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The Expositor's Bible: The Second Book of Samuel (The Expositor's Bible, Series 1 in 6 Volumes 5)

Rev William Garden Blaikie

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BY THE REV. PROFESSOR
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Extract:
" So likewise Simon the sorcerer fancied that he only needed to offer money to the Apostles to secure from them the gift of the Holy Ghost. "Thy money perish with thee!" was the indignant rebuke of Peter. It is the same refusal to believe in the reality of high principle that has made so many a persecutor fancy that he could bend the obstinacy of the heretic by the terrors of suffering and torture. And on the other hand, no nobler sight has ever been presented than when this incredulous scorn of the world has been rebuked by the firmness and triumphant faith of the noble martyr. What could Nebuchadnezzar have thought when the three Hebrew children were willing to enter the fiery furnace? What did Darius think of Daniel when he shrank not from the lions' den? How many a rebuke and surprise was furnished to the rulers of this world in the early persecutions of the Christians,[Pg 6] and to the champions of the Church of Rome in the splendid defiance hurled against them by the Protestant martyrs! The men who formed the Free Church of Scotland were utterly discredited when they affirmed that rather than surrender the liberties of their Church they would part with every temporal privilege which they had enjoyed from connection with the State. Such is the spirit of the world; if it will not rise to the apparent level of the saints, it delights to pull down the saints to its own. These pretences to superior virtue are hypocrisy and pharisaism; test their professions by their worldly interests, and you will find them soon enough on a level with yourselves.
The Amalekite that thought to gratify David by pretending that he had slain his rival had no idea that he was wronging him; in his blind innocency he seems to have assumed as a matter of course that David would be pleased. It is not likely the Amalekite had ever heard of David's noble magnanimity in twice sparing Saul's life when he had an excellent pretext for taking it, if his conscience had allowed him. He just assumed that David would feel as he would have felt himself. He simply judged of him by his own standard. His object was to show how great a service he had rendered him, and thus establish a claim to a great reward. Never did heartless selfishness more completely overreach itself. Instead of a reward, this impious murderer had earned a fearful punishment. An Israelite might have had a chance of mercy, but an Amalekite had none—the man was condemned to instant death. One can hardly fancy his bewilderment,—what a strange man was this David! What a marvellous reverence he had for God! To place him on a throne was no favor, if it involved doing anything against "the Lord's anointed!" And[Pg 7] yet who shall say that in his estimate of this proceeding David did more than recognize the obligation of the first commandment? To him God's will was all in all.
Dismissing this painful episode, we now turn to contemplate David's conduct after the intelligence reached him that Saul was dead. David was now just thirty (2 Sam. v. 4); and never did man at that age, or at any age, act a finer part. The death, and especially the sudden death, of a relative or a friend has usually a remarkable effect on the tender heart, and especially in the case of the young. It blots out all remembrance of little

injuries done by the departed; it fills one with regret for any unkind words one may have spoken, or any unkind deeds one may ever have done to him. It makes one very forgiving. But it must have been a far more generous heart than the common that could so soon rid itself of every shred of bitter feeling toward Saul—that could blot out, in one great act of forgiveness, the remembrance of many long years of injustice, oppression, and toil, and leave no feelings but those of kindness, admiration, and regret, called forth by

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