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THE LORD LOOKETH ON THE HEART.

– 1 SAM. 16:4-13. – AUGUST 2. –

Golden Text. – "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart."

SAUL'S rejection by the Lord because of disobedience meant not only his own ultimate removal from the kingdom, but that his family, his sons, should not succeed him in it. It meant, also, the Lord's selection of another man, another family, for the office of ruler in Israel and representative of the Lord upon the throne. The Lord's choice was David, to whom Samuel indirectly referred, saying, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou [Saul] hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." (1 Sam. 13:14.) David, at the time of this lesson, was about twenty years old; consequently, the words of the prophet just quoted must have been uttered about the time of David's birth. Thus we have another illustration of God's foreknowledge and design, in respect to those whom he specially uses in his service, from their very earliest moments. Similarly, God's choice of Jacob was declared before he was born; and similarly, the Apostle Paul tells us that he (Paul) was chosen of God from his mother's womb. We are to separate from this declaration any false thought respecting the divine choice, and note that none of these were chosen to eternal life, but each of them, all of them, chosen and fitted for special service. It gives us a suggestion of the possibility of paternal and maternal influences affecting the natural disposition of a human being from before his birth. He still has a will, and even though favorably endowed, it remains with himself to determine, to will, whether or not he will walk in the Lord's ways, and to what extent he will be obedient. There is no coercion of the will, for the Lord seeks such to worship [serve] him in spirit – willingly, heartily – and in truth. [R3226 : page 221]

David's grandmother was the gentle Ruth, who gleaned grain probably in the very fields with which David was familiar. His

grandfather's name was Boaz, a page of whose history is recorded in the book of Ruth. His father Jesse, like his grandfather, was doubtless one of the elders of the city of Bethlehem, respected and honored as a noble man. Of his mother we know little, except that he mentioned her twice as "a handmaid of God."

Samuel mourned and prayed for Saul, and was apparently disappointed that this man, of whom he had expected such great things and under whose guidance he had anticipated great prosperity for Israel, should be rejected. Quite probably fearful forebodings of a civil war to result from the installation of a new king perturbed the prophet's mind. He knew that Saul would not quietly submit to lay down the scepter which he had taken up with so great modesty in obedience to the Lord's arrangement; his mental eye could see the probability of civil strife which might rupture the nation and cause great trouble. He should have had greater trust in the wisdom and power of the Almighty, but his trouble was more or less like that which assails all of the Lord's people even today. The lesson from this to our hearts should be that we will implicitly trust the Lord to manage his own affairs: that we will trust him where we cannot trace him, and be obedient to his directions, and, so far from mourning at the execution of his plans, will rejoice, knowing **[R3226 : page 222]** that all things are working together for good to them that love God – that all things will ultimately work blessings for those who are in accord with the Lord – blessings for the future life if not for the present.

When sent to anoint David, Samuel exhibited a power not elsewhere noticeable in his character. He did not hesitate to perform the Lord's bidding, but intimated that he clearly understood that it meant the risk of his own life – that Saul would kill him as a traitor if he should anoint a successor to the kingdom. The Lord made it clear to him that it was not the intention to make the matter known at once, and directed him that he should go to Bethlehem and make a sacrifice there, and, incidentally, improve the opportunity of finding and anointing the one who, in due time, would be made known and exalted to the throne. At the time, he was merely to perform the initial work, which David's father and brethren

would not understand, thinking, perhaps, that the anointing meant special blessing or a commission from the Lord to engage as one of the members of the school of the prophets or something else of this kind. Quite probably, however, the prophet privately informed David of the meaning of the anointing, just as he had privately informed Saul when he secretly anointed him to the office of king.

The lesson takes hold of the subject at the point when Samuel had arrived at the town of Bethlehem. The Elders were in fear, thinking that his presence signified some sin on their part or on the part of some of their fellow-citizens which God had sent him to reprove and to punish; hence, their inquiry whether or not he came peaceably – whether or not his presence meant a blessing or the infliction of a penalty. Their fears were allayed when they heard that his mission was a peaceable one – to offer a sacrifice there unto the Lord. Some time before this the ark had been captured by the Philistines, and the tabernacle services thus discontinued had not yet been reestablished; for this reason this sacrificing was performed by the Lord's specially appointed prophet. The command to the people of Bethlehem to sanctify themselves if they would be participators in the blessings of the sacrifice, signified that they should wash their persons and put on clean clothes and draw nigh to the Lord with their hearts. Thus they typically represented that justification and sanctification which the Church of this Gospel age enjoys. Samuel seems to have taken supervision of the family of Jesse to the intent that he might without public display find the man whom the Lord had chosen and anoint him to the office and give him the divine blessing in preparation for it. Jesse properly introduced his sons to the prophet according to the order of their birth, his eldest, Eliab, first; and as he was of fine appearance Samuel naturally assumed that he was the Lord's choice; but as he looked to the Lord for direction in the matter he got the response (in what manner we know not) which constitutes the Golden Text of this lesson. Judging from the human standpoint of appearance, age, ability, etc., Eliab was the most suitable person in Jesse's family to be the king over the nation; but not so in the Lord's sight. The Lord was looking at the heart and had already selected David as a man after his own heart, although at this time being under age,

etc., his father had not thought worth while to send for him to be present at the feast. As one after another appeared, and the prophet found not him whom the Lord's spirit indicated as the one to be anointed, he inquired, "Are all thy children here?" when Jesse suddenly remembered that he had another boy, his youngest, in the field with his sheep.

Our Golden Text appeals to all in connection with the high calling of this Gospel age, and year by year experience shows us its general applicability. We, too, as the Lord's messengers, are seeking for those to be anointed with the oil of gladness, the holy spirit, that they may be kings and priests unto God in the Kingdom he is about to establish, which will supersede present kingdoms. We too, like Samuel, might feel afraid to proceed with this work of anointing the successors of present institutions, did we not realize that the work of sealing the elect of the Lord, which is now in progress, is a secret work which the world cannot understand. Indeed, none understand this matter of the sealing, the anointing of the holy spirit, except those who have received it, and they are all of the David class. The name David signifies "beloved," and as it applied specially to our Lord and Master, of whom it was said by Jehovah, "This is my beloved Son," so also it applies to all the members of his body, each one of whom must be beloved, else he cannot be acceptable as a member. The Head says of such, "The Father himself loveth you," and again he says that we should love one another as he has loved us. It is not too much to say that all who receive this anointing of the Lord must ultimately be of this David, or beloved, character – the spirit of love must be in them, love for the Lord and love one for the other, else they are none of his.

In seeking for the Lord's anointed who shall by and by reign in Millennial glory for the blessing of the world, as antitypes of David, we notice that as he was counted by his brethren too insignificant to be considered in this connection, so also are those whom the Lord is choosing and anointing for his heavenly Kingdom. Our Lord Jesus was disesteemed of his brethren, and when the suggestion was made that he should be the Lord's anointed, his people hid, as it were, their faces **[R3226 : page 223]** from him – disdained him, despised him, and considered him

hopeless in respect to anything great or glorious, – "as a root out of dry ground." The same has been true respecting the members of his body, the true elect Church; they also have been despised and rejected of men, and of them the Apostle declares, We are counted the filth and offscouring of the world; we are counted fools all the day long for Christ's sake. – 1 Cor. 4:13.

Again he declares that "not many great, not many wise, not many learned, hath God chosen; but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom." And this principle of the divine selection of things that are not [esteemed amongst men], to bring to naught the things that are [esteemed by men], is noticeable all throughout this Gospel age. Often have we, like Samuel, looked about us amongst men seemingly eligible to a place in the Kingdom – upon those who are high in position, – socially, intellectually, morally, educationally, – and in the esteem of men, and expect that surely the Lord would sanction their anointing with the oil of gladness, and grant them a knowledge of the truth pertaining to the Kingdom, etc., only to find ourselves mistaken, and to get a fresh lesson that God looketh not on the outward appearance but upon the heart. We concede that we are unable to read the heart, but we are fully satisfied to accept the divine decision in such matters, and to trust that when in due time all the secrets of this present time shall be disclosed, we then shall be able to understand the meaning of the Lord's selections more completely than we do now – we shall then be able to see what a difference there was between the hearts of those the Lord accepted and the hearts of those outwardly humble, whom he did not so highly favor in respect to the Kingdom call. Meantime, we must simply wait and trust the Lord and accept his decisions, as expressed by our dear Redeemer when he said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in thy sight. – Luke 10:21."

Instructed respecting the Lord's methods, we are not to despise the least, the most ignoble or illiterate of those who give evidence of a purity and honesty of heart toward God, and to whom he seems to give the

anointing of his spirit and the "ear to hear." Rather, while making known the message to all as we have opportunity, we are to rejoice specially with those upon whom the Lord's favor is manifested, regardless of their earthly surroundings, etc. The Lord knoweth them that are his, and it is for us to recognize, to honor and to cooperate with all such, as the ambassadors and representatives of our Lord and Master.

Often have we thought as we have looked over a congregation of the Lord's people and beheld some not prepossessing in personal appearance, some not well educated or refined, some ignoble, but, nevertheless, bearing the marks of the anointing of the Lord, the **[R3227 : page 223]** light of the truth shining in their faces, the confidence and hope of the truth inspiring them, and their lives indicating a transformation from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, – often have we thought of such, that had the Lord sent us forth to seek his bride, we might have ignorantly passed by some of his choice jewels and have gathered in some whom he rejects as unworthy – because we are unable to read the heart. This thought should make us very humble, gentle and meek toward all, and very trustful of the Lord and very much inclined to look for his leading in respect to our labors as his servants, just as Samuel looked to the Lord in connection with the anointing of David.

Samuel's words, "We will not sit down until he come hither," referred to the feast of which they were about to partake. It was the custom that, after the sacrifice had been offered, the sanctified persons present and those in spirit sharing in the sacrifice might join in a feast, eating the flesh, and thus celebrating a communion with the Lord. It was this feast that Samuel decided should not be commenced until David's arrival; – indeed, by reason of his being the Lord's anointed, he would be the most important one present at the feast. Perhaps in this also we can see a figure of the Lord's blessing in the divine plan. A great feast of fat things has been designed for the whole world of mankind, but it cannot be participated in until the justifying and sanctifying sacrifice has been killed – and, more than this, the feast cannot be commenced until first the Anointed One shall come and shall receive the anointing. The anointing began with our Lord,

the Head of the Church, and has throughout the Gospel age been flowing down upon all the members of his body, the Church. The sacrifice has been killed, and we, as members of Christ, have been participating in the sacrifice. Shortly the whole matter will be accomplished and then, as the Lord's anointed, the feast of fat things will be spread, – the Anointed One – Head and body, being the principal in that great antitypical feast.

The blessing and power of the Lord accompanied David's anointing in some manner – just how we may not understand, because the manifestation of the spirit was not the same in that time as it is with us, the Church, since Pentecost, respecting which the Apostle declares, "The holy spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39.) However, in some manner God's blessing and power were with David, enabling him to progress in knowledge, etc., and fitting and preparing him for the duties of the office to which he had been anointed. May we not consider as an antitype to this, the anointing which comes upon the Church from the time of her acceptance with the Lord? Ours is not a physical anointing, nor are the blessings conferred of a temporal character: it is as New Creatures that we are anointed; as New Creatures that we grow in grace and knowledge and love; and as New Creatures that, by and by, we shall be perfected in the First Resurrection and come to the throne with our Lord and Master as our Head.

