

Sermon 1

“Because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.” 1 Kings 14:13

This chapter contains Ahijah’s prophecy, foretelling what dismal judgments would befall Jeroboam and his posterity for his idolatry in worship and defection from the government and house of David. For these sins God destroyed him, and his posterity for their father’s guilt; for so it is intimated in this verse, out of which the text is taken. Here was a young man, Jeroboam’s son, who would die for the father’s fault; and yet here was a mitigation of the punishment, that he should not die after the same manner that the rest did: “He shall go to his grave in peace, because in him there is found some good.” Behold the goodness of God! A little good in him, and yet the great God takes notice of the little good. God found (as it were) one pearl in a heap of peoples, one good young man in Jeroboam’s household, some good in him towards the Lord God of Israel.

In the whole verse, there are three parts:

1. A lamentation for the death of this son of Jeroboam. It is said, “All of Israel shall mourn for him,” and so they did (verse 18), which argued there was goodness in him; for if he had not been desired and prized while he lived he would not have been so lamented at his death.

2. A limitation of his punishment. He only of Jeroboam’s family shall come to the grave; the rest of his posterity who died in the city dogs would eat, and he who died in the field should the fowls of the air devour (verse 11).

3. The commendation of his life: “In him was found some

2 Grace: The Truth, Growth, and Different Degrees

good.” Of this I am now to treat.

He is commended by the Holy Ghost, for his goodness is set forth:

By the quality of his goodness. It was a good thing, not a word only, or a good purpose of inclination with which too many content themselves, but it was a good action.

By the quantity of his goodness. It was but some little good thing that was found in him, and yet that little good God did not despise or overlook.

By the sincerity of his goodness. There are two notable demonstrations of this young man’s goodness: it was towards the Lord God of Israel, and it was in Jeroboam’s house.

His goodness was towards the Lord God of Israel. The Apostle Paul’s sincerity was evidenced in that in his speaking, writing, and actions he could and did appeal to God. That religion, said the Apostle James, “is pure and undefiled” that is so “before God and the Father” (James 1:27). Many hypocrites may be good towards men who are not so towards God; to be rich indeed is to be rich towards God. True repentance is repentance towards God, and he is unblameable indeed who is void of offense towards God as well as towards men.

He was good in the house of Jeroboam. A wicked man may seem good in a good place, but to be good in a bad place argues men to be good indeed. To be good in David’s house was not so much, but for this young man to be good in the house of Jeroboam his father —whom the Scripture brands for his idolatry in that “he made all Israel to sin,” and yet who could not make his son to sin—argued he was sincerely good. As it argued Lot’s sincerity to be righteous in Sodom, for Job to be good in Chaldea, and to be saints in Nero’s palace, so to fear God in Jeroboam’s family is goodness indeed.

There is only one difficulty in the text. What was that good thing that was found in Abijah?

For an answer to this, it is true the Scripture does not par-