

OLD TESTAMENT
READINGS &
DEVOTIONALS

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VOLUME 4

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C.M.H. Koenig Books

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1

Reading: 1 Samuel 13

“So all the Israelites went to the Philistines to sharpen their plows, mattocks, axes, and sickles.” 1 Samuel 13:20

We are engaged in a great war with the Philistines of evil. *Every weapon within our reach must be used.* Preaching, teaching, praying, giving, all must be brought into action, and talents which have been thought too mean for service, must now be employed. Coulter, and axe, and mattock, may all be useful in slaying Philistines; rough tools may deal hard blows, and killing need not be elegantly done, so long as it is done effectually. Each moment of time, in season or out of season; each fragment of ability, educated or untutored; each opportunity, favorable or unfavorable, must be used, for our foes are many and our force but slender.

Most of our tools want sharpening; we need quickness of perception, tact, energy, promptness, in a word, complete adaptation for the Lord’s work. Practical common sense is a very scarce thing among the conductors of Christian enterprises. We might learn from our enemies if we would, and so *make the Philistines sharpen*

our weapons. This morning let us note enough to sharpen our zeal during this day by the aid of the Holy Spirit. See the energy of the Papists, how they compass sea and land to make one proselyte, are they to monopolize all the earnestness? Mark the heathen devotees, what tortures they endure in the service of their idols! are they alone to exhibit patience and self-sacrifice? Observe the prince of darkness, how persevering in his endeavors, how unabashed in his attempts, how daring in his plans, how thoughtful in his plots, how energetic in all! The devils are united as one man in their infamous rebellion, while we believers in Jesus are divided in our service of God, and scarcely ever work with unanimity. O that from Satan's infernal industry we may learn to go about like good Samaritans, seeking whom we may bless! (Spurgeon, Morning, Mar 2)

2

Reading: 1 Samuel 14

There appears so much of God's mercy, manifested in what we read in this chapter, that I beg the Reader, more particularly to regard it. When the Lord works without means, and sometimes contrary to means, this becomes a more striking display of his Almighty hand. Let the Reader, before he enters upon the events recorded in this chapter, observe the dangerous state of Israel. There were with Saul, but six hundred men, and they trembling with fear: whereas, the host of the Philistines consisted of thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand of the sea shore for multitude. How was it, that this great host had not swallowed up the handful of Saul's army? Was it not, because the Lord restrained them? Can it be referred unto any other cause? Though Israel merited nothing from God, but his displeasure, yet the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great Name's sake. This Samuel had said, and this the Church had found, in all ages. Compare chapter 12:22, with Psalm 106:7, 8. And cannot the Reader find similar proofs in his own history? Oh! it is sweet, it is precious, when we discover the abundings of grace, over the abundings of sin. There is a

blessed *nevertheless*, in all the histories of God's people. (Hawker, Poor Man's Old Testament Commentary: Deuteronomy - 2 Samuel, 527)

3

Reading: 1 Samuel 15

“...Look: to obey is better than sacrifice, ...” 1 Samuel 15:22

Saul had been commanded to slay utterly all the Amalekites and their cattle. Instead of doing so, he preserved the king, and suffered his people to take the best of the oxen and of the sheep. When called to account for this, he declared that he did it with a view of offering sacrifice to God; but Samuel met him at once with the assurance that sacrifices were no excuse for an act of direct rebellion. The sentence before us is worthy to be printed in letters of gold, and to be hung up before the eyes of the present idolatrous generation, who are very fond of the fineries of will – worship, but utterly neglect the laws of God. Be it ever in your remembrance, that to keep strictly in the path of your Savior’s command is better than any outward form of religion; and to hearken to his precept with an attentive ear is better than to bring the fat of rams, or any other precious thing to lay upon his altar. If you are failing to keep the least of Christ’s commands to his disciples, I pray you be disobedient no longer. All the pretensions you make of attachment to your Master, and all the devout actions which you may perform, are no recom-

pense for disobedience. "To obey," even in the slightest and smallest thing, "is better than sacrifice," however pompous. Talk not of Gregorian chants, sumptuous robes, incense, and banners; the first thing which God requires of his child is obedience; and though you should give your body to be burned, and all your goods to feed the poor, yet if you do not hearken to the Lord's precepts, all your formalities shall profit you nothing. It is a blessed thing to be teachable as a little child, but it is a much more blessed thing when one has been taught the lesson, to carry it out to the letter. How many adorn their temples and decorate their priests, but refuse to obey the word of the Lord! My soul, come not thou into their secret. (Spurgeon, Eve, Oct 18)

4

Reading: 1 Samuel 16

“... Then the LORD said, “Anoint him, for he is the one.” So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers ...” 1 Samuel 16:12-13

Was David singled out from amidst his brethren, to be the Lord's anointed; and do I not behold in this the representation of Jesus, that Holy One, concerning whom the Lord spake in vision, and said, I have laid help upon One that is mighty: I have exalted One chosen out of the people?¹ Yes! thou Lord our Righteousness!² in this I behold thee. And let my soul make this sweet subject the meditation of my morning song, for surely it is a lovely song, to hail thee, the chiefest among ten thousand!³ I behold thee then, thou dear Emmanuel, by the eye of faith, as coming up from everlasting, when amidst that immense multitude of those thou disdainedst not to call thy brethren, thou stoodest forth, in the eternal view, as the glorious One, to be the Christ, the God-man Mediator, for the salvation of thy church and people. Here, precious Jesus! didst thou appear, to God our Father's view, pre-eminent above thy fellows! And of the whole body, the church, which God our Father in

the great decree determined to form as the receivers of grace and mercy, and of eternal life and salvation, thou wert appointed their glorious Head; that, *in* thee, and *from* thee, and *through* thee, they might become a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,⁴ but that thou mightest present it to thyself in love. And surely, dearest, precious Jesus! had every individual of thy redeemed brethren been present, as all the sons of Jesse passed in review before the prophet, to have chosen their glorious head, on none but thee could that choice have fallen. All voices would have echoed to Jehovah's proclamation: "Arise, anoint him; for this is He." Yes! truly, Lord, thou art He whom thy brethren shall praise, and all thy Father's children, with devout rapture and holy joy, shall bow down before thee. Thou art heir of all things, the chiefest and first-born in the womb of mercy. It is thou that art the most entitled to the most full, honorable, and unchangeable right to all thy Father's inheritance. Men shall be blessed in thee, and all nations shall call thee Blessed. My soul! delight thyself unceasingly in this contemplation of thy Jesus. God thy Father hath chosen him. He hath anointed him with the holy oil for salvation, and the Spirit was given unto him, not by measure. And is not God's chosen thy chosen; the Father's anointed thine anointed! Is there any in heaven, or upon earth, to whom thou art looking for help, or strength, or comfort, or salvation, but to Jesus? Who but Jesus, my soul, wouldest thou have for a Savior? What object so desirable as Jesus to claim thy love? Witness for me, ye sons of light, ye angels that see his face and do his pleasure, that Jesus is my only Beloved, my Hope, my Portion. Shortly I shall join your assembly, and with you bless and adore Jesus in endless song, the fairest and chiefest among ten thousand. (Hawker, The Poor Man's Morning Portion, Apr 28)

Footnotes:

1. Psalm 89:19.
2. Jeremiah 23:6.
3. Song of Solomon / Songs 5:10.
4. Ephesians 5:27.

5

Reading: Psalms 19 & 8

"Lord, our Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth!" Psalm 8:9

The Psalmist, after reciting the wonders of redemption in the person of him by whom all things are restored, makes a beautiful response to his own first exclamation of wonder and praise, and again extols Jehovah in the covenant mercies of redemption, as the object of adoration through all the earth. Hail, Lord of all! blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to him that was slain and now liveth forever. Amen. (Hawker, Poor Man's Old Testament Commentary: Job-Psalms, 186)