

CHAPTER XIV
Gaining the Kingdom
I and II Samuel

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Again in Saul and David we have the symbol, ubiquitous in Hebrew history, of the rejection of the elder and the acceptance of the younger. Saul compromises with the enemies of his country; and keeps part of the spoil which he uses as a sacrifice. Subtle mortal man thus persuades himself that "the end justifies the means." No end, however, in the spiritual world is gained by compromise; man cannot bargain with principles, he must undeviatingly obey them. Nor can any sacrifice be made to Jehovah in lieu of the absolute obedience that he demands. Samuel, the prophet, is unyielding and uncompromising, and unflinchingly says to the king: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? He hath also rejected thee from being king."

Saul is unworthy of the kingdom, but one must be found who is worthy of it and it is Samuel's work to find him. Great trusts carry great responsibilities with them, and Samuel waits for the Lord to tell him whom to anoint. The chosen one is David (beloved), son of Jesse, who keeps his father's sheep. From Bethlehem (house of bread) comes David the king, apex of Israel's national power, and Jesus (salvation), climax of her spiritual power. From whence could they have come but from Divine Substance? And the shepherd who guards his father's sheep so carefully that with his own hand he slays the lion and the bear which menace their lives, is he not the type of the Good Shepherd? Of Him who said: "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd layeth down his life for his sheep. He that is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them and scattereth them: he fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep."

Saul's sin results in insanity, the consequence of sin. We leave sanity, the basis of right thinking and acting, to sin. "Whosoever sinneth is the bond-servant of sin," and forgets the chains which bind him. The penalty of sin is the reaction or recoil of the sin upon the sinner. Penalty grows on the same stalk with sin and cannot be separated from it, it is its consequence. Sin and penalties are temporal, however, Love watches over all. David is brought to the court of Saul as a musician who can exorcise the evil spirit. Out under the vast dome of the arched sky, he has learned to think and to translate thought into music. So David plays his harp before Saul, "who was refreshed, and was well and the evil spirit departed from him."

"The universe has been created and is sustained by a musical law." The sinner is out of harmony and he must be restored to it. Life is one vast symphony and each, from the least to the greatest, has his place in the orchestration. Life is all music, if the notes are struck correctly. Sanity is the ability to strike those notes clearly, powerfully and definitely. Insanity is discordant and perverted thinking. Music is the expression of the musician, and David, the beloved, was under contract to the universe to give out what had been so freely given him. He loved Saul and through his music flowed that which makes the harmony of the spheres. Love is good will, and the only healer. Nothing can express love in the same degree as music. It is the soul's own language and should be used in therapeutics more universally than it is now. It is the most refined and spiritualizing of all the arts and spiritual ideas can be expressed through music as in no other art.

The elder brothers of David are in Saul's army; and their father sends his youngest son with provisions to his brothers and presents to their officers. When David arrives at the camp, the Israelites are encamped on one hill, and opposite them on another hill is the Philistine army. Into the valley between them Goliath, champion of the Philistines, presents himself daily. His "height was six cubits and a span, and he had an helmet upon his head and he was clad in a coat of mail." This giant cries to the armies of Israel: "Why are ye come to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye the servants of Saul? Choose ye a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me and kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, then shall ye be our servants and serve us. I defy the armies of Israel this day. Give me a man that we may fight together."

No man in the camp has dared to accept this challenge, until David arrives. He says to Saul: "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight this Philistine." He puts off him the armor of Saul, which the king has placed on him and which would mean defeat; for who can prove another's armor? He who accomplishes must conquer by his own methods and be sheathed in his own armor of conscious power. He only is invulnerable who is clothed in the power which he can gain from no man, but is inherent within himself. David believes in God; he believes in himself; and he believes in the righteousness of his cause; thus armed, he determines to accept the challenge of the Philistine.

In the sublime audacity of youth, the stronger for his inexperience--for every experience in which we have been defeated weakens us--David goes forth to meet Goliath in his own armor, a shepherd's scrip and sling, and sends a stone crushing into the forehead of his opponent. The way to success must be original; failure and mediocrity are the results of trying to win by the alien methods of others. Each soul is not only a distinct individual; it has its own distinct work, and inherent within it its own method of doing that work. "The fault lies not in our stars but in ourselves that we are underlings." And this fault lies in the fact that we endeavor to do our work weighted down with the unproved armor of another, and close our eyes to the fact that

only in our own original thought are we equipped to meet the requirements of our own work.

Goliath (an exile), the Philistine (an emigrant), is the great braggart who presents himself daily before us and defies us. This exile emigrant from nowhere is brazenly standing between us and our birthright; his modern name is Finite Sense. It is only in our own spiritual insight that we can meet him, and send crashing into his forehead the words of divine Truth. Each has his own work and there is a spiritual tie connecting one with the work that is his to do. The key of another will not open my door. There is a legend of a musical instrument which stood in an old baronial hall. It had become disordered, and though many had tried to repair it, they were without success. But there came one day to the castle the man who was the maker of the instrument. With loving care and skill, he set right that which was wrong, and again the instrument gave forth music that charmed the life and inspired the soul.

The crown of life is only given to him that overcometh, and each must slay his own Goliath, the limiting, hampering, defeating mortal thought. Each must adjust the strings of his own instrument, and release the music of his own soul. Daily and hourly will Goliath challenge us, until, like David, we go out and meet this Philistine, clothed in our conscious knowledge of Truth, and slay him with his own sword. Evil is self-destructive, its own sword slays it. It is impossible to compromise with Goliath, either we slay him or he slays us. Warfare with him is self-defense.

In "Self Reliance," Emerson says: "Let the stoic arise who shall reveal the resources of man, and tell men that they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear; that a man is the word made flesh, born to shed healing to the nations, that he should be ashamed of our compassion, and the moment he acts for himself, tossing the laws, the idolatries out of the window, we pity him no more but thank and revere him, and that teacher shall restore the life of man to splendor, and make his name dear to all history."

Other tests await David. He must meet the jealousy of Saul; and more subtle still, the adulation of the people. Many a man has accomplished the heroic deed, only to fall under the seductive guile of his own vanity, when the plaudits of the multitude ring in his ears. And only the love that is tested to the uttermost, and weakens not under the severest strain is real. Saul's malady reaches an acute stage when the multitude sings:

"Saul has slain his thousands,
And David has slain his ten thousands."

Still, "David played with his hand, as he did day by day; and Saul had his spear in his hand. And Saul cast his spear for he said: I will smite David even to the wall." But "David behaved wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him. All Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them."

The charm and personal popularity is David's; and what can this be but love sent out in large measure from the soul, and returning upon it a gracious benediction? He is always one of the people even though he marries the king's daughter. All beautiful lives have their secret; and David could say as did another when asked the secret of his power, "I had a friend." Saul's son loved David, "The soul of Jonathan was knit with that of David, and Jonathan loved David as his own soul."

The story of Jonathan's friendship for David is one of the most inspiring pieces of literature of all time. Without the absolute love and trust of another in him, man never makes the supreme stand; for the soul requires this stimulus to grow to that state of consciousness which is fixed and unswerving. We grow out into another's faith in us; as the flower grows out to greet the sunshine. "Whenever God makes a great man he confides the secret to another," is a poetic way of stating the fact that the faith and love of a friend ennobles a soul and brings it out on the mountain top of greatness.

As One later gives up his life for his friends, Jonathan gives up a throne for his friend. Friendship has its own throne, but it is not of "this world," it is of that other eternal in the heavens, for friendship is immortal. Jonathan's love never falters when David, driven away by Saul's jealousy, becomes a freebooter for years. During this time Saul's life is twice in David's power, but he holds true to his course, and spares the king's life. Did not he who came from the house of David a millennium later say in his greatest discourse: "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven"?

The following estimate of David is from the pen of Richard Moulton, in "The Modern Reader's Bible." "The personality of David is perhaps the most splendid in all history. He is the warrior of Israel, the founder of the monarchy from which all kings trace their reigns. He is equally the center of Hebrew poetry, with whose name both earlier and later song is associated in the book of Psalms. He is the inventor in musical art; whereas the Greeks never learned the art of combining lyre and flute, David's orchestra of cornets, trumpets, cymbals, psalteries, and harps shows the union of strings, wind and percussion, which is supposed to constitute the distinctiveness of modern music. With him is associated whatever else of art is permitted to the Hebrews; the architecture of Solomon's temple is designed by his father, and he establishes the courses of sacred ritual which constitute Israel's highest art. And all this splendor of achievement is crowned with a personality that is intensely human, and lovable in all human relationships."

Jonathan and three of his brothers were slain in a battle with the Philistines. The misdirected life of Saul ends at the same time when he falls on his own sword and dies. In David's Lament, which is undoubtedly from his own pen, we feel a love that is not only human but super-human; from one who has been touched with the divine.

David had been weighed in the balance and not found wanting; he had served up to the kingdom and it could not be kept from him.

DAVID'S LAMENT

Thy glory, O Israel,
Is slain upon thy high places!
How are the mighty--
Fallen.

Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Askelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel,
Weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet delicately,
Who put ornaments upon your apparel.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan,
Very pleasant has thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.

How the mighty--fallen!
And the weapons of war--perished.