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LAT971

Substance of Two Sermons
Preached by our Pastor, J. W. Sperling-Tyler
on Sunday January 20. 1974.

Morning Lesson. 1 Samuel 16.

As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him. Psalm 18. 30.

It will be spiritually advantageous to consider the setting of this song of praise. King David was evidently in his latter days and he celebrates in this Psalm marvellous things emanating from divine faithfulness, immutable love, and Covenant mercy and unfailing grace of his King, God. What is it he celebrates? namely, as you see in the title; "A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said, I will love thee, O Lord; my strength." We have this song before in the Book of God (2 Sam. 22) and it is evident it became one of the songs for the saints of God to sing in the holy place, in the temple, to celebrate the plenary subject of deliverance.

We may take it on the human level. He was delivered from the man we read a little of who had such an amazing love-hate complex, - one of the most difficult complexes in human nature. There is a very narrow margin between the two. The one may be saving grace; the other is not. This man greatly admired and loved David, but he was consumed with his own insatiable jealousy, and a solemn and distressing thing; namely, an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. You may ask how there could be an evil spirit from the Lord? So let us at once translate. It does not mean an evil spirit can proceed from the Lord, but the Lord may allow an evil spirit to plague a person. (Just an interesting aside, and we should receive warnings concerning this. The melody of music could charm away evil spirits, and certainly we never want ^{to} intrude on or cross the border of anything outside our own sphere. There are many things a Christian must not meddle with.) - This man deeply loved David, yet he became his implacable enemy: because

of his consummate jealousy he sought David's precious life with all his resources and with redoubled energy for a long season. So this forms a background to the Psalm. It looked impossible, incredible for David to live against such odds: he thought he must die. This does emphasise what I have often said: whether you like to accept it or not, this world is not a rose garden. It is a battlefield for those who desire to go and are going to heaven. This world is a hostile land; there is much belligerence; much to suffer. Nor is this exclusive to externals; there is more to suffer from a body of sin and death and all that is in us,- subtle, dangerous, full of venom, bitterness, malice, hatred, revenge against the new man of grace.

But this is encouraging: the day came when David was delivered out of the hand of Saul and from the hand of all his enemies. The point to make is, the manner of deliverance is to be greatly admired and emulated. That is, he was never left to a spirit of discourtesy or revenge. Always with the greatest decorum he respected and addressed Saul as the Lord's anointed, his king, so in his deliverance largely his hands were clean. They were not soiled with blood in relation to Saul. In another part we read he could not build the House of God because he had shed blood, but in relation to Saul he was very honourable. His is an outstanding example of correct behaviour narrated in the Scriptures. This is beautiful to me, and it is well for all Christian folk to emulate this concerning the Queen, Parliament, judges, all in authority and so on; the Lord's anointed. So we should seek to "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the queen." (1 Peter 2.17) Correctness of behaviour to all our fellow creatures as God's creatures is greatly to be admired and followed.

So he was delivered from the chief foe he took great delight in sparing. This just proves to me one thing: you must never take things into your own hands. If you do you are guilty. When David cut off a part of Saul's garment he was guilty: he could have slain him. Whatever trial, difficulty, problem you have, do not take it into your own hands. God is Judge. "He putteth down one, and setteth up another." (Psa.75.7) So this correctness in the behaviour of David is remarkable. The day of deliverance, and I have said we can view it on a human level, but we know it was not only

human, it was a spiritual level or height. His deliverance was not only a providential matter; it was eminently a spiritual deliverance, as you know from the language of the Psalm.

First of all, let us proclaim the word to you of deliverance, proceeding from, having its spring and rise in the love of God, the victory of Christ, the character of God. He must for His own Name's sake deliver all who call on Him in sincerity and truth. He will deliver you from your last enemy, death. So here is a note to sound loud and clear on the silver trumpet; deliverance. "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." (2 Cor. 1.10) Wonderful word! Let it be observed, this is not applicable unless you are in the depths, in a state of misery and distress. If your eyes are open you know you are in trouble, danger, difficulty, and you will need a great Deliverer.

David was inspired to write what is one of the songs of the temple to this day. How amazing is deliverance! I go aside to suggest to you we are seeing so remarkably unfolded before our eyes the great work of God in our day. We are witnessing a miracle of His delivering hand to this dear land and to the nations. We should never be able to appreciate the extent of this if we did not come into a depth of distress, apprehension, anxiety. See the Lord beginning to deliver!- the incredible weather,- mild; and here even in the Sanctuary I have heard the song of the birds. Every morning you are awakened by the song of the thrush, and there is the bursting forth of new life. So in ways that are visible to the whole population, and things behind the scenes known only to those in responsible positions the Lord is manifesting His delight in deliverance. Is there any limit? May this process of deliverance unfold till we are enfolded in glory; to see the purpose to poor dead sinners and to those religious people, and to us. I feel the need of much refining and purifying to make me a true Christian. I am not satisfied with a label to say I am a Strict Baptist, or a minister. I want to know before my God I am a real Christian.

So this is the note of the Psalm,- deliverance. It would appear the song David found such delight in as he praised God, he was often musing on all through his latter days. He delighted to take the harp and accompany this

sweet Psalm. I can almost see his venerable figure with his hoary head,- a crown of glory,- in his last days playing the harp, and the singers and other musical instruments praising God in the language of this Psalm, and the wonderful view he had of the way God had led him. It reflected the character of his God and all His Covenant engagements.

"As for God, His way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him." The three parts are interrelated. "As for God," says he, "his way is perfect." In considering this, bear in mind the whole of the path David had walked and all the way. Now he says; and he includes all the persecutions, troubles, all he had passed through. "As for God," This means, with respect to God. "As for God, his way is perfect." That is what you are going to say presently. In the interim it appears to be impossible, and in your present position it may be quite outside your concept. In the cumulative experience of your soul, in the long run and in the consummation you are going to say; "As for God, his way is perfect." With all the turning of things upside down; with providence and promises seen in disharmony, in the blessed end you will be able to say; "With respect to God, His way is perfect."

The word 'perfect' means first, 'faultless'. It cannot be faulted; all is right. There is another way of viewing it and in harmony. - Whatever facet you take, all are in harmony.- It is to be expounded chiefly, viewing the accomplished act of God, (it was plenary deliverance,) he had respect to the retrospect and the prospect. I hope you are able to digest this exposition of the word, He was looking at the things God had done,- He had delivered him. He looked at, he had respect to the retrospect; all the way God had led him to bring him up to this, and also the prospect "As for God, his way is perfect." Take a poor sinner, brought to the blissful joy of complete spiritual deliverance, pardon, peace: you look on and say; "As for God, his way is perfect." The plan of salvation devised by eternal wisdom, and the execution of it in the incarnation of His only Son by eternal love, and the experimental realisation of it in a poor sinner, by the operations, graces and gifts of the Spirit, you will say; "As for God, his way is perfect," You look on the way God has led you, beginning with your conversion, conviction of sin, condemnation,

grief, misery, the wormwood and the gall, then a ray of light, of living hope, and you say; "As for God, his way is perfect."

"Could we see how all is right,
Where were room for credence?
But by faith, and not by sight,
Christians yield obedience." (315)

Have you seen a little of this? "Could we see how all is right." So look at the wonder of it! David says; "As for God, his way is perfect." "He anointed me. The Spirit of the Lord came on me, and later the Lord blessed me. He delivered Goliath into my hand and I was viewed with jealous eyes; persecuted. I was in the cave Adullam; I was in distress." He says; "As for God, his way is perfect.- It is all right." Do you get an inkling of it? I confess to you from a personal aspect all I enter into is an inkling, and it does not take long. Go back over one, two, or three years, as you look on God's hand, His method of dealing with you, what are you saying? With the heavy yet light hand of affliction, trial, distress, and the Lord's mercy you are saying; "As for God, his way is perfect." You are not saying; "God's hand is too heavy." or "He is too severe." You are saying; "As for God, my Father, His way is perfect." This has been briefly highlighted in my spirit recently. You have an expectation as creatures: you think there is a prospect that is secure, and overnight it vanishes and your castle is demolished. Presently it is as though the Lord says to you; "I shut, and none can open: I open, and none can shut." Presently He says; "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." "As for God, his way is perfect." Your castle in the air has gone; things you set much store by, gone. Now what? There is only One to look to; God. The prop you leaned on is removed. Presently it is as though the Lord will take you aside and give you a view of His Covenant and purposes and divine decrees that remain unmoved, and you say; "As for God, his way is perfect." "I am a foolish sinner looking to an arm of flesh. I went down to Egypt for help: much has fallen.- As for God, his way is perfect."

Now you see the beauty of the word. I would suggest therefore, that this Psalm may well be sung by you who are younger in the temple, but it

is specially appropriate for those in their more latter days, when things are beginning to come to a finality in preparation for glory, and you have joy in looking back. "And thou shalt remember all the way." (Deut. 8, 3) So with things that appeared complicated you look back and see the wisdom and mercy of God in them. "As for God, his way is perfect,"- crosses, disappointments, frustrations, the failing and overturning of things, and the opening of His hand, His wisdom and goodness;- As for God, his way is perfect."

I will give you a word of caution; that is, Satan will try to get into the arena, and there are several ways. One is, he will say to you; "There is no need for you to be overconcerned about certain things that are sinful; things that are at variance with the royal statutes, because it will come right in the long run." There are many things in my heart at variance. I need grace to mourn over and repent and confess them. It is so easy to say; "look at various things, and at the issue; so why be worried or over-anxious?" We need to resist the devil on that ground; to mourn over all that is sin and to pray for amendment of life; for holy desires and grace to bring them to good effect. This is a wonderful presentation of adoring faith. "As for God, his way is perfect." We echo the sacred language now, and in full measure when we have reached the happy shore and enjoy the felicity of heaven evermore. Blessed be God. :333

Amen.