

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1876.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES. SUNDAY, January 9th, 1876.—David Anointed King.—1 Sam. xvi. 1-13.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 7-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, 1 Samuel xv. 24-35. Tuesday, 1 Sam. xvi. 1-13. Wednesday, Job i. 1-5. Thursday, Psa. xxxiii. Friday, Psa. cxlvii. 1-12. Saturday, Matthew ii. 8-20. Sunday, Psalm lxxviii. 70-72.

ANALYSIS.—I. Samuel sent to Bethlehem. Vs. 1-3. II. Fear of the Bethlehmites. Vs. 4, 5. III. Seven sons rejected. Vs. 6-10. IV. Call and choice of David. Vs. 11-13. V. Saul troubled. Vs. 14-16.

EXPOSITION.—The scene opens probably at Samuel's home, in Ramah of Mt. Ephraim, near Gibeon, and not far from Jerusalem, to the north, i. 19; ii. 11; vii. 17, and other passages. It is at once transferred to Bethlehem, where it is mainly laid. The earliest name of this town was Ephrath, or Ephratah (Gen. xxxv. 16). It is six miles south of Jerusalem. The modern town "covers the east and northeast parts of the ridge of a long grey hill of pure limestone, which stands nearly due east and west, and is about a mile in length." It is mainly celebrated as the birthplace of Jesus.

By Saul's neglect the execution of Agag fell upon Samuel. 1 Samuel xv. 32, 33. Saul then returns from Gilgal to his royal palace in Gibeon, and Samuel likewise departs from Gilgal to his home in Ramah, fifteen miles away. Years pass on, and then it appears that God does not intend, by Saul's rejection, to deprive Israel utterly of a king, but to exchange him for a better. In Saul, Israel had sought for themselves a king. In David, God provides for Israel a man "after his own heart." 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

Verse 1.—How long wilt thou mourn, etc. Jehovah addresses to Samuel a censure and a command. The censure is given in the form of question—often the most emphatic assertion. His mourning seems to have been in part a deep regret that Saul was under ban, and in part a fear that this would work mischief to the cause of his country and his God. But what propriety in blaming him for such grief? Because, says Jehovah, "I have rejected him." Faith in God might and should have been so strong as to have controlled Samuel's feelings as well as his will. The command was to fill a horn with oil, and go to Bethlehem. It was customary to anoint the person who was to become king in token of his appointment to the office. There were in some cases, such as those of Saul and David, two anointings, one like this, private, preceding the actual inauguration, the other public, at the inauguration. 2 Samuel v. 3. The command specifies with exactness the one sending, the one sent, the person to whom, and the place to which. The time implied was "now," when the command was given. This was Jehovah's business, and he determines everything with precision to make it certain that the rejection of Saul, and the appointment of his successor, was wholly his business, not man's. As David was a type of Jesus, the King of Israel, this exactness teaches typically that Jesus in his kingship is the anointed of God.

Verse 2.—A fear and its ground. Even a good man would not enjoy a rival, claiming his throne. But Saul was abandoned of God, and had doubtless shown something of the fiery fury of his wrath before this. We might blame Samuel for raising this objection if it appeared that it was raised in disobedience. This was not the case. He only honestly laid before the Lord his sense of the danger of the act.

Verse 3.—Take an heifer, etc. Direction how to avoid suspicion; how to proceed at Bethlehem. No rebuke of his want of faith, but a removal of his fear. The sacrifice was a needful part of the ceremony, and not appointed merely as a blind.

Verse 4.—Comest thou peaceably. These elders were the town-officers. They trembled with terror at the approach of Samuel, who, as God's prophet, and still a judge (vii. 15), was

naturally suspected to be on a mission of condemnation. The office of prophet and judge was known to carry authority and power, for God even by miracles honored it. Their question was therefore fit and natural, showing equally care for their town, and honor for God's prophet—both patriotism and piety.

Verse 5.—He gives to them a direct answer, and an explanation of his mission, and a command to prepare and appear at the sacrifice. His explanation, like all his acts, is in precise obedience to divine commands. Our real life always depends on obeying God. To "sanctify," here, means to perform those washings, etc., required by the law in order to take part in the sacrifice. Ex. xix. 10, 22. They are typical of that purity of heart needful in order to commune with God, and of that carefulness to be used by us in securing such purity. It seems from what follows, either that there were two sacrificial feasts, one public for all, and one private for Jesse's family and Samuel, or else that the sacrifice was public, and that Samuel shared the feast privately with Jesse's family.

Verse 6.—Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. The scene has here changed from before the town's gate with the town-officers in Samuel's presence, to a private room with Jesse and seven of his sons before the prophet. Its meaning was fully known to the prophet, and seems clearly to have been in part explained to the others present, but only in part, for it would not have been safe to let the brothers know to what the elect one was elected. It would have been likely to get to Saul's ears, and make mischief. In Samuel's assurance we see that God's revelation to his prophets made them infallible in nothing except that which was revealed. Samuel's impression was from himself, not from God. This will help us to understand what is meant by saying that God's prophets were as prophets infallible, though fallible as men. Comp. x. 23, 24.

Verse 7.—Look not, etc.—We have here a prohibition and its explanation. The explanation of the prohibition as to its first part, is that God has rejected Eliab; as to its second, that God's eye finds fitness in the nature and character. "As we think, so are we," and in at least two ways: what we are, determines what we become. God weighs actions, and in his balances gold, glory, and all the world are not so much as "the dust of the balance."

Verse 8, 9.—Neither hath the Lord, etc. Whether by lot or in what way God's will was made known we are not told. These words show that the family knew that one was to be chosen of God for some purpose, but just what was the purpose was doubtless unknown. See verse 13, and above.

Verse 10.—The Lord hath not, etc. The seven included the first three, xvii. 12. Both Samuel and the father must have at length been astounded that all were rejected. We find in the Old Testament, that God very frequently, perhaps usually in his selections, took a younger if not the youngest. This was in part to magnify his own sovereignty, and in part to teach the worth of genuine manhood in distinction from mere accidental advantages.

Verse 11.—Are here all, etc. No others present, and Samuel had supposed that these were all. There remaineth, etc. An omission confessed and justified. He had been commanded to bring his sons (vs. 5) and David he left out, partly because he was the youngest, partly because he was off with the sheep. How often do we think least of that which in God's sight is most.

Send, etc. A command and its explanation. Somewhat of rebuke also may have been in the words. Jesse's justification of his neglect to call David was really lame, at best only an apology.

Verse 12.—Arise, etc. Said at once on the appearance of the young man. The name David means "Beloved." His appearance was as attractive as the first-born's was commanding. "Ruddy," was "of red, or auburn hair." Said to have been regarded in the East as the color of beauty for hair. This was the Lord's beloved. This act marked him king. Vs. 13. His history is for future study.

QUESTIONS.—How well is David known by us? What are the three divisions of

his life? Where are we first introduced to him? At what age?

Vs. 1. What was the act of anointing? Who was Jesse's grandfather? What, then, was David's relation to Boaz and Ruth? Ans. Great-grandchild. Was Ruth a Jewess? Do you remember the name of her first husband? Of her Moabite sister? For whom did she avow a permanent affection? What became of her sister Orpah?

Vs. 2. What was the occasion of Samuel's unreadiness to go to Bethlehem? Is there not an appearance of intended deception in the command of God? Is truth concealed necessarily truth denied? If a discreet silence is sometimes justifiable, what have you to say of any and every known lie? Prov. xii. 22.

Vs. 4. Why did the Bethlehmites tremble?

Vs. 6. Why was Samuel pleased with Eliab? Are first appearances reliable?

Vs. 7. Does the Lord ever judge by external standards? For what should we all pray? Psalm li. 6, 10.

Vs. 12. What is the meaning of "ruddy"? Of the words, "of a beautiful countenance?" In what respect was young David "goodly to look to?"

Vs. 13. How did the Spirit of the Lord come upon him?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

YOUTHS' DEPARTMENT.



For the New Year.

Hark! at the gate of sunlight— A knock and a merry shout; 'Tis the New Year come in a chariot, With winged hopes all about;— Open the door in the shadows, And let the Old Year out.

He was young, as I remember, Only a twelvemonth gone; And he came in pomp and splendor, Like the heir to a kingly throne; I must be growing older, Since his last day is done.

Lord of the year that is vanished, Lord of the glad New Year, While life is all bright and joyous, Teach me thy love and fear; That passing on to the shadows, I ever may have Thee near.

Roland's First Knot.

"There is not a prettier sight to me in all the world than that," said Captain Shirley to my father, as we were crossing from Liverpool to Queenstown.

My father, who had hold of my hand as the captain spoke, thought that he had referred to the gorgeous sunset which at the moment was shedding a glory upon the waters. He made the reply that landsmen were not so highly privileged as sailors in respect of splendid sunsets, and steadily watched the sun slowly sinking beneath the wave.

"Oh, yes, that is pretty enough in its way," said the captain, with a little backhanded shake of his two fingers toward the glowing West; "but it was not of that I was thinking."

"Of what then, captain?" asked my father with a smile.

"Of this sir," and the captain, as he spoke, lightly touched my father's hand which, as I have said, affectionately held mine in its grasp.

"Why, you see, Captain Shirley," said my father, "my boy is leaving us for the first time for a situation in Queenstown, and I thought I should like to see him start fair. So just to please his mother—"

"Oh, of course," cried the captain with a merry laugh, "his father does not, of course, take any interest in the matter; he takes hold of his darling boy's hand a dozen times in the hour, but that means nothing. It is all done to please his mother!"

My father, who is one of the tenderest-hearted men living, saw that he had been "caught," and that the captain understood the loving motive of his trip as clearly as if it had been explained to him in so many words. He shook Captain Shirley warmly by the hand, and said briefly, "It means all that you see, and perhaps more, captain."

It was a calm, delightful evening, and the captain walked up and down the deck with us, chatting in that pleasant tone which, better than the most carefully ordered conversation, helps to set

mind and heart at rest. "Your son's coming on board to-day, has brought into my mind a little story which it may be pleasant to him to hear," said the captain, "especially when he is so like the hero of it that I have more than once been going to call him Roland Godfrey."

"Ah!" continued the captain with a sigh, "poor Roland went his first voyage without any father's hand to lay hold of! It was a very sad piece of business, I can tell you. I was then sailing between Southampton and Calcutta, and could not but feel some surprise that his father should come on board without expressing any wish to any one, so far as I could learn, about having an eye to his boy during the voyage. I watched the parting between them, and it was as cold and as formal as between chance acquaintances, instead of father and son. I said to myself, there is some mystery here, and I could not help pitying the youngster who was bound on so long a voyage without a friend on board."

"I am quite sure, Captain Shirley," said my father warmly, "that you became his friend from that minute."

"Well, I could not help taking an interest in the lad," said the captain, modestly, "he was so quiet, and kind, and respectful in all his ways, and one day he told me that he was going out to a relation in Calcutta to assist him in counting-house business, although his tastes, he added, were in quite a different direction—my own line, for example. I looked at him as he said this, with surprise, for until now I had not noticed what a resolute, lissom, well-built youth he was. By dint of a good deal of questioning, for he was very reserved, I gathered that he had been fond of boating, and that he had had more than one hair-breadth escape.

"Many more besides myself on that voyage had good reason to be thankful that Roland had come on board, as you will hear in a minute or two. I did the best I could to make the lad feel at home, and officers and men took to him, and it was easy to see that if it had been his lot to have become a sailor, instead of a quill-driver, as he sometimes bitterly said, his youth time would have been as bright as any father could have wished. We had been out for about ten days, when we suddenly encountered very violent weather. We were in the midst of a tempest before we had half made up our minds what weather we were going to have, and there was that curious feeding amongst many on board which led them to anticipate something far worse than anything they had yet experienced.

"I never remember an instance of what better deserves to be called cool courage than that which Roland displayed on this occasion. I had given orders to take in sail, and to make the ship as tight as we could while the hurricane lasted, and had run down below to say a word or two of comfort to some poor ladies who were almost distracted with fear. I had not noticed that Roland was standing by when I said that the topsail must be taken in, or we should get mischief; but the lad had heard my words. I had scarcely left the spot when a man hurried aloft to carry out the order; but the violence of wind drove him back, and he was blown on the deck with a broken arm.

"For a minute or two a panic seemed to seize the men; but while they were wasting time and words in discussing about it being the business of every one to go up except themselves, Roland, unseen by them had nimbly climbed the mast, and by his own tact had got in the sail! How he did it he never knew; but having done it, instead of coming down again, he kept up aloft, resolving, as he said, to knot the sails with arms and legs as well as with the knot he had tied. Observing that the sail was taken in, I made no enquiry when I went back, and they, believing at last, that it had been done by the poor fellow who had been blown down sometime before, thought no more about it until I missed Roland, and anxiously inquired if any one had seen him. Search was made in every part of the ship, and nowhere could the lad be found; and to my great grief I had to resign myself at length to the conviction that the poor boy had been blown overboard.

"The storm ceased as suddenly as it came on, and at night we were sailing in comparatively smooth water, when I gave vent to the sorrow that was oppressing me by crying out—

"Roland, Roland; where are you?"

"Judge of my astonishment, to say nothing of fear, when, in reply to my exclamation, I heard the boy's voice faintly say—

"All right, captain. It was my first knot, and I was afraid it might get loose."

"Where are you, my boy?" I cried. "Up here, sir; I shall be glad to come down, if you think the sail will be safe."

"With a joyous shout half a dozen sprang aloft and brought Roland down as tenderly as if he had been an infant. I could not help clasping the boy to my breast in a transport of delight.

"But why did you not come down, Roland?" I asked. "You might have lost your life."

"I heard you say, sir, that the safety of the ship depended upon the order you gave to be carried out, and every one has been so good to me, you, sir, especially—the lad could get no farther, and I was glad to take him to my cabin, and to see that the best attention was paid to him. I reported the circumstance, you may be sure, in the right quarter, and Roland had not been long ashore when the representatives of my owners in Calcutta made very handsome proposals to his relatives for the training of the lad for a sea-faring life. Roland was to good a son to do any thing without his father's consent, which after some delay was reluctantly given. At the present moment," said Captain Shirley, bringing his interesting story to a close, "there is not a better officer in the service than the brave boy who so strangely and courageously tied his first knot. I saw the meeting between him and his father, sir, when he came back after a time of great danger, when his name was upon hundreds of tongues for the courage and humanity he displayed. There was no coldness between father and son then, you may be sure, and it was with no ordinary pleasure that I saw the father's cheek flush with joy, as he heard his son's name rapturously shouted by a shipwrecked crew whom he had rescued in their hour of utmost need."

Many years have gone since I heard the story of "Roland's first knot," and gone, too, have the dear father and genial captain in whose society I heard it; but I seldom see a boy settling down to any business or profession without earnestly wishing that the right choice has been made, and one in which a fair measure of success may be fairly looked for.—British Journal.

The Pilgrimage of Sorrowful.

By ELIZABETH PATTEN HUNT.

Edited by Mrs. Hunt-Morgan.

CHAPTER XVI.

Here the Black Prince again interfered; but he appeared, as he generally wished in disguise; and said to Sorrowful:

"Such words as you have been uttering, might be suitable for a pilgrim who had never gone to Relaxation, who had passed through Trial as in the immediate presence of the Prince, who had been steady, persevering, and unyielding in Temptation, who had found by experience that all was easy and delightful; but pride is so much the moving cause of all you say and do, that it is no wonder that you should take upon you to use the language of upright and consistent pilgrims."

This speech drew Sorrowful's attention from the pilgrim to whom she had been speaking; and she began again to reflect upon her own folly, and to think how very unlike she was to real pilgrims.

But Grace was with her; if this had not been the case, no doubt the Black Prince would again have prevailed against her. She proceeded on her way in the same state of mind, until it began to get dark; at which she was much alarmed; for she could see no place near at which she could tarry for the night and it is in the dark that the Black Prince likes to annoy pilgrims for he is not so soon detected, and pilgrims in general are more easily frightened than when the sun shines. Sorrowful had many miles to go before she could reach any Lodge, and the Black Prince and his servants were continually terrifyng her, until at last the desired resting-place was attained, and she was led