

DAVID'S LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE.

– SEPT. 6. – *1 Chron. 22:6-16. Compare 1 Kings 1; Psa. 84.* –

Golden Text – "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee." – **Psa. 84:4.**

AFTER the stirring events considered in our last lesson, David, being recalled by the people, returned to Jerusalem and set about bringing order out of the general confusion into which Absalom had plunged the nation. At the time of his returning a usurper, with some show of success, sought to intercept him and secure the throne for himself; but he was promptly dealt with, and David was again established in his kingdom, and several years of peace and progress followed. – 2 Sam. 20:21.

But the king's troubles were not yet ended: again from his own household came the notes of discord, and the experiences with Absalom seemed likely to be repeated in the rebellion of another son, Absalom's younger brother Adonijah, who had laid his plans and skillfully prepared to seize the throne and thus establish himself as David's successor. (See 1 Kings 1:1-53.) This attempt at usurpation and self-appointment led to the immediate anointing and proclamation of Solomon, whom God had indicated as his choice among the sons of David to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord. (1 Chron. 22:9,10; 28:5-7.) So Solomon was recognized as king in Israel in the room of his father David. – 1 Kings 1:34,39,40; 1 Chron. 29:22-25.

David had now accomplished nearly all of his earthly mission. He found the dominion small, and now it was much extended. He found it in disorder, and left it thoroughly organized. He found religion at a low ebb, and he had succeeded in greatly reviving and energizing religious devotion and zeal. He found powerful enemies on every side, threatening the destruction of the nation, but he had subdued all the enemies and led the nation to a condition of peace and introduced them

to a season of unparalleled prosperity. And not only so, but he had laid the foundation for the more permanent establishment of the service of God and the religious health of the nation in his preparations for the building and service of the temple which God had promised that his son and successor should build, and in the religious zeal and enthusiasm he had aroused on the part of the whole people, so that as one man they were at the service of Solomon in the great work. His life had been an eventful and a troubled one, not without its grave mistakes, but it had accomplished great things in bringing order out of confusion and establishing peace and prosperity on a permanent footing. The glory of Solomon's reign was but the harvest of David's labors and sufferings. While David was not permitted to build the temple himself, because he was a man of war, this was no reproach against David for engaging in those wars, for he had done so in the name of the Lord and for his people, and not from the unholy ambition of the world's warriors, for plunder and prestige.

To some who think of the building of the Jewish temple as a mere mechanical service, like the building of any other temple, heathen or Christian, it may seem that there was much unnecessary ado about it. How strange, they mentally say, that it should be considered necessary for the whole nation to be at peace before the building could be undertaken! Why could not some be building while others were out fighting the battles? and why should the king be charged with the business? Were there not in all Israel plenty of architects and workmen and men suited to oversee the work, without burdening the king with it?

Let us not forget that the building of the Jewish temple was not a mere mechanical service, the putting together of so much stone and mortar and wood, etc., but let us view it from the standpoint of David, who, in charging the congregation of Israel to diligently cooperate with Solomon in the work, said, "Solomon, my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great; *for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God.*" (1 Chron. 29:1.) And the sacred

edifice was not one of human designing: the plans and specifications were given to David by the spirit of the Lord: – "All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern."

"And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God will be with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee until thou hast finished all the work;...also the princes of all the people will be wholly at thy commandment." – 1 Chron. 28:12,13,19-21.

Thus it was to be a building into every fiber of which should be worked the religious devotion and zeal of the whole nation, and which should therefore stand as a monument of such devotion and zeal, and a testimony to coming generations which should awaken and preserve the same in them. Thus viewed, the work was indeed a great work; and, since all the people were to be interested and active in it, it was necessary that it should be undertaken only in a time of peace, when the attention of the people was not absorbed in wars and their attendant perplexities and calamities. It is manifestly appropriate, too, that the Lord's anointed king, in preference to any other individual, should have been charged with this important business, since it was a national enterprise, and he stood as the representative and head of the nation.

In this view, as well as in view of its divinely ordained typical significance, it is also manifestly appropriate that its beauty, its costliness and all its adornments should represent the labor and care and sacrifices of the loving hearts and active hands of a people devoted to God. So David expressed it, when he said, "The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries." – 1 Chron. 22:5.

In the charge of David to his son Solomon concerning the building of the temple, to which our attention is called, we catch a glimpse of the man after long experience and discipline had mellowed and enriched his character. Now, over every other ambition, his zeal for

God predominates, and his chief desire for Solomon is that he may prove true and faithful to God and zealous in his service and that so he might abide in the divine [R2030 : page 210] favor. Then he bade him be strong and of good courage in the great work before him, assuring him of abundant prosperity and divine favor if he would only continue to heed and fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel.

This counsel to Solomon may also with equal propriety [R2031 : page 210] be accepted by every Christian in the service of the Lord, – "Be strong and of good courage." Both strength and courage are necessary to faithful service and to success in the good fight of faith; and both are developed by patient endurance and faith in God under the various trials to which the Christian is exposed. The counsel of the Apostle Paul to the Church also tallies with that of David to Solomon, when he says, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;" and again, – "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." – Eph. 6:10; 1 Cor. 16:13.

The prayer and thanksgiving of David to God, recorded in 1 Chron. 29:10-19, ascribing praise to him for the privilege of collecting the materials for his temple and humbly acknowledging that all their gifts were only returning to God that which was his own, expressing his joy in the freewill offerings of the people and praying that their hearts might ever incline to him, and that he would give unto Solomon a perfect heart, is full of touching pathos, reverence, meekness and holy enthusiasm. Read it and underscore its touching phrases, that again and again you may be refreshed and instructed by it. Then mark (vs. 20) how he led all the people to fervently bless the Lord, and how the enthusiasm thus kindled anointed Solomon a second time to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord. (Vs. 22,23.) This second anointing was like the grand Amen! of the whole nation to the first anointing (1 Kings 1:38-40), which was, comparatively speaking, done in a very quiet way.

Psalm 84, from which the Golden Text is taken, is another expression of David's devotion and zeal for the service of the Lord. While we thus contemplate the typical temple which kindled such an enthusiasm among the worthy saints of the Jewish dispensation, with what intensity of zeal and fervor should we regard that antitypical temple, the Church of the living God, whose living stones shall to all eternity show forth the praises of him who quarried and polished and fitted them together until it grew into a holy temple for the Lord in which he is pleased to dwell, and of which Christ Jesus is the chief corner stone. – Eph. 2:19-22.
