

CHAPTER 26

We have here an account of the business of the Levites. That tribe had made but a very small figure all the time of the judges, till Eli and Samuel appeared. But when David revived religion the Levites were, of all men, in the greatest reputation. And happy it was that they had Levites who were men of sense, fit to support the honour of their tribe. We have here an account,

- I.** Of the Levites that were appointed to be porters (v. 1-19).
- II.** Of those that were appointed to be treasurers and storekeepers (v. 20-28).
- III.** Of those that were officers and judges in the country, and were entrusted with the administration of public affairs (v. 29-32).

<1301> 1 CHRONICLES 26:1-19

THE OFFICERS OF THE LEVITES

Observe,

I. There were porters appointed to attend the temple, who guarded all the avenues that let to it, opened and shut all the outer gates and attended at them, not only for the state, but for service, to direct and instruct those who were going to worship in the courts of the sanctuary in the decorum they were to observe, to encourage those that were timorous, to send back the strangers and unclean, and to guard against thieves and others that were enemies to the house of God. In allusion to this office, ministers are said to have *the keys to the kingdom of heaven* committed to them (<4169> Matthew 16:19), that they may admit, and exclude, according to the law of Christ.

II. Of several of those that were called to this service, it is taken notice of that they were *mighty men of valour* (v. 6), *strong men* (v. 7), *able men* (v. 8), and one of them that he was a *wise counsellor* (v. 14), who probably, when he had *used this office of a deacon well* and given proofs of more

than ordinary wisdom, *purchased to himself a good degree*, and was preferred from the gate to the council-board, ^{<5483>}1 Timothy 3:13. As for those that excelled in strength of body, and courage and resolution of mind, they were thereby qualified for the post assigned them; for whatever service God calls men to he either finds them fit or makes them so.

III. The sons of Obed-edom were employed in this office, sixty-two of that family. This was he that entertained the ark with reverence and cheerfulness; and see how he was rewarded for it.

1. He had eight *sons* (v. 5), *for God blessed him*. The increase and building up of families are owing to the divine blessing; and a great blessing it is to a family to have many children, when like these they are able for, and eminent in, the service of God.

2. His sons were preferred to places of trust in the sanctuary. They had faithfully attended the ark in their own house, and now were called to attend it in God's house. He that is trusty in little shall be trusted with more. He that keeps God's ordinances in his own tent is fit to have the custody of them in God's tabernacle, ^{<5400>}1 Timothy 3:4, 5. *I have kept thy law*, says David, and *this I had because I kept thy precepts*, ^{<4485>}Psalm 119:55, 56.

IV. It is said of one here that *though he was not the first-born his father made him the chief* (v. 10), either because he was very excellent, or because the elder son was very weak. He was made chief, perhaps not in inheriting the estate (for that was forbidden by the law, ^{<5216>}Deuteronomy 21:16, 17), but in this service, which required personal qualifications.

V. The porters, as the singers, had their post assigned them by lot, so many at such a gate, and so many at such a one, that every one might know his post and make it good, v. 13. It is not said that they were cast into twenty-four courses, as before; but here are the names of about twenty-four (v. 1-11), and the posts assigned are twenty-four, v. 17, 18. We have therefore reason to think they were distributed into as many companies. Happy are those who dwell in God's house: for, as they are well fed, well taught, and well employed, so they are well guarded. Men attended at the gates of the temple, but angels attend at the gates of the New Jerusalem, ^{<6212>}Revelation 21:12.

1 CHRONICLES 26:20-28

THE OFFICERS OF THE LEVITES

Observe,

1. There were *treasures of the house of God*. A great house cannot be well kept without stores of all manner of provisions. Much was expended daily upon the altar — flour, wine, oil, salt, fuel, besides the lamps; quantities of these were to be kept beforehand, besides the sacred vestments and utensils. These were the *treasures of the house of God*. And, because money answers all things, doubtless they had an abundance of it, which was received from the people's offerings, wherewith they bought in what they had occasion for. And perhaps much was laid up for an exigence. These treasures typified the plenty there is in our heavenly Father's house, enough and to spare. In Christ, the true temple, are hid *treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and unsearchable riches*.

2. There were *treasures of dedicated things*, dedicated mostly *out of the spoils won in battle* (v. 27), as a grateful acknowledgment of the divine protection. Abraham gave Melchisedec the *tenth of the spoils* ^{<3004>} Hebrews 7:4. In Moses's time the officers of the army, when they returned victorious, brought of their spoils an *oblation to the Lord*, ^{<0615>} Numbers 31:50. Of late this pious custom had been revived; and not only Samuel and David, but Saul, and Abner, and Joab, had dedicated of their spoils to the honour and support of the house of God, v. 28. Note, The more God bestows upon us the more he expects from us in works of piety and charity. Great successes call for proportionable returns. When we look over our estates we should consider, “Here are convenient things, rich things, it may be, and fine things; but where are the dedicated things?” Men of war must honour God with their spoils.

3. These treasures had treasurers, those that were over them (v. 20, 26), whose business it was to keep them, that neither *moth nor rust* might *corrupt them*, nor *thieves break through and steal*, to give out as there was occasion and to see that they were not wasted, embezzled, or alienated to the common use; and it is probable that they kept accounts of all that was brought in and how it was laid out.

1 CHRONICLES 26:29-32

THE OFFICERS OF THE LEVITES

All the offices of the house of God being well provided with Levites, we have here an account of those that were employed as officers and judges in the outward business, which must not be neglected, no, not for the temple itself. The magistracy is an ordinance of God for the good of the church as truly as the ministry is. And here we are told,

1. That the Levites were employed in the administration of justice in concurrence with the princes and elders of the several tribes, who could not be supposed to understand the law so well as the Levites, who made it their business to study it. None of those Levites who were employed in the service of the sanctuary, none of the singers or porters, were concerned in this outward business; either one was enough to engage the whole man or it was presumption to undertake both.

2. Their charge was both *in all business of the Lord, and in the service of the kings*, v. 30 and again v. 32. They managed the affairs of the country, as well ecclesiastical as civil, took care both of God's tithes and the king's taxes, punished offences committed immediately against God and his honour and those against the government and the public peace, guarded both against idolatry and against injustice, and took care to put the laws in execution against both. Some, it is likely, applied themselves to the affairs of religion, others to secular affairs; and so, between both, God and the king were well served. It is happy with a kingdom when its civil and sacred interests are thus interwoven and jointly minded and advanced.

3. There were more Levites employed as judges with the two tribes and a half on the other side of Jordan than with all the rest of the tribes; there were 2700; whereas as the west side of Jordan there were 1700, v. 30, 32. Either those remote tribes were not so well furnished as the rest with judges of their own, or because they, lying furthest from Jerusalem and on the borders of the neighbouring nations, were most in danger of being infected with idolatry, and most needed the help of Levites to prevent it. The frontiers must be well guarded.

4. This is said to be done (as were all the foregoing settlements) in the fortieth year of the reign of David (v. 31), that is, the last year of his reign.

We should be so much the more industrious to do good *as we can see the day approaching*. If we live to enjoy the fruit of our labours, grudge it not to those that shall come after us.