

33 Of the works of the flesh, as stated in Gal. 5, we would notice hatred, strifes, jealousies, anger, contention, disputes, . . . envying. James 3:14, according to Young, Vine and Marshall, reads, "If ye have bitter JEALOUSY and RIVALRY in your heart. . ." This was at the root of Saul's hatred for David: -- it is the pride of self that cannot brook a rival!

Vying for Mastery

“. . . There was strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest” (Luke 22:24).

The names of the two sisters in the assembly at Philippi have gone on record, not for their honor but for their shame, as also a reproof for sisters or brothers who have such high esteem of themselves that they are unwilling to see another surpass them. We have watched goats vying with one another for the prominent place on the top of rocks, bucking one another down. Then there is the story of the two goats wanting to pass each other on a very narrow and precipitous mountain ledge. As locking horns would not do, one of the goats lay down and let the other walk over it. "Them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground and as the street, to them that went over" (Isa. 51:23). We can well afford to allow *ourselves* to be trampled on (1 Cor. 6:7; 1 Pet. 2:23), though never the truth. "Yieldingness" as to our own things is beautiful; "stubbornness" is ugly, rigid, adamant.

Let your gentleness (yieldingness, "not insisting on your own rights") be known of all men (Phil. 4:5, JND and footnote).

Insist not on your own rights, but never yield as to the truth. ". . . to whom we yielded . . . not even for an hour, that the truth. . . might remain with you . . ." (Gal. 2:5, JND).

The Fruit of Saul's Jealousy Was Cruelty

"Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous . . ." (Prov. 27:4). ". . . Jealousy is cruel . . ." (S. of S. 8:6).

"Saul eyed David," (but David was not jealous of King Saul). Saul became infuriated at the youth. Murder was in his heart as he cast his javelin at him. Then observing that "the Lord was with David" and that "all Israel loved David," Saul said, "Let the hand of the Philistines be upon him" *to slay him!*

"Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David," so Saul thought to use her to endanger David's life. Saul proposed that in order for David to become his son-in-law, David should provide 100 foreskins of the Philistines. David actually doubled the number (1 Sam. 18:27). But ". . . Saul became David's enemy continually." David had won another great victory by slaying many of the Philistines, but instead of honoring David ". . . Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin" (1 Sam. 19:10). When Saul saw that all his servants esteemed the name of David to be "precious" he commanded all his servants to kill David! (1 Sam. 18:30 and 19:1). "Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father." David was not the adversary, he was the

target of Saul's cruel jealousy! "Saul also sent messengers to David's house . . . to slay him . . ."! He also ". . . sent messengers to . . . bring him . . . that . . . he might . . . slay him . . ." (1 Sam. 19:15). His unsuccessful efforts to slay David intensified his wrath and in verse 20 and 21 we see him sending more messengers, three times, and finally ". . . then went he also . . ." to slay David (v. 22). Saul was so determined to slay David that he cast a javelin at HIS OWN SON, Jonathan, to smite him, when he sought to dissuade his father (1 Sam. 20:33). How cruel jealousy is!

Those Faithful to David Also Become the Target of Saul's Persecution

“. . . If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you . . ." (John 15:20).

Frustrated at his lack of success in slaying David, Saul extends the scope of his fury to those who would be faithful and true to David even at the jeopardy of their lives. He complained to his servants:

All of you have conspired against ME, and there is none that sheweth ME that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for ME, or sheweth unto ME that my son hath stirred up my servants against ME. . . Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest. . . and all the priests. . . And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against ME, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against ME.

One has little difficulty in seeing who was foremost in Saul's thoughts. Me, me, me! everything in Saul's mind focused on himself.

Self-importance, loving prominence, "honor me" (1 Sam. 15:30). "It is indeed most grievous. . . to find some forward, self-sufficient one making himself the center of the meeting" -- JND. It is the opposite of the spirit of Christ, who "emptied Himself," "humbled Himself," was "meek and lowly."

"Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased" (Luke 14:11).

"Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not . . ." (Jer. 45:5).

"Put not thyself forward . . ." (Prov. 25:6, JND).

Self-exaltation is the very thing that will characterize ANTICHRIST! ". . . and he shall exalt *himself*, and magnify *himself* above every god . . ." (Dan. 11:36). "Who opposeth and exalteth *himself* above all that is called God . . ." (2 Thess. 2:4).

Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence;
The man who deems himself so great,
And his importance of such weight,
That all around and all that's done
Must move and act through him alone,
Will learn by deep humiliation

The folly of self-exaltation.

"THAT HIS HEART BE NOT LIFTED UP above his brethren . . ." (Deut. 17:20). These words were instruction for the king, given long before Israel was in the land. How grievously Saul, their first king, failed in this very thing!

Ahimelech, faithful to David, answers the king, and said, ". . . and who is so faithful among all thy servants as David. . . and is honorable. . ." Such faithfulness cannot escape Saul's hatred and he said:

. . . thou shalt surely die . . . and . . . slay the priests of the Lord; because their hand is with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not shew it ME . . . and Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons . . . and Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen and asses and sheep with the edge of the sword (1 Sam. 22:8-19).

What ruthless murder!

Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David . . . he came to. . . a cave; and Saul went in. . . Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe secretly . . . went out of the cave and cried after Saul, saying, . . . See . . . I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not . . . And he (Saul) said to David, Thou art more righteous than I . . . And now I know well that thou shalt surely be king . . . and Saul went home (1 Sam. 24:2-4, 8, 11, 17, 20, 21).

Again:

Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen of Israel with him to seek David . . . David came to the people by night; and behold Saul lay sleeping . . . and his spear stuck in the ground at his head . . . So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head . . . for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them . . . And David cried to the people . . . See the king's spear and the cruse of water that was at his head. . . Then said Saul, I have sinned . . . My soul was precious in thine eyes . . . I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it (1 Sam. 26:2, 4, 7, 12, 14, 16, 21, 22).

This bitter pursuit had gone on for three years, until David hid himself in Gath for sixteen months (1 Sam. 27:4, 7).

Two-facedness

With Saul the hatred was manifest, it was not hidden. With many Christians the same jealousy, the same hatred, lurks in the heart even though it is not blatantly demonstrated in their deeds as was Saul's.

He that hateth dissembleth with his lips . . . when he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart, whose hatred is covered by deceit, . . . A lying tongue hateth those that are

afflicted by it (Prov. 26:24-28).

The bitter ill-will that you nurse in your heart
Will not stay inside where it first got its start:
For sinew and blood are a thin veil of lace --
What you wear in your heart you wear on your face.

Jealousy and ill-will harbored in the heart toward another breed deceitfulness. Being two-faced is all too common among us. Shameful is the Judas kiss. "One speaketh peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in his heart he layeth his wait" (Jer. 9:8). "Believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee" (Jer. 12:16). "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart" (Psa. 55:21). "With their mouth they show much love, but their heart . . ." (Ezek. 33:31). "They hunt every man his brother with a net" (Mic. 7:2). "Lay a snare for him" (Isa. 19:21).

"Sowing discord (*promoting* a clash or disharmony) among brethren" God hates (Prov. 6:19). Speaking evil (disparagement, tearing one another apart, ridiculing) of one another He forbids (Jas. 4:11; Gal. 5:15). Both involve a motive unworthy of a Christian, that of exalting self at the expense of another. "Why dost thou set at naught thy brother?" (Rom. 14:10). "The Lord. . . will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts."

David a Type of Christ, Rendered Not Evil for Evil

"Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself unto Him who judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23).

Having dwelt at length upon the bitter hatred of man against God's anointed, we feel it is not amiss to point out the lovely contrast shown in David's Christlike kindness of heart towards his enemies. David is the most beautiful type of Christ "the Beloved," (as also Joseph is typical of "the Son of His love"). Such types point to "the Man of My counsel" (Isa. 46:11 margin), God's beloved Son. David is spoken of as "a man after His own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14), one God delighted to honor.

The Scriptures present but one David, who is named about 1120 times (!); and we like to speak of David's Greater Son, "David's son" and "David's Lord," "the root and offspring of David." David wrote about 75 psalms and is spoken of as "the sweet psalmist of Israel." While a "youth" David's skill with his harp (and perhaps his singing) charmed king Saul at times when his spirit was troubled, so that Saul "loved him greatly" (1 Sam. 16:21).

We have already noticed how that twice David spared Saul's life when he could have killed him (1 Sam. 24:4 and 26:5). Instead of rejoicing at Saul's death, David ordered the newsbearer to be slain, and then lamented most touchingly, "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant . . . Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul" (2 Sam. 1). Again when two had slain Saul's son Ish-bosheth and then taken his head to David and said, "Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, thine enemy which sought thy life;" instead

of rejoicing, "David commanded his young men and they slew them" (2 Sam. 4).

One of the sweetest stories of God's grace in the Old Testament is that of David's earnest desire to show God's kindness to Saul's grandson Mephibosheth (meaning "a breathing shame") who was lame on both his feet. David sent and fetched him to his home, where he became as one of the royal family, and David restored all of the land of Saul to him. How faithful was David to the covenant of love made with Jonathan, Mephibosheth's father! (1 Sam. 18:5; 20:17).

Another "of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei," cursed David, "cast stones at David" and called David a "man of Belial" (meaning "worthlessness"); but instead of resenting or retaliating he meekly submitted to it saying, "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, curse David . . . It may be that . . . the Lord will requite me good for his cursing" (2 Sam. 16:5-7, 10, 12).

When the news came of the death of his ambitious, rivalrous and rebellious son Absalom, David "was moved and went up to the chamber . . . and wept; and . . . said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sam. 18:33; 19:1, 4). Then further on in chapter 19 we see David accepting the repentance of Shimei who had cursed and stoned him --David forgave him and assured him that he would not die (v. 23).

The Ill Attitude of Jealousy Is Ugly, Unjudged Self

"For if we would judge ourselves . . ." (1 Cor. 11:31).

An ill attitude of jealousy in the heart towards another magnifies some little thing while ignoring one's own malice.

"Self-judgment by grace always tends to promote humility and love. . ." (Bible Treasury 6:375).

W. Kelly said:

"Judge not that ye be not judged". . . refers not to that which is plain, but to what is concealed; to that which, if it does exist, God has not yet laid the evidence before the eyes of His people . . . We are bound to watch against the spirit of SURMISING evil or IMPUTING MOTIVES (Lectures on Matthew, in loco).

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Matt. 7:3).

The mote, of course, was but little, but it was made a great deal of, and the beam, an enormous thing, was passed by. The Lord is bringing out . . . the danger of a SUSPICIOUS JUDICIAL SPIRIT. And He shows that the way to deal rightly, if we desire the good of His people and their deliverance from evil, IS TO BEGIN WITH SELF-JUDGMENT . . . Let us begin with the

grave faults. . . in ourselves: . . . if I begin with this, I shall then see clearly what concerns others; . . . (W. Kelly, Lectures on Matthew, in loco.)

It is clear that unjudged self breeds a SUSPICIOUS JUDICIAL SPIRIT which presumes to judge undisclosed motives. It is this which the Lord condemns in Matt. 7 (and not the commendable judging of evil which we are commanded to do -- e.g., 1 Cor. 5:12, 13).

The discovery of a mote in a brother's eye . . . "Beholdest" means that it is a continuous thing. It further shows our overlooking all the other praise-worthy features in the brother in order to focus on the smallest spot -- the least speck that is wrong in him, though it can hardly be discerned . . . If I cultivated the habit of self-judgment, instead of being severe with the sin of others and indulgent with my own, I should then "consider the beam" in my own eye, that is, I should first deal with my own faults with unsparing judgment, and then with my brother's if necessary in the spirit of meekness . . . Those who are most faulty are too often the least conscious of it, and usually the first to find the faults of others, and the most unsparing to condemn them. It was not the brother with the mote in his eye that discovered the beam in his brother's, but he with the beam, although, undoubtedly, the former could see more clearly of the two. May we have grace to mortify our own members, for if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged . . . The motive must be nothing less than love . . . first cast out the beam out of thine own eye (from *Matters of First Importance*, by E. V.).

"The faultfinder commences not with himself."

"Pray for them which despitefully use you."

The Echo of Love

Must I true faith in Jesus show
By doing good to all, both friend and foe?

Echo, both friend and foe.

But if a brother hates and treats me ill,
Must I return him good and love him still?

Echo, love him still.

If he my failures watches to reveal,
Must I his faults as carefully conceal?

Echo, as carefully conceal.

If he the worst construct on all my ways,
Must I the best construct his case affords?

Echo, best construct his case affords.

But if my name and character he tears,
And cruel malice, too, too plain appears,
This uncommon, this peculiar case --
Sweet echo, say, must I still love and bless?

Echo, still love and bless.

The Need for Self-judgment in Order to Worship

"If thou bring thy gift to the altar . . . go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother . . ." (Matt. 5:23, 24).

The law took cognizance of . . . [the] extreme form of violence; but our Lord gives length, breadth, height and depth to it: "But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:" . . . our Lord treats as now coming under the same category with murder, in the sight of God, every kind of violence, and feeling, and expression; anything of contempt and hatred, whatever expresses the ILL FEELING of the heart; . . . the will to annihilate others as far as character or influence is concerned; . . . He is expanding the law; He is showing now One who looks at and judges the feeling of the heart . . . there might be no very bad effect produced by these words of anger, but they proved the state of the heart; and this is what the Lord is dealing with here. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23, 24) (W. Kelly, Lectures on Matthew, in loco.)

To refuse to be reconciled is to be implacable. "Stubbornness is as iniquity" (1 Sam. 15:23) was said of King Saul.

Often brother has been separated in heart and spirit from brother, while the outward form of fellowship has been well kept! In some instances brethren have "preached at" and "prayed at" another in the meeting, only to widen the breach . . . "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (Jas. 3:16). ". . . First be reconciled to thy brother." However repugnant to flesh and blood, or humbling to our natural pride, our own feelings must be laid aside with "all malice and all guile and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings." We must by the grace of God conquer the greater difficulty -- the flesh in ourselves (from *Matters of First Importance*, by E.V.).

--A. C. Brown, 1972

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"Saul Eyed David"

These words are taken from the narrative in 1 Sam. 18:9. They describe the attitude of Saul toward David, an attitude of bitter hatred. We need to be constantly on guard against allowing the flesh in us to develop a spirit of jealousy toward our brother lest we find that we like Saul are "eyeing" someone with a view to promoting his downfall.

Saul had advantages not a few.

There was none like him.

He was the people's choice, higher, older, -- God's anointed king over the nation.

He had even prophesied.

Samuel (who had God's mind) had faithfully warned Israel of his character; that he would grasp everything "for himself." "He will take your sons," daughters, fields, vineyards, oliveyards, seed, servants, and asses. To be honored before others was his chief ambition (1 Sam. 15:30). Contrast the spirit of ". . . in lowliness of mind, each esteeming the other as more excellent than themselves; regarding not each his own [qualities] but each those of others also" (Phil. 2:3, JND); ". . . as to honor, each taking the lead in paying it to the other" (Rom. 12:10, JND).

God had in mind one after His own heart -- David, the beloved, the shepherd and sweet psalmist, whose harp was used in the court of the king to soothe and charm Saul's disturbed spirit.

The Cause of Saul's Bitterness Toward David

". . . Watching . . . lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you . . ." (Heb. 12:15).

The youth David meets Goliath, the giant and champion of the Philistines, who had defied "the armies of the living God" in the valley of Elah, and slays him with a smooth stone, winning a great victory. When David returned with the head of Goliath in his hand, King Saul's son Jonathan fell in love with David. Saul beheld how David's wise behavior "was accepted in the sight of all the people." Women sang with joy saying, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." From then on, SAUL EYED DAVID (1 Sam. 18:9). It was malicious jealousy. No doubt he was thankful enough for the deliverance from Goliath of Gath, but now his resentment for David increased. He could not stand that the people recognize David's superiority and thus honor *him* above himself, their king. Such is the flesh in every one of us, and it crops out to our shame, dishonors the Lord, and causes no end of trouble.