

THE VALUE OF CONVERSATION

HEBREW NOTE ENTITLED "REPAIR" OR "RESTORE"

qzj

That which assists or encourages and binds the book to you like a girdle

There are 1560 preserved spoken exchanges of the lips that have been discovered is the booty or bonanza of the book of Samuel... BLESSED is the churning of butter that separates and the offering of the bound bullock of covenant (Jeremiah 34 18-19) but three or four assembled sittings, deliberations, consultations with God or revelations opens YOUR HAND. *The statement reminds us that men's words teach us even when they are gone-and the verbal exchanges of God's word are for our profit. The observation on the benefit of turning over and over the milk and of the sin offering (Leviticus 9.2) also shows the blessing that comes from thoroughly sorting out one's life with God. The Prophet consulted David twice, the Lord spoke to Gad twice, Araunah took considerable thought and David deliberated on the plague with Gad, with the angel and with Araunah. God offered David three choices but after deliberation he found a fourth!*

PATIENT PERSISTENCE

The Rabbinic note emphasises the value of "churning" things over. This technique as in the production of butter enables the truth to be sifted out and for solid fats to emerge.

The books of Samuel are redolent with conversations which are part of the lasting value of these writings.

Very often the private conversations take us to the heart of the spirituality and also to the core of the infidelity and deception of the human heart. The Master Himself said that "by your words you shall be justified and condemned" (Matthew 12.37). We know that Saul was "afraid of the words of Samuel" (1 Samuel 28.20).

It is by the teasing out of facts in the legal process that truth emerges. To gain spiritual benefit from the books of Samuel one must study the conversation pieces of which there are just under three hundred. Some are one liners and their economy of expression often says it all. Others are prolonged statements. There is much to be learned about obedience from conversation. The books of Samuel are about "listening to God" and obedience to the LORD. From the early words of 1st Samuel we learn how important it is to recognise God as speaking to us and how important to respond to Him. The LORD spoke as you will remember

THREE OR FOUR TIMES

The rabbinic note speaks of "three or four times" occasions of conversation whether with a man or with the LORD as making a difference. They literally

open the human hand and the hand of God. They declare what men are doing and they reveal what God is doing too. You will remember that Samuel's relationship with the LORD began as the LORD spoke to him four times. You will find that the relationship of David with God was finally brought to a solemn point where God gave him first one option-then two-then three-but David chose a "fourth" namely "to fall into the hands of God". You will read how the noble and valiant Abner offered Asahel his life by three short conversations of some considerable kindness but Asahel did not obey his direction.

THE VALUE OF SACRIFICE

The books of Samuel hold the fine balance between obedience and sacrifice. They bring to the front the importance of obedience without reducing the moment of atonement. Samuel reminds Saul in *book one* that the LORD would have obedience and not sacrifice. The rabbinic note speaks of the blessing of sacrifice as a thing apart for the death of our LORD Jesus is an absolute *sine qua non* and yet in the believer to walk in the Spirit as Saul signally failed to do and to obey God's word is of first importance.

O give me Samuel's heart,
A lowly heart that waits
Where in thy house thou art,
Or watches at thy gates
By day and night,-a heart that still
Moves at the breathing of thy will