

Saul's Zabelins.

By W. T. P. W.

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Saul's Javelins.

“IF God does not give me peace, I shall go mad,” and so saying, the speaker rose, and excitedly paced the room, while the clock intimated the hour—just two A.M.—one Saturday in 1871. He was a tall, powerfully built man, in the prime of life, with a piercing dark eye, and a countenance that bespoke more than the ordinary amount of intelligence, and force of character. All his natural boldness had, however, disappeared for the nonce, and he trembled visibly under the touch of the hand of God, now really laid upon him.

Our introduction was remarkable. On the previous Thursday a number of the Lord's people had gathered in Edinburgh, to study His Word, and seek to edify each other. Called into

Fifeshire early in the day, I only got back in time for the evening meeting, and was then led to speak a little on the history of Jonathan. We saw that in 1 Sam. xvi. David is brought into view. Type, as he is, of the blessed Lord Jesus, little wonder that his person is described as "withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to" (v. 12). In chap. xvii. we saw his antagonist, Goliath of Gath, the "champion" of Israel's foes, a striking type of man's enemy, Satan. His voice is soon heard, "Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. . . . I defy the armies of Israel this day: give me a man that we may fight together" (vv. 8, 10).

The effect of this challenge was obvious: "When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid" (v. 11), and for "forty days" (v. 16)—the time of perfect probation

—this testing went on, and yet no man dared face the foe. How could he? Certain defeat could only have been the result. No, my reader, neither you nor I are a match for Satan. It is good when we learn it.

Then was foreshadowed the lovely statement, "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14), and David comes on the scene, bidden of his father, to "look how thy brethren fare" (v. 18). They were faring badly enough, but, like sinners since, were too proud to own their nothingness. "Why camest thou down hither?" says his eldest brother (v. 28), reminding one of the words, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John i. 11), and then goes on to say, "I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle" (v. 28). The battle forsooth! There was none.

No man dared meet the giant. Not even boastful Eliab. This David knew and simply rejoins, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" This is perfect grace. Nothing chilled the love of Jesus, and nothing arrested the purpose of David. "Thy servant will go, and fight with this Philistine" (v. 32), is followed by action, for "David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling, and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David; therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith!" (vv. 50, 51.)

What a picture is this of the victory of Jesus. Coming into this poor sin-stained world, He found man the servant of sin, the vassal of Satan, and consequently under the power of

death, with its after consequence—judgment. Satan had, and could wield, the power of death over man's conscience. But what do we read of Jesus? "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that *through* death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and *deliver* them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Wondrous fact for men to hear! We die because we are men—sinful men. He became a man—a sinless man—that He might die, and deliver us. Blessed Saviour! What a deliverer and what a deliverance! Death is our portion. Christ, on whom it had no claim, took it. See this, and you get free. Goliath's head was cut off with his own sword. The chain of torture Satan can hold a sinner by—death, as the wages of sin

—is snapped the moment you see Christ “made sin”—that “he died for our sins according to the scriptures”; yea, more, that He “died for sinners.” His death breaks Satan’s power, puts away my sins, glorifies God about sin, and sets me free.

The giant’s head off, his army “fled,” and all Israel had to do was to “spoil their tents” (v. 53). So with us, we have only to enjoy ~~the~~ spoil of Jesus’ victory. He has done all. We enjoy all. Proof of David’s victory is seen as “Abner took him, and brought him before Saul, with the Philistine’s head in his hand” (v. 57); and the evidence of Christ’s victory stands in the fact that He is now alive before God, having “led captivity captive,” and the Holy Ghost says, “Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col. ii. 10). Yes, far, far above the angels who never sinned, there sits now a Man

who was once in death for sinners. In that Man every believer is complete.

Thus came out the gospel, and then its proper effect on the one who hears, or sees, and believes it. "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, . . . and Jonathan 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" (chap. xviii. 1, 4). This was, indeed, a fine result—typically, a grand conversion. David had done all; Jonathan gets all the fruit; and, as a right outcome, his heart is all for David.

When David came into the camp, Jonathan was "trembling"; as David advances toward the foe, he would be Jonathan "hopeful"; as he sees

the giant fall, his head roll off, and his army flee, he is Jonathan "delivered"; the sharer of all the spoil, he is Jonathan "enriched"; and now, lovely climax, he is Jonathan "devoted." Yes, all is surrendered to the Deliverer. What a lovely picture of a young convert yielding all to Jesus!

Reader, do you know aught of this? If not, may you know it. Follow Christ fully. What will be the result? "Javelins." If Christ be made much of, Satan must need oppose. Hence we read (chap. xviii. 10, 11, xix, 9, 10), that thrice did Saul cast a javelin at David. But Jonathan "delighted much in David" (xix. 2), and began to "speak good" of him, saying to Saul, "His works to theeward have been *very good*, for he did *put his life in his hand*, and slew the Philistine" (xix. 4, 5). Yes, David *risked* his life, but Jesus *laid down* His for us. Well may we "speak

good" of Him. But if we do, what then? Look out for javelins. Satan cannot touch Christ, but he will touch you if he can; and so we read that David being off the scene altogether, Jonathan afresh witnesses to his worth, and therefore "Saul cast a javelin at him, to smite him" (xx. 33). Jonathan is now the target for his darts. Blessed would it have been for him if he had from that moment fully associated himself with David in utter rejection. Alas! hindered, like too many, by home influences, he fails in fully following the rejected king, and therefore misses honourable mention in David's kingdom (see 2 Sam. xxiii.), where his name is conspicuous by its absence. This last lesson from his history is pregnant with importance to every lover of the Lord Jesus.

The foregoing, in brief, was what fell from my lips, and among my

listeners was a stranger, whose appearance, and unconcealed interest in the ministry of the Word attracted my attention. As the meeting broke up, an old friend, and fellow-Christian, a lady from a distant part of Scotland, greeted me, and at the same time introduced the stranger as her friend, Mr C——. Circumstances prevented any conversation, and he passed out. During that night, and all next day, a great desire possessed me to again meet, and have converse with this stranger, but, as I knew nothing of his whereabouts, nor of my lady friend's, I had no means of reaching him. The Lord, however, had His eye upon him, and to my joy, in the afternoon I casually met the lady. Making inquiry as to her foreign-looking friend, she said he was unconverted, a thorough man of the world in every sense of the word, but had a believing, prayerful wife, and

she thought that now, for the first time in his life, was beginning to take real interest in divine things.

"I have an immense desire to see that man again, and have a talk with him," said I.

"And that is just why I got him to go early to the meeting last evening," she replied; "only you were not there. Now, I fear it is impossible for you to meet."

"Why?"

"Because he leaves for the West Indies at ten to-morrow morning, and I know he is engaged to dine out, and thus will be occupied all this evening."

Learning where he was lodging in A—— Street, I said, "I shall be preaching at Leith to-night and will call on him at ten o'clock as I come up." To this offer she gladly acceded, and, at the appointed hour, I called, to learn that the object of my visit

had been in, and gone out again. I told the servant I would call again at eleven. I did so. He had not come in. "I will return at twelve," I said to the doorkeeper, as I gave her my name, to give Mr C—— when he did come in. As the clock struck I was on the doorstep. He had got home five minutes before me, and received me most courteously, as I at once offered an apology for so untimely a visit. "Make no apology, sir, I am truly glad to see you; and had I but known you were coming would most surely have waited in for you."

Without further delay I told him simply why I had called, viz., an irrepressible desire for his soul's salvation. The spring was immediately touched, as he replied, he had longed for a conversation the night before. "I am a miserable sinner, a perfect wretch. I have had no peace for a week. I went to that same Hall last

Sunday night expecting to hear you. I heard instead a little man with a terrible double squint, who worried me awfully with his 'two whoso-
evers.' "

Inquiring what that might mean, I learned that the preacher had dwelt on "*whosoever* was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15); and "Let him that is athirst come; and *whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

"These 'two whosoevers' have upset me thoroughly," he went on, "I don't think my name is in the book of life, and I'm sure if ever any man deserved the lake of fire for his sins I do. I have scarcely slept since Sunday, and then you made matters worse last night, for you did nothing but fling 'javelins' at me all the evening. I could scarcely sit the meeting out." At this confession, I need not say I

was deeply rejoiced, for I saw a spirit-wounded man—an anxious soul. I wonder, my reader, if you have ever known anything of this sort in your soul's history. It is high time you did, be certain.

Anxious about his soul's salvation, as he evidently now was, I did not feel led to comfort him all at once, so asked him if he had ever seen his full-length portrait, as a sinner, as taken by God Himself.

“No! where is it?” he replied.

We drew in our chairs to the table, and, each getting hold of a copy of the Word of God, turned together and read, “There is NONE *righteous*, NO, *not one*: there is NONE that *understandeth*, there is NONE that *seeketh after God*. They are ALL *gone out of the way*, they are TOGETHER *become unprofitable*; there is NONE that doeth good, NO, *not one*. Their *throat is an open sepulchre*; with their *tongues*

they have used *deceit*; the *poison of asps* is under their *lips*: whose *mouth* is full of *cursing* and *bitterness*: their *feet* are *swift to shed blood*: *destruction* and *misery* are in *their ways*: and *the way of peace* have they *not known*: there is *no fear of God* before their *eyes*. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that *every mouth* may be *stopped*, and *all the world* may become **GUILTY** before *God*" (Rom. iii. 10-19).

The effect of God's word on that man's soul I shall never forget. Some scenes in one's life leave an indelible impression. This was one. He blanched and trembled visibly as he said, "True, true to life. Every line of it. Yes, that's me. That is my likeness. I could sign my name to it. I am indeed 'guilty before God.'" Thereafter, he opened up a little of his history as a sinner,—his careless, god-

less, Christless life,—a life surrounded by God's mercies and goodnesses, which he had taken thanklessly, scorning the love that had so blessed him.

His awful sin now loomed hideously before his awakened soul, and after a good deal of conversation, in which I vainly endeavoured to show him the grace of God, in giving His Son even to death for sinners, such as he and I were, his anxiety reached its climax, as he pushed back his chair exclaiming, "If God does not give me peace, I shall go mad!" and then paced the room with a face betokening agony and despair.

I thought the Holy Ghost's divine and omnipotent javelins of conviction had done their work well, saw that no words of mine could avail to quell the storm that raged in his bosom, and knew that alone in face-to-face confession to God could he get de-

liverance ; so after a few moments of silence said, " Get down on your knees, man, before God, and have it all out with Him. ' If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity ' (1 John i. 7). David shows us the way when he says, ' When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long : for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me ; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I *acknowledge* my sin *unto thee*, and *mine iniquity* have I NOT HID. I said, *I will confess* my transgressions unto the Lord ; and THOU FORGAVEST the iniquity of my sin ' (Ps. xxxii. 3-5). Do just what he did, and you will get what he got—forgiveness, and the knowledge of it."

He fell in a moment on his knees before the Lord, and burst out weeping as though his heart would break

When the violence of his hitherto pent-up, but now—in quiet confession to God—relieved feelings was a little spent, I prayed with him, simply confessing what utter sinners we had both been, but telling the Lord that the grace that had saved me could surely save him.

On his knees, in His own blessed tender grace the Lord spoke to him, and gave him perfect peace, for he rose, and gripping my hand as in a vice, said, "I can trust Him now. I see it all. Oh, what grace! what mercy! and to such a sinner as I have been!"

The storm was over, the clouds were gone, and genuine God-given peace and joy shone in his manly face, and he seemed to be filled with the Holy Ghost as we stood, and I quoted some scriptures to him. He had known somehow the letter of Scripture. Now he knew its spirit and power, and forcibly illustrated the

apostle's wish, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 13). He got on the spot the conscious knowledge of forgiveness, and realised that he was justified by faith in Jesus; rejoiced in the present possession of eternal life, as the gift of God, and, being born of God, took joyfully the place of a child who had received the Father's kiss of welcome (Luke xv.). Rarely, if ever, have I seen such a complete transformation, under the power of the truth.

It was near day-dawn ere we parted, and at ten A.M. I saw him off, rejoicing in Christ, as the train sped south, and he went to his far-off home. Since then I have heard of his welfare and steadfastness in Christ, and that his lips often proclaim the Saviour's love and grace to others.

This simple narrative of God's grace, dear unsaved reader, I have told just as it happened, with the hope and prayer that you may be led to the same blessed Saviour. As this paper falls into your hands, surely you may well ask yourself, Have I been all my days slighting the God whose goodness each year attests, and each day proves? If you, too, have to plead, "Guilty before God," let this be the last moment of unbelief. Let there be a thorough and full surrender of yourself to the Lord Jesus—imitate Jonathan thus—and may you be a devoted follower of His all your days, and at the end hear His blessed voice saying to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

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