

Our Daily Homily - 1 Chronicles

by F.B. Meyer

F.B. Meyer explores the significance of individual lives in God's plan, emphasizing the importance of character, prayer, and worship in the Christian journey.

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 1:1, 1 Chronicles 2:1, 1 Chronicles 3:1, 1 Chronicles 4:9, 1 Chronicles 5:20, 1 Chronicles 10:13, 1 Chronicles 12:38, 1 Chronicles 14:15, 1 Chronicles 16:9, 1 Chronicles 28:20

Topics: "God's Purpose", "New Birth in Christ"

Description

F.B. Meyer reflects on the genealogies in 1 Chronicles, emphasizing the significance of each name as a testament to God's love and purpose for humanity. He warns that while our lives may seem insignificant, they contribute to the greater narrative of God's redemptive plan. Meyer contrasts the flawed lineage of David with the perfection of Christ, urging believers to seek a new birth in Jesus. He highlights the importance of living a life of obedience and faith, as well as the necessity of intercession and worship in our daily lives. Ultimately, he encourages the congregation to recognize their role in God's kingdom and to live in a way that glorifies Him.

Transcript

Adam, Sheth, Enosh. 1 Chronicles 1:1

THIS is an ancient graveyard. The names of past generations who were born and died, who loved and suffered, who stormed and fought through the world, are engraven on these solid slabs. But there is no inscription to record their worth or demerit. Just names, and nothing more.

How strange to think that if Christ tarry, our names will be treated with the same apathy as these! So far as this world is concerned, we and all our generation shall pass away. As the flowers of the field, so we shall perish from the earth.

But each of these lives fulfilled a necessary part in the progress of the race. Each was in turn father and son; each passed on the torch of life; each contributed something to the fabric of humanity rising like a coral island from unknown depths. The hilltops would not be possible but for their lower courses which touch the valleys. We could not have the somebodies without an immense number of nobodies. The flowers of the race were prepared for by the slow progress of the plant through years of growth.

But each was the object of the love of God. Each was included in the redemptive purpose of our Lord; each contributed some minute particle to his nature; each is living yet somewhere; each will have to stand before the judgment bar of God; each is predestined to live in the unknown world that lies on the other side. It is a stupendous thought to imagine the whole race, rooted in Adam, like one vast far-spreading tree. Ah, reader, be sure that thou art taken out of the first Adam, and grafted into the second ■■ the Lord Jesus; and abiding in him, see that thou bring forth much fruit to his glory.

These are the sons of Israel. 1 Chronicles 2:1

It is noticeable how irrevocable the Divine sentence is on a human life. Of Er, the grave, impartial voice of Scripture says, he was "wicked in the sight of the Lord"; of Achan, he was the "troubler of Israel, and committed a trespass in the devoted thing." These sentences are recorded with such precision as to admit of no dispute, no appeal; and they sum up the life.

But was there not much else in each of these men? Were there not tender or chivalrous moments? Did they never shine for a moment in some transfiguring ray? Was all their life dyed with these sad and somber hues? Ah, it may have been so ■■ still the one thing that the Scripture tells of them is the sin in which all their life seemed to culminate and express itself. With unerring accuracy God can distinguish the one act or word by which the character is revealed. He may forgive it, but He holds it up as the epitome or summary of what the life was.

Let us see how we live, walking before God with reverent fear, watching and praying, because any moment may give birth to a word or act which may characterize our life in all coming time. It must be remembered, however, that all these things emanate from the heart. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; but the issues of life proceed thence: it therefore must be watched with all diligence and care. What a man thinks, that he is. The chance word or act is a true indication of the inner life. Therefore it is preserved for all after-time by the voice of God. See that your heart is perfect before God. There is forgiveness; but then is also the unerring verdict.

These were the sons of David. 1 Chronicles 3:1

BUT how different they were to the Son of David! Contrast any one of these with our blessed Lord, and what an infinite chasm lies between them! Solomon was the most reputable of them, but a greater than Solomon was born in Bethlehem, and cradled in a manger. Surely the least earnest must be struck with the difference in these sons and that Son. But in this difference, is there not the most conspicuous proof of his miraculous conception? Even though the story of his wondrous birth had never been preserved for us by the evangelists, we should have felt convinced that something like it must have happened, in virtue of which He should be the Man of men, the one absolutely flawless and perfect flower on the stem of humanity. With new emphasis we read the familiar words, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of GOD."

We, too, who have been born once, need to be born again. To be born of a David does not ensure perfectness of heart and life. Though born of parents, who were after God's own heart and are passed into the skies, we need to be born again, or we may repeat the sins of an Ammon, an Adonijah, an Absalom. It is a serious question to ask whether, like David, we have called his greater Son our Lord. This is the true mark of the new birth. Those who are born of the Holy Ghost call Jesus Lord, and none other. The recognition of the supreme lordship of Jesus is imperative for the peace and right ordering of the heart and

life, So we pass to our true stature in Jesus.

Because I bare him with sorrow. 1 Chronicles 4:9

THE products of sorrow have been the rarest gifts to mankind. The books, hymns, discoveries, deeds, to which men and women have been urged by sorrow, or which have been born into the world amid heart-rending soul-travail, are those which will never be allowed to die, because perennial sources of inspiration and comfort. It was thus with the child of whom we have this brief record. We might becomingly weave the four petitions of the prayer of Jabez into the supplications of each new morning hour.

To be blessed indeed. ■■ Not the lower springs only, but the upper ones also; not life alone, but life more abundantly; not those blessings only which pertain to the body or worldly circumstance, but those spiritual ones of the heavenlies, that are the best donation man can receive or God bestow.

A larger coast. ■■ There is a godly ambition which may be reverently cherished for wider influence over men, not for its own sake, but for the Master's. You may feel that you have fulfilled the measure of your present possibilities, but have unexhausted powers and talents. Tell God so, and ask for a wider extent of territory to bring under cultivation for Him.

Thine hand with me. ■■ The father puts his hand on the boy's hand as he draws back the bowstring, strengthening the thin arms of youth. So will the mighty God of Jacob do for you.

Keep me from evil. ■■ You cannot keep your heart door shut when a tumult of temptation or care assaults it from without; but God's peace and grace, like angel sentries, can avail you. Though tempted, you may be kept in the temptation and delivered from the evil. Thus your spirit, and the Holy Spirit shall be ungrieved.

They cried to God in the battle, and He was entreated of them. 1 Chronicles 5:20

WHETHER they cried to God before they went into the battle we are not told; but probably they did, because we read that the war was of God, and it is hardly likely that they would have prayed to Him in the midst of the fight, when the foemen's blows fell like hail on their armour, if they had not prayed before they entered the bloody fray. Men often excuse themselves for neglecting their morning devotions by saying that they will surely look to God, as they may require his gracious help, in the midst of the day's temptations and needs; but, as a matter of fact, when once they are plunged into its war they forget to look up. You must direct your prayer in the morning, and look up whilst the early shadows lie long on the dewy grass, if you would keep looking off to Jesus, amid the din of the fight.

It is very lovely to contract and preserve this habit of looking upward, and crying to God in the battle. When our feet are slipping, when the foe seems about to overmaster, when heart and flesh fail ■■ how refreshing and strengthening to fling one eager look or cry to heaven, and say, "I am thine, save me." There can be no doubt as to the issue. God is always entreated of those who put their trust in Him. Sooner might a mother forget her sucking child than God be unmindful of one sigh, or tear, or upward glancing look from his own. Oh, child of God, put thou thy trust in God, and go through this tempestuous world as one who is confident of a Divine Ally. At any moment He will ride on the heavens to thy help. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Heman the singer. 1 Chronicles 6:33

THIS is a very brief record to put on a man's grave, but a very expressive one. To decipher that epitaph about Heman is to learn a good deal about him. From this clue we might almost construct his entire personality and character. And it would be well if it could be said of us that we had ministered with song before the tabernacle of the Lord.

Would you be a singer ■■ not on Sundays only, but always; not with your voice only, but in your heart; not only when the sunshine pours into the open casement through the swaying boughs of honeysuckle, but when the shutters tell of bereavement and removal ■■ then remember these rules: ■■ (1st.) God must put the new song into your mouth; (2nd.) You must be fully consecrated to Him; for the song of the Lord only begins when the burnt■offering is complete. (3rd.) You must not go into a strange land, for it is impossible to sing the Lord's song there.

Sing on, dear heart, sing on. There is nothing that scares off the devil so quickly as a hymn. Luther said, "Let us sing a hymn, and spite the devil." There is nothing that so well beguiles the pilgrim's step, and quickens his pace, when the miles are growing long and weary. There is nothing that brings so much of heaven into the heart. Singing makes every movement rhythmic, every service praise, every act thanksgiving. Sing when times are dark, you will make them bright; sing when the house of life is lonely, it will become peopled with unseen choristers; go down into the valley of shadow with a song, and you will find yourself singing the new song of Moses and the Lamb when you awake on the other side.

It went evil with his house. 1 Chronicles 7:23

IT is an old■world tale, and those tears have long since been wiped away. What led to the death of so many of the stalwart sons of Ephraim is not quite clear; but apparently they made a raid from the hill■fastnesses on the men of Gath to lift their cattle, and were repelled with great disaster. At any rate, they were slain by men of Gath, that were born in the land. They were part of the early nations of Canaan that should have been destroyed. This suggests a significant train of thought. We must beware of the tendencies and impulses which were born in us, which we have inherited.

They are strong in all of us. Parents transmit to an awful extent their own passions. What a reason this is for carefully curbing them! I have known the children of drunkards, grown to middle■life, who have confessed that they have never spent a day without the conscious craving for alcohol. These are the men of Gath, born in the land, who will slay us unless we are on our guard.

There will be irremediable sorrow if we yield to them. Many days of mourning will not avail to wipe out the sad and bitter memory of the disaster, when once they have wreaked their wild will on us. If permitted within, they will, like traitors, open the door to Satan without.

But faith is the victory. He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God; he in whom Jesus lives by the Holy Spirit; he who knows the Stronger than the strong man armed, shall be kept from falling, and preserved unto God's heavenly kingdom. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh."

Esh■baal, . . . Merib■baal. 1 Chronicles. 8:33,34

BAAL was the idol■god of Zidon and of many surrounding nations. This idol, representing the sun in his productive force, was worshipped with impure and scandalous rites. The introduction of this name into the appellation of one of Saul's sons indicates the secret root of the declension and consequent misfortunes of

that ill-fated monarch. In the earlier part of his reign he was perfect in his allegiance to Jehovah ■■ Jonathan means "Gift of Jehovah " ■■ but as the years went on, he became proud and self-sufficient; he turned to Baal, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, and an evil spirit rushed in to take His place, as wind rushes in to fill a vacuum.

The name which Jonathan gave his son had another significance. Merib-baal is one who opposes Baal. It is as though he would indelibly stamp upon his child an undying hatred and opposition to that idolatry which was undoing his father's character and kingdom. In this choice of his child's name we also gather the deep-seated piety and devotion of that noble soul, whose heart was true to God amid the darkening shadows of his father's reign. It was this that probably drew David and him so closely in affinity.

How absolutely necessary it is for the peace of a household that there should be a oneness of devotion to God! Where that is the first consideration, there is peace and blessedness; and that it may be so, it is of the greatest importance that the parents should be constant in their godly allegiance. The ruin of Saul's home, family, and realm, began in his personal disloyalty to God; and how far he influenced the nation for evil it is difficult to estimate.

Chosen to be porters . . appointed over the furniture; . . the singers. 1 Chronicles 9:22,29,31,33.

WHAT a busy scene is suggested in these words! When the morning broke, it called to duty first the porters who opened the House of God; and then, after due ablution, each band of white-robed Levites been its special service. There was no running to and fro in disorder, no intrusion on one another's office, no clashing in duty, no jealousy of each other's ministry. It was enough to know that each had been appointed to his task, and was asked to be faithful to it. The right ordering of the whole depended on the punctuality, fidelity, and conscientiousness of each.

So it is in the Church of Christ, each is specially gifted for some post to which he has been set apart. One to see to the gates, admitting souls to the kingdom; one to the baking in pans, attending to the feeding of the household of God; some are appointed to the furnishing and maintaining of the House of Prayer; others to the psalmody, as the hymn-writers of our praise and holy song. How beautiful it is when we dwell together in this unity, not envying one another, nor interfering in each other's ministry. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Whatever is successfully done by the Church is accredited by Christ to each faithful servant, just as the impression produced on the audience by an orchestra is the result of each instrument, even to the piccolo, doing its part. Whatever is done by the whole, is done by each part of the whole. Be content with the position to which thy Master has assigned thee, and let thine eye be single unto Him. So shall each have praise of God.

So Saul died for his trespass. 1 Chronicles 10:13 (R.V.).

IT is suggestive to ponder the threefold analysis of Saul's trespass as given here. He kept not the word of the Lord ■■ this probably refers to his failure to execute the sentence on Amalck; he asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit ■■ this errand had taken him to Endor on the eve of the battle; he enquired not of the Lord ■■ this was conspicuously the case in his persecution of David.

Do we sufficiently inquire of the Lord? We ask the advice of our friends and religious teachers; we sometimes use doubtful methods of ascertaining God's will, as allowing the Bible to drop open, or

interpreting some coincidence in the way we secretly desire to follow; besides which there is an increasing tendency in society to use the crystal, to consult spiritualistic mediums, to employ palmistry. These latter, course, repeat the sin of Saul, in going to Endor; and the resort to them on the part of children of this world shows that the heart of man must have something exterior to itself for worship and trust; if it has Forsaken God, it will deal with the devil rather than drift on alone. But let us all cultivate more carefully the blessed habit of waiting on God. If we ask Him for guidance, He will be sure to impart it; only we must put aside all selfish and personal ends, desiring to know his will, with a single purpose, and an unalloyed determination to follow it at any cost.

Christ has told us that willingness to do his will is the sure organ of spiritual knowledge. "He that wills to do his will, shall know." Be of good cheer, beloved: God hath chosen thee that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth.

Oh that one would give me drink of the water at the well of Bethlehem! 1 Chronicles 11:17

DAVID had often drunk of this well. As a boy he had gone with his mother to draw its clear, cold water. It was, therefore, associated with the happy days of childhood and youth that lay behind the haze of the years. In the sultry afternoon, as, from the cave in which he was hiding, he looked across the valley where his ancestress Ruth had gleaned in the fields of Boaz, to the long straggling town of his birth, it seemed as though nothing could stay his passionate longing for a draught of the water of the well of Bethlehem that was at the gate.

Sometimes longings like his take possession of us. We desire to drink again the waters of comparative innocence, of childlike trust and joy; to drink again of the fountains of human love; to have the bright, fresh rapture in God, and nature, and home. But it is a mistake to look back. Here and now, within us, Jesus is waiting to open the well of living water which springs up to eternal life, of which if we drink we never thirst.

Purity is better than innocence; the blessedness which comes through suffering is richer than the gladness of childhood; the peace of the heart is more than peace of circumstances. We have solace in Jesus, which even the dear love of home could not equal; and before us lies the reunion with the blessed dead. How shall we thank Him who, at the cost of his own blood, broke through the hosts of our foes, and won for us the river of life; and who for evermore will lead us to the fountains, where life rises fresh from the heart of God! Listen to his voice as He bids us drink abundantly: "Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

All these men of war, that could keep rank, came to make David king. 1 Chronicles 12:38

THE crowning of David secured the unity of Israel. Because all these men of war converged on the chosen king, they met each other, and became one great nation. The enthroning of David was the uniting of the kingdom. Herein is the secret of the unity of the Church. We shall never secure it by endeavoring to bring about an unity in thought, or act, or organization. It is as each individual heart enthrones the Saviour that each will become one with all kindred souls in the everlasting kingdom.

Is your heart perfect to make Christ king? We read in verse 33 of Zebulun, whose warriors were not of a double heart; the margin says they were "without a heart and a heart." The doubleminded man is unstable in all his ways; he is not to be relied upon in his loyalty or service to his king. The only blessed life is that of the man whose eye is single. It is only such an one that receives anything from the Lord. Let us

ask that the thoughts of our hearts may be cleansed by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that our hearts may be perfect towards Him, and so perfect to all who hold Jesus as King and Head, though they differ from us in minor points. Different regiments, but one army, one movement, one king.

Let us learn to keep rank, shoulder to shoulder, and in step, with our brethren. Too many like to break the ranks, and do God's work independently. Fifty men who act together will do greater execution than five hundred acting apart. There is too much of this guerilla fighting. Unity is strength; and in their efforts to overthrow the kingdom of Satan it is most essential that the soldiers of Christ move in rank and keep step.

And David was afraid of God that day. 1 Chronicles 13:12

THERE was no reason for David to be afraid of God, if he conformed to the rules laid down in Leviticus. There it was expressly ordained that the Ark should be carried on the shoulders of the priests, because the cause of God must proceed through the world by the means of consecrated men, rather than by mechanical instrumentality. David ignored this provision when he placed the Ark on the new cart. He disobeyed the distinct law of the Divine procedure. What wonder that Uzza was struck dead! Fire will burn if you persist in violating its law. Obedience, on the other hand, studiously obeyed, so far as he knew them, the Divine regulations, and to him the Ark was a source of blessing; just as fire will toil for us in our furnaces and grates, and be the greatest possible benediction to human life, if only we carefully conform to its ascertained and immutable law.

God is to us what we are to Him. To Pharaoh, blackness and darkness; to Israel, light and help. To the froward, He is froward; to the merciful man, merciful. To one of the thieves, the cross of Christ was the savor of death unto death, because his heart was impenitent; to the other, the savor of life unto life, because his heart was soft and believing. You need not fear God so long as you walk in his ways and do his will. He is to be feared only by those who violate his law. God is a consuming fire. He will make a breach on those who disobey Him. He will consume the evil of our inner life. But let Him be welcomed into your life and home; let the Ark, which is the symbol of his presence, dwell within; bring up your children to minister unto Him; and you will be blessed, with all that you have.

Then thou shalt go out to battle; for God is gone forth before thee. 1 Chronicles 14:15

WHAT was this "going"? It was not merely a fitful breeze stealing through the leaves; it was not the going of the wind; but of angel squadrons who were proceeding against the enemies of Israel. This thought often occurs in Scripture as when Jacob met God's host; and the warrior-Saviour told Joshua that He was captain of a host whom God had commissioned to take Jericho; so also the horses and chariots of fire surrounded Elisha. Harken to the measured footfall of God's host, beneath which the mulberry trees sway, though no wind stirs the sultry air.

God's hosts go forth against his foes and ours. Perhaps we should feel less oppressed with the burden of the fight if we realized this. The battle is not ours, but God's. He will deliver the Philistines to us so that we shall have to do little else than fight and spoil. Oh, believe in the cooperation of the Holy Spirit. Lonely missionary in some distant station of the foreign field, listen for the moving in the tops of the mulberry trees! God is stirring for thy succor. Thou art a co-worker with Him in making known his salvation; and He will prosper thee.

Let us wait for our instructions. David inquired of the Lord; let us not anticipate Him. It is useless to go up until He has gone out before us. We may as well save ourselves from disappointment by quietly waiting for

the salvation of our God. But oh, be sure that those who wait for God shall not be long before the God for whom they wait shall go forth before them to smite the host, whether it be the hosts of temptation that oppress the inner life, or the hosts of spiritual foes that oppose the progress of God's work.

And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song. 1 Chronicles 15:22

THE carrying of the Ark to its right place was associated with every expression of gladness on the part of king and people; but there were some who were specially set apart as the exponents of the general joy. In the old time such were David, Heman, Asaph, Chenaniah; in our time, Watts and Doddridge, Wesley and Toplady, Keble, Havergal, and Bonar.

It is good to be for song. Many a heart that cannot rank as a musician or poet, may yet be susceptible to the joy of the Lord, which is ever passing through creation, catching it up so as to express it. As the Ark of the Lord comes to its place within you, sing.

Song is harmony with the life of God. The will of God sometimes enters life as a sigh, as David's first attempt to move the Ark; but afterwards it becomes a song, as in the second attempt. Enshrine the Ark of God with its tables of stone, its mercy-seat of fellowship, its worshipping Cherubim in the Holy of Holies within; and you will find sighs turned to songs, tears to thanks, mourning to the garment of praise.

Worship the will of God. Conform your life with it. Draw on the ground a circle to represent God's will, and step into it, resolving never to step out of its blessed precincts again. Dare to believe and confess that Paradise lies within, though it may be veiled to sight and sense. According to your faith it shall be unto you. If you believe that heaven is there, you will find heaven. The Ark of God is ever a provocative of song. His statutes seem awful in the distance; but so soon as we begin to practice them, they turn to songs

Talk ye of all His wondrous works. 1 Chronicles 16:9

WE do not talk sufficiently about God. Why it is so may not be easy to explain; but there seems a too great reticence among Christian people about the best things. In the days of Malachi, "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard." We talk about sermons, details of worship and church organization, or the latest phase of Scripture criticism; we discuss men, methods, and churches; but our talk in the home, and in the gatherings of Christians for social purposes, is too seldom about the wonderful works of God. Better to speak less, and to talk more of Him.

But probably the real cause of our avoidance of this best of topics, is that our hearts are filled with so much which is not of God, and they speak out of their abundance. You may judge the contents of a shop by what is put in the windows; and you may judge of the inner life of too many Christians by the subjects which are most familiar to their lips. The heart does not seek for God and his strength, nor his face continually; and therefore we find it hard to talk of all his wondrous works.

But go back in thought to the day of Pentecost. One of the first signs of the descent of the blessed Spirit was that the crowd heard every man speaking in his own tongue the wonderful works of God. What God has done in the past, as recorded on the page of Scripture; what He is doing day by day in the world around, and in our hearts; what He has promised to do on the horizon where heaven and earth shall blend in the Second Advent ■■■ yield fit themes on which his children may beamingly talk to each other, till He goes beside and talks with them till their hearts burn.

Do as Thou hast said, that thy name may be magnified forever. 1 Chronicles 17:23,24.

THIS is a most blessed phase of true prayer. Many a time we ask for things which are not absolutely promised. We are not sure therefore until we have persevered for some time whether our petitions are in the line of God's purpose or no. There are other occasions, and in the life of David this was one, when we are fully persuaded that what we ask is according to God's will. We feel led to take up and plead some promise from the page of Scripture, under the special impression that it contains a message for us.

At such times, in confident faith, we say, "Do as Thou hast said." There is hardly any position more utterly beautiful, strong, or safe, than to put the finger upon some promise of the Divine Word, and claim it. There need be no anguish, or struggle, or wrestling; we simply present the check and ask for cash, produce the promise, and claim its fulfillment; nor can there be any doubt as to the issue. It would give much interest to prayer, if we were more definite. It is far better to claim a few things specifically than a score vaguely.

David's argument was not simply that his house might be established, but that God's name might be magnified for ever. It is good when we can lose sight of our personal interests in our keen desire for his glory; when we are so delivered from egotism, that Christ is all and in all. Let the attitude of your soul be more towards the glory of God; and as you quote promise after promise for the enthroning of Christ, the saving of men, and the sanctification of your soul, dare in humble faith to say, Do as Thou hast said, that thy Name may be magnified for ever.

He put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became servants to David. 1 Chronicles 18:73

EDOM and Israel were closely related, but there was constant rivalry and war between the two peoples. Sometimes Israel held the upper hand for a little; but Edom soon broke loose again, and resumed the old independence, with the border forays (2 Chronicles xxi. 10; xxv. 11-14; Psa. cxxxvii. 7). Now, as Edom stands for the flesh, which hungers for the savory dish, and is willing to give even its birthright of spiritual power to secure it ■■ this long feud is full of interest to us. It reminds us of the strife of Rom. vii., between the will of the renewed man and the law of the members, ever striving for mastery.

We turn on the pages of our Bibles to Isa. lxiii., where a mighty Conqueror is seen coming towards the southern frontier of Palestine, with his back on Bozrah and Edom. His garments are dyed with the blood of Israel's foes; and behind Him cities are desolate and depopulated, territories are laid waste without inhabitant, and Edom's hostility is for ever quenched in blood. What a portraiture is here of Jesus, "mighty to save," who in his cross triumphed over principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly. He has overcome the world, the flesh, and the prince of the power of darkness; and stands for evermore between us and our former oppressors.

Let us resign the conflict wholly to Him. We have sought in vain for victory by resolutions and endeavors ; by close attention to religious duties; by occupying our mind with various interests, so that we had no leisure to be tempted; by diet and exercise. Now, hand the conflict absolutely over to Jesus: do not even try to help Him: just let Him do all: be quite still, and when temptation comes, let Him meet it.

Let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God. 1 Chronicles 19:13

THOSE were days in which rough soldiers, like Joab, did not hesitate to speak freely of God to their companions in arms. It is a sorry thing that it is considered a breach of etiquette to mention God's name in polite society. "It is not good form! "

We are reminded in these words of Joab of Cromwell's memorable advice to trust in God and keep the powder dry. David's General felt that the ultimate issue of the battle must be left to God; but that nothing could absolve him and his soldier from doing their best. They, at least, must make careful dispositions for the fight, and show themselves valiant.

This balance of statement and thought between God's work and ours is an evidence of fine Christian sanity. We must believe that God is the ultimate arbiter, but we must ever speak and act as though the responsibility were entirely on ourselves. To believe that God will do all, and therefore to do nothing, is as bad as to believe that God leaves us to our unaided endeavors. We believe in the strength and sufficiency of God's purpose; but we know that there is link in the chain of causation which we must supply.

The servant of God who counts most absolutely on the communion and cooperation of the Divine Spirit will be most careful in making all needful dispositions for the fight. He will leave no stone unturned to secure the victory, though he knows that the ultimate decision rests with God. The conquests of the cross recorded in the Acts of the Apostles were the result of the united action of the Holy Spirit and the men who were sent forth with the message of the gospel "We are laborers together with God."

The time when Kings go out to battle. . . . But David tarried at Jerusalem. 1 Chronicles 20:1

THERE are times and tides in the affairs of men; favorable moments for doing and daring, for attempting and achieving. Hours when the ship must be launched, or it will have to wait for another spring tide. Days when the seed must be sown, or it will have to tarry till another autumn. Royal natures show their quality by taking advantage of times like these, when God and circumstances favor a great attempt.

Alas, if long-continued prosperity has robbed the kingly soul of its desire or power to use its sacred opportunity! Once missed, it may never recur; and the soul that has missed it condemns itself, and loses heart, and surrenders itself to lower and ever lower depths of temptation.

Beware of moments and hours of ease. It is in these that we most easily fall into the power of Satan. The sultriest summer days are most laden with blight. There is no such guard against temptation ■■ next to the keeping power of Jesus, which is all-sufficient ■■ as occupation to the full measure of time and capacity. If we cannot fill our days with our own matters, there is always plenty to be done for others. You think that no one has hired you, but it is not so; the Master has sent you into his vineyard. If you cannot do one thing, you can another. There is the ministry of intercession for those who are in the field. There is the exercise of worship, in which you take your place amongst the priests. There is the ministry of comfort to some of the sad hearts within your own circle. Redeem the time, because the days are evil. Watch and pray in days of vacation and ease, even more than at other times.

And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing. 1 Chronicles 21:8 (R.V.).

HIS sin lay in the spirit of pride and display. He vaunted in the growing numbers of Israel, and credited them to himself, as the result of his own prowess and prudence. All such boasting is very abhorrent to the all-holy God, who will not give his glory to another. It was the sin of Nebuchadnezzar, when he said, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?" It was the sin of Herod Agrippa when the people shouted, saying, "The voice of a god, and not of a man"; and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, "because he gave not God the glory."

We are all tempted to it when we count up the number of our adherents and converts; when we unroll our securities and vouchers; when we count up our assets; when we display our jewels. All these are gifts entrusted to our care by our Father and Saviour, to be held in trust as a matter for gratitude rather than for pride.

How greatly David had fallen from the level of his own sweet sonnet! ■■ "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty." Oh, let us ask our Master Christ to teach us how to be meek and lowly in heart, that we may find rest unto our souls; let us endeavor to be as little children, devoid of self-consciousness; and let us be careful, as we survey the growing treasures and power of our lives, to remember the Apostle's words: "Who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? But if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? "

How well John the Baptist parried the temptation to jealousy, when he said, "A man can receive nothing unless it be given him from heaven."

A man of rest . . . he shall build. 1 Chronicles 22:9,10

THE men of rest are the builders of the most lasting structures. Solomon builds the Temple, not David. Mary's deed of anointing, learnt in much sitting at the Lord's feet, fills the world with its aroma. What is needed to make us men and women of rest?

First, a profound conviction that God is working. ■■ Never despair of the world, said the late Mrs. Beecher Stowe, when you remember what God did with slavery: the best possible must happen. This serene faith, that all things are working out for the best ■■ the best to God, the best to man ■■ and that God is at the heart of all, will calm and still us in the most feverish days. There is a strong and an experienced Hand on the helm.

Next, an entire surrender to his will. ■■ God's will is certain to mean the destruction of the flesh, in whatever form He finds it; but it is our part to yield to Him; to will his will even to the cross; to follow our leader Christ in this, that He yielded Himself without reserve to execute his Father's purpose.

Thirdly, a certain knowledge that He is working within to will and do of his good pleasure. ■■ what a blessed peace possesses us when once we realize that we are not called on to originate or initiate, nor to make great far-reaching plans and try to execute them; but just to believe that God is prepared to work through our hands, speak by our life, dwell in our bodies, and fulfill in us the good purposes of his will. Be full of God's rest. Let there be no hurry, precipitation, or fret; yield to God's hands, that He may mould thee: hush thy quickly throbbing pulse! So shalt thou build to good and lasting purpose.

Aaron was separated, he and his sons for ever, to minister unto Him. 1 Chronicles 23:13

THE threefold office of Aaron suggests our own. When we are prepared to follow Jesus, through the rent veil of his flesh, living a truly separated life, cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, we also, as chosen priests, may exercise these functions of intercession, ministry, and blessing.

Intercession. ■■ The fragrant incense stealing heavenward is a beautiful emblem of intercessory prayer. Let us pray more, not for ourselves so much as for others. This is the sign of growth in grace, when our prayers are fragrant with the names of friend and foe, and mingled with the coals of the golden altar. This is one of the best gifts; oh to exercise it more persistently!

Ministry. ■■ We have many things to engage our attention, but they maybe unified and elevated by the one threading purpose of doing all for the King. Whether we eat, or drink, or whatever else we do, we may do all to his glory. Go up and down in the Temple, O priests; engage in song, or sacrifice, or whatever ministry you will: but be sure that all is of Him, and through Him, and to Him forever.

Blessing. ■■ As Aaron came forth from the most Holy Place to bless the congregation that waited for him, so we should bless that little portion of the world in which our lot is cast. It is not enough to linger in soft prayer within the veil; we must come forth to bless mankind. He who is nearest God is closest man. Let our smile, our touch, our words, our life, be the greatest blessing possible to those who know us best.

Blessed Spirit, realize through each of us this threefold ideal, and separate us from sin and the world, that we may be prepared for it.

Princes of the Sanctuary. 1 Chronicles 24:5 (R.V.).

IT is not enough for us to be in the sanctuary, we must be princes there. There must be the regal mien, which is a meek humility; the real largesse, which is peace and blessing; and the regal might, which is self-restraint and self-control. None can be princes of the sanctuary without two things: they must be priests, come of the priestly line; and kings, royal not because of deeds of war, but because they are related to the King Himself, and are regal in their holy and blameless character.

There is only one power that can make us princes of the sanctuary ■■ the hand of the exalted Lamb, who is Himself a Priest-King, after the order of Melchizedek. He it is who makes us kings and priests unto God his Father.

He makes us priests. ■■ This is your position, not now to offer propitiatory sacrifices, but to present yourselves a living sacrifice; to have compassion on the ignorant, and on those who are out of the way; to swing the censer of prayer between the living and the dead, so that plagues may be stayed; and to plead for the dark sad world, with its load of wretchedness, need, and sin. See that your garments are ever white and stainless.

He makes us kings. ■■ We reign with Him. Sin and Satan, the world and the flesh, are beneath our feet. Ours the life of overcoming power, of unbroken victory, of identification with Jesus in the glory that the Father has given Him. They that receive the abundance of his grace reign. It is there for us all, but many do not know, or knowing do not appreciate. It is on our reception by faith of God's abundant grace, that we reign in this life, and the next.

All these were under the hands of their father for song. 1 Chronicles 25:5,6

WHAT a glorious family was here! The household was a band of choristers! From morning till night their home must have been full of holy song and psalm, or talk about the order of the Temple service, in which they were all so deeply interested. Surely no jarring note, no unholy discord, would live in such an atmosphere! The common occupation and worship must have welded the brothers and sisters into to the tenderest union.

How one would like to have seen Heman coming into the Temple with his children! It was largely owing to him and their mother that they were what they were. We shall read the Psalms ascribed to him with more interest, now we know of the holy family life out of which they emanated. What interest there would be when the father had produced a new psalm, to know what music would suit it best!

Parents! Be sure that you look on your children, as these Hebrews did on theirs, as the gifts of God; and remember that if He gives you many months to feed, He will send the wherewithal to feed them. Be careful also that your own hearts and lives are full of praise and prayer; what you are, the children will become. Would that mothers especially realized how they transmit their characters. But remember that you must be obeyed in the home. Heman's children were "under the hands of their father." Young people must not get the upper hand.

But if you would rule well, you must obey. Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, were under the king (6, R.V.). The man who is himself under authority, can say, Go, come, do this or that, with the calm assurance of being obeyed.

For the courses of the doorkeepers. 1 Chronicles 26:1 (R.V.).

MIGHTY men of valor were needed for this, just as sweet singers were for the service of song. Entrance to the House of God was restricted to a privileged few. Gentiles were excluded from certain courts, and women from another. It was incumbent also to look out for those who, like the publican in the Lord's parable, might shrink from intruding, and encourage them to enter. Doorkeepers had to combine many qualities, which would be of the greatest service if they could be repeated in each church and chapel of our great cities, for welcoming old and young.

But chiefly we are concerned with the temple of the heart. We surely need the doorkeeper there, for in the history of the inner life there is so much going and coming; such troops of thoughts pour into the shrine of the soul, and pour out. And often, in the crowd, disloyal and evil thoughts intrude, which, before we know it, introduce a sense of distance and alienation from God, as though a cloud had veiled the shining of the Shekinah. Whenever the sky is overcast within, we should question whether some traitor, some excommunicate, has entered. Our native wit is not quick enough to detect, and our strength not mighty enough to withstand, the entrance of all these evil things. Hence the necessity not only to live in the Spirit, but to walk in the Spirit, i. e., to submit everything to the Spirit's scrutiny.

It is necessary also that strict supervision strong be exercised over those who unite with the visible Church, lest her holiness become diluted, and her fences broken down. Nothing is more important than the function of door keeping for the Church's purity.

All these were the rulers of the substance which was King David's. 1 Chronicles 27:31

THERE was great variety in office and gift. He who cared for the work of the field could not have known how to care for the flocks. The overseer of oliveyard and vineyard would have been a poor hand with the camels and asses. One sort of talent was needed for the herds, and another for the wine cellars; and yet there was unity in the common service of the king. We are reminded of the words of the Apostle, describing the variety in unity which must obtain in every healthy church: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord; diversities of operations, but the same God."

Each of these different men had his distinct sphere for which he was doubtless specially qualified; and it was his duty not to be jealous of others, nor eager to imitate them, but to be faithful in his own province. How much happier we should all be if we recognized our specific work in God's house, and kept to it, being content to serve the King as He has seen fit to determine, rendering Him the produce in due season.

How great an error it would have been had any of these begun to account the produce of cattle or ground as his own! He had nothing that he had not received, and whatever he controlled had been entrusted to his care for the emolument and of his sovereign. Yet, how few of us that we are put in business with God's capital, for God's use. We take all and give Him a percentage, instead of using all for Him and keeping a percentage for ourselves. In this we rob God, and greatly err. We must acknowledge that both we and all we possess belong to Him.

The Lord God, even my God, . . . will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 1 Chronicles 28:20

IT is very comforting to take these words to our hearts; especially when we connect them with the foregoing ones about the pattern, and apply the whole passage to the temple-building of our own lives. For each of us, too, there is a pattern, an ideal, a design, based on the possibilities which God sees to be within our reach; for each, too, there is abundance of stored provision; but we are not always strong to do. In Jesus there is the complete ideal of human life; of the Child at Nazareth; of the Servant in the workshop; of the Lover in his affection for his church; of the Friend, the Sufferer, the Patriot, the Saviour. Go forth and imitate Him!

Sometimes our heart and flesh fail us in the mid-passage of life. Once the energy and vigour of youth promised to sustain and carry us to the end of life, without fear or failure; but these die down, and we wonder how the remainder of the life-plan can be fulfilled. And the one sufficient answer is God. He who helped our fathers to the very end will help us; He who did not fail or forsake them, will never leave nor forsake us, until all the work of life which He has planned, is finished.

It is probable that you will do better and more enduring work henceforth than you have ever done in the heyday and plenitude of youthful power, if you let God work all through you to his own glory. You have no need for despondency, God is sufficient. Oh to write this down on the tablets of the heart God is; God is here ; God is all-sufficient; God has begun and will finish! God has promised that he will never leave nor forsake us; therefore we may boldly say, "God is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding. 1 Chronicles 29:15 (R.V.).

ALL life has been compared to the shadow of a smoke-wreath; a gesture in the invisible air; a hieroglyph traced for an instant on the sand, and effaced a moment after by a breath of wind; an air-bubble vanishing on the river. Pilgrims and sojourners, as were all our fathers such is the universal confession. But even such may do a work that will last for ages. David and the men of his time, though transitory their stay on our planet, left behind them a standing evidence that they had been here.

Our life is nothing, but it may be divine: our days are as a breath, but they may affect unborn generations: the tent of the body is laid aside, but the soul, which had dwelt in it, is immortal in its touch: it leaves traces of its own immortality behind in its works, and it lives in them. In one sense, the answer to the ancient prayer is certain: "Establish Thou the works of our hands upon us." But we may well ask, that they may be such that we shall have no need to be ashamed of.

But, for this, God must live mightily within us. Abide in Me, said our Lord. . . . I have appointed you that ye may bring forth fruit, and that your fruit may abide. It is impossible to be in true union with Christ without feeling the pulse of his glorious life; and where it enters like a tidal river, it can have but one result it must manifest itself in fruit. It is only in proportion as our works are done in God, and God permeates our works, that they become sources of enduring blessing to coming time. Pilgrims though we be, yet, if our

lives are spent before Him, we may build temples which will outlast the wreck of matter.

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