

DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL.

NO character in Old Testament history is so many-sided, no genius so versatile, as that of David. We behold him in the humble shepherd-boy, the youthful hero, the passionate lover and romantic friend, the brave chieftain, the mighty warrior, the greatest of kings, the wise statesman, the sacred poet, and the tender father.

The conqueror of Goliath could be no ordinary hero. The feats of valour and the constant victories that attended him while in the service of Saul, foreshadowed his coming greatness. While an outlaw and the captain of his brave six hundred, he out-generalled the armies of Israel, and when he attained the throne he rapidly completed the conquest of the nations spared by the sword of Joshua.

David, more than Saul, was the real founder of the kingdom. His wise statesmanship led him to establish a national capital, and by placing the ark there to centralise the national power. In thus securing the unity of all Israel for the first time after the death of Joshua, he fulfilled the dying prophecy of Jacob, and obeyed the Divine command to Judah, to lead the tribes to the complete conquest of the Land of Promise. He thus became Joshua's true successor, and accomplished that which all the judges and rulers had so far failed to do—a failure that had been to the nation the source of countless woes.

His lofty genius early identified him with the glorious songs of Israel, and his immortal Psalms will ever be cherished in the heart of the Church universal. Before his time there had been occasional bursts of Hebrew poetry, but David was the first who gave it its fixed place in the Israelitish worship. His harp was to him what the wonder-working staff was to Moses, the spear to Joshua, or the sword to Gideon. It was with him in his early youth; it was his comfort amid the trials of middle life, and solaced many a weary hour in old age. Singing men and women were recognised accompaniments of his court; he was himself the inventor of musical instruments (Amos vi. 5), and with his whole heart he sang the praises of the God he loved.

David, enthroned on Mount Zion, the man after God's own heart, the light of Israel, the star of former prophecies, has ever been regarded as a type of the Messiah. From the promise of the Lord, sent to the King through the prophet Nathan, the conviction started, and ever after deepened in Israel, that the dynasty of David should never end. In the darkest hour of the nation's misfortune and captivity, the hope of the coming of the Messiah rose high; and when at last the earthly throne had perished, and Israel was about to be scattered, and Jerusalem trodden down of the Gentiles, there was born in the City of David, and of the seed of David, one in whom the law and the prophecies received their fulfilment, and who set up a spiritual kingdom, manifesting himself to all the world as "the root and offspring of David." Such expressions as "The seed of David," "The sure mercies of David," refer to his connection with the great Prince and Saviour, who was born at Bethlehem of Judah, but whose "goings forth were from old, from everlasting."

But David, with all his greatness and glory, was not without sin. Dissimulation, falsehood, polygamy, adultery, and even murder, as in the case of Uriah, may be charged upon him. The inspired pen has recorded them all, without any attempt to conceal or excuse, but declares plainly that they were exceedingly displeasing to God. He did indeed forgive the royal penitent, but the transgressions were rebuked again and again: brought up to David's sad remembrance; brought out in sunlight before the nation and before the world. In the words of the 51st Psalm we read the language of the contrite soul.

Not his sin, but his earnest struggle and aim never to be untrue to Jehovah, made him the man after God's own heart. His transgressions were sudden and erratic; his zeal and loyalty to God were steadfast and persistent. He never forgot his humble origin, but in his last song called himself the son of Jesse, and the man who had been exalted on high—true humility in the midst of royalty.

By his early deeds of valour, by his successful warfare; by his prosperous reign; and especially by his imperishable psalms, and his example of faith and Christian submission, he has obtained a hold upon the Church and the world that must remain for ever.

PULPIT POWER.

BY E. A. RAND, D.D.

I CAN imagine the Sabbath service to be over. The little country church has been emptied of its worshippers, Farmer Gray lingers at the door a moment. His eye sweeps and gathers in the beauties of the autumn landscape ere he descends the steps to his carriage. Perhaps the sermon has been upon autumn leaves, a favorite October topic in the pulpits. "Excellent sermons we have," says Farmer Gray. "Strange we don't see greater results. Why, there is a sermon stamped on the very leaves to help the truth along. But I don't see results. The pulpit don't have power. Where is the trouble?"

A good many people that are not farmers ask the same question. Why is not the truth that is sent out from the pulpit more efficacious? Why does it not go out everywhere to warn or win; everywhere lighting up heaven and hell; compelling men, by the vividness of its testimony, to shun the wrong, and attracting them to the right? Why is not the pulpit accompanied by such influences of power? What is the reason? Many thinking people ask the question. Now, if there are *willing* men and women, as well as *thinking* men and women, the thing desired can be reached.

A little suggestion came to me as I was looking at the head-light of a locomotive. What a great, flaming, fiery, thing is a locomotive head-light. Just see it coming round the curve at night. It flashes and grows, flashes and grows, till it sends a magnificent beam along the track, lighting up all the way. It is an immense eye of fire looking into the night; and what an eye it gives to the engineer! It would seem as if he could see a spider crawling on the rails. But what gives the head-light its intensity? Watching the locomotive, I saw how it was. The lamp itself was not large. A child could handle it, and carry it about at night. It had, though, an immense reflector. There was a reflecting surface on this side, on that side, above it, below it, back of it, and from these reflecting surfaces there shot out a huge ball of flame. It was a little lamp, but it had an immense reflector.

Dear brother, sister, you can be a reflector of the truth. The sermon on Sunday may be just an ordinary instrumentality, but if there are Christian disciples on this side, on that side, on every side, to reflect the teachings of the pulpit in their own faithful lives, the work desired is done. The sermon holds up honesty: be honest. It holds up purity: be pure. It holds up the heralding of the Gospel: be a herald of the Gospel. Beside every light held up set many reflectors. What a power the pulpit will become! What a blaze of light will go all through your community.

Revivals come in this way. A pastor, for three months after his settlement, preached on specific Christian duties. Then he told his deacon a revival was coming. A revival coming? Certainly. The people had gone out, and in their better lives had given the truth a reflector. So light had gone out, and a revival was inevitable. That is all we can do, to get the light to men. The Spirit of God, without whom we can accomplish nothing, will do all the rest.

It is a great help to a minister, when he holds up the light of God's truth in the pulpit, to look down and see rows of reflectors in the faithful souls before him, waiting to set forth the truth in their better lives, and so scatter the light everywhere. Who is willing to help the minister? Who is willing to say, "Though I can't be the light in the pulpit, I will be a reflector?" Is Farmer Gray willing to be a reflector?—*Christian at Work.*

When God's Word declares that there shall be "certain who shall privily bring in damnable heresies," it distinctly establishes this solemn truth—that error can damn as well as vice. It is not for us to say what errors are thus dangerous; but neither is it for us to conceal a truth so little believed, so seldom acted upon, and yet so certain and so appalling.

May not the telling, for others' encouragement, that which to us seems dearest and most sacred be among the "cups of cold water?" It is such a comfort to poor humanity that their burdens of grief, and pain, and weariness are shared by others, and sympathy is a golden chain to bind our hearts together, while "*He who was acquainted with sorrow*" Himself is the clasp.