

CHRISTMAS REVIEW

– *READING LESSON, PSALM 103. – DECEMBER 27. –*

THE lessons of the last quarter, dealing with Saul, David and Solomon, are fresh in our memories. Saul's great but wasted opportunities have impressed us with the thought that we also have great opportunities, and need to be on guard lest these should be wasted. Saul's opportunities were of an earthly kind, in connection with an earthly kingdom; ours relate to the everlasting glorious Kingdom. His mistake was in failure to give his heart entirely to the Lord. Instead of doing this he sought to serve the Lord but to maintain a will of his own. Seeing how great was his mistake impresses upon us the importance of making our consecration full, complete, and then seeing to it that, by the Lord's assistance, we faithfully carry out the provisions of that consecration.

In David, Saul's successor, we have a man after God's own heart – not in respect to all the affairs of his life, but in respect to his heart, his intentions, his holiness of will, of purpose. Seeing what God appreciated in David helps us to understand the better what he appreciates in all those who would please him. Not that we could hope to please God of ourselves, – but having accepted his grace in our hearts, having come under the robe of the Redeemer's imputed righteousness, and having realized ourselves accepted in the Beloved, then it must be the desire of our hearts to attain as nearly as possible to the divine standard in thought, word and deed. By so doing we are making our calling and election sure, for the Lord seeks only those to be his servants who worship him in spirit and in truth. He accepts us under Christ's merit because we have declared that we desire to be like Christ and to fulfil the Father's will. Our acceptance is with the view of giving us an opportunity to demonstrate the truthfulness of our assertions – to fulfil the covenant of self-sacrifice in obedience to the principles of righteousness. Failures surely will from time to time mark

our very best endeavors, but so surely as we are of the David class, the beloved of the Lord, so surely our failures will cause us regret and pain, and lead us to the Lord to entreat his forgiveness in the name and merit of him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood.

David's warfare with the enemies of the Lord, and with the enemies of the Kingdom and Law which the [R3290 : page 457] Lord had established in Israel, were continued through David's career, and these very properly represent the warfare which all the Lord's beloved ones must endure faithfully if they would abide in his favor. Loyalty to the principles of the divine government is of prime importance; the royal banner must be lifted high; our lives must be risked and be given in defence of the divine character and teachings if we would be counted worthy of the Kingdom of glory, if we would belong to the house of David, the beloved, which the Lord has promised shall be established forever – the house of Christ, the house of sons.

We review Solomon's peaceful reign and note how its opening years were typical of the blessings of the noontide of the Millennial Kingdom. The glories and wisdom and wealth of Solomon were but trifles in comparison to the wisdom, honor and riches which God has promised to those who love him. Respecting the faithful overcomers, we remember it is declared that they shall know even as they are known by God, that they shall share the glory, honor and immortality of their glorious Head and Master.

We remember, too, the typical temple, and its construction from materials previously prepared during the Levitic reign, and how this prefigured our preparation as living stones for the glorious temple of the future, in which God shall make his presence known to all the families of the earth for their blessing and uplifting, and for the joy of all those who shall respond to the blessed influences of the Millennial Kingdom. The thought of the preparation of these stones causes us much comfort and joy respecting the trials and difficulties of this present time, as we realize that they are working out for us and in us

preparation for the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which will be ours if we are faithful when we shall be brought together in glory as the spiritual temple of the Lord.

This review is perhaps as appropriate a lesson for the closing Sunday of the year as any, especially when we remember that all of these glories and blessings and privileges are ours because of the great redemptive work accomplished by him whose entrance upon the work is celebrated by Christmas day. Although we cannot agree that this is the proper day for celebrating the birth of our dear Redeemer, but must insist that it was about October first, nevertheless since he did not intimate his desire that we should celebrate his birthday it is quite immaterial upon what day that event, of so great importance to all, is celebrated. Upon this day, so generally celebrated, we may properly enough join with all whose hearts are in the attitude of love and appreciation toward God and toward the Savior.

The habit of giving little remembrances one to another at this time of year seems to us specially appropriate. God is the great giver of every good and perfect gift. He is continually giving and we are continually receiving from him; but amongst all his gifts the one of greatest importance to us is the gift of his Son to be our Redeemer. While, therefore, thanking the Lord for this great gift and for the great plan which centered in it, it is appropriate that we cultivate in our hearts the spirit of liberality, generosity, and that we allow this spirit to exercise itself to some extent – according to our conditions and circumstances – toward those with whom we have contact, especially to the members of our own households. We recommend that every little gift on this occasion should, so far as possible, represent or be accompanied by some little remembrancer of the great gift – something to draw the mind of the recipient to the fact that the great gift of God in Christ is and should be in the minds of all who give or who receive the trifling exchanges of the season.

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