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## **The Cry of the Suffering Christ**

*Address by W. J. Hocking*

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? why art Thou far from My salvation, from the words of My groaning? My God I cry by day, and Thou answerest not; and by night, and there is no rest for Me: and Thou art holy, Thou that dwellest amid the praises of Israel" (Psalm 22:1-3)

**I**n Psalm 22 we have one of the many Old Testament prophecies which refer directly to our Lord Jesus Christ. This one, however, is distinguished from the rest because it foretells facts concerning His unique and unfathomable sufferings which are not to be found in other predictions. Here we have them in all their simple, solemn, and pathetic sweetness from the lips of the Holy Sufferer Himself.

### **Three Outstanding Messianic Psalms**

Many Psalms give glimpses of Jehovah's Anointed One Who was to come, but three of them are conspicuous among the rest by the vivid details of His sufferings which they make known beforehand. Besides Psalm 22, there are Psalm 69 and Psalm 102. All three foretell in words of song the amazing pathway of the Hope of Israel laughed to scorn by all who saw Him and the Savior of men without a place to lay His head. Each of the three Psalms presents its own

particular phase of the sufferings of Christ followed by its appropriate sequel, but the one which touches our affection and devotion most deeply is Psalm 22.

The theme of Psalm 69 is the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ as He unflinchingly bore the reproach of Jehovah in the face of those who hated Him without a cause.

High and low were His enemies. Those that sat in the gate spoke against Him, and He was the song of the drunkards. "Save Me, O God," He cried, "for the waters are come into My soul." Jehovah heard and answered, as the latter part of the Psalm shows. God will bring righteous and overwhelming retribution upon the ungodly generation that rejected and crucified their Messiah. The sufferings caused by the enmity of man are followed by the righteous judgment of those who caused those sufferings.

Psalm 22 is differently framed, and its theme is unique. Here, though the sufferings depicted are far deeper and more poignant, the result for man is not judicial but merciful. Not a word is uttered about wrath and judgment for man. Indeed, one might almost call Psalm 22 the nearest approach in the Old Testament to the revelation of the super-abounding grace of God in the New. Instead of thunderbolts of wrath from God falling upon those who maltreated the Messiah, the Psalm ends with praise arising to God from all mankind. The sufferings of Christ will yield what the whole world has never yet rendered to God—united and universal praise. Now, there is praise from a few here and a few there; but the Psalm views a time when all the world will be rejoicing in God and giving Him what is due to His name, giving Him, in fact, what man's tongue was designed to render—intelligent and heartfelt praise. And "in that day" all the "kindreds of the nations" will worship before Jehovah of Israel in consequence of the sufferings of Christ which are set forth in the prophetic monologue of this Psalm.

Psalm 102 also celebrates the sufferings of Christ. There Messiah is presented in His

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humiliation among and by men and in His invariable attitude of meek and lowly submission to whatever was the will of God. The Psalm is called "the prayer of the afflicted when He is overwhelmed." In His infinite greatness, Christ "emptied Himself," and obediently took the poor man's place in a world of self-sufficiency and self-exaltation. He was forsaken of men, and left to mourn "as a sparrow alone upon the housetop." In His distress, Messiah cried, "O My God," desiring that He might not be taken away in the midst of His days. Thereupon Jehovah vindicates His suffering and outcast Son (vers. 24-.27). Though the days of His humiliation, might be shortened, was He not the Creator of the earth and the heavens? All creation perishes, but Messiah abides unchanged continually, the Same "yesterday and today and for ever." Thus, the prayer of the afflicted One is answered by a divine witness to the Intrinsic glory of His person; and the passage is quoted in Heb. 1:10-12 as a crowning testimony to the glory of the eternal Son, by Whom God spoke to men in New Testament days.

### **Sufferings and Praises**

In Psalm 22, however, the sufferings of Christ are from God. Forsaking by God is expressed in its opening stanzas, and affords the key to the whole Psalm. The ferocity of men appears as in other Psalms, but the abandonment of the Messiah of Israel by the Holy One of Israel is, as it must necessarily be, the predominating feature of the prophecy. Moreover, it is the Holy Sufferer Himself Who confesses that He is forsaken by His God. He Who endured it describes it. He is, indeed, the Speaker throughout this Psalm. And as He records His own sufferings, so He declares the praises to God that follow as their effect. We learn that propitiation or atonement being accomplished, the earth, in due course, will become full of praises to God.

You will recollect how beautifully this combination of propitiation and praise is portrayed in Leviticus 16 by the blood and incense. There the great work of Christ's atonement is foreshown in type. The blood of both the bullock and the goat is taken from the court of the tabernacle into the most holy place

and sprinkled there upon and before the mercy-seat. Aaron enters that most holy place where Jehovah's presence rests enthroned upon the mercyseat with blood and incense. The sprinkling of the blood of sacrifice in the required manner is accompanied by the fragrant fumes rising from the burning incense and affording a sweet odor to Him Who sits between the cherubim. Thus the type illustrates how the incense of praise is intimately associated with the propitiation Christ made in respect of our sins. His atoning work is the abiding basis for the believer's worship now, and for the homage of all men in the millennial day and kingdom.

As we are reminded, the Father "seeketh" worshipers; and if we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have been constituted worshipers on the basis of the propitiatory work of the Lord Jesus, and the Father seeks that we worship Him as we are thereby entitled to do. What then can we offer to God the Father that will be acceptable? Shall we bring any material offering in our hands? Shall we bring anything in our hearts springing from our own natural affections and efforts? You surely know that we can find nothing in ourselves worthy of His acceptance.

Where then as worshipers shall we find what is sure to be acceptable to God the Father? Everything that concerns the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is well-pleasing to the Father. And if one subject concerning Him is more acceptable than another, it is that which relates to His sufferings and death, whereby "God was glorified in Him." As worshipers, therefore, we need to have in our hearts a clear sense of the vast work of atonement accomplished upon the cross when He, the blessed Son of God, Who knew no sin, was "made sin for us" by God (2 Cor. 5:21).

Scripture often refers to Christ's atonement in easy words that even an infant may recite, but how profound and unfathomable is their full significance! They are, however, for us to meditate upon continually, allowing the Holy Spirit to develop and enlarge their meaning and implication before our eyes so that our hearts may break forth in worthier songs of praise as we remember that the holy, perfect, sinless Son Of

God was upon the cross "made sin for us" by God. We cannot fully understand the profound doctrine, nor need we do so in order to worship God. But when we are before God in "the holiest of all" and recall that the death of Christ is the most notable Occurrence in the world's history and that something was done there and then of immeasurable value and requiring no repetition, then songs of irrepressible praise will swell within us. The incense of acceptable praise will ascend to the eternal throne.

Let us bear clearly in mind that in this Psalm we hear the words of Christ Himself addressed to God. Most of us are familiar with the bitter cry which forms the forefront of the Psalm and provides the keynote to its pervading theme. We read, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Here the pathetic words occur prophetically. In the Gospels they are found historically. Matthew and Mark record that the Lord uttered them upon the cross. In the depths of His anguish, the Lord used the words, having the fullest sense of their profound significance and also the knowledge that the prophecies of Psalm 22 were being fulfilled in Himself. At the due moment He had appeared in the world for the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. In this work, the Blessed One stood alone—he God-forsaken One. This awful experience He Himself proclaimed aloud that whosoever would might hear—"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" As so often, those who heard did not understand His speech. They said, "Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save Him." That this crucified One should thus address God in heaven was beyond their comprehension. The fact is that therein lies the central truth of the propitiation which Christ made for our sins and for the whole world.

This occasion is, I believe, the first time that we read in the Gospels of our Lord using the words, "My God," when addressing Him. The Son was constantly in communion with the Father, hearing His word and doing His commandments. In converse with His Father, we read of Him answering and saying, "I praise Thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Yea, Father, for thus has it been well-

pleasing in Thy sight" (Matt. 11:25, 26).

This communion of the Son with the Father was unbroken, not only during His public ministry when He was preaching the gospel to the poor, healing the sick, and doing His multitudinous deeds of mercy among men, but also, as you will remember, during that solemn midnight hour in Gethsemane. There the Lord was alone, apart from His disciples, prostrate upon the ground, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Yet in this agony of anticipation, the Blessed One was not altogether alone. As He said to His disciples earlier that night, Ye "shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me" (John 16:32). Throughout His "strong crying and tears," communion with the Father was unbroken. "Abba, Father," He cried. "O My Father, if it be possible . . ." "O My Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done." Knowing fully what the Father's will had decreed for the morrow, the obedient Son acquiesced in Gethsemane as He had always done. "The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"

But here the Lord is speaking from the cross. It is now not "My Father" as in the garden, but "My God." The question of sin has arisen, and God, Who is Judge of all, is the appropriate name of address. God is the righteous governor of the world. His nature is opposed to sin, and His essence demands the punishment of sin. There can be no communion between holiness and unholiness, between light and darkness. And there, Him Who knew no sin God had made sin for us. In the consciousness of sin-bearing, and of being "made a curse for us," He exclaimed, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

So our Lord in the midst of His suffering for sin confessed Himself forsaken by His God, but still addressed Him as "My God." This relationship of Jesus subsisted from His earliest infancy. In this very Psalm, He declares, "Thou art My God from My mother's belly" (ver. 10) From the manger in Bethlehem right onwards He, the perfect and blessed Man, recognized God as the One Whom He obeyed and on Whom He depended. But here it was a time of noontide darkness, and there was an

immeasurable difference. His God in Whom He trusted had forsaken Him! and Why?

Christ had come into the world to take the place of the unholy and unrighteous under the judgment of the Righteous and Holy God. He Himself was the Holy One. "That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," the angel said to Mary (Luke 1:35). The very demons in Capernaum said to Him, "I know Thee Who Thou art: the Holy One of God." And what charge did Peter lay against the Jews after Pentecost? "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just" (Acts 3:14). It was the fact that the Lord Jesus had been presented to His people as the Holy One. And when the apostle referred to the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:27), quoting from Psalm 16:10, he said, "Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption."

But here Christ, the Holy One, acknowledges His God as the Holy One: "O My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not . . . but Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." What is the explanation? The Holy One was the sin-bearer. The Just One stood in the place of the unjust. "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." Oh, deepest of all deepest depths! Oh, profoundest of all unravelled mysteries that this should be! The human heart stands still in silent awe before the impenetrable veil for ever screening from mortal gaze the Savior in that dread hour. One only was there in the darkness and in the shadow of death. He alone can speak of it. He has spoken. His words are before us. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken ME?"

We cannot understand this cry of anguish wrung from the heart of Christ, nor fathom its import. Apart from its interpretation, however, we possess the truth and blessedness of the fact through the ministrations of the Holy Spirit. Our faith lays hold of this poignant utterance of the suffering Christ. It tells us of the price paid for our redemption. It measures for us the value of the sacrifice made upon the cross for our sins and for the glory of God in respect of them. The Holy Christ was forsaken by the Holy God!

Hence, the more we meditate upon this great cry in the presence of the Lord from Whose lips it came, the more we learn of His

atonement work. Then He was standing where He had never stood before—beneath the weight of our guilt and of God's wrath against it. During His life of ministry, He was not bearing our sins, as some wrongly imagine. It was upon the tree that He bore our sins in His own body, as Peter tells us. There He suffered for us, for our forgiveness, for our redemption, that we might be brought to God, that the blessings of God in all their fullness might flow unhindered into our souls.

But there is another aspect of the work of atonement that we must never forget. Because of man's sin God's glory was at stake. God's eternal attribute of justice was in question. Was God the Holy One Who abhorred sin? or was He One Who would favor sin and overlook its due penalty? The Lord Jesus supplies the answer in His Person, and upon the cross He upheld the immutable holiness of God. There He declared in the ears of the universe, "Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel," witnessing to that holiness by the confession of His own abandonment.

The Holy Sufferer had been made sin and was deserted, left alone because of it. In His agony Christ called aloud to His God. "My God, My God," He said. The repetition means much—deep emotion, pressing need. When Abraham stood at the altar on which Isaac lay bound, holding aloft the knife to slay his only son, the angel of Jehovah called, "Abraham, Abraham". Twice the father's name was called from heaven. There was urgent need for the patriarch to hearken. Not a moment must be lost. More urgent still was the cry of the blessed Lord. He was in the depths of His anguish, submerged beneath the waves of divine wrath against sin; and the cry rang out in the desolate waste, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

These are the words of the beloved Son of God, the Only-begotten of the Father, God manifest in flesh. Let us ponder over them and brood upon them, again and again. Let them penetrate our inmost souls. To do so purifies the spirit and enlightens the heart. We behold fresh visions of the grandeur of God's grace, and we glory more and more in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We see more and more of the light and love of God in Him Who stood alone in

that dread place of darkness and curse. And we adore more fervently Him Who loved and endured to the end, never even when abandoned by Him losing touch with His God, calling Him "MY God" in the confidence that He would be heard for His piety (Heb. 5:7).

(continued)

"The knowledge of God's calling, loving, and keeping brings believers assurance and peace during times of apostasy."  
(Pentecost)

## Rehoboam and His Reign; A Life of Vacillation

*Joel Portman*

They are wise who learn from past examples, whether good or evil. If we fail to do so, then we are certain to repeat those same mistakes without having the benefit of learning from their lives. Paul reminds his readers that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15:4). Historical records are valuable, in that they remind us how others have faced problems and circumstances in their lives, and how they either triumphed or failed.

We looked at Gideon in the past issue, and now we would like to learn from the example of Rehoboam. It was sad that, during his tenure as king, the kingdom was divided between Israel and Judah. This was a final division that had been brewing for a long time, but it seems to have been brought to its conclusion as a result of the failures of Solomon in the latter years of his reign, when he greatly oppressed the people, and the subsequent failures of his son, Rehoboam. Possibly, this division might have been postponed, had these two men not been marked by selfishness and their failures to recognize that they were not intended to be dictators or tyrants, but rather servants and shepherds of God's heritage. This is a principle that should be imitated in all who

have responsibility in any gathering of God's people. When any one, including those who are considering "Lord's servants," begin to act dictatorially and give the impression that they are intended to direct and control God's people, then disaster will result. Though Paul was an apostle, we never see him conducting or expressing himself in this way, unless in very serious cases in which the testimony of the Lord was involved.

The history of Rehoboam is marked by favorable and positive acts as well as failures. He began poorly, but the record of a portion of his latter life indicates that he attempted to behave well (2 Chronicles 11:23) and did wise acts, but the overall record of his later life is that he did evil, "And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD". The inspired writer traces his overall evil character of life to the failure of his heart. If seeking the Lord and His will is not our chief desire, it is inevitable that our desires will rapidly take preeminence. Heart condition is essential for a spiritual life; the condition and desires of one's heart will determine the practices and direction of the life (Prov. 4:23). His was a life of vacillation, sometimes doing right and sometimes wrong. He began foolishly in his response to Israel, but the last words in 2 Chronicles that God graciously records are that he did wisely. However, since the divine commentary on Judah is that they did evil in the sight of the Lord (1 Kings 14:22-24), his influence was bad.

### **Rehoboam's Birth**

It is notable that the sacred writer records the name of his mother and her nationality at the beginning and end of his reign. It says, in 1 Kings 14:21, 31 (2x), that his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. Does this indicate that the mother's influence was what resulted in his uncertain life? In the lives of Judah's kings, the name of the mother is almost always mentioned, whether they were good or evil. We should never minimize the influence of a mother on her children. In this day when motherhood is often despised, we should not be surprised when many young people are not as they should be. Mention of her is remarkable. Her name means "loveli-

ness, or sweetness," so perhaps he married her for physical beauty or attractive personality. We know that he was 41 years old when he came to the throne (1 Kings 14:21), but Solomon, his father, only reigned for 40 years. This indicates that Solomon married Naamah before he began to reign. It is estimated that Solomon was likely only about 17-18 years of age when he came to the throne, so she was the wife of his youth. One wonders when he wrote the beautiful Song of Solomon, that records the epitome of love that is expressed between a young bridegroom and his bride. Was it before or following his marriage to this "strange woman"? It also indicates that Rehoboam was Solomon's eldest son. One can wonder about the addition of many "strange women" in his later life, but he had already indicated his propensity to marry foreign women in early years. We don't know any more about her than her name and nationality, for nothing more is recorded. We do know that Ammon was no friend of Israel, but rather a constant enemy, and we wonder why Solomon, renowned for his wisdom, would marry an enemy of Israel. But whatever the reason, it is a warning to believers to maintain their separation from close association with unbelievers, since this is what will almost always result. These women were Solomon's downfall, or they were an indication of his personal moral and spiritual decay. Patterns develop in early life that will produce an undesirable harvest later.

We don't know exactly why Solomon selected Rehoboam to be king in his place. We cannot say with certainty, but there is no other son of Solomon named. If he had no others, then it was a foregone conclusion that Rehoboam would sit on the throne, regardless of whether or not he was qualified. Ecclesiastes 2:18-19 expresses Solomon's sad lament at this possibility: "Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity." This is a sad result of the tenor of Solomon's life, a son who failed to display his father's wisdom at its highest point,

who declined from a poor beginning because he followed his father's example and disregarded his father's proverbs.

### **Rehoboam's Beginning**

His was a beginning marked by potential for failure. We read in 1 Kings 12:1 that he went to Shechem to be made king. Prior kings had been recognized by the nation as king by God's election (Saul, David, Solomon), but those events took place in Hebron or Jerusalem. Hebron was marked by historical and spiritual events beginning with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Being a city in Judah, it identified the crowned king as one who was chosen by God from that tribe. But Rehoboam went to Shechem, which was the place of Jacob's daughter's failure (Genesis 34). On the positive side, it was near where the terms of the covenant of the law were reaffirmed when Israel was in the land (Gerizim and Ebal are near Shechem (Deut. 27:12-13)). However, it was also the place where Abimelech was made king by the men of Shechem and where he slew all but one of his brothers (Judges 9). So it had a mixed history, much like that of Rehoboam, and the question remains why Rehoboam went there?

One reason might be that the ten northern tribes (Israel) recognized his innate weakness, so that to be made king, he had to acquiesce to their demands. They had come there, so he had to go there as well. The people were not only rejecting Rehoboam, but they were also declaring their independence from Judah. To be king, he had to come to their terms. This is obviously not an encouraging beginning for one who is in the chosen line of David to sit on the throne! His beginning, thus, was marked by weakness. He yielded to the demands of the people, rather than trusting in the Lord. It is notable that there is no mention in his early life of any time when he sought the Lord. This is always an element of weakness in a believer.

Then, having shown weakness, his decision to consult with and follow the advice of younger men was a act of foolishness. Those who forsake and despise the counsel of the older and follow the ideas of the younger, are certain to fail. Younger believers don't have the

experience of life and personal failures behind them as do the older. How many younger believers honestly seek the counsel of older saints? This is a sad mistake, because if we cannot learn from the experience of older ones, we are certain to repeat the same errors and will need to learn the truth from experience. Older believers may seem to younger one to be "fuddy-duddys" or unaware of present circumstances. This may be true in some cases, but it may also be only a matter of one's perception. If we only listen to the advice of those who tell us what we want to hear, then we lose the benefit of older age. Proverbs is full of admonitions to younger to heed the counsel of the parents, elders, and mature ones.

Actually, the requests of Israel weren't unreasonable! Indeed, Solomon, in latter years, had oppressed the people and made their yoke heavy. Perhaps it wasn't as heavy as the Israelites expressed it, but they apparently felt that it was burdensome (1 Kings 5:13-14). Alternatively, they were likely using this as an excuse. They were determined to rebel, and possibly Jeroboam instigated this response.

His response to the Israelite representatives showed his arrogance and pride. It is never wise, even for a king, to treat others in a derogatory way. "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger", (Proverbs 15:1). He proved the reality of that proverb in his response. Such an answer only fell into the hands of Jeroboam, who seized upon it to lead the people in rebellion against the house of David (we recognize that this division was of the Lord, though caused by the evils of Solomon's latter years, but we wonder what result might have ensued if Rehoboam had responded better. Division would have yet resulted, but perhaps with a better relationship between the divided tribes). So that, instead of responding with words that might have calmed their temper, he only inflamed their resentment, and the matter was brought to its head, resulting in a complete separation.

### **Rehoboam's Blundering**

Now facing the rebellious response of the 10 northern tribes, Rehoboam decided to assert his right to collect taxes (1 Kings 12:18). We read in 1 Kings 5:14, that Adoram was over the

levy of forced labor that Solomon had, so it is unlikely Rehoboam's choice of him to come to Israel, evidently to collect taxes, wasn't the wisest choice. It was as if he were asserting his right to receive their revenue, though they were rebelling! Again, he was blundering if he thought this would be acceptable.

Then he decided to send an army to subdue them with force (1 Kings 12:21), and it was only through the divine message through Shemaiah that war was averted. Very likely this prevention of war was a blessing to Rehoboam, since many times later, the armies of the northern tribes overpowered and defeated those of Judah.

We use an expression, that "he was acting like a wounded bear" to this point, but the realization of his position finally made its impression his mind

### Rehoboam's Latter Behavior

His initial wise act was to submit to the God's Word. What a blessing it would have been, if he had sought the mind of God and not the counsel of young men earlier! This should be a lesson to all of us, especially to those who are younger and early seeking direction for their lives. Conformity to friends, heeding their advice, desiring their counsel rather than seeking the Lord's will is what will result in events like Rehoboam's. Psalm 119:9-10 says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee.. ." . This is the best advice that anyone of us can and should follow.

The sad evidence of his subsequent weakness involved the severe loss of the riches that marked his father's glory. He could use the treasures of the king's house and the shields of gold to satisfy Shishak's demands, but he had no right to the treasures of the Lord's house. It is sad, indeed, when our evil behavior and defeats lead to loss of personal wealth (not physical but spiritual), but more, when it may also deplete the glory of God's house. We must realize that our behavior will affect more than ourselves. It can have a deleterious result on God's assembly and other believers. Many do what Rehoboam did; they substitute something that looks the same, but it isn't, and the value

of it is greatly depleted. How often the things of God can be lost, and we try to ease conscience by substituting something that we think is just as good. But we have lost, whether it be principles and convictions, practices or purposes, the result is the same. The inspired writer has said, "How has the gold become dim!"

"Doctrine must always precede exhortation since in doctrine the saint is shown his exalted position which makes the exhortation to a holy life, a reasonable one, and in doctrine, the saint is informed as to the resources of grace he possesses with which to obey the exhortations."  
K. Wuest

### Jonathon's Choice

D. R. S.

David and Jonathan present a beautiful picture of Christ and a newly saved sinner. For examples of such in their first love—see the man of Gadara, Mark 4:14-18; and the woman of Luke 7. Although David had served in the presence of Saul, yet he was unknown, like Him who is called "David's Lord," And the King said to Abner, 'Enquire who the stripling is.'" When Abner brought David before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand, that champion who had defied the armies of the Living God, Saul said, "Whose son art thou, thou young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite." But Jonathan saw in David the savior of Israel, and his heart was completely won to him. "And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

His love was expressed in actions. "He stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David and his garments even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." There was nothing too good to lavish upon David. How this reminds one of conversion's



early days, when the things that accompany salvation were so evident, and we sang from the heart, "O Christ, He is the fountain, the deep sweet well of Love," and "Crown Him! Crown Him! Lord of all." Jonathan could have used the words of Ruth that day, "Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge," (even if it be a cave). "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." (Ruth 1:16). It could be said in the case of Ruth, "Better is the end of a thing, than the beginning thereof." (Eccl. 7:8). But could this be said in the case of dear Jonathan?

There came a moment when a choice had to be made. True, Jonathan loved David still. He knew that David was truly the Lord's anointed, and that he would be king over Israel; and he expected to be next to him in the kingdom, but then, for Jonathan to turn his back on the courts of Saul and all connected therewith, and presently become fully identified with David in his rejection, with a few outcasts, his followers, poor and despised, people in debt and distress, and discontented, to bear the reproach, disgrace, persecution, and hardships of the cave: this proved too much for dear Jonathan.

Why did they part company? Had David proved untrue? Perhaps Jonathan thought that he would just be neutral. Or he may have thought that he could work to David's interest by staying with Saul. We feel sure he had no intention of becoming David's enemy. But the fact remains, he turned away from David and cast in his lot with David's enemies, who were seeking his life: and with that which was popular, and comfortable, although he knew that God had rejected Saul, his father. His presence in Saul's "bloody house" (2 Sam. 21:1) would help to quiet the consciences of any who might have misgivings about their position. They would naturally think if Jonathan who loved David so much can still cling to Saul and Israel, as a whole, why should we venture on such an unpopular course? If David is right there would be more to espouse his cause.

Those were dark and trying days for David; but God had His eye upon him and upon

those who identified themselves with him. He also had His eye on Saul, and all that followed him. He saw his cruel and bloody deeds; when he slew the Gibeonites, and his relentless pursuing of David and his few men in the wilderness. But God has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay."

The Lord delivered Saul twice into the hand of David; but David would not stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed. He said, "As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle and perish." David took the spear from Saul's bolster while he was sleeping in the trench, but would not stretch forth his hand against him. 1 Sam. 26:12. What follows may present a partial fulfillment of Ps. 2, although it is the Lord Jesus, the Son of David who is the King there. Poor Saul! His day did come. He descended into battle and perished. Saul and his sons fell together on mount Gilboa.

From that memorable day when David and Jonathan parted never to meet again, when Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace," and he arose and departed and Jonathan went into the city, (1 Sam. 20:41-42), there is no more mention of dear Jonathan for the remaining six years of his life until the news reached David of his tragic death on Mount Gilboa, at the hands of the uncircumcised Philistine. This Amalekite thought that David would rejoice to hear of the death of Saul, his enemy, but he was greatly mistaken. David mourned and lamented. Oh, that we had more of his spirit! We can understand him lamenting over Jonathan. But he could also lament for Saul. It was not a light thing to him, the death of one anointed with oil, at the hand of the Philistines. David had nothing bad to say against his beloved brother Jonathan. Not even against Saul. "How are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice; lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thy high places. I am distressed for thee my brother Jonathan." In this first chapter of second Samuel, David laments and exclaims three times, "How are the mighty fallen!" Jonathan was a good man and a lovely charac-

ter and ran well the greater part of his life. It could be said of him that he had wrought a great salvation in Israel, "He hath wrought with God this day." (1 Sam. 14:15)

But Jonathan missed the mark in the latter part of his life. What a solemn thing it is to be a Saul to lead God's people astray through pride, self-will and disobedience? And what a sad thing to be among the led, even if it be a Jonathan? Indeed, the fall of a good man is far more sad than that of a schemer.

Sometimes the "Old Prophet" escapes God's judgment, seemingly, while the man of God comes under the judging hand of God. The "Old Paths" are certainly not becoming more popular: and those who seek to follow the rejected One in these last days when everything is going so fast to wreck and ruin in the world, and among the Israel of God, will find themselves not only in the minority, but also in disrepute and disgrace in the eyes of the multitudes. But if we seek to press on "through evil report, and good report, as deceivers yet true; having nothing yet possessing all things: poor yet making many rich" we can well afford to wait His verdict in the coming day.

## **GLORIOUS CONTRADICTIONS**

**A. W. Tozer**

**God has revealed so many glorious contradictions in the lives and conduct of genuine Christian believers that it is small wonder that we are such an amazement to this world. The Christian is dead and yet he lives forever. He died to himself and yet he lives in Christ. The Christian saves his own life by losing it and he is in danger of losing it by trying to save it. It is strange but true that the Christian is strongest when he is weakest and weakest when he is strongest. When he gets down on his knees thinking he is weak, he is always strong. The Christian is in least danger when he is fearful and trusting God and in the most danger**

**when he feels the most self-confident. He is most sinless when he feels the most sinful and he is the most sinful when he feels the most sinless. The Christian actually has the most when he is giving away the most; and in all of these ways, the Christian is simply putting into daily practice the teachings and example of Jesus Christ, his Savior and Lord!**

**The want of the age is men  
Men of thought, men of action.  
Men who are not for sale.  
Men who are honest to the heart's core.  
Men who will condemn wrong, whether  
it be in friend or foe, in themselves  
or in another.**

**Men whose consciences are as true as  
the needle of the compass is to the  
pole.**

**Men who will stand for the right though  
they stand alone.**

**Men who can tell the truth and look the  
world right in the eye.**

**Men whose courage comes from within  
and whose joy springs from the  
soul's deep fountain.**

**Men through whom the current of  
everlasting life runs still and deep  
and strong.**

**Men too large for certain limits and too  
strong for the bondage of men.**

**Men who know their message and tell it.  
Men who know their place and fill it.**

**Men who are not lazy to work, nor too  
proud to be poor.**

**Men - real men of God.**

Author Unknown