

THE LORD IS WITH THEE.

BY CHARLES CULLIS, M. D.

"And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee."—2 Sam. vii. 3.

DAVID had been exercised in his mind in relation to the Ark of the Covenant. The ark had had no abiding place since the children of Israel came out of Egypt. It had been carried, covered with curtains only, from house to house and from place to place. The Ark of the Covenant was God's presence with His people. I love to change it a little, and in this

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day, when the old Ark of the Covenant has had its day and finished its work and we have entered within the vail that has been rent in twain,—I love to take this blessed *Book* as the Ark of the Covenant, which was a covenant of promise from the living God to His chosen people; and as the ark brought a blessing to every house where it abode, so this blessed Ark of the Covenant carries its blessing to every house it enters, as there the Lord Himself abides, manifests His presence, and gives forth His love. So we, who take this blessed *Book* as God's covenant to us, are under the ark of His love, surrounded with the Everlasting Arms; the clouds of glory come down to overshadow us, and out of heaven itself we hear the words again repeated to our ears, "This is My beloved Son;" hear Him.

David sat in his house, at peace with all his enemies round about,—they were all subdued: he had con-

quered them,—his house, a magnificent house, built of the choicest wood that could be found, cedar. It was fragrant, it was beautiful, it was a house fit for a king; and he sat there in the quietness of his days, praising and thanking God that he had found at last victory over all the enemies round about him. What are the thoughts of our hearts as we sit quietly at home? If we are truly and wholly the Lord's, the thoughts and meditations of our hearts centre about Him who has done so much for us; who has given to us His only begotten Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier. We look out upon a bright morning like this, and thank God that the storm is passed and the sunshine pours its warmth upon all the earth. Figured forth in the brightness of the sun is our Intercessor, standing upon the throne of glory, opening His hands and supplying the need of every living creature, and our hearts are filled with

love and thanksgiving for what He hath wrought for us.

As David sat in his own house quietly resting, no doubt the thought of God, of His tender mercies and loving kindnesses to him, suggested the reflection: "Here is the Ark of the Covenant, it has no abiding place; as the people move, so is that subject to change and vicissitude. I have a home—a house built of cedars; it is magnificent in all its architecture; it fills my eyes and fills my heart with gratitude. But here is God's ark; it has no abiding place.

As king, it was David's duty to take care of the Ark of the Covenant, and he had brought it to his own house. The Spirit of God was in that ark, and, as the covenant of peace rested upon David, he could but think about Him whose presence was with him. O, that we, when we sit in our houses, and think of God's wondrous love and power and majesty, and of all His

goodness to us, might think of what return we can make to Him!

David recognized that the Ark of the Covenant was the representation of the Lord among His people; that it was put into his keeping. Are there not representatives of God among His people who are suffering, distressed, weary in body and soul, who are as really entrusted to our keeping? Oh! if I could tell you of the multitudes that I see from week to week, the sad and sorrowing ones, that have no place of rest,—only the poor-house offered them!

My heart looks out from this covenant, claiming it for the millions in need. This ought to be the thought of our hearts when we think what He has done for us. Has this Ark of the Covenant brought rest to my soul? Is there not some poor soul that needs my help, my comfort, my means? I am living in a house of cedar, and God's distressed children all about

me. The cause languishes. Time is short. Brethren, it is but a few years that are left to any of us. O, that we may look out beyond our own windows and see what God has for us to do. When we go hence and stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to be judged for the things we have done in the body, and to hear His blessed word, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto Me;" not a cup of cold water even shall lose its reward. Let us look back upon the past week. To whom have we ministered — what parched and thirsty one has received the cup of cold water from our hands? There is the reward, a crown for a cup; paradise for a gift to "one of the least of these" in His blessed Name.

With these thoughts, David called the prophet Nathan, and they sat down together to talk over what should be done with the Ark of the Covenant. It was

in David's heart to build a house; and at night the Lord God came to Nathan. Do you ever think of the wonderful comfort with which passages of Scripture come home to us at night, when we are lying upon our beds, perhaps before we have lost ourselves in sleep? Or awaking in the night, there seems to come music from heaven itself that fills the room and fills our hearts, as the precious promises of God come rolling in upon us, and His Word seems more grand and beautiful than at any other time. No doubt Nathan realized this when the Lord came to him at night, and said, "Tell David that there shall be built to his people a temple." Then followed full directions and a promise of blessing to the house of David and upon all his generation, "for a great while to come."

Ah, friends, that covenant of blessing has reached us; we worship to-day under the covenant promised to Da-

vid. Ages to come shall sit under its protecting arms until the Lord shall come again to receive us unto Himself into His everlasting kingdom. With what humility does David receive the words of Nathan; but with childlike trust he does not hesitate to "sit before the Lord," while he talks thus:

"Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" We say,—is he not a king? But he looks at his life in the past, when he was an ordinary lad in the country taking care of the sheep. "Who am I, Lord, and what is my house?" Ah, it is well for us to remember from whence we came,—out of unrighteousness into the righteousness of His kingdom, out of sin and darkness into light and glory, out of "wickedness in high places," perhaps, to the foot of the cross, to be cleansed with the precious blood of Jesus; out of all the doubt and despair into the bright sunshine of God's love. "'Tis

greatly wise to talk with our past years, and ask them what report they bore to heaven." Many a one looks back only to say, "See what I have accomplished!"

A man within a stone's throw of this house told me that he came at twelve years of age to the city of Boston with six cents in his pocket, all he had in the world. He points with pride to the mansion he has built, the fortune he has made. He never darkens the door of a church; he never reads a passage of God's blessed book; he never recounts the blessings that have come to him from the "Father of lights." Oh! it is well for us to take David's position, and look back over the pit from which we were taken, to the miry clay out of which our feet were lifted, and to recognize God as the rock of our deliverance; to sing the song of praise to Him who "holdeth our soul in life."

David cries, "Who am I, oh Lord,

and what is my house?" He remembers that his house was not of royal blood. "Why should I be chosen to be king of this people, and the architect, under God, to build a temple to His great name?" As we look at God's work from beginning to end, we find it grandly true, He is no respecter of persons. "Not many noble, not many mighty are called." Where is the surrendered heart that can say, "Here am I, send me?" That one shall hear the heavenly mandate, "I have chosen you." It matters not from whence we come, if we only come.

Through the covenant with David comes the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ; the "Seed of David," who should sit upon his throne, who should be our Saviour and our "Counsellor," the "Prince of Peace." A man said to me only two or three days ago that he loved the New Testament, but he could not seem to make anything out

of the Old. I said, "My brother, how would your door hang if it only had one-half a hinge?" "Well, it wouldn't hang very well." I replied, "The Old Testament and the New Testament are simply the hinge. One half is not complete without the other, but the two swing open the very gates of heaven and reveal to us our King upon His throne, sending forth His Spirit of Life and Light upon His Word."

Let us follow David in his prayer: "And what can David say more unto Thee? For Thou, Lord God, knowest Thy servant. But for Thy Word's sake hast Thou done all these great things." He claims a blessing; he claims the promises of the Father not only for himself, but for his children "to a thousand generations." Let us then claim the promise of the text for ourselves. Let it be God's voice to us. "Do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee." Does one timidly reply, as did Saul in his early

life when he was taken from the farm, "Am I not of the smallest of the tribes, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe?" As Moses said, when he was asked to command the children of Israel, and bring them out of bondage, "Who am I that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" The one promise, "Surely I will be with thee," is to them and to us.

If the Lord has laid anything upon your heart to do, do it, for the Lord thy God is with thee. In other words, don't talk about doing it. God never lets His children fail when they step out upon His promises, and claim all that He has promised to do for them. There is not a man or woman in this house to-day but that the Lord God has called definitely to do some service for Him. You know what it is. I do not. It may be in the quiet routine of your home or your business. This is to be dignified and hallowed

by the knowledge that it is God's calling for you. But whatever is within thine heart, do it, for the Lord thy God is with thee. The same God who blessed these of old lives to bless us. He did not exhaust His grace in the works of the Old Testament or of the New. He has a storehouse of His power left. Sooner can the lightning exhaust its power that in the summer goes from cloud to cloud, or the ocean's fulness, as the clouds draw rain and moisture from it. No one ever yet attempted too much for God, or expected too much from out of the abundance of His grace. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and holds us in His tender love and in the majesty of His power, and He says to you to-day, here as we stand under the cross, "Do what is in thine heart, for the Lord thy God is with thee."

Take this language. Use it, as you strive to do something for the Master.

Take it as the Ark of the Covenant, the *promise to you!* See in it victory, not defeat; blessing, not despair. Let it lift you into a holy atmosphere. Hear Him say, "I am with you; I will never leave nor forsake you."

Are you under the blood, beloved, to-day? Do you know the cleansing power that takes every spot and stain of sin and gives you peace, so that you can go home to-day and sit in your house as David sat in his, and think of the wondrous goodness and love of an ever-loving Father who gave His life for you in the person of His only-begotten Son?

During our civil war, George H. Stewart, of Philadelphia, at the head of the Christian Commission followed the army after its battles to comfort and relieve the sick and wounded. One day, wishing to go beyond the lines, he got the password from the colonel. As he rode on, he came to a sentry, who presented his musket

and asked, "Friend or foe?" "Friend." "Give me the password." "Chicago." "Mr. Stewart, you are wrong; I have the right and power to shoot you, but I know you. Go back and get the password." He rode back to his colonel, and said, "Colonel, you have given me the wrong password, you gave me 'Chicago.'" "Beg your pardon, Mr. Stewart, to-day it is 'Massachusetts.'" Mr. Stewart rode back and presented his password, "Massachusetts." "That is right, sir." "Now," said Mr. Stewart, "my friend, I have given you the password which lets me through the lines; have you the password for heaven?" "I have, sir." "What is it?" "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin. I learned it from you, sir, in the Sabbath School in Philadelphia."

"Do what is in thine heart, for the Lord thy God is with thee." Our password, "The Blood." By it, the veil is rent in twain and we enter the

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Holy of Holies. Nothing can there separate us from a close walk with Him. Oh, that we to-day under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost may hear the voice as it comes from heaven, "Do what is in thine heart, for the Lord thy God is with thee."

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