

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1876.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, March 26th, 1876.—REVIEW. Saul and David contrasted.

- 1. Saul Rejected.....1 Sam. vx. 10-23.
2. David Anointed King...1 Sam. xvi. 1-13.
3. David and Goliath.....1 Sam. xvii. 38-51.
4. David in the Palace.....1 Sam. xviii. 1-16.
5. David and Jonathan....1 Sam. xx. 35-42.
6. David sparing Saul.....1 Sam. xxiv. 1-16.
7. Saul and his Sons slain..1 Sam. xxxi. 1-6.
8. David Established King..2 Sam. v. 17-25.
9. The Ark brought to Zion.2 Sam. vi. 1-15.
10. God's Covenant with David.2 Sam. vii. 18-29.
11. Absalom's Rebellion....2 Sam. xv. 1-14.
12. Absalom's Death.....2 Sam. xviii. 24-33.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Ps. 52.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off thou shalt see it." Psalm xxxvii. 34.

I. OF SAUL.—"Saul is no monster who has won power by false means and then plunged at once into a reckless abuse of it; no apostate who casts off the belief in God, and sets up some idol. He merely forgets the Lord and fails to remember that he is under law. That calm spirit of trust and hope which had once come upon Saul, had been resisted and grieved; he had forgotten that such a spirit had been given him to be his guide and counsellor, his wisdom to understand God's commands, his strength to obey them. And now there had come an evil spirit from the Lord, an accusing conscience, warning him of what he had been, throwing its dark shadow upon the present, making the future look dim and gloomy. The servants of Saul, who could not probe the seat of their master's disorder, suggested the wisest of all methods for removing its external symptoms. Music brought back for a time the sense of true order, a secret inward harmony, an assurance that it is near every man, and that he may enter into it.

"At the next turn of the story the evil spirit has become an evil spirit from the Lord." Which was preying upon the man himself, has found another object—a gnawing suspicion and hatred against an innocent man. This feeling of suspicion more explains to us than anything else the nature of the retribution which a man brings upon himself by tampering with evil thoughts and imaginations, by trifling with the loving Power which is so close to him, and so ready to nourish him with wholesome and gracious food.

II. OF JONATHAN.—"He first appears some time after his father's accession. If his younger brother Ishbosheth was forty at the time of Saul's death (2 Sam. ii. 8), Jonathan must have been at least thirty when he is first mentioned. He was regarded in his father's life-time as heir to the throne. Like Saul, he was a man of great strength and activity (2 Sam. i. 23.) He was also famous for the peculiar martial exercises in which his tribe excelled—archery and slinging (1 Chron. xii. 2.) His bow was to him what the spear was to his father. It was always about him (1 Sam. xviii. 4; xx. 35.) From the time he first appears he is Saul's constant companion. He was always present at his father's meals. The whole story implies deep attachment of the father and son. But he cast his lot with his father's decline, not with his friend's rise, and in death they were not divided (2 Sam. i. 23; 1 Sam. xxiii. 16)."

III. OF DAVID.—"The character of David has been so naturally brought out in the incidents of his life that it need not be here described in detail. In the complexity of its elements, passion, tenderness, generosity, fierceness—the soldier, the shepherd, the poet, the statesman, the priest, the prophet, the king—the romantic friend, the chivalrous leader, the devoted father—there is no character of the O. T. at all to be compared to it. David's character stands at a higher point of the sacred history and represents the Jewish people just at the moment of their transition from the lofty virtues of the older system to the fuller civilization and culti-

vation of the latter. In this manner he became naturally, if one may say so, the likeness, portrait of the best and grandest development of the nation and of the monarchy in the person and the period of the Messiah. In a sense more than figurative, he is the type and prophecy of Jesus Christ. Christ is not called a son of Abraham, or of Jacob, or of Moses, but he is truly a son of David."

"To his own people, his was the name most dearly cherished after their first ancestor Abraham. 'The City of David,' 'the house of David,' 'the throne of David,' 'the rod of David,' 'the oath sworn unto David,' (the pledge of the continuance of his dynasty), are expressions which pervade the whole of the Old Testament, and all the figurative language of the New, and they seem to mark a lasting significance of his appearance in history. The difficulties which attend on his character were valuable as proofs of the impartiality of Scripture in recording them, and as indications of the union of natural power and weakness which his character included. The Rabbis, in former times, and critics, (like Bayle), in later times, have seized on its dark features and exaggerated them to the utmost. And it has been often asked, both by the scoffers and the serious, how the man after God's own heart could have murdered Uriah, and seduced Bathsheba, and tortured the Ammonites to death. An extract from one who is not a too indulgent critic of sacred characters, expresses at once the common views and the religious sense of the whole matter. 'Who is called the man after God's own heart? David, the Hebrew king, had fallen into sins enough,—blackest crimes—there was not want of sins, and therefore, the unbelievers sneer and ask, Is this your man according to God's heart? The sneer, I must say, seems to me but a shallow one. What are faults what are the outward details of a life if the inner secret of it, the remorse, temptations, the often baffled never-ended struggle of it be forgotten? David's life, or history, as written for us in those Psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given us of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul toward what is good and best. Struggle often baffled, driven into entire wreck, yet a struggle never ended, ever with tears, repentance, true unconquerable purposes begun anew'— Carlyle's Heroes and Hero-worship.

IV. OF ABSALOM.—Thomson, in "The Land and the Book," pp. 234, says: "I have had a delightful ramble this morning in these grand old forests and now understand how perfectly Absalom could be caught by a thick branch of an oak. The strong arms of those trees spread out so near the ground that one cannot walk erect beneath them; and on a frightened mule, such a head of hair as that vain but wicked son polled every year would constantly become inextricably entangled. It is interesting to know that the region where the battle was fought is still covered with such forests; that 'wood of Ephraim,' with thick oaks, and tangled branches, and thorny creepers growing upon ragged rocks and ruinous precipices, down which the rebel army plunged in wild dismay; horses and men crushing each other to death in remediless ruin. Thus twenty thousand men perished in that fatal wood which devoured more people that day than the sword devoured."

QUESTIONS FOR QUICK ANSWERS.—Who was Saul's father? Who was David's? Of what tribe was Saul? Of what tribe was David? In early life did Saul have a bold or a retiring nature? 1 Sam. x. 22. In early life did Saul have a merciful or a cruel spirit? 1 Sam. xi. 12, 13. Might not Saul have been a better man but for the temptations of kingly power? Is not prosperity oftentimes as great a trial as adversity? What fortress did Saul's son Jonathan take? What fortress did David's captain Joab take? What king did Saul bring disobediently and proudly away from battle? What Philistine champion did young David kill? What were the famous words of Nathan that aroused David's conscience? Which of the two kings we have studied about had a son better than his father? Who was he? Which of the two kings had a son worse than his father? Who was he? Does grace, then, flow in the blood? In whom did Saul's royal house end? 2 Sam. iv. 8. How long did David's house have promise of endurance? 2 Sam. vii. 16. Whom does David call Lord? Matt. xxii. 41-46.

Was Saul any more a sinner by nature than David? Rom. iii. 23. Is there any evidence that Saul ever repented sincerely of sin?

Is there not the best evidence that David did so repent? 2 Sam. xii. 13; Ps. li. Is it not by impotence and penitence that a marked difference is made between a saved and a lost soul? Luke xxiii. 9-14.

Partially from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, April 2nd, 1876.—The Ascending Lord.—Acts i. 1-12.

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

The two paths.

The safe and narrow way Leads up to God; Be careful, lest you stray Into the broad.

Pleasure and gold and sin Seek the wide gate; Whoso his Lord would win Enters the straight.

Look where the Savior's steps Have gone before, And in His footprints walk Forevermore.

He that defileth not On earth, his feet; Shall tread with the redeemed Heaven's golden street.

For the Christian Messenger.

Notings about Missionaries and Missions, for Boys and Girls.

The following is a copy of a letter forwarded to the Times from Troywell Rectory, Thrapston. It is an account of the expedition sent out to found a Memorial Mission Station in the wilds of Africa; in honour of the great Missionary explorer Livingstone who died in the Mission field, struggling to plant the Cross of liberty and truth. Weary and sick, the bold brave soldier of Christ fell at his post. For him to die was gain, others have followed his track, and the benevolent have organised a noble company of Christian soldiers to go forward and maintain the banner of love. The following extract, will give information with reference to their journey, progress, and reception in the land, where, as Bishop Heber said,

"Africa's sunny fountains Roll down their golden sand, From many an ancient river, From many a palmy plain,— They call us to deliver Their land from error's chain."

Livingstone declared their claims to be real not imaginary, for in describing the attacks made by the slave-hunters upon defenceless villages, the flight of men and the capture of women and children, he said, that the native chiefs would help the slave-hunters to capture their victims, for a piece of cloth, equal in value to 25 cents for each slave captured. The dealer got from \$20 to \$30 each at the coast, he cared therefore but little if 50 per cent perished on the long and weary march. For every one brought into the market the missionary tells us, that at least five were torn from their home, to fall on the way broken down by harsh usage and the heavy burden they had to carry on their heads. From one port as many as from 10 to 15 thousand slaves were yearly exported: To be used as mere machines, by cruel and selfish masters.

When you read the following letter, I think you will be glad to know,—that God's servants are on their way to teach the people and that so far they have been well received:

LIVINGSTONIA MISSION EXPEDITION.

The Rev. Horace Waller writes to the Times from Troywell Rectory, Thrapston:—

"Intelligence has just reached home by the present Cape mail steamer respecting the admirably organised Scotch Mission bound for Lake Nyassa, under Mr. E. D. Young, R. N. It seems that the Shiré Valley is now densely populated. The fugitives from the hill country, finding themselves safe from the Portuguese slave-hunters at the Makololo settlement, have built numerous villages around them at Chibisa's, and Mr. Young and his party met with an enthusiastic greeting. The small steamer Ilala had already been transported above the Murchison Cataracts on September 22, and she has now a clear run into the Lake. There is no mention of serious illness or anything of an adverse nature beyond the usual difficulties connected with transporting heavy weights in hot weather, and the numerous friends of this effort, which owes its existence to the combined action in good fellowship of the Scottish Churches to commemorate the deeds of their countryman, Dr. Livingstone, may

be heartily congratulated on the good news."

Mr. J. Murray Mitchell, of the Foreign Missions Office of the Free Church of Scotland, sends us the letter from Lieut. E. D. Young, R. N., to which Mr. Waller, we presume, refers. The letter is dated Upper Shiré, above Murchison Cataracts, September 22, 1875:—

"It is with very great pleasure that I advise you, for the information of the committee, that I arrived here to-day with the last of 650 carriers, conveying the whole of the steamer's engines and boiler and all the stores we shall require for some time. After writing to you from Mazaro, on the Zambesi, we were very much delayed owing to the rivers being so low. Several times we had to clear the Ilala to the mere shell to get her over and through the sand-banks. Day and night often we were at work. The Morambala marsh is now a vast lake, owing to the Zambesi altering its course, and we had great difficulty in finding a passage through. On nearing the Makololo villages on the Lower Shiré, we were met by canoes bringing us presents of food and fuel for the steamer, and on our arrival at the small villages nothing could exceed the joy of the natives when they knew who we were. Thousands lined the banks, clapping their hands, dancing and singing, saying their fathers, the English, had come back to them. I at once assembled the Chiefs, who are all Makololo, and informed them of the object of our mission. They all appeared very grateful, and promised to assist us; and so they have, for without their help we could not, in so short a time, have got together so many carriers, and transported everything here. We arrived at the head of the Lower Shiré on the 6th inst., and commenced taking the boat to pieces, packing goods, and employing carriers, and I arrived to-day with the last of the goods, after a 16 miles' walk. The journey was very, very fatiguing, and the heat oppressive even to me, who have done the journey before. It appears wonderful how the poor natives carried their heavy loads across the mountains of rock and sand and through thick bush. Some of them came a distance of 40 miles to be employed; then they had to walk with a load of steel not less than 60lb., find themselves in provisions, and now have to return the same distance; for doing which I paid each man six yards of calico. So I hope your committee will not think I have overpaid them. I myself am pretty well, but at present am nearly done up with the journey and attending to the carriers. Till our arrival here the whole of the party enjoyed good health. Now three have a slight touch of fever, but no doubt they will soon get over it. Under God's blessing we shall, I trust, steam into Nyassa in about 14 days. Hitherto the Mission expedition has met with great success, considering the many difficulties we had to contend with. The Zambesi men whom I brought with me are now eager to return to-night, so I am obliged to send this hurried report. There are no natives hereabout, but the Lower Shiré is now thickly inhabited for 40 miles, and all are eager to be taught. They love and reverence the very name of the English. We have received no letters or news from England since leaving Algoa Bay, but are endeavouring to get natives from the Zambesi to bring up despatches as soon as they arrive. The expense will be trifling. There is no war or even a rumour of war in the country, as far as we have been able to learn. Everything appears peaceful and quiet. Unfortunately, we have no natives here to assist us up, so must get on as quickly as possible ourselves. As I have walked over a difficult part to day, I am sure you will excuse my writing more this time. I will endeavour to report again as quickly as possible. The native carriers cannot be persuaded to stop longer."

Perhaps I ought also to tell you, that slavery is now greatly checked by the British Government. But dear children we must rely upon the preaching of the gospel for their TRUE DELIVERANCE FROM BONDAGE. The English Governor at Natal says one missionary is worth more than a battalion of soldiers. Little friends, pray for missions and missionaries. That is, if you are Christian missionaries yourselves, and missionaries you must be, if you have the love of God in your heart. Your friend, J. F. AVERY.

Halifax.

The Lord's Day.

If I break the Sabbath day By my pleasure and my play, God may not with lightning stroke Rend me as a splintered oak, May not pour his judgment down Like lava on the ancient town:—

But if I his First Day break God from my whole week will take All that best it can impart, Peace of mind and joy of heart; I will spend His one bright, And he shall make my six days bright.

He who laughs at cruelty sets his heel on the neck of religion.

CORRESPONDENCE.

For the Christian Messenger.

From Rev. John Brown.

Mr. Editor,—

After waiting three weeks for Mr. Somerville's last effort, it has at length appeared, and is like the wine in feasts in olden time, with this difference, that Mr. S.'s wine was bad and sour at the beginning, and his worst and sourest he has kept till the last. I expected a little work with this his final effort, and primed myself accordingly, but find that there is in fact no argument to reply to, inasmuch as there is not a single passage brought to refute Believer's Baptism or confirm Infant Sprinkling notwithstanding the caption "The voice of Scripture on Baptism." He has taken my hint and is "letting Scripture alone." He talks of Mr. Saunders, Mr. Messenger, Dr. Wayland, Dr. Crawley, and some others, but we look in vain for Old or New Testament names. As "experience ought to teach," it is gratifying to find that Mr. S. is learning, inasmuch as he knows or might know, that the writers of the 'Book of the Law' are opposed to him as directly as the East is to the West.

He is still determined that the Baptists of Nova Scotia shall answer at his bar as to their belief in the Old as well as the New Testament as their rule of faith and practice. This is as if a sweep were saucily to ask a gentleman if he believed in soap and water. When Mr. S. pulls the beam out of his own eye, it will be time enough for him to seek to take the mote out of ours. His reasons for bringing the charge are about as distinct and sensible as Tom Smith's were of jilting Mary Jones. "Why somebody told me as how somebody said, how somebody else had somewhere read, in some newspaper as how you was dead." If Mr. S. should be tempted to refer to this charge again, I recommend him first to read a clause of three words towards the end of the tenth verse of the sixth chapter of Amos. And as a reason for the same, I will quote from his own letter:—"The greatest men often talk loosely and without thinking."

He says "I would say to my Baptist friends, and they are many, warmly attached to me, and to whom I am warmly attached; if you read only what the Messenger says in this controversy, you will never know what my views and sayings are." We should not have known that Mr. S. loved any Baptists if he had not told us, I suppose that will account for the great trouble he has gone to to show them their error, as well as the gentleness of his language towards them. And as regards the views and sayings of Mr. S. the readers of the Messenger know quite as much of his views and sayings as they care for; especially the latter, and I hope he will give me some credit for informing them. Baptists are 'fanatical' enough to be content with the plain teachings of Inspiration on the subject of Baptism. I may here say to my Pedobaptist friends, "If you read only what the Wesleyan says in this controversy, you will never know the weakness of Mr. S.'s arguments, nor his ability to twist the Scriptures to mean what its author never intended them to mean."

He says the Messenger "has been itching to get at baby-sprinkling, and if not happily anticipated I shall help him to a remedy." I presume the remedy is silence. That is wise, very wise of Mr. S. I have been itching for it too, inasmuch as he promised twice to entertain us with his views thereon. If he is wise he will keep as silent as the Bible does on that subject; but he should keep his promise. Our good brother seems to bid for sympathy in his reply to "A Country Baptist" when he informs his readers that this is the sixth opponent with which he has had to do. With five of these he has had something to do, and unless I mistake I am myself the favored one which he has spared. I am, I hope thankful that he has let me say what I pleased without calling me into question. There is a seventh opponent which Mr. S. appears to have overlooked, from whom nothing has appeared in the religious papers of Halifax. "To my Baptist mothers and sisters, says Mr. S. I would say with all affection. This is not a cross which Christ has laid upon you." Truth is sometimes told without intending it. It is not a cross which Christ has laid upon them. His commandments are not grievous. My yoke is easy and my