

DAVID, KING OVER ALL ISRAEL.

– JULY 12. – 2 Sam. 5:1-12. –

Golden Text. – "David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him. – 2 Sam. 5:10.

THIS lesson is a simple matter of history which needs little comment. It shows how, in God's own good time and way, his purpose of establishing David as king over all Israel was fulfilled. It was not by David's might or power, but by the providence of God; and in the meantime David learned how blessed a thing it was to wait upon the Lord, who doeth all things well, and his faith grew strong.

Now that the Lord's time had come to establish the throne of David, not only over Judah, but over all Israel, David was not only the Lord's choice, but he was also the people's choice, and by their representatives they came to him with arguments in favor of his immediate acceptance of the office over the whole nation. His seven years reign in Hebron had manifested his wisdom and ability; he was just the man they needed to order the affairs of the whole nation, and he was also bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, and his courage, fidelity and great ability had been proven even in the days of Saul. So David made a league with them. This league was probably some kind of a charter defining the rights and limitations of the king. And the people on their part pledged their allegiance and support. The government of Israel was not an absolute, despotic government, but a limited authority.

David chose Jerusalem for his new capitol of the now united kingdom, because, while within the boundaries of his own tribe, Judah, it was near the border, and central as a capitol for all Israel. It was a fortress also which had withstood the Israelites from the days of

Joshua, and was considered by its possessors impregnable. Jerusalem, however, was still inhabited by the Jebusites, a remnant of the Canaanites, whom Israel was commissioned to destroy out of Canaan. These people, feeling the strength of their position, refused to surrender to David, and defiantly replied that they would not do so, and that even the blind and the lame among them would be able to defend the city. David surveyed the situation and perceived that, the fortress being situated on top of a steep hill, the best means of attack would be by way of the water courses (here translated gutters); and he promised a reward to those who would scale the height and smite those representing themselves as blind and lame. In all this we have a typical suggestion of the proper course of the Christian in boldly attacking and overcoming in their strongholds the weaknesses and sins of the fallen nature.

This lesson is set forth as a lesson on patriotism. We have nothing to say against a spirit of patriotism on the part of the world towards the kingdoms of this world. Under the existing state of things it insures a measure of peace and order which otherwise would be greatly disturbed; and as men's minds and hearts are not large enough and generous enough to take in the [R2002 : page 154] interests of our common humanity, it is well that there is a measure of common interest that binds the individuals of a country into one homogeneous society or nation, and thus insures their united progress along the various lines of human weal. But the good of all this is, alas, sadly offset by national selfishness, greed, pride and unholy ambition, so that the sentiments of patriotism in each nation indicate generally a bitterness of animosity and hatred toward neighboring nations; and the ardor of patriotism is generally only to the extent that the national interests are believed to affect the interests of the individual. There is little indeed in the politics of nations that is purely unselfish.

This worldly, selfish patriotism, which conserves merely the home interests, and ignores or plays havoc with the rest of humanity, is not the patriotism that should actuate the Christian. The patriotism of the

Christian should embrace the interests of all humanity. And since none of the kingdoms of this world are founded in perfect righteousness, nor are able nor willing to devote all their energies toward the elevation and blessing of mankind in general, and since they are all to a considerable extent under the dominion of the prince of this world, our sentiments of patriotism must be reserved for that one and only righteous government which is worthy of our devotion; *viz.*, for the Kingdom of God, which in due time shall bless all the families of the earth.

True, that Kingdom is not yet established, except in the hearts of God's people. Over them Jehovah's Anointed is now the reigning King, and by and by his dominion will extend over all the earth. To this worthy King they owe all their allegiance; to the lofty principles of his government and to all the interests of his Kingdom they should be devoted with a holy zeal and patriotism which know no limit except their ability to serve it.

The complete separation of the Lord's people from the world, although repeatedly emphasized by the Lord and the apostles, is very generally overlooked by professed Christians, who seem to think they should still be part and parcel of the world and sharers in its aims, ambitions and self-imposed responsibilities – political, social and military. Of his people Jesus said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:16.) We are to be in it, not as citizens, but as aliens, – but law-abiding aliens, rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the **[R2002 : page 155]** things that are God's; owing no man anything but to love one another; rendering to all their dues, – tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor, and being subject always to the higher powers. – Rom. 13:1,7,8.

If we were now under a theocracy, a divine kingdom such as was established in Israel, and of which David was appointed king, then as Christians we should have the most patriotic feelings toward it. But we

should remember that God abolished his typical earthly throne and declared that it should no more exist until Christ should come and set up his Kingdom, the antitype of the throne and kingdom of David. And to as many as believe this testimony and consecrate themselves fully to the cause of the new King, whose dominion begins in their hearts long before its establishment in the earth, will be granted the privilege of heirship with him when, in due time, his kingdom is established.

But the world does not know or understand this kingdom, nor with the natural, depraved heart are they able to comprehend or appreciate its principles of righteousness and the wide distance between the kingdoms of this world and the Kingdom of God. And for this reason they cannot understand the course of any of God's people who do not join with them in calling these earthly kingdoms the kingdom of God – "Christendom" – and serving them as though they were his.

If we wholly follow the Lord in this as in every thing else and so walk apart from the world in all things, as in it but not of it, we can only expect to be misunderstood and disliked. But we should remember the Lord's words, "If ye were of the world [sharing its sentiments, policy, methods, etc.], the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you....If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord." (John 15:18-20.) Let us see to it that we are indeed a peculiar people, zealous of good works.
