

Son of My Right Hand

How sad were Rachel's words in the day of her departure, when knowing she had borne a son, she called him "Benoni" – the son of my sorrow. The vision that Jacob saw was clear, though doubtless through the mist of tears, when in such tragic circumstances he named the child Benjamin – the son of my right hand. Often in the years that ensued as he remembered that desolate road between Bethel and Bethlehem and saw the development of his son, with an eye more tender than Leah's, his soul was knit with the lad.

How appropriate the words with which Moses the man of God blessed his posterity!

"Of Benjamin he said,
The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him;
He covereth him all day long,
And he dwelleth between His shoulders" (Deuteronomy 33:12).

Such words seem in retrospect an apt description of the life of Israel's youngest son, who knew many times of sweet fellowship with his father in Hebron. For him there were no long years of separation such as Jacob knew, nor was his experience like that of Joseph who was sorely tried in an alien land and whose feet were hurt with fetters. Yet interwoven through a life marked by safety and security there were days of sorrow. What terror must have struck his breast when Joseph's cup was found in his sack (Genesis 44:1-6); and what sudden fear he doubtless experienced when he fell before Joseph and heard Judah's touching appeal on his behalf, "His father loveth Him!". It would have been fitting had he then cried, as did Asaph in his generation, "Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, upon the son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself" (Psalm 80:17).

Precious as such glimpses of the Lord's dealings with the patriarchs are to all who read them, they become dearer to those who discern in them shadows of the operation of the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob with The Shepherd, the Stone of Israel. Whilst never presented in the Scriptures as the Son of God's Sorrow (for He did always the things that were pleasing to the Father) the Lord Jesus was graphically described by Isaiah as a "Man of Sorrows". How familiar He was with grief, being despised and rejected of men. His sensitive soul felt keenly the rejection of those in Nazareth to whom in infinite love He had come to release from captivity. They cast Him forth out of the city! Luke tersely records, He "went His way", Yes, onward He went, setting His face to go to Jerusalem.

"He went about", Peter declares, "doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil", proving, in every turning of the way, that "God was with Him". For many another it was the way of their being wondrously blessed. For Him, it was the way to the cross that would lead home.

Oftentimes early in the morning from all around they came to the temple to hear Him who spoke as no man ever spoke, and to sit under His shadow with great delight. Of an evening, when all returned to their own homes, He crossed no threshold, but in the growing darkness ascended the Mount of Olives. There He "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death (Hebrews 5:7 RVM).

Deep as were the sorrows that the Saviour then knew, they were eclipsed by those He experienced when in the garden to the faithful few He confided, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death". Forsaken though He had often been of men, always He had known sweet fellowship with His Father. "The hour ... is come", He declared, "that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John 16:32).

But now as the power of darkness was so fully to be made manifest, in agony He prayed alone, knowing that those precious sheep, whom He had graciously called by their names, would soon be scattered abroad and He, the Shepherd, would be smitten. It was at that time that the angelic messenger appeared and strengthened Him. What words did he bring? Perhaps then were whispered the promise of the Father, "Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail" (Hebrews 1:12).

Well did the poet write,

"Low on the ground, the Lord of Glory lies,
Around Him surge death's sorrows like a flood,
Forth from His heart prayer pours with tears and cries,
Falls to the ground His sweat like drops of blood;
That awful cup He takes, submissive still.
To drink the last dark dregs, it is the Father's will."

"He went a little further" (Matthew 26:39) What a world there is in these words! - further in Gethsemane, forward to Gabbatha, and finally to Golgotha. Had He not earlier said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!?" (Luke 12:50).

Thus did He come to Calvary, and there in matchless love was, for our sake and for our salvation, crucified in weakness. The full significance of the words brought to Mary by the angel at His birth were realised, as a sword pierced through her own soul that thoughts out of many hearts might be revealed. Not even then, grief-stricken though she was, could she repeat Rachel's word "Benoni" - Son of my Sorrow.

Not many days after these sacred scenes, to the risen, glorified Saviour from the Throne of God came the words, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Psalm 110:1). All heaven was filled with His praises, and there were those on earth who re-echoed the glorious strain. To this fact the apostles' words bear witness, when in Jerusalem they announced "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree. Him did God exalt at His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour" (Acts 5:30-31 RVM). It is gloriously true that the Man of Sorrows is the Son of God's right hand. Whether the Father speaks to the many on Jordan's banks, or to the few in the holy mount, from the excellent glory the testimony is the same, "In Him I am well pleased".

May the Lord give us grace in these evil days, when the love of the many waxes cold, to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us ... looking unto Jesus the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising shame and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1.2).

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