTERS 6:1-7:2

1. The counsel of the Philistines (6:1-9)
2. The ark at Beth-shemesh (6:10-20)
3. The ark at Kirjath-jearim (6:21-7:2)

The ark had remained among the Philistines seven months. For them they were months of suffering and deadly destruction. Now they plot to get rid of the ark and of Him whose hand rested so heavily in judgment upon them. The advice of the heathen priests and diviners is that the ark should be sent away with votive offerings of gold, representing that which had plagued them. This was a heathen custom, which has also been adopted and is practiced by Roman Catholicism, the great Philistine system of Christendom. In Romish churches, especially at shrines, one can find hundreds of votive offerings to God by those who are suffering affliction to appease the wrath of God. It is heathenish and denies Him who shed His blood for our redemption. And as these Philistine priests had some knowledge of God's judgment upon Egypt they added to their counsel a warning reminding them of Pharaoh and Egypt. Their unbelief and superstition are manifested by the way they returned the ark. But the power of the Creator is seen in the incident.

"In result it is proved conclusively that Jehovah is the God of Creation, supreme above all the natural instincts: the kine, though unaccustomed to a yoke, take the cart with its sacred burden directly away from where their calves are shut up, even while lowing after them, and take the straight road to Bethshemesh, a priestly city near the Israelite border. There, at the border, they stop, still under the eyes of the Philistine lords, at a great stone upon which the Levites place the ark, and where the kine are offered up a burnt offering to Jehovah.

"Thus the Philistines have Jehovah's sovereignty demonstrated to them in the precise terms which they have themselves chosen,--the goodness of God thus meeting them with what should have turned them from idolatry forever and brought them to His feet. But they go back, after all, to worship instead the humbled Dagon" (Numerical Bible).

The ark reaches Beth-shemesh (house of the sun) the nearest point across the border. It is welcomed with much rejoicing, but they forgot the holiness of God and looked into the ark, and the people of Beth-shemesh were smitten. As Beth-shemesh was only a small town it is generally taken that the number of the slain as given in verse 19 was changed by the mistake of a copyist. Various readings give smaller numbers; but that is

immaterial.

The ark is removed from Beth-shemesh to Kirjath-jearim, "the city of the woods." It was an humble place where the ark abode for twenty years. It was brought into the house of Abinadab; his son Eleazar (my God is help) was set aside to keep it. David found it there (Psalm 132:6). The ark never returned to Shiloh again.

Chapter 7:3-14

7. The Return Unto Jehovah and the Deliverance

CHAPTER 7:3-14

1. Samuel's message and the response of the people (7:3-4)
2. Gathered at Mizpah (7:5-6)
3. The deliverance (7:7-14)

Samuel now is seen beginning his great national ministry. The message he brings is the message of repentance and the assurance of faith. In simple words he addressed the people, who no doubt were prepared for it by their long period of humiliation. He demands that their true return to the Lord must be practical; the strange gods and Ashtaroth must be put away. If they serve the Lord only, deliverance out of the hands of the Philistines would come. The message was at once obeyed. Every true return to the Lord must manifest itself in the same way. True repentance without self-judgment and self-surrender is impossible. The earnest appeal and whole-hearted response by the people led to the great gathering at Mizpah (the watch tower). It was a day of humiliation and prayer. Samuel said "I will pray unto the Lord for you." He was the child of prayer and the man of prayer (8:6; 12:19, 23). "Samuel among them that call upon His name; they called upon the LORD and He answered them" (Ps. 99:6). There was confession of sin and they drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah. It was a symbolical act showing the undone and helpless condition of Israel. "We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground" (2 Sam. 14:14). When the Philistines came up against them they were afraid and acknowledged prayer as their only refuge and help. "Cease not" they appealed to Samuel, "to cry for us unto the LORD our God." And afterwards he offered a whole burnt offering unto the Lord. This offering represents Christ. Then Samuel cried unto the LORD and the LORD answered him. The elements of a true return unto the Lord and a true revival among God's people are found in this great national movement. While Samuel offered the burnt offering and interceded for Israel the Philistines drew near. Then came the interference from the LORD. It was a supernatural thundering which discomfited the Philistines, and they were smitten. Israel gains a great victory. They pursue the enemy to Beth-car (house of the lamb). Between Mizpeh and Shen the stone called by Samuel "Ebenezer" is put up as a memorial. Ebenezer means "stone of help." "Helped--but only 'hitherto'! For all Jehovah's help is only 'hitherto'--from day to day, and from place to place--not unconditionally,

nor wholly, nor once for all, irrespective of our bearing." (A. Edersheim, Bible History.)

Chapter 7:15-8:3

8. Samuel Exercising His Office and His Failure

CHAPTERS 7:15-8:3

1. Samuel the Prophet-Judge (7:15-17)
2. His failure (8:1-3)

Samuel's activity as the great prophet-judge is now seen. He had a blessed circuit of ministry, which has its spiritual lessons for us. He first visited Bethel (the house of God). Judgment must begin there. When Jacob was obedient to the divine call "Arise and go up unto Bethel," he buried the strange gods, the household gods under the oak of Shechem. So the evil things must be put away. Then came Gilgal (rolling). There the reproach of Egypt was rolled away (Joshua 5). This is what we need, to be freed from the world, dead to it and the world dead to us. Mizpeh (watch tower) was his third station. This is our constant need to be on our guard and watch against the foe, as well as look upward and forward from Mizpeh to that blessed home where He is and which we shall surely share with Him. This is represented in Ramah (heights) where Samuel had his home. But there is failure. Samuel makes the mistake in making his sons judges. Because he was a judge and prophet and had success in it, his sons are to follow him in the same capacity. God does not work by succession, nor does He transmit gift and power from father to son. The so-called "apostolic succession" and traditional authority is an invention and one of the greatest factors in the corruption of Christianity. The Lord alone can call to service and give gifts for the ministry. Joel and Abiah were judges in Beersheba, but walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. And this opened the way for the introduction of the monarchy in Israel.

Chapter 8:4-22

II. KING SAUL: His REIGN AND REJECTION

1. The King Demanded

CHAPTER 8:4-22

1. The king demanded (8:4-9)
2. The rights of the king (8:10-22)

The kingly government is now to be established through the deliberate and untheocratic self-determination of the people. Jehovah was their invisible King, and Him they rejected by requesting a king like all the nations. The motives for the demand of a king are three: 1. The old age of Samuel and the unfitness of his sons; 2. The desire to be upon the same footing with other nations; 3. To have a leader and fight their battles (verse 20).

"The state or political organization reaches its highest development when royalty is introduced. The King of Israel is not, however, intended to be an autocratic but a theocratic king; the prophet and the priest, in their official capacity, did not occupy a subordinate, but a co-ordinate rank. As men and as citizens, they were under an obligation, like all other subjects, to obey the king; but with respect to their prophetic and priestly offices, they were dependent on God alone, and by no means on the king" J. H. Kurtz, Sacred History.

Samuel was displeased by the request, but the man of prayer turned to the Lord and received from Him the needed direction. The Lord comforts the heart of His servant "for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." As they did to Jehovah, so the Lord told His servant, do they also unto thee. The servant is identified with His Master. It reminds us of the words of our Lord: "if they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you also." We are called to share His reproach. And they were to have a King according to their own choice. Later the Lord reminded Israel through Hosea of this event. "I will be thy King; where is any other that may serve thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, give me a king and princes? I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath" (Hos. 13:10-11). Then Samuel describes the manner, literally the rights, of the king. Military service, harsh and compulsory, forced labour and other evils are spread before them. Yet they refused to hearken and the Lord said again: "Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king."

Chapter 9:1-10:16

2. The Story of Saul and His Anointing

CHAPTERS 9:1-10:16

1. Saul the son of Kish and the lost asses (9:1-10)
2. Samuel and Saul (9:11-24)
3. Saul anointed King (9:25-10:16)

And now the Lord gives them a king according to their choice. "He should possess all the natural attractions and martial qualities which the people could desire in their king; he should reflect their religious standpoint at their best; but he should also represent their national failings and the inmost defects of their religious life; that of combining

zeal for the religion of Jehovah, and outward conformity to it, with utter want of real heart submission to the Lord, and of true devotedness to Him" (A. Edersheim). They obtained exactly what they wanted. God's choice for them would have been a different character, one who seeks Him and is in subjection to Him, as we shall find in the king after God's heart, King David. But now He gives to the people what they had asked for.

Saul means "asked." The genealogy of Saul is given; the five names in their original meaning suggest the pride and self-glorification of the natural man. Saul is described as an ideal man, "a young man" (literally, "in the prime of manhood") and goodly; and 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. Saul, ignorant of the divine purpose, sets out to seek the lost she-asses of his father. Little did he know how the search would end and that he would soon become the head of the nation, which had gone more astray than the lost asses (Is. 1:3). A small matter it was going forth to look for animals which had strayed away; but the guiding hand of Jehovah was there. The search is futile. The servant then suggests a visit to the man of God, none other than Samuel. Saul seems to have no knowledge of Samuel. He is willing enough to seek the man for counsel but he is troubled about the present for the man of God. It shows the tendency of the natural man to give in order to get from God. The servant has the fourth part of a shekel of silver which he offers to give to the man of God. Verse 9, containing a parenthetical statement, is not a gloss by a later hand, as the critical school maintains. The difference between seer and prophet is an interesting one. A prophet is one who speaks for God being moved by God; he is the mouthpiece of the Lord. The term seer suggests the knowledge the prophet had. The people were more concerned about the seer than the prophet. Thus Saul shows the state of his heart. He does not seek God, nor the prophet as the man and mouthpiece of God; only the seer.

Then Samuel and Saul meet for the first time. First Saul and the servant meet maidens going out to draw water, and they directed them to the heights where a sacrificial feast was to be held. And the Lord had spoken into Samuel's ear the day before that the man of Benjamin would come. All had been ordered by the Lord and Samuel, knowing the expected one would come had reserved the shoulder of the peace offering for him (9:23-24). (See annotations on Leviticus.) What the Lord had said to Samuel concerning Saul reveals His gracious purpose of love towards Saul. Though he was the people's choice yet the Lord was willing to make him much more, even the saviour of this people Israel (9:16). Samuel tells Saul that the asses were found, so that he was relieved of the anxiety. And when Samuel acquaints him that all Israel desires him, he speaks of his own littleness (9:21). It reminds us of that other Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, the Apostle Paul, whose name means "little." However Saul, the son of Kish, knew nothing of real self-judgment. It was rather the language of surprise than the expression of a deep, heartfelt humility. Then we see them in communion, and afterwards Samuel anoints him with the holy anointing oil and kissed him. The anointing is the symbol of power conferred upon him and also implies dependence upon the Holy Spirit, typified by the oil. The kiss was given in token of homage. Thus Saul became the first king in Israel. Samuel also gave him three significant signs, which all came to pass. They were given to Saul to assure him of all which had taken place and to teach him certain spiritual lessons. He was assured that God is with Him (10:7). The Spirit of God also came upon him and he prophesied.

"By this, as in the case of Judges, we are, however, not to understand the abiding and sanctifying presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the heart as His temple. The Holy Ghost was peculiarly "the gift of the Father" and "of the Son," and only granted to the Church in connection with and after the resurrection of our blessed Lord. Under the Old Testament, only the manifold influences of the Spirit were experienced, not His indwelling as the Paraclete. This appears not only from the history of those so influenced, and from the character of that influence, but even from the language in which it is described. Thus we read that the Spirit of Elohim "seized upon" Saul, suddenly and mightily laid hold on him,--the same expression being used in Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam. 16:13; 18:10."

Chapter 10:17-27

3. The Open Acclamation of Saul as King

CHAPTER 10:17-27

1. The lot at Mizpeh (10:17-21)
2. The acclamation of the King (10:22-27)

Samuel called once more a national gathering at Mizpeh. The lot is now to be cast. But before this is done the Lord through Samuel reminds them once more of their serious mistake: "And ye have this day rejected your God, who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto Him, Nay but set a king over us." They had not heeded this warning before and now they are to receive what they had asked in their self-will. The lot was therefore but an outward, empty ceremony. It fell on Saul, the son of Kish. He could not be found. Why did he hide? Some say it was humility and modesty. It was not that, but rather fear of the responsibility he was now to assume. And that revealed lack of confidence in God of whose power he had received such evidences. All foreshadows the coming failure of the people's king. When he is presented before the people it was seen that he towered above them all. When Samuel introduced him, "See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen," there was a wave of fleshly enthusiasm. And all the people shouted and said, God save the King. (literally, Live the King!) Now they had a king like the other nations, a king who reflected their own carnal, unspiritual condition. How his heart must have been lifted up with pride even then! Once more Samuel tells them the manner of the kingdom; it was undoubtedly a restatement of Deut. 17:14-20. And Saul did not assume leadership at once. He went home to Gibeah. A faithful company whom God had touched accompanied the king, while the sons of Belial despised him and brought no present. There was opposition to him. He showed the wisdom of the natural man by holding his peace. He was as a deaf man.

Chapter 11

4. The King's First Victory and the Renewal of the Kingdom at Gilgal

CHAPTER 11

1. The victory over Ammon (11:1-11)
2. The kingdom renewed (11:12-15)

Nahash the Ammonite encamped against Jabesh-gilead. Nahash means "the serpent." This invasion took place before Saul had been made king. From chapter 12:12 we learn that it really was the occasion why Israel demanded a king. In despair the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead offered to make a covenant with this old foe of Israel, whom Jephthah had so successfully fought. Ammon represents typically the enemy of God's people characterized by evil doctrines and perversions of the truth of God. How often compromise is made with the most subtle errors which emanate from Nahash, the serpent! But he makes his condition, their right eyes are to be plucked out. We speak of the eye of faith, and typically we may apply it in this way. All errors and false doctrines blind the eyes of faith and rob God's people of their true vision.

Then Saul acts for the first time. However his actions are characteristic of his spiritual condition. We read nothing of prayer; he did not seek the presence of the Lord. It is true, the Spirit of God came upon him, but that does not mean that he was right with God. The Spirit of God came also upon Balaam to prophesy. Even so the Spirit came upon King Saul with external power in the same sense as He came upon the Judges. The anger which he manifested, the methods he employed to stir up the people, the threat he makes and his leaning on Samuel for authority (verse 7) all show again the lack of true faith. He is but the man in the flesh who knows not the Lord.

At Gilgal the kingdom is renewed. The people are united and suggest the killing of the sons of Belial mentioned in the previous chapter. Saul forbids it and acknowledges that the Lord had wrought salvation that day. But there is no real outburst of praise. They were at Gilgal, the place which typifies death to the flesh. Here Saul is made king before the Lord. But while Saul and the people rejoiced nothing is said of Samuel's joy. The man of God looked deeper, for he knew that all was only skin deep and that the Lord, whom they had rejected from being king over them, could not be pleased with their outward joy.

Chapter 12

5. Samuel's Witness and Warning

CHAPTER 12

1. His witness to his own integrity (12:1-5)
2. His warning (12:6-15)
3. Heaven's answer (12:16-19)
4. His words of comfort (12:20-25)

What a scene! The man of God, the man of prayer, now advanced in years, stands before them. "I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day." Here was not a Nazarite who had failed like Samson, but one who had lived out his Nazariteship in the fullest sense of the word. What unselfish service he had rendered and how he loved his own people! In all this he is a type of that greatest servant who came in the fulness of time not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. His witness to his own integrity reminds us also of Paul's words in the Epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:6-9; 12:14-17). The whole nation acknowledged Samuel's integrity. A brief historical retrospect follows in which Samuel points out their sin of forgetting Jehovah. ("Bedan" in verse 11 should be "Barak.") Their present condition was like that of their fathers, unbelief and disobedience.

It was the time of the wheat harvest. Samuel prayed for a witness from heaven upon his words. Then it thundered and rained. It never thunders and rains in Palestine at that time of the year (May and June). A guilty fear seized upon them and they requested intercession. This reminds us of that coming harvest, the end of the age (Matt. 13:39). Then Jehovah will thunder in judgment and the repentance of the people of Israel will follow. However true repentance did not take place here when Samuel prayed. Beautiful are his words of comfort. How he manifests the work and character of a true prophet! Here is also the assurance for Israel. "For Jehovah for His great name's sake will not forsake His people, because it hath pleased Jehovah to make you His people." His gifts and calling are without repentance.

Chapter 13

6. The First Failure of Saul and Its Results

CHAPTER 13

1. The failure of Saul (13:1-9)
2. Samuel's sentence (13:10-14)
3. Israel's deplorable condition (13:15-23)

Omit the first verse of this chapter as it does not belong into the text. In self-confidence Saul has dismissed the greater part of the people; only 2000 remained with him and 1000 with his son Jonathan. Saul is now passing through a test. Hath he true faith which counts and depends on God? Is he obedient to His word as given by the prophet? Jonathan appears here for the first time. His name means "the Lord hath given." He is the opposite from his poor father; the son is a man of real faith and zeal for God. In smiting the garrison of the Philistines he manifested that faith. He counted on God and in dependence on Him he acted. And what did Saul do? "And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, let the Hebrews hear." It was not the action of faith but the result of his own proud heart. Significant it is that he avoids the word Israel. The Lord never speaks of "My people the Hebrews," their original, national name; it is always "My people Israel." He leaves out the God of Israel. It all reveals the character of Saul. Then Saul gets the credit of having smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and when they gathered in all their strength the people are paralysed by fear, and instead of advancing in the name of Jehovah they seek the caves, the thickets, the rocks, the high places and the pits. And some of the Hebrews even crossed the Jordan. Saul remains in these demoralized conditions at Gilgal, followed by some of the people trembling. It is all unbelief; like king, like people. They fear the Philistines and distrust Jehovah. And Saul at Gilgal! He might have remembered the captain of the Lord's hosts and sought His presence and help. All shows the chosen king knew not the Lord. Samuel's word to him (chapter 10:8) was not forgotten by Saul. He waits, but not long enough. The test is on. The people stay a few days and then begin to scatter. They have no faith; neither has the king. True faith waits on God and trusts in Him. Faith knows that man's extremity is God's opportunity. Saul makes an outward effort to be obedient, while in his soul he knows no subjection to the Lord and to His way. At last the breaking point is reached. He intrudes into the priestly office. The burnt offering, without any meaning under these circumstances, is brought by Saul and immediately after, perhaps before the seven days had fully expired, Samuel appears.

The king's own words reveal once more his character and they are his condemnation. He was tested and the test revealed a heart which did not fear the Lord, had no confidence in Him and is disobedient to His word. And

Samuel delivers his message. Sentence is pronounced. Another, a man after the Lord's own heart, is to take his place. And the deplorable condition of Israel! The Philistines speak also of them as Hebrews. Instead of being dependent upon the Lord for everything, they were the slaves of their oppressors, dependent upon them. This is the place into which unbelief can put the people of God.

Chapter 14

7. Jonathan's Heroic Deed of Faith

CHAPTER 14

1. Jonathan's victory (14:1-23)
2. Saul's adjuration and Jonathan's deed (14:24-32)
3. Saul's first altar and unanswered inquiry (14:33-37)
4. Jonathan condemned and saved (14:38-45)
5. Saul's battle and success (14:46-48)
6. Saul's family (14:49-52)

Jonathan, one of the most beautiful characters of the Bible, with a kindred spirit, his armour bearer, goes forward to attack once more the outpost of the Philistines. Saul knew nothing of it. The King is surrounded by a small company, among them the relations of Eli. They had an ephod, needed for inquiry from Jehovah, but we do not read of its use. Jonathan and his armour bearer and their conversation are blessed illustrations of true faith. What simplicity it reveals! Jonathan knew the Lord and knew that He loves His people and therefore would overthrow their enemies. He tells the armour bearer "it may be that the LORD will work for us, for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few." And the armour bearer, whose name we do not know, but known to God, answered him: "Do all that is in thine heart; turn thee; behold I am with thee according to thy heart." They were in blessed unity. They cast themselves upon the Lord and let Him decide what they were to do. And the Lord, as He always does, answers to their faith. In spite of the difficulties, the sharp rocks, which they had to ascend, difficulties which are always connected with true faith, they overcome the foe. The Lord was there, for it was His battle and the earth quaked. But twenty men were slain by the two. A great confusion followed. The multitude melted away as they beat each other, and the Hebrews which had been with the Philistines turned against them. It was the Lord who saved Israel that day (verse 23).

Then Jonathan and his armour bearer were missed. Saul made an attempt in consulting the Lord, which did not succeed. Saul's adjuration was unnecessary and made in self-will. His oath is but the working of the natural man. In his blindness he thinks he can help along the complete defeat of the enemy by his legal injunction. On account of this foolish oath the people were in distress; legalism always puts burdens and distress upon the people of God. His own son Jonathan, ignorant of his father's

commandment, takes a little honey on the end of the rod and receives refreshment by it. Honey is the type of natural things and their sweetness. Their use in the right way is not forbidden. Like Jonathan we must touch them only with the end of the rod and take a little. If Jonathan had gone down on his knees and filled himself with all the honey he could eat, it would not have refreshed, but incapacitated him for the conflict. Jonathan was revived by the little honey he had taken, while the people fainted. But a worse result of Saul's commandment happened. The famished people ate meat with the blood. Thus Saul's restriction of a lawful thing led to the breaking of a divine commandment.

Saul erects his first altar, for he feels the need; perhaps less than that, he only fears the judgment of God. There is no answer from God when he inquired "Shall I go down after the Philistines?" What follows shows us again the impetuous and stubborn heart of Saul. Self-righteous and self-willed he is ready to slay his own son; the people rescued him from his own hands. What humiliation for King Saul!

Chapter 15

8. War with Amalek: Saul's Disobedience and Rejection

CHAPTER 15

1. The commission to destroy Amalek (15:1-9)
2. Saul's disobedience and rejection (15:10-23)
3. Saul's confession (15:24-31)
4. The doom of Agag (15:32-35)

From verse 48 in the previous chapter we learn that Saul smote the Amalekites. Samuel is sent by Jehovah with a new message to Saul telling him to smite Amalek again and to destroy utterly all that they have. It involves another task for Saul. He had been fully established as king and is therefore called upon to discharge his responsibilities and prove that he is fit for the position which he held. Amalek is the great foe of God's people and typifies, as we have seen in our annotation on Exodus (chapter 17), the flesh and its lusts. Israel should have war with Amalek from generation to generation, and the remembrance of Amalek was to be completely blotted out. Even so the flesh is always the enemy of the children of God. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh." It is enmity against God. With this enemy Saul was to war and to destroy them utterly. But Saul at heart was nothing but an Amalekite. He gathers his army to do what Jehovah had demanded. The Lord gives Amalek into his hands. Then comes the significant "but."--"But Saul and his people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good and would not utterly destroy them, but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."

"The lesson is a deeply solemn one, and wider in application than perhaps we would easily allow. If Amalek stands here as elsewhere for the lusts of the flesh, alas, is it not true that we measure our judgment of these often more by our own tastes than by the simple letter of the Word of God? How easy it is to judge the multitude of things, and spare the worst of all, the Agag! And things which minister to the lusts of the flesh are unhesitatingly allowed, if only they are not what to common estimate would be considered vile. Our judgments, how apt are they to be those of the world at large rather than of God,--in the light of nature rather than of the sanctuary!" (Numerical Bible)

Then the Lord, who had been the silent witness of all this, told Samuel about it. A night of sorrow and of prayer followed for the man of God. How he must have pleaded with the Lord for unhappy Saul! Samuel and Saul meet. Strange words which came from the lips of disobedient Saul: "Blessed be thou of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD." It was a falsehood. He then hears the sentence. "When thou wast little in thine own sight thou becamest the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee King over Israel!" And now he had become great in his own sight and little in the sight of the Lord. Solemn are the prophet's words to him. "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, He hath also rejected thee from being king." This was the irrevocable sentence of Jehovah. Alas! Saul's confession but reveals his true character once more. He sinned and transgressed against the voice of the Lord, because he feared the people and hearkened to their voice. Such a one was unworthy to be king over the Lord's people. It is a sad spectacle, the unrelenting Samuel and the deposed king. And Samuel deals with Agag in judgment as he deserved it.

The statement "and Samuel saw Saul no more until the days of his death" is taken by critics in connection with chapter 19:24 as an indication of the diversity of the sources from which the books of Samuel have been derived. But it is incorrect. Samuel did not come to see Saul again, though Saul prophesied before Samuel. However chapter 28:11-19 must be connected with Samuel's final word to Saul in this chapter.

Chapter 16

III. DAVID, THE KING AFTER GOD'S HEART--His EXILE AND SUFFERING

1. David Anointed King and the Departure of the Spirit from Saul

CHAPTER 16

1. David anointed king (16:1-13)
2. The Spirit departs from Saul and David with Saul (16:14-23)

The king after the people's heart has failed and is set aside, and now Jehovah brings forth His king after His own heart. That king like Jonathan, a man of faith, is devoted to Jehovah and in perfect subjection unto Him. Furthermore, from the tribe of Judah (Judah means "praise") he is a worshipper through whom the Spirit of God pours forth the sweetest strains of praise and worship. He prospers into a great kingdom and Jehovah makes an oathbound covenant with him (2 Sam. 7). That covenant points us to the true King, who according to the flesh is of the seed of David. Saul could not foreshadow that King. There is absolutely nothing in Saul which could remind us of the King who is yet to rule over this earth in righteousness. It is different with the life and reign of David. Everywhere we may discover most blessed types of our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of David. Because this king after God's own heart is to give a typical vision of the coming true King, David had to pass through suffering first before he could receive the kingdom and its glory. From now on in this book we shall follow the sufferings of the king after God's heart.

Samuel is interrupted in his mourning for Saul by a new command to fill his horn with oil for the anointing of another king. That king is to be chosen from the sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite. A sacrificial feast is appointed in connection with the approaching anointing of the son of Jesse, and Samuel is obedient and went to Bethlehem. Then he called Jesse and his sons to the feast. Then the seven sons of Jesse pass by, but the chosen one is not among them. Only one was left, the youngest who kept the sheep. He is brought in. "Now he was ruddy (literally, "reddish," perhaps referring to auburn hair) and withal of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look upon; and the LORD said, Arise, anoint him, for this is he." David the son of Jesse was anointed and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. And so David became the Lord's anointed. David means "beloved"; he is a shepherd, typifying the Beloved One, the good, the great and the chief Shepherd. What a contrast with Saul!

An evil spirit from the Lord began then to trouble Saul after the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him. What a sad spectacle he now presents! When he had been anointed, the Spirit also came upon him and he became another man. His pride, self-will, disobedience and stubbornness we have followed, and now the Spirit departs and in judgment upon the deposed King an evil spirit was permitted to come upon Saul. "Evil as well as good has its commission from God,--not its existence, but its liberty to act, and the limits of its action." It was no doubt a case of demon possession. He had rejected the Word of God and was given over into the hands of a demon. Such is also the case in the days of apostasy which are now upon Christendom. They depart from the faith and follow seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Doctrinal apostasy and the moral evils following such an apostasy is the work of demons. God still permits as an act of judgment that demons possess those who are disobedient and rebel against Him. Then David is called in to sing to the afflicted King and to soothe him. And he loved him greatly and David became his armour bearer. "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." Here we have a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. His sweet words, the ministrations of His Spirit refresh the soul and drive out the evil spirit. When the unhappy king had been quieted and the ministry of the young shepherd-king was no longer needed, he returned to his home and to his shepherd life; to feed his father's sheep (17:15).

No discrepancy exists between 1 Sam. 16:19-23 and the question which

Saul subsequently asks: "Whose son is this youth?" (17:55-58) The king had not been previously anxious to become intimately acquainted with the origin and family-connections of one who merely bore his arms and served as his harper, but when the latter is on the point of becoming his son-in-law, it is naturally a matter of interest to him to acquire a more accurate knowledge of the personal history of David.

Chapter 17

2. David and Goliath

CHAPTER 17

1. Goliath of Gath, the Philistine (17:1-11)
2. David's errand and inquiry (17:12-30)
3. David's offer to fight Goliath (17:31-40)
4. David's victory (17:41-54)
5. Saul's inquiry (17:55-58)

Modern critics are practically unanimous in regarding the story of this chapter as unhistorical. One of the leading arguments they advance is the statement found in 2 Sam. 21:19 that the slayer of Goliath was Elhanan the son of Jair-oregim, a Bethlehemite. But if we consult still another passage we find that Elhanan slew the brother of Goliath. "And Elhanan the son of Jair smote Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite" (1 Chron. 20:5). It is therefore no discrepancy at all. A closer examination into this matter we cannot undertake here. If the account in 1 Sam. 17 were unhistorical the jealousy of Saul against David would be inexplicable.

David, the Lord's anointed, in his great deed, is constituted the deliverer of Israel. The deed of the young shepherd is one of the greatest recorded in the Bible. It was simple trust in the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which won the overthrow of the boasting Philistine. In typical application the story of David and Goliath is especially rich; we can pass on but a little of it. A prayerful and diligent search will reveal much more. Goliath, the giant, is the type of Satan, the prince of this world, who has the power of death. He also typifies that which is connected with the enemy of God, which is under the leadership of Satan. This is suggested by the number "six." Six is in Bible numerics the number of man in opposition to God. His height was six cubits. He had also six pieces of armour (verses 5-7). The number six is also prominent in another giant, who was slain by Jonathan, the son of Shimeah. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot (2 Sam. 21:20). Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold also has the number six connected with it (Dan. 3:1). In Revelation we find the number of the beast, that coming man of sin, and his number is 666; it represents the utmost defiance of God, the fullest manifestation of sin. The bold and defiant language Goliath used, the terror he inspired among the people of God, find easy application to Satan and his power.

And David is the type of our Lord Jesus Christ. His father sent David on a mission to his brethren. It reminds us of Joseph who was sent to seek for his lost brethren. Both are types of Him whom the Father sent into the world. (Jesse means "Jehovah is living.") He came to the camp in lowliness and then was misunderstood and wrongly accused by his own brethren. And thus our Lord was treated by His own. We must not overlook the prominence given to the reward which he is to receive who slays Goliath. "The King will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel." Well may we see here a type of the reward of Him who became poor for our sake. And David took the stones from the brook, out of the water, the type of death. Then after he struck the giant with the stone, he took Goliath's sword and slew him and cut off his head. Even so our Lord Jesus Christ by death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14). And now Israel and Judah, the types of the true people of God, can arise and shout for joy and gain a complete victory over the conquered foe (verse 52). And this took place at Ephesdammim (the boundary of blood) and the valley of Elah (the mighty one). It speaks of the blood and the power, death and resurrection. What evidences we have in these historical events and their typical application of the inspiration of the Bible! And David had said to Goliath that the victory Jehovah would give him should bring about "that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel." All the earth will yet see and know His salvation.

The alleged difficulty of verses 55-58 we have already explained at the close of the previous chapter.

Note objections made by critics to verse 54. They say it is "curious anachronism, since David's future capital was still in the hands of the Jebusites." However, Jerusalem, west of Moriah, had been taken by Judah. The Jebusites only held Jebus, or Zion, south of Moriah. See Judges 1:7-8. Higher criticism abounds in misstatements of the Scriptures.

Chapter 18

3. Jonathan and David--Saul's jealousy

CHAPTER 18

1. Jonathan's love for David (18:1-4)
2. The beginning of Saul's jealousy (18:5-16)
3. David's marriage (18:17-30)

A beautiful scene opens this chapter. Jonathan, the man of faith, loves David. He was about 40 years old and David about 17. Jonathan made a covenant with David and loved him as his own soul. He showed also his great devotion by giving to David, his robe, his garments, his sword, his bow and his girdle. Thus he stripped himself of all for David's sake. Such devotion and love should we manifest towards Him, who is greater than David. No

doubt Jonathan's devotion was kindled by the deed young David had done in slaying Goliath. And when we think of what our Lord has done for us the devotion to Him increases.

And David the anointed is the obedient servant and conducts himself wisely. The days of suffering and exile are now rapidly approaching. The song of the women, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," angers the rejected King. Again the demon possesses him because he gave way to his temper. He nourished the feeling of hatred against David. "He eyed David from that day forward." When the evil spirit came upon him he prophesied. This has been hard to understand to some. Several translators have translated "raved"; but that cannot be done, for the word prophesy is the same as in chapter 5:5. Prophesying means to speak by inspiration; it does not always mean the prediction of future events. Now there is besides a divine inspiration, also a satanic inspiration. Certain cults which claim restoration of certain gifts claim inspiration, which has often been traced to the influence of demons. Saul uttered words which were the result of the indwelling evil spirit. Then he attempted twice to kill David with the javelin. This was no doubt an attempt from the side of Satan to do away with him from whose loins the promised seed, the Redeemer, was to come. The Lord shielded David and Saul was afraid of him, because the Lord was with him.

And now David has also gained the love of all Israel and Judah. Saul then offers to make David his son-in-law. Underneath it all was the mad King's plotting to get rid of David and have the Philistines kill him. How blinded Saul had become! The Lord's anointed was in the Lord's own hands and his life was precious in His sight. It has its precious lessons for us likewise.

Merab is promised to him to become his wife, but Achiel receives her instead. (See 2 Sam. 21:8 and read "Merab" instead of "Michal.") Then he received Michal, who loved David. We shall meet her again later when she was restored to the King by Abner and later mocked the King of Israel. And Saul, after his scheme failed, became David's enemy continually.

Chapter 19

4. Saul's Renewed Attempt and David's Escape

CHAPTER 19

1. Saul and Jonathan (19:1-7)
2. Saul's new attempt to kill David (19:8-10)
3. David's escape (19:11-18)
4. Saul's pursuit and his helplessness (19:19-24)

The lost King goes from bad to worse. First he tried to spear David; then he attempted to take his life through having him killed by the

Philistines, and now he speaks openly to his own son and to all his servants that David must be killed. Therefore loving Jonathan warned David and he hid himself. Then Jonathan persuades his father to desist and Saul uttered a meaningless oath "As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain." And Jonathan brought David to Saul.

Thus Jonathan is seen as a peacemaker.

But David's great victory (verse 8) starts the king's hatred again and the javelin flies once more, but only strikes the wall from where he had slipped away. Then David fled and when he comes to his house his faithful wife tells him of the great danger and let him down through a window. They watched the house to kill him. The fifty-ninth Psalm throws interesting light upon this part of David's history and has of course prophetically a wider application.

And Michal practised a deception. Like Rachel she possessed teraphim, the idol-images in so much use among the Chaldeans and other nations. These were forbidden by Jehovah and yet they were secretly used (Judges 17:5; 18:14). Michal's image must have been of considerable size; she arranged it in the bed and then said to messengers "he is sick." When the deception is discovered she lies again and said that David threatened her life. That the Scriptures record these misdeeds is but an evidence of their genuineness, however the Holy Scriptures never sanction these things. In all these attempts on David we see a foreshadowing also of the attempts which were made on the life of our Lord.

And David fled to Samuel, who had a kind of a school for prophets at Naioth in Ramah. Saul's pursuit is in vain and he is helpless to touch the Lord's anointed. Divine power was engaged in behalf of David, and Saul himself, stripped and naked, lying down all night and all day has to bear witness to it.

"The 'schools of the prophets,' which were placed under the direction of experienced and approved prophets, afforded to younger men an opportunity of becoming qualified to perform the duties of the prophetic calling. The selection and the admission of individuals who were suited for the prophetic office by their personal character, and who had a divine call, undoubtedly depended on the prophetic judgment of those who presided over these institutions. As prophecy was a gift and not an art, the instructions which were imparted probably referred merely to the study of the law, and were intended to awaken and cultivate theocratical sentiments, as well as promote a growth in spiritual life, for herein a suitable preparation for the prophetic office necessarily consisted. There are also indications found which authorize us to conclude that the revival of sacred poetry, as an art, and that theocratico-historical composition also, are to be ascribed to these religious communities as their source. Such schools existed in Ramah, Jericho, Beth-el, and Gilgal (1 Sam. 19:18; 2 Kings 2:3, 5; 4:38)" (J.H. Kurtz)

Chapter 20

5. Jonathan Protects David and Their Separation

CHAPTER 20

1. David with Jonathan (20:1-10)
2. The strengthened bonds and the token (20:11-23)
3. Saul's attempt to kill Jonathan (20:24-34)
4. David separated from Jonathan (20:35-42)

We do not need to enlarge upon this beautiful story of the further devotion of Jonathan to David. What friendship and affection is here! Indeed the chapter contains one of the most charming incidents in this book. When David told Jonathan of his great danger, Jonathan refused to believe it. But David knew there was but a step between him and death. The conversation which took place in the field is most pathetic. Both were men of faith putting their trust in Jehovah and hence this great affection. Jonathan also was deeply conscious of David's destiny as the Lord's anointed. Verses 14 and 15 bear witness to this. "And thou shalt not only while I live show me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not. But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever, no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth." Then Jonathan caused David to make a covenant with him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul. And Jonathan had to taste his father's anger. Vicious are Saul's words to his own son, and in wrath he threw a javelin at him to smite him. How this illustrates Satan's hatred, both against Christ and those who are one with Him, as David and Jonathan were one.

Then comes the parting. They kissed one another, and wept one with another till David's weeping exceeded (literally, "till David wept loudly"). Jonathan went into the city and David into the suffering of the exile. They met but once more (23:16-18).

Chapter 21

6. David's Varied Experiences

CHAPTER 21

1. David at Nob with Ahimelech (21:1-9)
2. David's flight to Achish, King of Gath (21:10-15)

With this chapter begins the record of David's wanderings as an exile. A number of Psalms were written by him during this period of the rejection of the Lord's anointed. We shall point out some of them. These Psalms are prophetic also foreshadowing the rejection and the sufferings of Christ as well as the tribulations of the pious remnant of Israel during the closing years of the age, preceding the coming and enthronement of the King of Israel, our Lord. He reached Nob after his separation from Jonathan. At Nob the tabernacle of the Lord had been established and Ahimelech (my brother is King) the son of Ahitub (22:9) and great-grandson of Eli, was now exercising the priesthood. Nob was not far from Jerusalem, north of the city (Isaiah 10:32).

He appeared before Ahimelech in a deplorable condition. It was on a Sabbath when the King's son-in-law appeared unarmed and hungry. Ahimelech became afraid and suspicious, but David invented a falsehood to allay the suspicions of the high priest. The truthfulness of the Word of God is demonstrated in this faithful report of David's failure. He was not fully trusting in his God and the result was the exercise of an endeavour to protect himself which led to the deception. How different the actions of Him who according to the flesh was the son of David! "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who when He was reviled, reviled not again" (1 Pet. 2:22-23). Then he and his companions ate the hallowed bread. Our Lord called the attention of the Pharisees to this when they murmured because His disciples had plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5). There are no discrepancies between the account in Samuel and the words of our Lord. Our Lord speaks of David and they that were with him, while in the record here we read that Ahimelech asked David "Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?" The young men who are mentioned later (verses 4 and 5) may have at first kept out of sight. In Mark 2:26 our Lord mentions Abiathar as high priest. This is not a discrepancy, for Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech and exercised priestly function and also was high priest (1 Sam. 30:7). The story of eating the shewbread which was not lawful for him to eat is full of interest if compared with the words of our Lord. There was an inquiry of the Lord and then Ahimelech gave him the hallowed bread. (See 22:10.) On account of the ruin in Israel everything had become common and David and his companions did not sin in eating the shewbread; the "bread of presence" as it is called. And so our Lord was rejected, as David was, and justifies the conduct of His disciples by referring the Pharisees to David's action. (For a complete exposition see the annotations on Matthew, chapter 12.) "We can see in David rejected the type of a greater, who as such has abrogated Jewish and legal ordinances in order to give to His, people the true

communion with Himself of which the shewbread speaks." Thus the shewbread typifies the true bread, which we use for our sustenance, as David needed it for his physical keeping.

Then Doeg (the fearful) is mentioned. He was an Edomite and a prominent servant of Saul. David knew with the presence of Doeg that his secret was now discovered and Doeg later told Saul about it (22:9). He also received the sword of Goliath. With it he had slain the giant and, as we showed before, it is the type of Him who by death has destroyed him who has the power of death. The victory our Lord has won through death is the weapon against all our enemies.

Then we find David in Gath among the Philistines. Strange place he had selected for his protection! Why should he have gone to the strongest enemies of God and of His people? He had acted in unbelief and unbelief was dragging him down lower and lower. Instead of fleeing to God, he turned to Gath. And then for self preservation, because he had been discovered, he feigned madness. The King of Gath drove him away. The Lord was far better than his fears. The gracious deliverance set his heartstrings vibrating with praise. Here we would ask the reader to turn to Psalm 34, which David wrote, according to the inscription, when Ahimelech drove him away and when he departed. (There is no discrepancy here. The Philistine kings were called "Abimelech" as the rulers of Russia are called "Czar," the rulers of Turkey, "Sultan." Achish was Abimelech of the Philistines.)

Chapter 22

CHAPTER 22

1. In the cave of Adullam (22:1-2)
2. In Moab and Gad's message (22:3-5)
3. Saul's discovery of David's visit to Nob (22:6-10)
4. The murder of the priests (22:11-19)
5. David and Abiathar (22:20-23)

Next we find him in the cave of Adullam (a witness). Here a strange company gathers around the rejected king. It consisted of 400 men. He became their captain. Some of them were in distress, others in debt, and discontented. Such were attracted to the rejected David. It was a blessed scene foreshadowing Him to whom all can gather who are in distress, who feel their debt, their sinfulness, their sorrow and their need. And a greater One than David is here. Our Lord rejected, but owned by those who acknowledge their need, has power to meet it all in the riches of His grace. They with their captain, the Lord's anointed were "outside of the camp." Such a place there is today for all who know Him, who is rejected of men and so much dishonored in that which claims and bears His name. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13). And later those who had gathered around David in the cave, and suffered with him, were specially remembered (2 Sam. 23:8-39). "If we suffer we shall reign with Him" (2 Tim. 2:12). Psalm 57 was written by

David when he fled to the cave. And when he was in the cave he prayed. This prayer is embodied in Psalm 142. It was answered too when the Lord sent to him the 400 men. What food for meditation and reflection is here!

Then he came to Moab. His father and mother were there with him. He thought of making his nest there, yea, more than a nest, a hold; it was not according to the mind of the Lord. His ancestress of blessed memory, Ruth, the Moabitess, had left the land of Moab to dwell in Israel; her great-grandson David leaves the land to dwell in Moab. Again it was unbelief. He tried to escape the troubles which were in store for him. He had to learn patience and endurance. Therefore the Lord sent the prophet Gad with the message to depart. In all his unbelief and failures the Lord did not forsake him, but His watchful, loving eye followed His rejected servant. He cared and provided for him. No harm could reach him. He was not in Saul's hands but in the hands of the Lord. And this is our happy lot. In a psalm he saith "Thou tellest all my wanderings."

A frightful scene follows. Doeg the Edomite tells Saul of what happened at Nob. Saul, demonized Saul, orders the slaughter of the priests and while the servants of Saul refused the bloody work, the Edomite executed the command. Abiathar the son of murdered Ahimelech told David. He knew of Doeg's words to Saul about the shelter Ahimelech had given him. At that time David wrote Psalm 52. Prophetically Doeg, the Edomite, is the type of that cunning man of sin.

Beautiful are David's words to Abiathar (verse 23). They suggest the blessed assurance of salvation and preservation all receive who in faith turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 23

CHAPTER 23

1. The victory over the Philistines at Keilah (23:1-13)
2. In the wilderness of Ziph (23:14-26)
3. Saul's return (23:27-29)

Keilah was about six miles southeast of Adullam. David heard of the invasion of the Philistines that they were fighting against this walled city. And he inquired of the Lord, through Abiathar, who had an ephod (verse 6). David's inquiry of the Lord shows the man of faith in his submission to the Lord. He had his lapses, but at heart he owned the Lord and wanted to glorify Him. Twice he asked the Lord; the second time evidently to quiet the fears of the six hundred men who were now with him. The Lord gave him the victory. Then poor, blinded Saul thought David was now shut up in Keilah and could not escape. He knew not the Lord and His power to protect His own. While Saul plotted, David prayed and depended on the Lord, who told him that Saul would come to Keilah and that the men of Keilah would deal treacherously with him and his men. In the wilderness of Ziph Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hands.

And David learned by experience what the name of Ziph means; it means "refining." In the refining process of suffering and endurance the shepherd-king was fitted for his coming exaltation. In this he is not a type of our Lord, but we can read our own experience here. For the last time Jonathan and David met. He came to strengthen David's hand in God. This is the true purpose of the fellowship of the Saints. What a noble character was Jonathan!

"It is difficult to form an adequate conception of the courage, the spiritual faith, and the moral grandeur of this act. Never did man more completely clear himself from all complicity in guilt than Jonathan from that of his father. And yet not an undutiful word escaped the lips of this brave man. And how truly human is his fond hope that in the days to come, when David would be king, he should stand next to his throne, his trusted adviser, as in the days of sorrow he had been the true and steadfast friend of the outlaw! As we think of what it must have cost Jonathan to speak thus, or again of the sad fate which was so soon to overtake him, there is a deep pathos about this brief interview, almost unequalled in Holy Scripture, to which the ambitious hopes of the sons of Zebedee form not a parallel but a contrast" (A. Edersheim).

The Ziphites after Jonathan's visit discovered David's hiding place to Saul but Saul could not reach him nor touch the Lord's anointed. But David at that time cried mightily to God, "Save me, O God"--"Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth"; these were some of his utterances recorded in Psalm 54, which was written at that time.

Chapter 24

CHAPTER 24

1. In the wilderness of En-gedi (24:1-8)
2. David's words to Saul (24:9-15)
3. Saul's answer to David (24:16-22)

Saul continues in the pursuit of David and with 3000 chosen men he sought David at the rocks of the wild goats. It was in En-gedi, which means "the fountain of the young goat." There were wild rocks and the fountains of water and here David had found his refuge and strongholds. God trained him also amidst the hardships and difficulties suggested by the rocks, while the fountain suggests the refreshing which was also his blessed portion. Perhaps in that trying wilderness he poured out his heart in the way as recorded in Psalm 63. It is certain that he developed constantly in his faith and trust in God. And a test is now permitted to come upon him. Saul had entered a cave. David and his men were in the sides of the cave. But a few steps between him and the unsuspecting Saul! An uplifted sword, one stroke and Saul's career would have been ended. Is he going to do it? Will he take his case out of the hands of the Lord and become his own avenger? And his men remind him of an unrecorded word, which the Lord had spoken to David (verse 4) which David might have used to justify the

slaying of Saul. Faith conquers. He looks upon Saul as being still the Lord's anointed and only cut off a part of the skirt of Saul's garment. What magnanimity it was! And even for this his tender conscience smote him. A marvellous, eloquent address to King Saul was delivered by David. He tells him all what he had done and what is in his heart and thus shows the purpose of his soul to leave it all with the Lord. This is faith's language. The Man of God who walks by faith can await the Lord's own time. And thus the case was not Saul against David, but Saul fighting David's Lord. The outcome is obvious. And Saul? His reply, given in the voice of weeping, acknowledged the wrong he had done and the righteous cause of David as well as the future of David, that he would receive the Kingdom of Israel. He also made David swear not to cut off his seed. He is broken down and deeply moved. Yet his heart is unchanged.

Chapter 25

CHAPTER 25

1. The death of Samuel (25:1)
2. Nabal and his refusal (25:2-13)
3. Abigail's deed and her prayer (25:14-31)
4. David's answer to Abigail (25:32-35)
5. Nabal's death (25:36-38)
6. Abigail becomes David's wife (25:39-44)

After the death of Samuel, briefly mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, David went still further south into the wilderness of Paran. An interesting story, the story of Nabal and Abigail, is told in this chapter. David had won a great victory over himself and over Saul. The next event records a great failure. He loses his self-control completely, and instead of manifesting the magnanimity he showed towards Saul, he breaks out in a rage and in the violence of his temper he was ready to kill Nabal and his entire household. God alone in His gracious intervention saved him from committing a crime as heinous as the one Saul committed when he slew Ahimelech, his fellow-priests and the inhabitants of Nob. How he failed! How different He was, whose rejection and suffering David foreshadowed, our Lord! What a contrast with His meekness! David was out of touch with the Lord and we read nothing here of David asking the Lord about sending the ten young men to Carmel, nor did he enquire of the Lord, when in the heat of his spirit he ordered the four hundred men to proceed on their dreadful errand.

It is true the provocation was great. He had sent the young men with a message of peace to Nabal, requesting the rich man for a little help. David had regarded the property of Nabal and his shepherds were not molested. The exiled king had a right to expect the little help he asked. And Nabal was an unbeliever. He did not believe in David as the Lord's anointed King, but looked upon him as a slave who had left his master. He refused and insulted the King's messengers. Nabal means "fool." He is a type of natural man and especially those who reject the Lord and His message of peace. His words

"my bread"--"my water"--"my flesh"--"my shearers" and the whole story reminds us of that other fool of whom our Lord spoke. He also spoke of "my barns"--"my fruits"--"my goods" (Luke 12:16-21).

David was restrained from his evil purpose by the intervention of beautiful Abigail, the wife of Nabal. When she heard what her husband had done she at once prepared a magnificent present for David and his men. It was a princely gift, including two skins filled with wine. All this she did without consulting her husband. And the place she takes before David, her supplications, her confession, her humble prayer for forgiveness, her delicate reference to the king's sinful haste to shed blood, her faith in David's coming exaltation and her concluding request, "then remember thine handmaid"--all is so rich and beautiful. Abigail the woman with understanding and of a beautiful countenance typifies the true believer and may also be taken as a type of the church. Nabal to whom she is bound as wife is typical of the old nature, the flesh. But Nabal died and Abigail was married to David; even as the believer is dead to sin, dead to the law and is now married to another, even to Christ (Rom. 7:4). We leave it to the reader to follow these hints in their application.

Chapter 26

CHAPTER 26

1. The Ziphites and Saul's pursuit (26:1-4)
2. David again spares Saul (26:5-12)
3. David's words to Abner (26:13-16)
4. David's words to Saul (26:17-20)
5. Saul's confession and David's reply (26:21-25)

Hachilah, where we find David now, was six miles east of Ziph and about halfway to En-gedi. The Ziphites once more reveal his hiding place to Saul. And Saul was rushing forward to his doom when with his three thousand chosen men he took up the hunt again. The two, the rejected king and God's true king, are close together and David finds Saul in the trench and the people round about. With David were Ahimelech, the Hittite and Abishai, the son of Zeruah, the sister of David. They creep up to sleeping Saul. Once more his enemy is given into his hands and once more David does not want to take his case out of the Lord's hands. He is true to his own words (24:15). Abishai, David's own nephew, counsels the smiting of Saul. But David does not want to touch the Lord's anointed. He declares "the Lord shall smite him" or "his day shall come to die." He leaves him in the Lord's hands to deal with him as it pleases Him. He acts in faith. Would to God that all the Lord's people would act at all times in the same manner, when they suffer persecution. The sleep which had fallen upon the company was of the Lord. He can keep awake (Esther 6:1) and He can put to sleep, to suit His own will and purpose. Then David took Saul's spear, perhaps the same he had cast at him and his water-cruce. Alas! poor, apostate Saul had been deprived before of what these two things mean spiritually; he had lost his weapon to fight in faith and righteousness, he knew no longer the water, which refreshes the soul. How the spear and the water-cruce are lost today

to nominal, disobedient, apostate Christendom!

The sleeping company is aroused. He ridicules and chides Abner for his unwatchfulness. Saul recognized David's voice and the last discourse between the two kings follows. We call attention to two statements. David witnesses to his faith and trust in the Lord. He trusts Him that He will deliver him out of all tribulation. Saul's last words to David are prophetic. "Thou shalt both do great things, and also shall prevail." David did not hear Saul's voice again after this, nor did Saul see David again. The sad history of poor, lost Saul will soon be consummated in his visit to the witch at Endor and his miserable end.

Chapter 27

CHAPTER 27

1. David's unbelief (27:1-2)
2. With Achish, King of Gath (27:3-7)
3. His slaughter and deception 27:8-12)

David became despondent. After all the gracious evidences that the Lord was with him, shielded him and guarded his very footsteps, he relapses in unbelief. Such is the heart of man! He fears for his life and then takes once more his case out of the Lord's hands and flees to Achish the king of Gath. He had been there before and at that former visit he feigned insanity and the Philistinian Ahimelech Achish of Gath had driven him away. Now he is welcomed by Achish, for he brings a small army of 600 young men with him and receives Ziklag to dwell in with his two wives and his household. And Saul after this sought him no more.

David abode there one year and four months; a long time to be away from the Lord. And at the same time he made raids upon the enemies of God and His people. He invaded the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. It was not a real work for God, but the result of a self-centered heart and its aim was selfishness. It shows how a person whose heart is out of touch with God may outwardly be engaged in fighting evil for selfish reasons. David shared in the spoils, yet he deceived the King of the Philistines. And the road leads down. Unbelief drags down, lower and lower. David, as we learn from the beginning of the next chapter, became the body guard of Achish and with his men is to fight Israel. A sad record it is. How often God's people followed the same road.

Chapter 28

7. Saul and the Witch at Endor

CHAPTER 28

1. David fully joined to Achish (28:1-2)
2. Forsaken Saul (28:3-6)
3. The command to seek a witch (28:7)
4. Saul's visit to Endor (28:8-14)
5. Samuel's solemn message (28:15-20)
6. Saul's despair and departure (28:21-23)

Saul's final plunge towards his awful end is the main topic of this chapter. Israel had adopted necromancy, asking the dead, and other occult and wicked practices of the Canaanitish nations. They had those who were possessed by demons; the so-called mediums of spiritism and the modern day Psychical research endeavors follow the same paths. Saul had cleared the land of these necromancers. Saul became frightened by the advancing Philistines. But when he asked the Lord there was no answer. Then in despair he sought the woman with the familiar spirit at Endor. Disguised he sneaked away to the woman. And he swears unto her in the Lord's name to exempt her from all punishment in breaking the law. What presumption! He demands to see Samuel. The woman no doubt had the power to communicate with wicked spirits, who represented themselves as those who had died. It is the same in spiritualism. The messages which are transmitted through the women mediums in that cult do not emanate from the dead at all, but from lying spirits, who impersonate the dead. More than once has this been practically demonstrated. When this woman at Endor saw Samuel, she cried out in fear and at the same time she recognized the king, who told her not to be afraid. (It has been suggested that the word "Samuel" should be Saul in verse 12. The woman, it is said, recognized Saul, which would explain the second half of that verse. However, there is no reason why such a change should be made.) She had not expected the return of Samuel from the realms of death. Was it really Samuel or only an apparition? There can be no doubt whatever that it was Samuel who came up. It was by God's own power and permission that he appeared to pronounce the final doom upon Saul. And what a message it was! "The LORD is departed from thee and become thine enemy;"--"the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand;"--"the LORD will deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines." Then came the announcement of his death and the death of his sons. "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." This means that they were to die. Perhaps the more correct rendering is given in the Septuagint version, which reads: "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons with thee be fallen."

Solemn is the record of Saul as given in 1 Chronicles 10:13. "So Saul died for his transgressions which he committed against the LORD, even against the Word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it." Such was the condition and doom of the people's king, before God's king came into power. Here is a striking and significant type of the conditions on the earth

before God's King, our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of David and Israel's King is enthroned. The kings of the earth and nominal Christendom are disobedient to the Word of God. They like Saul commit transgressions against the Lord and follow seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1). It is said that a number of European rulers have their own mediums and necromancers. But the kings of the earth defying God and His laws will be dragged lower still. The spirits of demons, working miracles, will yet go forth, during the closing years of this present age, and possess the kings of the earth and the whole world and gather them together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16). This is foreshadowed in Saul's apostasy and in Saul's end.

Chapter 29

8. David and Achish and Ziklag Destroyed and Avenged

CHAPTER 29

1. The objections of the Philistine lords (29:1-5)
2. Achish dismisses David (29:6-11)

While David's enemy, Saul, heard his coming doom, David was still with the enemies of God's people. The Philistines were gathered against Israel and David was with Achish ready to fight against the Lord's people. The lords of the Philistines however object to his presence. They still remember the song of bygone days and fear treachery. Then follows the description of how Achish and David parted. David's words expressing his great willingness to stay with the enemies of God show how deep a believer may fall when he has wandered away from God. He calls wicked Achish "my lord the King" and his own people Israel, whose anointed king he was, "the enemies." God's mercy kept him from plunging deeper than that.

Chapter 30

CHAPTER 30

1. The Amalekites destroy Ziklag (30:1-5)
2. David's distress and return unto the Lord (30:6-8)
3. David pursues the Amalekites (30:9-10)
4. The young Egyptian and the defeat of the enemy (30:11-20)
5. The threatening dissension and David's decision (30:21-25)
6. The spoil sent to Judah (30:26-31)

The chastening hand of the Lord now rests heavily upon wayward, backsliding David. The Amalekites had destroyed Ziklag. The entire city was burned to the ground and the women and children were taken away captive by the Amalekites. The people rose up against David and were ready to stone him. He reaps the fruit of his sowing. He had gone into an alliance with the enemies of God and His people, and now he finds that the Lord permitted the enemy to touch his possessions. The Lord through affliction, loss and sorrow spoke to the heart of David. How humiliating that his followers were ready to stone him! They understood that his behaviour had brought upon them the disaster, that he was another Achan (Joshua 7). It was then that he turned to the Lord. "David encouraged himself in the LORD his God." Here we see the difference between him and Saul. Affliction and sorrow, the chastenings of the Lord, recall the true believer and bring him back to the Lord. He sought the presence of the Lord and once more through Abiathar, who had the ephod, enquired of the Lord. And here graciously the Lord met His servant who had failed Him! There is no word of rebuke on account of the 16 months David had wandered from the Lord, but instead the Lord assures His servant that he would recover all.

The incident of the young Egyptian is very interesting. David appears now once more as a type of our Lord. He did not foreshadow the Lord Jesus during the months he was with the Philistines. The Egyptian is a type of the unsaved. He is an Egyptian (the type of the world); he was found in the field ("the field is the world" Matt. 13). He was the slave of an Amalekite. Amalek as we have seen in the annotations of Exodus (chapter 17) and in Judges, is a type of the flesh. Behind it stands Satan. Thus the unsaved, the one who is not born again, is of the world and a slave of Amalek, serving the flesh under Satan's dominion. The physical condition of this young Egyptian also typifies the spiritual condition of the unsaved. And David in showing him mercy is a type of Christ. The young man's confession, the bread and water given to him, can easily be applied in the gospel. The story of the Egyptian reminds us of the parable of the good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke. The young Egyptian is assured of his safety; the slave of the Amalekite becomes the servant of the king. The company to which he belonged is eating and drinking and dancing. They rest secure dreaming of no danger, when all at once the battle cry of the king is upon them. It is the picture of the world. Thus sudden destruction will come upon them. And David recovered all.

How differently the dissension, which threatened among David's men, would have turned out had he still been away from the Lord. But now he acts in the sweetness of grace. The great spoil is distributed among the different cities of Judah. Well may we think here of the victory of our coming King in which His people will share through His infinite grace.

Chapter 31

9. The Death of Saul

CHAPTER 31

1. Saul wounded in battle (31:1-3)
2. Saul a suicide (31:4-6)
3. The victorious Philistines (31:7-10)
4. The bodies recovered and burnt (31:11-13)

A sad ending to one of the saddest stories of the Bible. Jonathan, Abinadab and Melchi-shua, Saul's sons, fall first. Then Saul is wounded. He asks his armour bearer to make an end of his sufferings. There is no evidence whatever of his repentance and turning unto the Lord. He died as he had lived in rebellion against Jehovah. The armour-bearer refused to kill Saul; then he fell upon his own sword and committed suicide. He is the first suicide mentioned in the Bible. Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17:23); Zimri (1 Kings 16:18) and Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27:5) are other suicides recorded in the Word. The first chapter of the second book of Samuel tells us of an Amalekite who slew Saul. This is not a contradiction at all as some have declared. First Saul asked his armour-bearer to slay him; he refused. Then he fell upon his sword but was not wholly successful. In anguish he leaned upon his spear and when the Amalekite came along, he told him that his life was still in him (2 Sam. 1:9) and he slew him. His end is sad and has its solemn lessons. His sin was the sparing of Amalek, we say again, the type of the flesh. Of this sin Samuel had reminded him in his message of doom (28:18). His disobedience ended in self-destruction. Such is sin. And an Amalekite made the end of him. Sin allowed and followed will do its dreadful work in the end, as this Amalekite, spared by Saul, ends his life.

The triumph of the Philistines is complete. Saul's body is held up to scorn in the idol-house of the Philistines and afterward his body and the bodies of his sons are recovered and buried by Jabesh. The people's choice, King Saul, has gone down in ruin and shame. All looks hopeless now. Israel's hope centers now in the coming king after God's own heart, David the son of Jesse. How he foreshadows the true King and his coming kingdom, He who is the hope of Israel, the hope of the world, as well as the hope of the church, we shall find in the second book of Samuel.