

# SAMUEL THE PROPHET

by

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### AN EPILOGUE (II Samuel 1:19, etc)

“He who did most, shall bear most;  
the strongest shall stand the most weak.  
‘Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for!  
    my flesh, that I seek  
    In the Godhead! I seek and I find it  
    O Saul it shall be  
A Face like my face that receives thee a Man  
    like to me,  
Thou shall love and be loved by, for ever; a  
    Hand like this hand  
Shall throw open the gates of new life  
    to thee! See the CHRIST stand!”

- R. B.

“*THE Song of the Bow*,” for that is the title of the touchingly beautiful elegy with which David’s muse mourned over the tragedy of Gilboa, is very pathetic and inspiring. It seemed as though the singer had forgotten the rough experiences which had fallen to his lot through the jealous mania of the king; and, passing over recent years, he was a minstrel-shepherd once more, celebrating the glory and powers of his King.

**“The beauty of Israel, is slain upon thy high places!  
How are the mighty fallen! . . .  
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,  
And in their death they were not divided.”**

It makes us think of the love of God to hear David sing like that.

It reminds us that God has said, “**Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.**” Here at least, long before the Christian era, was a love that bore all things, believed all things, hoped all things, endured all things, and never failed; which cast the halo of its idealism around the memory of the departed; which thought only of what had been noble and beautiful in them, and refused to consider aught that had been base and unworthy.

It is thus that we also would think of Saul, the first king of Israel.

It always seems to us as though Saul were one of those castaways of which the Apostle speaks, and among whom he feared lest he should finally be classed; who were once selected by God for some high and holy purpose, who bade fair to realize it, but who at last were cast aside from his use and service as salt which has lost its savour, and is cast out to be trodden under foot of men.

It is a very solemn thought! No career could begin with fairer, brighter prospects than Saul had, and none could close in a more absolute midnight of despair; and yet such a fate may befall us, unless we watch, and pray, and walk humbly with our God.

We cannot forget that representation on the pages of the "Immortal Dreamer," of the man in an iron cage.

The man said, "I was once a fair and flourishing professor, both in mine own eyes and in the eyes of others; I once was, as I thought, fair for the Celestial City, and had then even joy at the thoughts that I should get thither; but I left off to watch and be sober; I laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts; I sinned against the light of the Word and the goodness of God; I have grieved the Spirit, and He is gone; I tempted the devil, and he has come to me; I have provoked God to anger, and He has left me; I have so hardened my heart that I cannot repent."

"Well," said Christian, "this is fearful! God help me to watch and be sober, and to pray that I may shun the cause of this man's misery!"

But those who are most fearful of falling into such a case are they who are least liable to it. It is the disciple who says, Lord, is it I? in lowly distrust of himself, who will never be found guilty of treading the Son of God beneath his feet, or crucifying Him afresh.

But, deeper than all, the dispensational aspect of Saul's reign appeals to us with profoundest interest.

He seems to represent the prince of this present age (or, as it might be called, "**the world**"), who was once Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, who was appointed as God's vice-regent to rule over his heritage; who fell from his high estate, and in his fall not only dragged down a noble retinue of bright and beautiful spirits, but cast a blighting influence over the entire realm over which he had been set.

In each of these points there is a close analogy between Saul the king, and Satan the fallen archangel. Both were favored above most; both began with high promise; both were vice-regents over God's heritage; both were disobedient, willful, and proud; both fell from their primal estate, and in their fall dragged many in their train, and left an entail of woe as their legacy and memento.

And both incurred the sentence of deposition in favour of another kingdom, which was springing up in the heart of their kingdom. In the case of Saul, this was David's; in the case of Satan, it is that Kingdom which can never be removed, but abideth for ever!

That gathering to the Cave of Adullam of all who were in desperate circumstances, until by careful discipline and the infusion of his own heroic spirit, David molded them into a great army, and won the empire of that time and land; that generous and noble disposition which stood out in such striking contrast to the character of his adversary; that incessant persecution and pursuit by the crowned prince of the realm what are these but striking analogies, which have their highest counterpart only in the history of the Son of Man, who from his cradle to his grave was always subjected to the hatred and opposition of Satan!

Notwithstanding all that Saul's malice could do to thwart and frustrate the Divine plan, yet the Lord set his king upon the holy hill of Zion, and He came forth to declare the decree of his enthronement and coronation.

Similarly the Divine purpose with regard to our Lord must stand, though demons and men oppose it. The Son of God is destined to be the crowned King of men. His kingdom is now hidden and in mystery; his followers are not manifested to the eyes of men; the full proportions of his empire are concealed. It has yet "**to come.**"

The overthrow of its great antagonist must precede its establishment. For the universe also there is to be an Armageddon, just as there was a field of Gilboa; and only when that last fight has been fought, and the powers of darkness have been shattered, never to be reconstructed, shall there be heard the sound of many voices, as of the tumultuous shout of vast multitudes, saying,

**"Hallelujah! The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."**

**"Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire."**

The reign of Saul would be almost too bitter to contemplate, unless under its rough cuticle and rind we could detect the formation of the luscious fruit of David's kingdom, destined to sow eternal seed over the world. Similarly, we might despair of the condition to which the Trinity of Evil has reduced our world, did we not know that in the days of these kings the God of Heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever (see Daniel 2:44).

Samuel the prophet thus practically bridges the gulf between Samson the judge and David the king; and there is deep significance in the fact that his name is identified with the two books of Scripture which describe this great transitional period, every event of which was affected by his influence.

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