

The Christian Messenger.

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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES. Heroes and Judges.

SUNDAY, May 23rd, 1875.—The Child Samuel—1 Sam. iii. 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein. Luke xviii. 17.

ANALYSIS.—I. Samuel's ministrations. Vs. 1. 11. Eli's blindness. Vs. 2. 11. Samuel's call. Vs. 3-10.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.—Samuel now dwells in the tabernacle, and sleeps, as it would seem, in the holiest place, having as his special duty the putting out the light of the sacred candlestick and the opening of the doors at sunrise. In this way his childhood was passed. While thus ministering in the tabernacle he received, as a child, his Divine call. The stillness of the night, the sudden and the repeated voice, the child-like misconception, the venerable Eli, the contrast between the doom of the aged priest and the gentle creature who was to announce it, give this portion of the Bible a universal interest.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 1.—And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord [Jehovah] before Eli. Samuel's age at this time is not definitely stated. As we last week learned, he was probably about three years old when first taken to the sanctuary. In ii. 21, 26, he is spoken of as growing, or having grown up before the Lord. Yet he is in this verse still a child, not improbably about twelve or fifteen years of age. This would well fit the relation he holds to Eli, and the character in which our lesson presents him. With interest we remember Luke ii. 42. That he was a boy of marked excellency of mind and heart, is clear from ii. 21, 26. The same language, in part, is here used of him as was long after used of Christ in his boyhood. See Luke ii. 52, which is substantially a quotation from 1 Sam. ii. 26. Samuel was joined to the high-priest, Eli, as his personal attendant and waiter—hence "before Eli"—and hence the resort to him when his name was called. This was, of course, the place of honor; and both the peculiar circumstances of his birth, which we last week learned, and the personal excellency of the boy, marked him out as the fit one for such honorable position. Eli was a man of genuine piety, but failed to preserve the honor of the sanctuary in the proper control of his sons; and hence the priesthood afterward passed from his family. See ii. and iii. 11, 12. The study of this context will alone enable us to understand the bearing of the Scripture of our lesson. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days. It was very rare ["precious"] that a prophetic word came from Jehovah. Only two prophets are mentioned as having appeared during the whole administration of the Judges." (Judg. iv. 4; vi. 8). A new and important order of events here begins in connection with the lad who is about to be inducted into the prophetic office, in which he is to have great eminence and influence, and partly and more immediately to show why the prophetic voice, on coming to Samuel, was so tardily recognized as prophetic. There was no open vision. Revelations were not numerous, as they had been in the times of Moses and Joshua; thus repeating, in another form, the previous thought.

Verse 2.—And it came to pass in that day. At this time just described, when communications from God were so rare. When [and, or now] Eli was laid [lying] down in his place. Doubtless in a room or apartment built adjoining the court of the tabernacle, and opening into it. And his eyes began to wax dim. Through age.

Verse 3.—Ere the lamp [light] of God went out. This was the light of the seven lamps of the chandelier, suspended in the holy place of the Tabernacle, which were to be lighted every evening, and supplied with oil to burn through the night until the morning (Exodus xxv. 31-40; xxx. 8; Lev. xxiv. 2; 2 Chron. xlii. 11.) Hence it was not in the early evening, as the rendering of the preceding clause in the Common Version suggests, but in the early morning, before daybreak. The Temple of the Lord [Jehovah]. The name more usually and properly designating, not as here the Tabernacle, but the "house" or "temple" which at Jerusalem superseded it. Where the ark of God was. In "the most holy place." (Ex. xxvi. 34, 35.)

Verse 4.—That the Lord [Jehovah] called Samuel. To be connected with "It came to pass;" of verse 2. This call was, to all appearance, a real, outward voice, and not a mere impression made upon the sleeping child, as in a dream. Verse 10. Here am I. Literally, "Behold I"—the usual answer when one was addressed by name.

Verse 5.—He ran unto Eli. He doubtless slept near his master, in readiness to answer any such calls, and give needed aid. Here am I, for thou calledst me. He evidently, to his surprise, found the old man asleep. I called not, etc. Eli seems not, as yet, to have suspected the facts, but supposed the lad to have dreamed.

Verse 6.—The Lord [Jehovah] called yet again, Samuel. Only the name, as before. Thus might he now speak to any child. And Samuel arose, etc. Eli doubtless still thought the boy's dreams were on his ministry to him—so that even in sleep he heard the wanted call.

Verse 7.—Did not yet know the Lord [Jehovah] neither was the word of the Lord [Jehovah] yet revealed to him. This verse explains why Samuel was so slow to understand that the voice was Jehovah's and not Eli's. He did know Jehovah—that is, had had no experience in receiving revelations from him.

Verse 8.—Thou didst call, Eli perceived that the Lord [Jehovah] had called the child. He may have been supernaturally assured.

This ark is mentioned because, with its cover, "the mercy-seat," it was regarded as God's throne, from which he was wont to speak and make revelations, and hence here fitly brought to notice in connection with his speaking to Samuel. And Samuel was laid down to sleep. Not, probably, in the sanctuary proper, but, like Eli, in one of the apartments of the structures built next to the court of the sanctuary. "Was laid," seems to imply that he had just lain down, which is not the thought. "Was lying," would be better.

Verse 9.—If he call thee. Recognizing that Samuel had been called, which he had not done before. Say, speak, Lord, [Jehovah] for thy servant heareth. A solemn thought that to him, child as he was, the great Jehovah was speaking.

Verse 10.—The Lord [Jehovah] came and stood. This seems to indicate a visible appearance, which before had been wanting. We think of the frequent appearance of Jehovah in former times as "the Angel." It would seem that he came from "the holy of holies"—the place of his throne. Samuel, Samuel. Samuel was now to know who spake to him. And he gave answer, as Eli had bidden, him. The command to Samuel was grievous, and taxed his loyalty severely. But he obeyed. So commenced his splendid prophetic career. Vs. 11-21. "A man sincerely obedient will not pick and choose what commands to obey and what to reject. He will lay such a charge upon his whole man as Mary the mother of Christ did upon all the servants at the feast, 'Whatever he saith unto you, do it.'

QUESTIONS.—Where is Samuel placed as a child? Chap. ii. 18. What does Hannah make for him every year? Chap. ii. 19. What is said of his childhood? Chap. ii. 26.

Vs. 1. How did Samuel minister unto the Lord?

Vs. 3. What time was the lamp of God put out? Where, from this verse, does it appear that Samuel slept?

Vs. 7. What is meant by "Did not yet know the Lord"?

Vs. 10. How many times did the Lord call in all? Did Samuel answer the last time as Eli bade him? How old was Samuel at this time?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, May 30th, 1875.—The Death of Eli.—1 Sam. iv. 12-18.

THE WORST PUNISHMENT.

"You do not look as if you had prospered by your wickedness," said a gentleman to a vagabond, one day.

"I haven't prospered at it!" cried the man. "It's a business that doesn't pay. If I had given half the time to some honest calling which I have spent in trying to get a living without work, I might be a man of property and character, instead of the homeless wretch I am."

He then told his history, and ended by saying: "I have been twice in prison, and I have made acquaintance with all sorts of miseries in my life; but I tell you my worst punishment is in being what I am." Men can steal our money, and rob us of our reputation, but no man can defraud us of what we are.

Youths' Department.

JINGLES.

Who can tell what a baby thinks! When it wakes from its forty winks And rubs its face into numerous kinks, And stares at the light that comes in at the chinks Of its rock-a-by nest, and gapes and blinks, Who can tell what a baby thinks?

Who has courage to venture a guess, As to what the baby may think of its dress, Trimmed and ruffled to such excess? Or what the baby may think of the mess For headache, and toothache, and stomach distress, And for all its ailings, more or less?

What does it think when it wakes at night, With all the pretty things out of sight, With nobody stirring and "making a light"? Does it think its condition is far from right, And that big folks are not at all polite, And that darkness is meant for a personal slight? Is that the reason it takes delight In screaming with all its personal might, And rousing the neighbors, at dead of night?

And what do you think that the baby thinks? Looking about like a mild-eyed lynx, Watching the spoon that tinkles and clinks, While papa is warming its oatnip drinks, Over a candle that glimmers and blinks, Humming and drumming out "Captain Jinks!" That the children skate to, now, at the rinks, What do you think that the baby thinks?

Did you say that babies are thinkless things, With no other light than what instinct brings, With brains as downy as butterfly's wings, And heads as empty as a bell that swings Over and under, and rings, and sings, When muscular motion is moving the strings? Did you say that babies are thinkless things?

Then when does the thing begin to grow? And when does the mind begin to show? And when does the baby begin to know That this is true, or that is so! Say, when you find out, please let me know!

TAMING A BUTTERFLY.

One evening last November, as I was closing the blinds, my little daughter May spied a colored moth or butterfly clinging to the slats of the blind.

"O mamma, bring it in or it will freeze to death," she said; and while I hesitated, thinking it would surely die in the house, she had clasped it loosely in her hands, and it was safely brought in and deposited in a hanging basket. It remained there through the night, and her shout in the morning waked me to see him. He was moving in a funny, stiff manner, very much as a person would after having been thoroughly chilled.

"Isn't he hungry? The flowers are all gone, you know," said Mary. She brought me one of Dolly's tiny plates, and I put some sugar and water in it, and placed it on the vines near him. In a few seconds he seemed to smell it, and lighted on the edge of the plate. We could see him move his throat as if swallowing, but how he ate we could not tell, as his head was held above his body, in fact it scarcely bent towards the dish. He was much revived by his breakfast, and fluttered about quite briskly.

I placed him under the magnifying-glass, and called the other members of the family to come and see the beautiful eyes on the under side of his wings, looking exactly like the eyes in peacock feathers, except they were grayer in color, not near as brilliant, but still very beautiful. May took him back to the basket, moving him by slipping her finger under his feet. In this way she did not injure him in the least.

We gave him his dinner of sugar and water on the window-sill. He flew to the plate, settled there, and then we could see how he obtained his food. He unrolled from under his chin a black proboscis, about an inch long and as fine and flexible as a fine black horsehair. This he plunged into his dish, and while sipping in a leisurely fashion, he kept his wings vibrating rapidly with a low humming sound. May said he was so pleased that he purred like kitty, and she could hardly believe the fairylike sound was made by his wings.

When he had finished his dinner, he rolled up his proboscis as you would coil a wire, and tucked it out of sight under his chin. One day he did not eat when his dish was placed for him, and kept moving his wings in a restless, uneasy way. I lifted him on my finger, and found the greedy

fellow had glued his proboscis to his feathers with the sugar. I softened the sugar with warm water, and helped him as gently as I could to unroll it. How clumsy my fingers seemed! but I found it was not easily broken; it felt hard and smooth to my fingers. As soon as it was uncoiled he ate with great relish.

He never, after the first few times, seemed at all troubled to have us touch him, and he became so tame that he would settle on our heads or hands, and remain there until we removed him. He had a special liking for May, and would follow her, lighting now on her shoulders and now on her hair, and delighting to be carried on her finger from room to room. We kept him nearly three weeks, and he might have lived much longer, but one sunny day he dashed so frantically against the window that he broke the ends of his wings, and injured himself so badly that we found him in the morning dead.

May grieved bitterly over him, and I laid him up in a box for her to look at, but each sight renewed her grief, and I finally put him away.

A TALK TO BOYS.

Mr. James T. Fields, of Boston, recently visited Phillips Academy in Exeter, N. H., and gave the boys a talk. We give below some of the excellent things which he said, as reported in the Congregationalist:

I want to tell you in just ten minutes what I understand a scholar to be, in this ignorant old world of ours. There never was a greater chance for first-rate men in all the professions than just now, now in our own era. And this, you who are studying that you may be successful, ought to know. Remember, I say the great chance is for men who are A, No. 1; not for those who are only Z, No. 25, but for thoroughbred, accurate scholars. When a young graduate once complained to Daniel Webster that the professions were all full, and that there was no room left for him, the great lawyer and statesman simply replied, "There is always room at the top, young man." Now the difficulty in our America is, that while we are all "pretty well" educated, very few of us are first-raters, and carry all the guns we might. We forget that if a man does not know a thing accurately, he positively does not know it at all. It is only now and then that we launch a really solid, substantial scholar, complete in all points, into the world. Look at Congress to-day! Look anywhere! At long intervals, Wayland, Webster, Bancroft, Everett, Choate, Prescott, Channing, Longfellow, Sumner, Motley, Lowell—and then a whole *parterre* of semi-intellectual peacocks, only strutting about on exhibition, with a few fine feathers sweeping along the dusty highways of learning. Is it not amazing, that since 1855 there has hardly graduated from any American college a man who has yet made any great mark, either as a lawyer, an orator, a statesman, a poet, a preacher, an essayist, or an historian?

Did it ever occur to you that you never hear out of our own country these everyday phrases so common among us—"pretty near," "about right," "near enough"? All over England the word "Right" is always sounding in your ears; and it goes into their scholarship as well as into their railroads. You may depend upon it, we never shall truly get on in politics, in morals, in government, until we also can cry out, "Right!" much oftener than we can now. Inaccuracy in everything is our rock ahead, and it is especially marked in our scholarship. Why, there is not a third-rate town in Protestant Germany to-day, that could not easily beat any of our largest cities in the number of accurate, thoroughly informed scholars. We are contented with smatterers. They demand thoroughness! When I hear it said of a man that he is a "pretty good scholar," I can't help thinking of a "pretty good" egg. Unless an egg is absolutely perfect, we send it away from the table. Ignorance is hateful; and simply to veneer ourselves with learning, is a deadly mistake. I think it a great piece of good fortune for any one to be born in America—the greatest good luck in the world; but how we dare to be ignorant of so many things is to me unaccountable. Just see how simple the whole matter of acquiring information is. Given Brains (and we always claim the privilege of knocking a man down if he disputes with us the fact of this possession), and all we can require, and must acquire, are these three—attention, persever-

ance, and memory. These can all be had for the asking; they can all be strengthened if they happen to be weak in any special case. You notice, I do not reckon in morals; for I cannot conceive of a real student—a young man of brains or common sense, who loves learning and means to be a first-rater by and by—I cannot conceive of his having any time or inclination for those idiotic immoralities which turn a man into a brute. Go in for fun and genuine enjoyment. It is a capital rule to play a little every day of our lives. Heaven knows our faces are long enough naturally, in such a climate as this; but we have only just so many years for real study, and youth won't stretch much beyond the twenties, in a country so full of wear and tear as the one we are born into.

I plead with you, then, for accuracy. Be sure of everything you know. A half-baked scholar is merely an underdone goose. He is simply a quack in every sense. Don't go about this world of ours, that sorely needs completeness in character, like so many locks without keys, or keys with missing locks.

Mirabou's secretary once said to him, "Sir, what you require is impossible." "Impossible," cried Mirabou, starting from his chair, "never name to me again that blockhead of a word!" Now downright accurate scholarship is impossible nowhere, and here in America we must come to it very soon. We have already delayed it too long. It will not do to shirk it any longer. When you hear a student reply to a question in Mathematics or Greek or History. "I know the answer very well, but I can't find words to express it," don't you believe him. He does not know the answer. He may think he does, but the poor chap is mistaken in his knowledge; if he knew definitely—and this is the only way to know anything—the words would somehow twist themselves out of his mouth, though they maimed his reluctant jaws for life.

DEFINITIONS OF BIBLE TERMS.

- A day's journey is about twenty-three and one fifth miles.
A Sabbath day's journey was about an English mile.
Ezekiel's reed was nearly eleven feet.
A cubit was nearly twenty-two inches.
A hand's breadth is equal to three and five-eighths inches.
A finger's breadth is equal to one inch.
A shekel of silver was about fifty cents.
A shekel of gold was \$8.00.
A talent of silver was \$38,32.
A talent of gold was \$13,809.
A piece of silver, or a penny, was thirteen cents.
A farthing was three cents.
A mite was less than a quarter of a cent.
A gerah was one cent.
An ephah, or bath, contains seven gallons and five pints.
A bin was one gallon and two pints.
A firkin was seven pints.
An omer was six pints.
A cab was three pints.

AN UNWRITTEN SERMON.

I remember when a boy, watching a religious teacher—indeed, a minister of the Gospel—under the immediate and sudden attack of injury. We all know him to be a man naturally of very impetuous passions; but he simply set his teeth firmly against violent utterance. His white lips quivered tremulously, lest he should fly into a provoked explosion. His whole soul was mightily held in hand, until he could calmly gaze upon his transducer. And when he quietly gave the soft answer which "turneth away wrath," that man preached a sermon then on forbearance and self-control, that no public performance of his, ever equalled before a congregation.

Such discourses cannot be delivered from a pulpit of eloquence; they must come from a pulpit of pain. "He that ruleth his own spirit, is better than he who taketh a city."

Why is a newspaper like a tooth brush? Do you give it up? Because every one should have one of his own, and not be borrowing his neighbors.

DEVOUTNESS.

Devoutly read, and then All books shall edify thee; Devoutly look, and naught But wonders shall pass by thee. Devoutly speak, and men Devoutly listen to thee; Devoutly act, and then The strength of God acts through thee. —Ruckert. Wisdom of the Brahmin.