

DAVID,
THE KING OF ISRAEL.

A Portrait drawn from Bible History and
The Book of Psalms.

BY

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TRANSLATED UNDER THE EXPRESS SANCTION OF THE AUTHOR

BY

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

AVAILING myself of the opportunity afforded me by the respected Translator, I have pleasure in addressing a fraternal salutation to my Christian friends on the other side of the Channel.

If, in the Preface to the German original, where I treat of the '*Homiletic use of the Old Testament*,' I complain of the lamentable *neglect* and *misapprehension* which that portion of the Sacred Scriptures has to suffer on the part of many of the faithful in the Church of my Fatherland, I feel myself at liberty, from personal experience, to congratulate the brethren in England and Scotland that they are not open to any such reproach.

It is therefore to me an encouraging thought that the following 'Portrait' is in the hands of friends well acquainted with the Scriptures, and of one mind with myself in their views of the *unity* and *infallibility* of the *two Testaments*.

I trust it may be favoured with a kind reception, and that it may in some measure contribute to their joy and edification.

FREDR. WILH. KRUMMACHER, D.D.

PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE book here presented in an English dress is the most recent that has emanated from the pen of the venerable Author. He needs no introduction to English readers. His name is a household word in religious circles.

The History of David and his Times is full of the deepest interest and significance. As we traverse the field here opened up to us, and follow the descriptions of Krummacher, the different scenes and incidents rise up before us with all the vividness of actual events passing before our eyes. The Translator has endeavoured to give a faithful rendering of the original, and to preserve, as far as the idiom of the English language would permit, the peculiar forms of expression employed by the Author. The reader will sometimes discover in the phraseology and structure of sentences a Teutonic origin; but this, it is believed, will not detract from the interest with which the book will be read.

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DAVID,

THE KING OF ISRAEL.

CHAPTER I.

The Call of David.

THE history of Israel presents to us, within the narrowest limits, a ground-plan of the whole history of the world. The hidden government of the personal God, guiding and training the people, there meets us openly manifesting itself. The veiling curtain of human designs and actions is raised, and we behold, concealed by it, the hand, moving and directing all things, of Him of whom it is written, 'He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.'¹ O the adorable condescension of God, who thus would help the weakness of our faith by bringing within the narrow circle of our vision, in the clearest manner, once for all, the secrets of His lofty providence working through all things in behalf of *one* chosen people! No seeming chaos of the events of time can henceforth astonish or perplex us, when, in the two thousand years' history of that nation, we perceive numberless illustrations of a higher will guiding the most intricate threads which wind themselves through our life, and at length weaving them into a web which, the more it is considered,

¹ Eph. i. 11.

forces to our lips the words of the apostle, 'O the depths, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!'

How remarkably do we discover, in the life-journey of each one of the saints of Israel, the shining footsteps of him whom Isaiah describes as 'wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working,' and regarding whom Solomon says, 'A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.' In the life of none of these Old Testament saints does the exalted Protector of men present, in greater variety of forms, evidences of His guidance and government, than in that of the man who was deemed worthy to be called 'A man after God's own heart.' What a fulness, not only of consolation and quickening, but of warning and instruction, is unfolded before us in the experience and the fortunes of this royal Psalmist! To a consideration of his earthly career we now invite attention. This invitation is equivalent to the call of the prophet Amos, 'Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel;' for there is no part of David's career in which we shall not meet with that God of whom the royal harper himself sang, 'He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake.'

'And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.' (1 Sam. xvi. 1.)

In the books of Samuel we stand on firm historic ground. They form an essential part of the canon of sacred Scriptures, bearing stamped on them the attesting seal, not only of the enlightened in Israel, but also of Christ and His apostles. Grant it, that the Holy Spirit acted, in the composition of the historical books of the Old Testament, more in the way of reminding,

watching over, and guiding the writers, while in the production of the prophetic books He put forth an overpowering, creating, inspiring energy; yet in the case of the one, as well as of the other, every suspicion of a mixture of mythic elements is to be utterly rejected, if we would not be guilty of 'speaking evil of dignities.' It is well known that the holy apostles, after the example of their Lord and master, so far from showing any scruple at receiving as true the historic narratives, such as those of Noah's ark, Israel's passage through the Red Sea, Balaam's ass, and the miraculous overthrow of Jericho at the blast of Joshua's trumpets, rather added new confirmation to them as undoubted facts. We believe and speak in accordance with these authorities; for who can name any others who are worthy, in the remotest degree, to stand beside them as their compeers in holiness and enlightenment? Thus, also, in the representations of David's life, for which we are indebted to divinely-instructed prophets, Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, we have to do with pure history, and in no part of it with mere fancies of the poet. With such feelings of confidence in the narrative, let us look more narrowly into this rich life-picture which will unroll itself before us; and first let us turn our attention (1) to the *calling* and (2) the *anointing* of the shepherd youth. And may the Spirit of the Lord grant to us guidance, and acknowledge us continually in our contemplations!

1.

The form of government in Israel was, from the beginning, the *theocratic*. The Lord Jehovah was the only sovereign Lawgiver, Director, and Leader of His people. The human organs through whom His government made itself felt, were, in the earliest times, the

patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: after these, in the sphere of *civil life*, the *heads of the tribes*; and, in the *ecclesiastical* domain, the *priests*, whose sacred office culminated in the mysterious person of the high priest. Yet the Lord reserved to Himself full liberty to raise up others, according to necessity, and to entrust them, as extraordinary plenipotentiaries, with special commissions. The prophets appeared as watchers and monitors sent and anointed of God as often as there was manifested, in any manner and at any place, among the people, a turning from the path of obedience to the divine laws of the kingdom, as these were delivered through Moses. Neither crown nor breastplate protected transgressors from the stern denunciation they were compelled to hear from the lips of these representatives of the Supreme Judge. As long as Joshua lived, the condition of the people who were born after the departure out of the infected air of Egypt, during the wandering through the wilderness, was a very joyful one. The last solemn national assembly held by Joshua found them in the heights of enthusiastic resignation to the God of their fathers. After Joshua's death also, they still continued to keep the covenant of the Lord under the direction and fostering care of the elders, with whom their great leader, the worthy successor of Moses, had surrounded himself. But after the watchful eyes of these faithful men also were closed in death, Israel, through the misleading influence of the heathen tribes living around them, entered on that downward course, on which, for a long time, they continued to descend in ever deepening national declension. They addicted themselves to the dissolute and impure worship of strange gods, and would gradually have been melted into one with the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, had not the Lord always, at the fitting moment, made use of these