

## CHOSEN BY GOD

(Discourse given in Glasgow, Scotland, by J. Hemery, 1912 Convention Report, starting on page 325.)

Dear Brethren, I am glad to be back with you in Glasgow. The passage of Scripture on which I will base my remarks this morning is in 1st Samuel 16. I am glad to see that you have brought your Bibles. Many of the Lord's people are beginning to leave their Bibles at home, hoping to remember the Scriptures to which the speakers will refer. I am telling the brethren everywhere that if they want to be Bible Students they must live up to their reputation—bring their Bibles with them. We cannot possibly remember the passages of Scripture quoted if we merely hear and do not see them. I often remind both the brethren and the public when speaking of these things of what dear old John Bunyan said, "The Lord has given at least two ways into the mind. There is eye gate and ear gate." We can get some things through ear gate, but if we get in at the eye gate as well, we have a double advantage; to hear a passage of Scripture read is good, but it is better to hear and see it at the same time.

Let us read verses 1 to 13 of this 16th chapter. The elders of the town (v. 4) had got a little terrified of Samuel, for not long before he had slain Agag (ch. 15:33). Samuel was rather a disturbing element in Israel at that time, as those who stand up for the Lord often are. These men at Bethlehem said, "Do you come peaceably?" Failing to seek the Lord they were afraid of the Lord's prophet.

The first thing we have to say about this passage of Scripture is that the experiences that David had from the time of his anointing until the time that he was made king of Israel seem as if they were specially intended by our heavenly Father to illustrate a good many of the experiences the Christian has from the time he is anointed by the Holy Spirit until the time when he comes with his dear Lord to sit upon the throne. If that be so, dear brethren (and to my understanding it is so without doubt), we have something that will help us to make our calling and election sure; something that will help us to see our Father's way with us; something that will give us encouragement in times of trial; something that will help us to get patience wrought out in our character; something that will give us encouragement and comfort and the Lord's blessing. Now let us look out for it. You know there is nothing in the Scriptures that is not intended for us and for our particular benefit. "Whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we might lay hold of our hope." The more that we go back to the Old Testament with this idea in our mind, believing that the heavenly Father has given that way—through illustration, through type and shadow, through figure, through these incidents that were wrought out in the lives of holy men of old—the more we go back to these and consider them, the more sure we all are of our God and of His promises. And I feel quite certain that he who is well instructed in the Old Testament Scriptures and in the

things that God has given and who has, thereby, seen the works of God in the past, is the one who has great faith in God. Speaking for myself, the more I go back and see what God has done with those grand old men and the lessons He gave them and how faithful He has been from time to time, as they called upon Him, the more sure I am that God is a God of His word and more clear does His love shine out.

In this chapter we have some very precious things given to us. This little history, like every other part of the Word of God, is brilliant with gems of truth. It shines out clear and bright as the Holy Spirit throws the light upon it. First we have the fact that God had cast off the king that He had caused to be anointed. Saul, a man who, in the eyes of his brethren, was a man very fitted to be king, had forfeited his right to continue in the Kingdom; God had said that He would take the throne from him and that his children should not be heirs of the Kingdom. Saul was a grand man in the eyes of the people; head and shoulders he stood above all the others—a man fine to look at; and one to suit the people, who wanted a king who should be in their eyes as the kings of the other nations were in the eyes of those people. The people had wanted a king. God gave them one. But they wanted a king according to their own ideas; God gave them their desire. Here is a lesson for us, brethren. You remember how God says through Ezekiel, 14th chapter, Son of man, some of the elders of the people are coming to you to ask My advice, and they have an idol in their hearts. I tell you that if anybody comes to Me and asks advice of Me and they have an idol in their heart, that I the Lord will answer according to the idol in the heart. See, then, what we are in for sometimes when we come to God with our prayers and we have certain designs and schemes of our own that we want God to live up to. “I the Lord will answer according to the idol that he has in his heart.” The people of Israel had a certain idea in their minds when they asked God for a king and God gave them a king according to their own ideas and it proved to be a mistake. The king lost his throne and the children of Israel had some sharp lessons to learn through their experiences. Let us beware when we come to God to pray that we do as the Psalmist said, “I will wash my hands in innocency, so shall I compass Thine altar.” When we have any desires, anything that we think God might do for us or for His people, let us be sure that our heart is pure, that our hands are clean. If we go to God with prayer upon our lips, in our heart, and at the same time have an idol in our heart, God may give us that request and it may be very detrimental, and may bring us into some very sharp experiences. If we have our heart pure, our eye single, our hands clean, we can go to God with a better desire for His glory and we can get our lessons without the sharp experiences. Let us learn, then, something from that lesson.

God had rejected Saul, and Samuel had something to learn. Samuel had helped Saul; quite a good many years he had borne with him, tried to lead him right, been a good friend to him, and when God cut Saul off from favor Samuel could not help but mourn. He felt very sorry not only for Saul but for the people; his heart was distressed for both, but the Lord gives a gentle rebuke to Samuel here. He says: “How long wilt thou mourn

for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil and go, I will send thee to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, for I have provided me a king among his sons.” Samuel was a little timid about going down. He had had to tell Saul that the Lord had rejected him and now he was to go and anoint a neighbor of Saul’s. It was rather a hard task to do and he said, “My life is in danger if I go close to Saul’s neighborhood and anoint another to be king. If Saul hears of it he will kill me!” So the Lord found a way whereby Samuel could comfort himself. He said, “Go and take an heifer and say that you have come to sacrifice to the Lord.” The Lord found this way out, and Samuel went: he called Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice. He called them apart, and the sons (fine-set-up young men evidently they were) were caused to walk before Samuel one by one. The first one came. Samuel thought, “there is no doubt this is he.” He thought his work was done. He said when he saw Eliab (v. 6), “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before me.” Fine young fellow, just the kind of man that seemed in Samuel’s eyes to be the one the Lord would choose; because the last time, when anointing Saul, the Lord had directed him to such a one: a fine man, well-set-up in the shoulders. He thought now, “This will be the man.” The Lord, however, said something to Samuel which proved a lesson to him and to us, written here not so much for Samuel’s sake as for our sakes—“Look not on his countenance, because I have refused him, for the Lord seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”

There was something in the heart of that young man the Lord did not like, sufficient for the Lord to say, “I have refused him: pass him by.” (He was not, therefore, cut off from all favor—from God, but he was not chosen to be king—passed by.) Then the second son came and Samuel seemed likely to choose him, but he also was passed by, and so the seven of Jesse’s sons were passed, and the Lord did not speak to Samuel for any one of them. Samuel could not understand it. He said, “Have you no more sons?” “Well,” Jesse said, “I have one, a young boy who is keeping the sheep, but I had not thought of sending for *him*.” Samuel said, “Send for him.” The boy was brought; he was “ruddy and withal of a beautiful countenance and good to look at.” It did one good to look at him. And the Lord spoke to Samuel and Samuel said, “This is he,” and he poured the oil from the horn over David’s head, and there, in the midst of his brethren, in that quiet way, the future king of Israel was anointed. It is a very beautiful picture we have thus set before us. But there were dark looks on the brothers’ faces, while Jesse’s face told of his wonder and interest. That was the Lord’s choice however, and there it was. Now some lessons for us in this.

First, the Lord has the choosing of His kings; no one is given privilege to say to the Lord what He must do. Just so with the calling out of those who are to be kings and priests with Christ. The choice rests with God. He does not allow any to interfere or even make suggestions to Him as to whom He should have. None at all; even our Lord Jesus does not choose. He was chosen by the Father to the great honor he had. Spoken of the

priesthood, it is true of the kingdom, that “no man taketh this honor to himself.” So for the great King who is to sit upon the throne, God chose him. No one had any say in the matter: so for those who are to be joint heirs with that king in His Kingdom. What about these? Does our Lord Jesus, the King, not have some say as to who are to be joint heirs with Him in that glory? No, no. It is wholly of the Father. See how our dear Master put it: “No man can come to me except the Father which sent me draw him.” But He also says, “Whoever comes to me I will in no wise cast him out.” He would not cast him out for two reasons. One reason, he would not go against His Father’s will; a second reason, his own loving heart would desire to have everyone brought to Him who seemed to have a heart that was ready for Him and for the love of God. So there it is, dear brethren, that our dear Master himself has no choice in this matter. We cannot imagine him saying, “Well, I hardly thought my Father would send such a one as this to me: I hardly thought He would work that way,” but my Father has sent him: and he is my Father’s choice and I gladly receive him: “Come right into the family, right in.” And the Lord begins to be his Advocate and his helper and he becomes his truest friend; he becomes his comforter, his guide, his protector, his Saviour, just as if he was the best loved of all the family of God. That is how our dear Lord does.

Now a lesson for us. The Lord gives the truth to some, and as they come into the meeting, we say to ourselves, and sometimes we venture to say to someone else, “Well, don’t you think that is a queer brother that is coming in now?” and we are not just as ready to extend our arm to the fullest extent: we are slow to receive him. But if the Lord seems to have blessed anyone with a knowledge of the Truth and they seem to be making progress in holy things, no matter how queerly or how blunderingly as it seems to us, our duty is, if we are followers of our Lord and desire to cultivate His spirit, to receive that one into the family without any question whatever. Our Heavenly Father has given us no choice as to whom we are to receive into the family. He chooses the family, it is just as in the natural so in the spiritual; we do not choose our brethren and sisters; they come and they are there; we have to take them; they are part of the family arrangement just as we are. There is no choice in the matter—and so with spiritual things. I think that is a very important one. Let us see that we are on the lookout for those whom the Heavenly Father seems to have begotten with the Holy Spirit, that we may receive them as our dear Lord would receive them, for we stand in His stead. Those who have had some experience, who are older, should be on the lookout for whoever the Lord may seem to call, with the Truth. Take it for granted meantime that the Lord is bringing that one into the family and let us welcome him, let us stand in the Master’s place trying to help him to come to the knowledge of the Lord. And the more we try to help them the more like the Master we will become ourselves.

Another lesson: If the Lord has blessed us with a knowledge of the Truth and if the “eyes of our understanding have been opened,” if we have seen spiritual things, if the Heavens have been opened to us, no matter how Satan may try us by telling us that we are

unworthy, no matter how we may have let ourselves get depressed so that we have little faith instead of being strong in faith, let us take courage. If God has thus called us He has done so because He has seen something in us that He can use for His glory and for His kingdom. Just as sometimes we are apt to judge another and say, “Well, I don’t know why the Lord chose that one,” so we are apt to judge ourselves and say, “I don’t know why the Lord chose me, for there is nothing in me that the Lord can ever use.” Don’t say it, my dear brethren; if you have said it, say it no more, but rather think this, that if the Lord has blessed you with a knowledge of heavenly things He has started in you something that He can continue until the day of Jesus Christ and bring into full perfection. *Let* the grace of God work in the heart. Be sure you do not judge God wrongly, as did Israel, and say, “God began a work in me but I know He cannot bring it to full fruition.” Let us honor God in receiving others into the family and by retaining ourselves a firm hold of the hope that God implanted in our hearts when He gave us the Truth. “The Lord looketh not on the outward things but on the heart” we may be quite sure, therefore, that if the Lord has blessed us with the Truth He has seen that in us what He can bring to the Christ-likeness. That should give us comfort.

“The Lord seeth not as men seeth, but the Lord looketh upon the heart.” When we were reading about Eliab we saw how the Lord pointed that out very specially. If you read the next chapter you will find that it is the account of David going to the battle between the Israelites and the Philistines when Goliath was stalking forth before “the armies of the living God,” as David says. David’s father sent the young lad with provisions for his elder brothers. Three of the oldest ones had gone to the war. When he arrived he saw the opposing armies in battle array and this great giant stalking before and between them day by day. David said, “What is the matter, how is all this?” Why is he allowed to defy the army of the living God? He had clear thoughts of what ought to be in the house of Israel and what the Philistines were in the sight of God. The armies had been facing each other for forty days; nothing decisive had been done; and David came up inquiring, “What is the meaning of all this?” He could not understand it, and he went about from one to another asking and putting some thoughts into the minds of his people. These the uncircumcised Philistines and these the army of the living God are facing one another! And Israel afraid to go against these uncircumcised and all the holy promises of God behind them! Oh, what’s the meaning of it? Why is this being permitted. He went from one to another and by and by got to his brother Eliab, who said, “You have come here to show yourself off; you had better get back to your sheep.” He said that pretty plainly to him. He did not understand what was working in that young brother’s mind. The trouble was he was jealous—jealous because this young lad, the youngest of the family, had been anointed by Samuel. This had soured his mind so that instead of being encouraged by what David said, instead of being stimulated to further thought and action and to a realization of the position, he allowed jealousy to rule him. The Lord had seen that disposition; He knew very well that man was not fitted to be the leader of the people. A man that has jealousy in his heart is not fitted for positions in the Lord’s work. Eliab

might have been a very useful man, but all we find recorded of him is this jealousy. He lost his opportunity. A lesson for us: let us cooperate with God for here safety lies as well as our own advancement.

If the Lord chose some young brother in the work, or some one who is young in the Truth, and shows He is blessing that brother—whether in the classes or in the more public work—if He does this, let not the elder ones say, “Why are you pushing yourself to the front?” but rather encourage him and let his zeal encourage you. The thing that kept Eliab from being useful was his jealousy. The Lord saw it. There’s the lesson for us.

But see how David’s family were honored because David had been chosen King! Never a blessing comes to anyone in the family but that family is honored by the Lord. Very often they are too blind to see it—often too dull of understanding to realize it. Jesse and his sons stand out in Bible history and will stand out throughout all the days of eternity as those whom God honored and blessed because of that lad, because of his fidelity to God. Now these are some lessons for us; lessons that the Lord is doing the choosing of His family: that we cannot bring anybody in and that we are to wait to see whom the Lord does bring in; to be ever ready, very ready, indeed, to help build up in holy things everyone that the Lord brings into the family circle. Let us not be jealous; but try to cultivate the spirit of our dear Master, seeking, earnestly seeking, to build up each other in our most holy faith. We are sure to honor God as we do that.

Then there is a lesson in *humility*, a very helpful lesson in grace. See young David, brought out of the field and hurried into the company; Samuel anoints him, pours the oil over him. The young lad hardly understands what it is, but he is told that he shall be king of Israel some day. He is amazed. Will all this “turn his head?” We could imagine him as saying, “Well, my father will do something for me now. He will surely keep me at home if I am to be king of Israel, and will send a servant to keep the sheep. Perhaps my father will provide a special tent for me.” David might have thought many things which would have tended to pride. When the anointing was over, simple, yet so important a thing in the kingdom of Israel, so wonderful a thing in that little family, so important a thing in the plan of God—when that little scene was over and all was done, David went back to keep the sheep just as if nothing had happened. Now, is not that a lesson in humility? I wonder how many of us would, under such circumstances, have wanted to go back and keep the sheep? I wonder if we would have gone back as willingly as David. He went back, to keep the sheep better than he had done before. He had been a good shepherd before, but I am sure he was a better one after. It was not the outward thing he prized—neither a coat with long sleeves nor a special tent; he went back to work, determined to live as one worthy of the honor and blessed with the spirit of the Lord, seeking to be in harmony with the will of God. He said, “I will keep my father’s sheep better than I have kept them before.” That is how David took his anointing to be king

over God's own people. His father paid him no special honor; it is pretty certain his brothers did not; but the spirit of Jehovah was upon him and David began to get a kingly heart and mind from that time forward.

The Lord came to us, perhaps, in the quiet of our room, or it may be in a meeting, or in the workshop, the office, or when we were going along the street, and our minds were opened to spiritual things: we there and then consecrated ourselves to God: God anointed us to be kings over His great kingdom, kings of Israel, and then what? That was a secret time we had with the Lord: we were anointed and received the Holy Spirit. Did He separate us? He did, to Himself, but not in outward things: He sent us back to the workshop. We went on with our work the next day, and the world was not a bit wiser of what had happened. God anointed us to be kings and priests and then sent us back about our business just as if nothing had happened: we went back to washing up the dishes, to our office work, or our mechanical work, or whatever it might be. Thus does God treat those who are anointed to share the glory of his Kingdom.

When we get the Truth there is always a temptation to pride: it is certain David got temptations to pride. There are always temptations to pride; we realize that we have got something more than our fellows have; the knowledge that comes to us with the understanding of the plan of God is often used by Satan. Many of the anointed are tempted to show off a little. The Lord helps us to learn this lesson of humility that we may, like David, go back to mind the sheep. Let us read the rest of the chapter now.

Verse 14: As soon as the spirit of the Lord came on David it departed from Saul. The thought is this, that when Saul was chosen from following his father's asses to be made king of Israel, not having any knowledge of how a king should act, being altogether uninstructed in matters of statesmanship, God gave him of His Holy Spirit, not to beget him to a new nature but to help him to deal with matters of state and the great matters of policy, and so we read that the spirit of the Lord came upon Saul. That has commonly been misunderstood. It has been understood that the spirit came upon him as it comes upon us. Not by any means. It was the spirit of the Lord to help Saul to understand matters of state, to help him to deal with people. When David was anointed to be king, the spirit of the Lord came upon him. God did not give the spirit of the Lord to two to reign at the same time, and as it came upon David it was lifted from Saul, and Saul was left to his own devices. Saul had committed what was correspondingly a "sin unto death" not his final cutting off from God, but what was such a sin that God had determined to take the kingdom from him. The spirit was passed on to David and an evil spirit "from the Lord" troubled Saul. Did God actually send an evil spirit to Saul to trouble him? No, we would not understand it so. The point is this, that since the children of Israel were separated from the world and brought unto God and, since they had made a covenant with God, whatever happened to them of good or evil was as from the Lord, and so if evil came it could properly be said that the Lord had sent it; not that He actually made the evil

come, but he allowed it to come to them: there were no second causes, it came as if it were directly from the Lord. That is why the Scriptures speak of the evil coming to Israel as coming from the Lord, and when it is said here that an evil spirit came upon Saul from the Lord it is to be understood in this way. God lifted His spirit of kingship from Saul and immediately an evil spirit entered into him, the man being in a wrong condition of heart. He turned melancholy, had periodic fits of madness. Music was suggested as a palliative; a cunning player was desired.

One of the courtiers had heard of David; he knew much about him; he said he is a man cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man (2 things) and (3rd) he is a man of war; (4th) prudent in matters, (5th) a comely person, and (6th) the Lord is with him. Six good things, but in the Scriptures evil usually goes by sixes. The mark of the beast is 666: Nebuchadnezzar's image was measured by sixes. Here are six things, where is the seventh? Good things always go by sevens in the Scriptures. "Behold I have seen *a son of Jesse*." That is the seventh. This is the point: David had gone back to mind his father's sheep, and he said in his heart, "The Lord has blessed me with this: how can I show that I am fitted for this great thing? How can I make myself better fitted?" He did not trouble about what he would do when made king; he simply knew that the thing he must do was keeping his father's sheep, and so he determined more and more to be a good shepherd. You know that one day a lion came along and took a sheep. David had realized that the Lord was with him, that he had anointed him. He wanted to be a good shepherd, to give back to his father a full tally of the sheep, and trusting that God was with everyone who trusted in Him, David went after the lion and slew it. Another day a bear came and he did the same to the bear. We do not know that David told of his exploits, but God took care they were known.

When the questions arose at court—where is there a man who is cunning in playing on the harp and otherwise a suitable person? One had heard of what David had done and he said, "I know a man, and he is not only a good player, but he is a mighty valiant man, good to look at, prudent, and the Lord is with him." "Who is he?" "The son of Jesse." Just the very one that was wanted. Now if David had not gone back to keep his father's sheep how could that man have heard about him and told of his valor and prudence? There would have been no incidents of the lion and no bear for you and me to be encouraged by: perhaps no record of David's experiences in the King's court. It was necessary, if David was to have lessons in statesmanship, that he should have training at court. He might have said to his father, "Don't you think you should get me away to where Saul keeps his court that I might get to know something of how they do things there? I really ought to have some lessons." You don't find a scrap of David scheming to get to Saul's court that he might get these lessons. He never troubled a bit about it. He did with his might what his hand found to do, what his father, what the Lord, found for him to do; and the Lord worked it all out so that in a perfectly natural way he got where the Lord intended him to be. You see how it is best to go on serving the Lord in a

perfectly natural way. Don't try to be somebody else. If your work is minding the sheep don't try to do any other one's work. Be natural, plain, and humble, before the Lord, for those very things that you think are the ordinary things of life are the things by which the Lord is testing you. If He has other designs for you, He will make His purpose known; just at the right time, the right thing will happen.

We think it was very necessary that David should have lessons at court. Saul's madness, David's valor and musical skill are the means of bringing David to his rightful place; his earnestness had fitted him for his new position, and David is sent for. He played so well with his harp that Saul felt his madness was charmed away and he asked that David should remain. That was one way, my dear brethren, that God wrought out His plan and I think a very beautiful lesson for us, that we may know that our Heavenly Father is watching over us and taking note of the little things of our daily life and an assurance to us that by and by He will bring these into full fruition that we may be exactly fitted for further work that He has. David learned lessons in the wilderness minding his father's sheep; he not only grew in valor but wrote many of the psalms there; now other experiences awaited him. The Lord wanted to make him a great king. When Saul was made king he was taken, as the Scripture has it, from following the asses; he got no lessons of statesmanship, but for this great king that God was about to produce, one who was to be a type of the still greater king in heaven, God must make special preparation for him.

David stayed awhile at the court and many and many a time he charmed away Saul's madness, but soon the spirit of jealousy got in Saul; he heard that the women of Israel were singing about David. They had a song "Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands"; Saul found it hard to bear and one day, under the pretext of a fit of madness, he took up a javelin and threw it at David. He was mad, but there was "method in his madness." He threw it so hard that it stuck in the wall. It would have killed David had it struck him, but the Lord took care of him and he slipped to one side. His intelligent mind would learn many things: his world surely grew in "wisdom and stature."

David stayed at court until things became unbearable and there seemed good evidence that the Lord wanted him to go somewhere else. Here he got what was one of the greatest treasures of his life—the love of Jonathan. Soon as a fugitive he had to flee, and he entered upon some very trying experiences. Anointed of the Lord as he was, he was persecuted and he had to flee for his life to the wilderness of Judah; Saul after him, determined to take his life. But see the manly, kingly heart that the young man had! On two occasions particularly, the life of Saul was in David's hand. At one time David was in a cave and Saul came into the cave. David came behind him and cut off part of his garment. On another occasion Saul and his chieftain slept in the midst of the camp. David and Abishai got into the very place where Saul and his chief were sleeping, and David came and lifted the spear and the cruse of water that was at Saul's head, leaving

him safe, untouched. He wanted to show that he had not the same spirit as Saul and he respected the Lord's anointed.

Many a hard trial he had, but the Lord took care of him and every experience was intended to fit him for the future work. There went with him down to Judah a lot of men that were, as the Scriptures say, "discontented." They were in debt; they either could not pay or would not! They were discontented! Anyone that had a sort of general complaint went away and joined himself to David. David got a crowd of 600 men, all men of character. You can tell a man is a man of character when he won't pay his rent or his rates! They were all men that had some complaint—grumblers, 600 of the most awkward men that ever got together as one body. Now the Lord allowed David to become captain of these, and from that motley crowd of 600 awkward men he got such lessons as perhaps never any man got; he learned how to handle men, how to treat them, how to adjust matters among men. Probably he got his most valuable lessons from those experiences. Perhaps no other king had such a training as he. See how the Lord was dealing with him!—lessons minding the sheep; lessons in the court; and in this experience of being persecuted in the wilderness. Every experience specially valuable.

When we remember that these things were written for our instruction we can see there are lessons for *us*. The Lord is not giving us the opportunity of dealing with 600 men (some of us might like it, most of us would not like it). The Lord is not giving us great matters of state to deal with, but He is giving us opportunities of dealing with little matters that come among the brethren, and of helping to smooth out difficulties here and there, and helping to develop those qualities of heart and mind that, by and by, when we are lifted up to the Kingdom, we may have the heart and judgment to deal with the things that will then call for decision. "The daily round, the common task," the little things of daily life, the things of the family—how to adjust matters between husband and wife, mother and daughter; the mother regulating the affairs of the family, the father guiding some of the greater affairs maybe, or the two of them together, or whatever it may be—all these things done unto the Lord, are the very things that our Lord is teaching us with for our fitness to handle the things of the Kingdom. And the affairs of the Church exactly the same way. Some dear good brethren will not go to a meeting if there is business to be dealt with, They say, "I want spiritual things, I will let others deal with those things." That is wrong, wrong, very wrong. It is in business matters connected with the Church that the Lord gives us the opportunity to learn how to deal with His matters. If we hope soon to deal with the great things of the Kingdom and say *now* "I won't touch them," is that not wrong? Every little thing that comes to us in our experiences of the brethren day by day, week by week, especially as the business matters come round, we should handle with care and after much prayer, that we may have wisdom. So with all the little things of our daily life of home, of business, just in the same way; remembering that it is by these things the Lord is giving us the experiences He gave David, that we may be fitted for the future work. Grand lessons there.

Then David got some lessons at court as to how matters were to be dealt with so that when he became king he needed to have no instructions from anybody. When he was in the wilderness he got lessons there how to adjust matters between men, how to settle some affairs of state. He really was a king in what we might call a small way. He never usurped the position of king of Israel; nor made any attempt to do that. He said “God has anointed me; He will give the Kingdom in due time, but I am not going to work for it.” but he prepared himself for it by subduing his heart to God, preparing himself continually.

He acted as a sort of big policeman in the country where he was. The Philistines away down in the southwest part of the country were ever ready to harass the children of Israel. The Amalekites away on the south part and the Edomites on the southeastern part were ever ready to come and steal the goods of the children of Israel, and Saul was not a good enough king to protect them, so David acted as a sort of big policeman, and he used to get goods, provisions, corn and raisins and wine; a certain proportion from the farmers, as a sort of tax for the care he had over them which the king ought to have exercised. David had, therefore, some sort of claim upon these people, because of the service he did them. An example of this is afforded in the instance of Nabal. On one occasion he came to Nabal and he said, “Now I have protected your property, you will, of course, give me what is due for that. You will pay me for the trouble.” Nabal was a churl and sent some nasty words back to David. David was angry and intended to inflict chastisement upon him, not in a vindictive spirit, but the situation seemed to demand such a course. The kingly spirit was working in him; he had a master mind, and he did what was right in the sight of God, caring and protecting the people of Israel. So by and by the Lord brought him to his own right place, made him king and blessed him, made him a dispenser of justice in a far greater measure than perhaps David ever expected, and David thus became with these qualities he had—that which was developed when a young lad, kingly qualities, fighting a lion, fighting a bear, being faithful in that which his father committed into his hand, faithful at court, not wanting to run away even when the javelin came at him, but standing it, his trial, bearing it as long as he could; and then in the many experiences he had in the wilderness he was developing all the qualities he needed—they made him what God would say was “a man after His own heart”—not David the *man* so much as David the *king*, was a man after God’s own heart.

Now, my dear brethren, we are called to a great place, far higher than that David had, as high above that as heaven is high above the earth. We are called to be with God. We are called to be His kings, not over the small kingdom of Israel, but over that great Kingdom which God will set up to rule over all the children of men, that is our calling. How will God prepare us for it? He has given us a hope for it. The oil has been poured over the Head. How are we being prepared for the Kingdom? Will God set us into that place without any preparation? Surely not. God does not call us as He called Saul. How will

He do it? He is calling us as He called David. He gives us various experiences, little by little. Perhaps we have been despising the very things that God has put into our hands to develop our character generally. Have we despised the simple work placed in our hands? Have we been saying, "Oh, that I had some great thing to do, then I could develop character." If so, let us remind ourselves of our position, and of David's example, and say, "whatever I have that I can do, whether it be nothing but caring for the ordinary things of daily life, and perhaps giving out a few tracts or speaking a little, doing with my might what my hands find to do, I will do it." If the Lord has blessed us in His house with any care over His word, deacons or elders, let us not be wanting to do that which someone else is doing. Let us do what falls to our lot to do. If it be minding the door, let us do that so that no one can do it better. If it be speaking from the public platform, let us try to do that to the best of our ability, doing it in a simple, natural way that the Lord can bless.

In the next chapter Saul says to David, "I will give you my armor because you cannot go to meet Goliath unprotected." David put on Saul's coat of mail; it was too big. He put it off. He said, "I cannot do this." How often do we try to put on someone else's armor or try to stand in someone else's shoes or wear someone else's coat! My dear brethren, let us above all things be natural; if the Lord has called us for those things which He can see in us. If He develops in our character something that seems quite foreign to it and yet it comes in a natural way, use that for the Lord. He called us, dear brethren, for what *He* saw in us. Now let us use that to His praise. Simplicity of life, simplicity of action, these are the strongest things of life; these are the things our Master had. All great men are simple. All great truths are simple. All great things are simple. Let us be like David minding the sheep. Be vigilant in a natural way. If a lion or a bear comes there will be some opportunity of showing some courage; but let it be merely as minding the sheep that we show it. Let us not do it in order that we may tell tales about it. Some one else will tell the tale, just as the man at court told of David.

Let us learn the lessons from what we have had before us this morning—how the Lord is guiding us, how it is He that is seeking after His own. It is delightful to think of how the Lord was looking over all the house of Israel when he was going to cut off Saul. He said "Now whom shall I anoint, who shall be My king?" And He saw that young lad there. His eyes went over Israel. He chose the young shepherd, because he had a heart that could be developed according to the principles of righteousness. So has He been looking over mankind now, and He says, "Here's such an one. I know he can develop those qualities which will fit him for that high place." Now let us honor Him by doing with our might in a simple way what our hands find to do, recognizing that He has the calling and that having called us He will perfect the work He has begun. Let us follow on, remembering that God saw something in us which He can bring to fruition that we may be glorified with Him, and remembering that all the experiences of our life are intended

for one end, that we may be fitted to be kings unto God, fitted for that great work of dealing with the affairs of His Kingdom.