

CHAPTER 17

David is the man whom God now delights to honour, for he is a man after his own heart. We read in the foregoing chapter how, after he was anointed, Providence made him famous in the court; we read in this chapter how Providence made him much more famous in the camp, and, by both, not only marked him for a great man, but fitted him for the throne for which he was designed. In the court he was only Saul's physician; but in the camp Israel's champion; there he fairly fought, and beat Goliath of Gath. In the story observe,

- I.** What a noble figure Goliath made, and how daringly he challenged the armies of Israel (v. 1-11).
- II.** What a mean figure David made, when Providence brought him to the army (v. 12-30).
- III.** The unparalleled bravery wherewith David undertook to encounter this Philistine (v. 31-39).
- IV.** The pious resolution with which he attacked him (v. 40-47).
- V.** The glorious victory he obtained over him with a sling and a stone, and the advantage which the Israelites thereby gained against the Philistines (v. 48-54).
- VI.** The great notice which was hereupon taken of David at court (v. 55-58).

1 SAMUEL 17:1-11

GOLIATH'S CHALLENGE TO ISRAEL

It was not long ago that the Philistines were soundly beaten, and put to the worse, before Israel, and they would have been totally routed if Saul's rashness had not prevented; but here we have them making head again. Observe,

- I.** How they *defied Israel with their armies*, v. 1. They made a descent upon the Israelites' country, and possessed themselves, as it should seem,

of some part of it, for they encamped in a place *which belonged to Judah*. Israel's ground would never have been footing for Philistine-armies if Israel had been faithful to their God. The Philistines (it is probable) had heard that Samuel had fallen out with Saul and forsaken him, and no longer assisted and advised him, and that Saul had grown melancholy and unfit for business, and this news encouraged them to make this attempt for the retrieving of the credit they had lately lost. The enemies of the church are watchful to take all advantages, and they never have greater advantages than when her protectors have provoked God's Spirit and prophets to leave them. Saul mustered his forces, and faced them, v. 2, 3. And here we must take notice,

1. That the evil spirit, for the present, had left Saul, ^{<D1623>}1 Samuel 16:23. David's harp having given him some relief, perhaps the alarms and affairs of the war prevented the return of the distemper. Business is a good antidote against melancholy. Let the mind have something without to fasten on and employ itself about, and it will be the less in danger of preying upon itself. God, in mercy to Israel, suspended the judgment for a while; for how distracted must the affairs of the public have been if at this juncture the prince had been distracted!

2. That David for the present had returned to Bethlehem, and had left the court, v. 15. When Saul had no further occasion to use him for the relief of his distemper, though, being anointed, he had a very good private reason, and, having a grant of the place of Saul's armour-bearer, he had a very plausible pretence to have continued his attendance, as a retainer to the court, yet he went home to Bethlehem, and returned to keep his father's sheep; this was a rare instance, in a young man that stood so fair for preferment, of humility and affection to his parents. He knew better than most do how to come down again after he had begun to rise, and strangely preferred the retirements of the pastoral life before all the pleasures and gaieties of the court. None more fit for honour than he, nor that deserved it better, and yet none more dead to it.

II. How they defied Israel with their champion Goliath, whom they were almost as proud of as he was of himself, hoping by him to recover their reputation and dominion. Perhaps the army of the Israelites was superior in number and strength to that of the Philistines, which made the Philistines decline a battle, and stand at bay with them, desiring rather to put the issue

upon a single combat, in which, having such a champion, they hoped to gain the victory. Now concerning this champion observe,

1. His prodigious size. He was of the sons of Anak, who at Gath kept their ground in Joshua's time (^{<ref12>}Joshua 11:22), and kept up a race of giants there, of which Goliath was one, and, it is probable, one of the largest. He was in height *six cubits and a span*, v. 4. They learned bishop Cumberland has made it out that the scripture-cubit was above twenty-one inches (above three inches more than our half-yard) and a span was half a cubit, by which computation Goliath wanted but eight inches of four yard in height, eleven feet and four inches, a monstrous stature, and which made him very formidable, especially if he had strength and spirit proportionable.

2. His armour. Art, as well as nature, made him terrible. He was well furnished with defensive armour (v. 5, 6): *A helmet of brass on his head, a coat of mail*, made of brass plates laid over one another, like the scales of a fish; and, because his legs would lie most within the reach of an ordinary man, he wore brass boots, and had a large corselet of brass about his neck. The coat is said to weigh 5000 shekels, and a shekel was half an ounce avoirdupois, a vast weight for a man to carry, all the other parts of his armour being proportionable. But some think it should be translated, not the *weight* of the coat, but the *value* of it, was 5000 shekels; so much it cost. His offensive weapons were extraordinary, of which his spear only is here described, v. 7. It was like a weaver's beam. His arm could manage that which an ordinary man could scarcely heave. His shield only, which was the lightest of all his accoutrements, was carried before him by his esquire, probably for state; for he that was clad in brass little needed a shield.

3. His challenge. The Philistines having chosen him for their champion, to save themselves from the hazard of battle, he here throws down the gauntlet, and bids defiance to the armies of Israel, v. 8-10. He came into the valley that lay between the camps, and, his voice probably being as much stronger than other people's as his arm was, he cried so as to make them all hear him, *Give me a man, that we may fight together*. He looked upon himself with admiration, because he was so much taller and stronger than all about him; his heart (says bishop Hall) nothing but a lump of proud flesh. He looked upon Israel with disdain, because they had none among them of such a monstrous bulk, and defies them to find a man among them bold enough to enter the list with him.

(1.) He upbraids them with their folly in drawing an army together: “*Why have you come to set the battle in array? How dare you oppose the mighty Philistines?*” Or, “*Why should the two armies engage, when the controversy may be sooner decided, with only the expense of one life and the hazard of another?*”

(2.) He offers to put the war entirely upon the issue of the duel he proposes: “*If your champion kill me, we will be your servants; if I kill him, you shall be ours.*” This, says bishop Patrick, was only a bravado, for no nation would be willing thus to venture its all upon the success of one man, nor is it justifiable; notwithstanding Goliath's stipulation here, when he was killed the Philistines did not stand to his word, nor submit themselves as servants to Israel. When he boasts, *I am a Philistine, and you are servants to Saul*, he would have it thought a great piece of condescension in him, who was a chief ruler, to enter the lists with an Israelite; for he looked on them as no better than slaves. The Chaldee paraphrase brings him in boasting that he was the man that had killed Hophni and Phinehas and taken the ark prisoner, but that the Philistines had never given him so much as the command of a regiment in recompence of his services, whereas Saul had been made king for his services: “*Let him therefore take up the challenge.*”

4. The terror this struck upon Israel: *Saul and his army were greatly afraid*, v. 11. The people would not have been dismayed but that they observed Saul's courage failed him; and it is not to be expected that, if the leader be a coward, the followers should be bold. We found before, when the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul (~~1~~ 1 Samuel 11:6), none could be more daring nor forward to answer the challenge of Nahash the Ammonite, but now that the *Spirit of the Lord had departed from him* even the big looks and big words of a single Philistine make him change colour. But where was Jonathan all this while? Why did not he accept the challenge, who, in the last war, had so bravely engaged a whole army of Philistines? Doubtless he did not feel himself stirred up of God to it, as he did in the former case. As the best, so the bravest men, are no more than what God makes them. Jonathan must now sit still, because the honour of engaging Goliath is reserved for David. In great and good actions, the wind of the Spirit blows when and where he listeth. Now the pious Israelites lament their king's breach with Samuel.

<0172> 1 SAMUEL 17:12-30

DAVID COMES TO THE CAMP OF ISRAEL

Forty days the two armies lay encamped facing one another, each advantageously posted, but neither forward to engage. Either they were parleying and treating of an accommodation or they were waiting for recruits; and perhaps there were frequent skirmishes between small detached parties. All this while, twice a day, morning and evening, did the insulting champion appear in the field and repeat his challenge, his own heart growing more and more proud for his not being answered and the people of Israel more and more timorous, while God designed hereby to ripen him for destruction and to make Israel's deliverance the more illustrious. All this while David is keeping his father's sheep, but at the end of forty days Providence brings him to the field to win and wear the laurel which no other Israelite dares venture for. We have in these verses,

I. The present state of his family. His father was old (v. 12): *He went among men for an old man*, was taken notice of for his great age, above what was usual at that time, and therefore was excused from public services, and went not in person to the wars, but sent his sons; he had the honours paid him that were due his age, his hoary head was a crown of glory to him. David's three elder brethren, who perhaps envied his place at the court, got their father to send for him home, and let them go to the camp, where they hoped to signalize themselves and eclipse him (v. 13, 14), while David himself was so far from being proud of the services he had done his prince, or ambitious of further preferment, that he not only returned from court to the obscurity of his father's house, but to care, and toil, and (as it proved, v. 34) the peril, of *keeping his father's sheep*. It was the praise of this humility that it came after he had the honour of a courtier, and the reward of it that it came before the honour of a conqueror. *Before honour is humility*. Now he had that opportunity of mediation and prayer, and other acts of devotion, which fitted him for what he was destined to more than all the military exercises of that inglorious camp could do.

II. The orders his father gave him to go and visit his brethren in the camp. He did not himself ask leave to go, to satisfy his curiosity, or to gain experience and make observations; but his father sent him on a mean and homely errand, on which any of his servants might have gone. He must

carry some bread and cheese to his brethren, ten loaves with some parched corn for themselves (v. 17) and ten cheeses (which, it seems, he thought too good for them) for a present to their colonel, v. 18. David must still be the drudge of the family, though he was to be the greatest ornament of it. He had not so much as an ass at command to carry his load, but must take it on his back, and yet run to the camp. Jesse, we thought, was privy to his being anointed, and yet industriously kept him thus mean and obscure, probably to hide him from the eye of suspicion and envy, knowing that he was anointed to a crown in reversion. He must observe how his brethren fared, whether they were not reduced to short allowance, now that the encampment continued so long, that, if need were, he might send them more provisions. And he must take their pledge, that is, if they had pawned any thing, he must redeem it; *take notice of their company*, so some observe, whom they associate with, and what sort of life they lead. Perhaps David, like Joseph, had formerly brought to his father their evil report, and now he sends him to enquire concerning their manners. See the care the pious parents about their children when they are abroad from them, especially in places of temptation; they are solicitous how they conduct themselves, and particularly what company they keep. Let children think of this, and conduct themselves accordingly, remembering that, when they are from under their parents' eye, they are still under God's eye.

III. David's dutiful obedience to his father's command. His prudence and care made him be up early (v. 20), and yet not to leave his sheep without a keeper, so faithful was he in a few things and therefore the fitter to be made ruler over many things, and so well had he learnt to obey before he pretended to command. God's providence brought him to the camp very seasonably, when both sides had set the battle in array, and, as it should seem, were more likely to come to an engagement than they had yet been during all the forty days, v. 21. Both sides were now preparing to fight. Jesse little thought of sending his son to the army just at that critical juncture, but the wise God orders the time and all the circumstances of actions and affairs so as to serve his designs of securing the interests of Israel and advancing the men after his own heart. Now observe here,

1. How brisk and lively David was, v. 22. What articles he brought he honestly took care of, and left them with those that had the charge of the bag and baggage; but, though he had come a long journey with a great load, he *ran into the army*, to see what was doing there, and to pay his

respects to his brethren. *Seest thou a man thus diligent in his business, he is in the way of preferment, he shall stand before kings.*

2. How bold and daring the Philistine was, v. 23. Now that the armies were drawn out into a line of battle he appeared first to renew his challenge, vainly imagining that he was in the eager chase of his own glory and triumph, whereas really he was but courting his own destruction.

3. How timorous and faint-hearted the men of Israel were. Though they had, for forty days together, been used to his haughty looks and threatening language, and, having seen no execution done by either, might have learned to despise both, yet, upon his approach, they *fled from him and were greatly afraid*, v. 24. One Philistine could never thus have chased 1000 Israelites, and put 10,000 to flight, unless their Rock, being treacherously forsaken by them, had justly *sold them, and shut them up*, ⁽¹⁵²³⁾Deuteronomy 32:30.

4. How high Saul bid for a champion. Though he was the tallest of all the men of Israel, and, if he had not been so, while he kept close to God might himself have safely taken up the gauntlet which this insolent Philistine threw down, yet, the Spirit of the Lord having departed from him, he durst not do it, nor press Jonathan to do it; but whoever will do it shall have as good preferment as he can give him, v. 25. If the hope of wealth and honour will prevail with any man to expose himself so far, it is proclaimed that the bold adventurer, if he come off, shall marry the king's daughter and have a good portion with her; but, as it should seem, whether he come off or no, *his father's house shall be free in Israel*, from all toll, tribute, custom, and services to the crown, or shall be ennobled and advanced to the peerage.

5. How much concerned David was to assert the honour of God and Israel against the impudent challenges of this champion. He asked what reward was promised to him that should slay this Philistine (v. 26), though he knew already, not because he was ambitious of the honour, but because he would have it taken notice of, and reported to Saul, how much he resented the indignity hereby done to Israel and Israel's God. He might have presumed so far upon his acquaintance and interest at court as to go himself to Saul to offer his service; but his modesty would not let him do this. It was one of his own rules, before it was one of his son's proverbs, *Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men* (⁽¹³¹⁶⁾Proverbs 25:6); yet his zeal put him upon that method

which he hoped would bring him into this great engagement. Two considerations, it seems, fired David with a holy indignation: —

(1.) That the challenger was one that was uncircumcised, a stranger to God and out of covenant with him.

(2.) That the challenged were the armies of the living God, devoted to him, employed by him and for him, so that the affronts offered to them reflected upon the living God himself, and *that* he could not bear. When therefore some had told him what was the reward proposed for killing the Philistine (v. 27) he asked others (v. 30), with the same resentment, which he expected would at length come to Saul's ear.

6. How he was brow-beaten and discouraged by his eldest brother Eliab, who, taking notice of his forwardness, fell into a passion upon it, and gave David very abusive language, v. 28. Consider this,

(1.) As the fruit of Eliab's jealousy. He was the eldest brother, and David the youngest, and perhaps it had been customary with him (as it is with too many elder brothers) to trample upon him and take every occasion to chide him. But those who thus exalt themselves over their juniors may perhaps live to see themselves, by a righteous providence, abased, and those to whom they are abusive exalted. Time may come when the elder may serve the younger. But Eliab was now vexed that his younger brother should speak those bold words against the Philistine which he himself durst not say. He knew what honour David had already had in the court, and, if he should now get honour in the camp (from which he thought he had found means effectually to seclude him, v. 15), the glory of his elder brethren would be eclipsed and stained; and therefore (such is the nature of jealousy) he would rather that Goliath should triumph over Israel than that David should be the man that should triumph over him. *Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous, but who can stand before envy*, especially the envy of a brother, the keenness of which Jacob, and Joseph, and David experienced? See ~~2089~~ Proverbs 18:19. It is very ill-favoured language that Eliab here gives him; not only unjust and unkind, but, at this time, basely ungrateful; for David was now sent by his father, as Joseph by his, on a kind of visit to his brethren. Eliab intended, in what he said, not only to grieve and discourage David himself, and quench that noble fire which he perceived glowing in his breast, but to represent him to those about him as an idle proud lad, not fit to be taken notice of. He gives them to understand that his business was only to keep sheep, and falsely insinuates that he was

a careless unfaithful shepherd; though he had left his charge in good hands (v. 20), yet he must tauntingly be asked, *With whom hast thou left those few sheep?* Though he came down now to the camp in disobedience to his father and kindness to his brethren, and Eliab knew this, yet his coming is turned to his reproach: “Thou hast come down, not to do any service, but to gratify thy own curiosity, and only to look about thee;” and thence he will infer *the pride and naughtiness of his heart*, and pretends to know it as certainly as if he were in his bosom. David could appeal to God concerning his humility and sincerity (^{<1978>}Psalm 17:3; 131:1) and at this time gave proofs of both, and yet could not escape this hard character from his own brother. See the folly, absurdity, and wickedness, of a proud and envious passion; how groundless its jealousies are, how unjust its censures, how unfair its representations, how bitter its invectives, and how indecent its language. God, by his grace, keep us from such a spirit!

(2.) As a trial of David's meekness, patience and constancy. A short trial it was, and he approved himself well in it; for,

[1.] He bore the provocation with admirable temper (v. 29): “*What have I now done? What fault have I committed, for which I should thus be chidden? Is there not a cause* for my coming to the camp, when my father sent me? *Is there not a cause* for my resenting the injury done to Israel's honour by Goliath's challenges?” He had right and reason on his side, and knew it, and therefore did not render railing for railing, but with a soft answer turned away his brother's wrath. This conquest of his own passion was in some respects more honourable than his conquest of Goliath. *He that hath rule over his own spirit is better than the mighty.* It was no time for David to quarrel with his brother when the Philistines were upon them. The more threatening the church's enemies are the more forbearing her friends should be with one another.

[2.] He broke through the discouragement with admirable resolution. He would not be driven off from his thoughts of engaging the Philistine by the ill-will of his brother. Those that undertake great and public services must not think it strange if they be discountenanced and opposed by those from whom they had reason to expect support and assistance; but must humbly go on with their work, in the face not only of their enemies' threats, but of their friends' slights and suspicions.

<DTS> 1 SAMUEL 17:31-39

DAVID MEETS GOLIATH

David is at length presented to Saul for his champion (v. 31) and he bravely undertakes to fight the Philistine (v. 32): *Let no man's heart fail because of him*. It would have reflected too much upon the valour of his prince if he had said, *Let not thy heart fail*; therefore he speaks generally: *Let no man's heart fail*. A little shepherd, come but this morning from keeping sheep, has more courage than all the mighty men of Israel, and encourages them. Thus does God often send good words to his Israel, and do great things for them, by the weak and foolish things of the world. David only desires a commission from Saul to go and fight with the Philistine, but says nothing to him of the reward he had proposed, because that was not the thing he was ambitious of, but only the honour of serving God and his country: nor would he seem to question Saul's generosity. Two things David had to do with Saul: —

I. To get clear of the objection Saul made against his undertaking. “Alas!” says Saul, “thou hast a good heart to it, but art by no means an equal match for this Philistine. To engage with him is to throw away a life which may better be reserved for more agreeable services. *Thou art but a youth*, rash and inconsiderate, weak and unversed in arms: he is a man that has the head and hands of a man, *a man of war*, trained up and inured to it *from his youth* (v. 33), and how canst thou expect but that he will be too hard for thee?” David, as he had answered his brother's passion with meekness, so he answered Saul's fear with faith, and *gives a reason of the hope* which was in him that he should conquer the Philistine, to the satisfaction of Saul. We have reason to fear that Saul had no great acquaintance with nor regard to the word of God, and therefore David, in reasoning with him, fetched not his arguments and encouragements thence, how much soever he had an eye to it in his own mind. But he argues from experience; though he was but a youth, and never in the wars, yet perhaps he had done as much as the killing of Goliath came to, for he had had, by divine assistance, spirit enough to encounter and strength enough to subdue a lion once and another time a bear that robbed him of his lambs, v. 34-36. To these he compares this uncircumcised Philistine, looks upon him to be as much a ravenous beast as either of them, and therefore doubts not but to deal as

easily with him; and hereby he gives Saul to understand that he was not so inexperienced in hazardous combats as he took him to be.

1. He tells his story like a man of spirit. He is not ashamed to own that he kept his father's sheep, which his brother had just now upbraided him with. So far is he from concealing it that from his employment as a shepherd he fetches the experience that now animated him. But he lets those about him know that he was no ordinary shepherd. Whatever our profession or calling is, be it ever so mean, we should labour to excel in it, and do the business of it in the best manner. When David kept sheep,

(1.) He approved himself very careful and tender of his flock, though it was not his own, but his father's. He could not see a lamb in distress but he would venture his life to rescue it. This temper made him fit to be a king, to whom the lives of subjects should be dear and their blood precious (¹⁹⁷²⁴Psalm 72:14), and fit to be a type of Christ, the good Shepherd, who *gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in his bosom* (²³⁰¹¹Isaiah 40:11), and who not only ventured, but *laid down his life for his sheep*. Thus too was David fit to be an example to ministers with the utmost care and diligence to watch for souls, that they be not a prey to the roaring lion.

(2.) He approved himself very bold and brave in the defence of his flock. This was that which he was now concerned to give proof of, and better evidence could not be demanded than this: "Thy servant not only rescued the lambs, but, to revenge the injury, *slew both the lion and the bear.*"

2. He applies his story like a man of faith. He owns (v. 37) it was *the Lord that delivered him from the lion and the bear*; to him he gives the praise of that great achievement, and thence he infers, *He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine*. "The lion and the bear were enemies only to me and my sheep, and it was in defence of my own interest that I attacked them; but this Philistine is an enemy to God and Israel, *defies the armies of the living God*, and it is for their honour that I attack him." Note,

(1.) Our experiences ought to be improved by us as our encouragements to trust in God and venture in the way of duty. He that has delivered does and will.

(2.) By the care which common Providence takes of the inferior creatures, and the protection they are under, we may be encouraged to depend upon that special Providence which surrounds the Israel of God. He that sets

bounds to the waves of the sea and the rage of wild beasts can and will restrain the wrath of wicked men. Paul seems to allude to this of David (~~SCHEP~~2 Timothy 4:17, 18), *I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion*, and therefore, I trust, *the Lord shall deliver me*. And perhaps David here thought of the story of Samson, and encouraged himself with it; for his slaying a lion was a happy presage of his many illustrious victories over the Philistines in single combat. Thus David took off Saul's objection against his undertaking, and gained a commission to fight the Philistine, with which Saul gave him a hearty good wish; since he would not venture himself, he prayed for him that would: *Go, and the Lord be with thee*, a good word, if it was not spoken customarily, and in a formal manner, as too often it is. But David has somewhat to do likewise,

II. To get clear of the armour wherewith Saul would, by all means, have him dressed up when he went upon this great action (v. 38): *He armed David with his armour*, not that which he wore himself, the disproportion of his stature would not admit that, but some that he kept in his armoury, little thinking that he on whom he now put his helmet and coat of mail must shortly inherit his crown and robe. David, being not yet resolved which way to attack his enemy, *girded on his sword*, not knowing, as yet, but he should have occasion to make use of it; but he found the armour would but encumber him, and would be rather his burden than his defence, and therefore he desires leave of Saul to put them off again: *I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them*, that is, "I have never been accustomed to such accoutrements as these." We may suppose Saul's armour was both very fine and very firm, but what good would it do David if it were not fit, or if he knew not how to manage himself in it? Those that aim at things above their education and usage, and covet the attire and armour of princes, forget that that is the best for us which we are fit for and accustomed to; if we had our desire, we should wish to be in our own coat again, and should say, "We cannot go with these;" we had therefore better go without them.

<074> 1 SAMUEL 17:40-47

DAVID KILLS GOLIATH

We are now coming near this famous combat, and have in these verses the preparations and remonstrances made on both sides.

I. The preparations made on both sides for the encounter. The Philistine was already fixed, as he had been daily for the last forty days. Well might he go with his armour, for he had sufficiently proved it. Only we are told (v. 41) that he *came on and drew near*, a signal, it is likely, being given that his challenge was accepted, and, as if he distrusted his helmet and coat of mail, a man went before him, *carrying his shield*, for his own hands were full with his sword and spear, v. 45. But what arms and ammunition is David furnished with? Truly none but what he brought with him as a shepherd; no breastplate, nor corselet, but his plain shepherd's coat; no spear, but his staff; no sword nor bow, but his sling; no quiver, but his scrip; nor any arrows, but, instead of them, five smooth stones picked up out of the brook, v. 40. By this it appeared that his confidence was purely in the power of God, and not in any sufficiency of his own, and that now at length he who put it into his heart to fight the Philistine put it into his head with what weapons to do it.

II. The conference which precedes the encounter, in which observe,

1. How very proud Goliath was,

(1.) With what scorn he looked upon his adversary, v. 42. He looked about, expecting to meet some tall strong man, but, when he saw what a mean figure he made with whom he was to engage, he disdained him, thought it below him to enter the lists with him, fearing that the contemptibleness of the champion he contended with would lessen the glory of his victory. He took notice of his person, that he was but a youth, not come to his strength, *ruddy and of a fair countenance*, fitter to accompany the virgins of Israel in their dances (if mixed dancing was then in use) than to lead on the men of Israel in their battles. He took notice of his array with great indignation (v. 43): “*Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? Dost thou think to beat me as easily as thou dost thy shepherd's dog?*”

(2.) With what confidence he presumed upon his success. He cursed David by his gods, imprecating the impotent vengeance of his idols against him, thinking these fire-balls thrown about him would secure his success: and therefore, in confidence of that, he darts his grimaces, as if threatening words would kill (v. 44): “*Come to me, and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air*, it will be a tender and delicate feast for them.” Thus the security and presumption of fools destroy them.

2. How very pious David was. His speech savours nothing of ostentation, but God is all in all in it, v. 45-47.

(1.) He derives his authority from God: “*I come to thee by warrant and commission from heaven, in the name of the Lord*, who has called me to and anointed me for this undertaking, who, by his universal providence, is the *Lord of hosts*, of all hosts, and therefore has power to do what he pleases, and, by the special grace of his covenant, is *the God of the armies of Israel*, and therefore has engaged and will employ his power for their protection, and against thee who hast impiously defied them.” The name of God David relied on, as Goliath did on his sword and spear. See ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 20:7; 118:10, 11.

(2.) He depends for success upon God, v. 46. David speaks with as much assurance as Goliath had done, but upon better ground; it is his faith that says, “*This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand*, and not only thy carcase, but the carcases of the host of the Philistines, shall be given to the birds and beasts of prey.”

(3.) He devotes the praise and glory of all to God. He did not, like Goliath, seek his own honour, but the honour of God, not doubting but by the success of this action,

[1.] All the world should be made to know that there is a God, and that the God of Israel is the one only living and true God, and all other pretended deities are vanity and a lie.

[2.] All Israel (whom he calls not this army, but *this assembly*, or church, because they were now religiously attending the *goings of their God and King*, as they used to do *in the sanctuary*) shall know that *the Lord saveth not with sword and spear* (v. 47), but can, when he pleases, save without either and against both, ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 46:9. David addresses himself to this

combat rather as a priest that was going to offer a sacrifice to the justice of God than as a soldier that was going to engage an enemy of his country.

~~1978~~ 1 SAMUEL 17:48-58

DAVID KILLS GOLIATH

Here is

1. The engagement between the two champions, v. 48. To this engagement the Philistine advanced with a great deal of state and gravity; if he must encounter a pigmy, yet it shall be with the magnificence of a giant and a grandee. This is intimated in the manner of expression: He *arose, and came, and drew nigh*, like a stalking mountain, overlaid with brass and iron, *to meet David*. David advanced with no less activity and cheerfulness, as one that aimed more to do execution than to make a figure: He *hasted, and ran*, being lightly clad, *to meet the Philistine*. We may imagine with what tenderness and compassion the Israelites saw such a pleasing youth as this throwing himself into the mouth of destruction, but he knew whom he had believed and for whom he acted.

2. The fall of Goliath in this engagement. He was in no haste, because in no fear, but confident that he should soon at one stroke cleave his adversary's head; but, while he was preparing to do it solemnly, David did his business effectually, without any parade: he slang a stone which hit him in the forehead, and, in the twinkling of an eye, fetched him to the ground, v. 49. Goliath knew there were famous slingers in Israel (~~1726~~Judges 20:16), yet was either so forgetful or presumptuous as to go with the beaver of his helmet open, and thither, to the only part left exposed, not so much David's art as God's providence directed the stone, and brought it with such force that it sunk into his head, notwithstanding the impudence with which his forehead was brazened. See how frail and uncertain life is, even when it thinks itself best fortified, and how quickly, how easily, and with how small a matter, the passage may be opened for life to go out and death to enter. Goliath himself *has not power over the spirit to retain the spirit*, ~~2008~~Ecclesiastes 8:8. Let not the strong man glory in his strength, nor the armed man in his armour. See how God resists the proud and pours contempt upon those that bid defiance to him and his people. None ever hardened his heart against God and prospered. One of the Rabbin thinks

that when Goliath said to David, *Come, and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air*, he threw up his head so hastily that his helmet fell off, and so left his broad forehead a fair mark for David. To complete the execution, David drew Goliath's own sword, a two-handed weapon for David, and with it *cut off his head*, v. 51. What need had David to take a sword of his own? his enemy's sword shall serve his purpose, when he has occasion for one. God is greatly glorified when his proud enemies are cut off with their own sword and he makes *their own tongues to fall upon them*, ^{<1648>}Psalm 64:8. David's victory over Goliath was typical of the triumphs of the son of David over Satan and all the powers of darkness, whom he *spoiled, and made a show of them openly* (^{<5125>}Colossians 2:15), and we through him are *more than conquerors*.

3. The defeat of the Philistines' army hereupon. They relied wholly upon the strength of their champion, and therefore, when they saw him slain, they did not, as Goliath had offered, throw down their arms and surrender themselves servants to Israel (v. 9), but took to their heels, being wholly dispirited, and thinking it to no purpose to oppose one before whom such a mighty man had fallen: *They fled* (v. 51), and this put life into the Israelites, who *shouted and pursued them* (David, it is probable, leading them on in the pursuit) even to the gates of their own cities, v. 52. In their return from the chase they seized all the baggage, plundered the tents (v. 53), and enriched themselves with the spoil.

4. David's disposal of his trophies, v. 54. He brought the head of the Philistine to Jerusalem, to be a terror to the Jebusites, who held the stronghold of Zion: it is probable that he carried it in triumph to other cities. *His armour he laid up in his tent*; only the sword was preserved behind the ephod in the tabernacle, as consecrated to God, and a memorial of the victory to his honour, ^{<1210>}1 Samuel 21:9.

5. The notice that was taken of David. Though he had been at court formerly, yet, having been for some time absent (v. 15), Saul had forgotten him, being melancholy and mindless, and little thinking that his musician would have spirit enough to be his champion; and therefore, as if he had never seen him before, he asked whose son he was. Abner was a stranger to him, but brought him to Saul (v. 57), and he gave a modest account of himself, v. 58. And now he was introduced to the court with much greater advantages than before, in which he owned God's hand performing all things for him.