

Sunday Reading.

Give it to God.

Hast thou in all thy flock a lamb— Unblemished without blight, The pride and beauty of thy herd, And of thine eyes the light? Give it to God.

A Pilgrim's Prayer.

BY REV. DR. STANFORD. "And lead us not into temptation."—Matt. vi. 13; Luke xi. 4. (AUTHORISED VERSION.) "And bring us not into temptation."—Matt. vi. 13; Luke xi. 4. (REVISED VERSION.) The Lord's Prayer is for the use of the family while travelling home. This is no easy travelling. A poet, speaking of the modern 'Pilgrim's Progress,' reminds us that there can be no railway to the Celestial City—that the journey must still be made in the ancient fashion—made, so to speak, on foot—made not for us, but by us. The onward movement is not like that of a carriage, while we are asleep inside it, but must be the result of our own individual volition and exertion 'We walk;' and we walk 'by faith, not by sight.'

lifting its head from below, for only the lunatic will 'dally with the crested worm.' Life is not in love with death; and the instincts of holiness would make the Christian shun a sin when known to be a sin, even without the warning, 'avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away.' But it is not so. The sin that is near us constantly hides itself under a false colour and a wrong name. We may be led into temptation, when in business. Business is not in itself a sin. It is not a sin to make the most of the earth, to get the most out of it, to make it answer, to turn it into value, and to do that with it which creates wealth. The commandment to 'dress and keep' the garden in which God has set man, so as to 'replenish and subdue the earth,' was given before the fall, and is still binding on us; but in the world as it now is, who does not know that while in pursuance of this lawful end we may be led into something that is unlawful? When a thing that is in itself only subsidiary, is interesting, there is a tendency to take too keen an interest in it. Dealing with earthly things, we may be too eager to gain them, too grasping to keep them and too sorrowful to let them go. We may be mastered by the law of assimilation, and so become like the elements that we work in. 'Bury a man in earth,' says the shrewd Owen Feltham, 'and he himself will soon be earth.'

and as for the statuette, we know that an idol is nothing in the world." At last, fellow Christians would venture on remonstrance. Then the young people in the family of Marcus would fire up, and answer grandly—'You tell us that we are in danger. We tell you that we know when to stop. You tell us that we distress the consciences of persons in the Church who keep to the simplicity of the old faith, and check the decision of converts. We beg to reply that we glory in everything broad, and scornfully repudiate everything narrow. The meanness of all influences over conduct is that which comes from the thought of what others may think. Others may think it religion to shut themselves up and read the old Gospel manuscripts; we stand up for our own rights, and, whatever others do, as for us and our house we will please ourselves.' So by degrees they were led into temptation, and at length it became impossible to tell from any social signs whether these advanced Christians were servants of Jesus or of Jupiter. Let us, as far as it is useful, apply the principle thus suggested to the circumstances of our own day. We may be led into temptation by retiring from the world. It must be plain to every one who forms a fair estimate of men as they are, that the great majority of them regard Christian principles as expounded in the New Testament with dead indifference or sarcastic hostility. The many are of the world: the few are not of it. So patent is this fact, and so patent has it ever been, that according to the Supreme Book, the term 'world,' marking the ungodly, is the term that also represents the idea of society in general; obviously importing that, in the judgment of inspiration, the ungodly form the mass of mankind. This is an alarming consideration, for it implies that if we are thoroughgoing Christians, we have to hold our ground or make our way against an opposing mass. Surely that which has at once mass and momentum, weight and velocity, must carry all before it! It has often been thought, therefore, that there is no safety for those who are 'not of the world' but by getting out of its way. If we attempt this by retirement into some scene of quiet happiness, we may there meet with new temptations. In the middle ages, when it was a common article of belief that the garden of Eden, though a holy secret, guarded by angels, still flowered in all its glory in some Eastern land, many a terrified soul in wicked city or monastic cell would doubtless dream of the blessedness there would be in finding the spot, and dwelling there guarded from Satanic spells. Yet, Paradise was the scene of the fall, and there it was that man was first led into temptation. Be sure that if we could find or make some earthly Paradise of our own, where we might hear 'the voice of the Lord God walking in the trees of the garden,' where 'the world forgetting and the world forgot,' holy love would tremble into tenderness, thought into flame, and where there would be no outward interruptions to prayers, even there, a tempting spirit would find us. If, on the other hand, we fled into a wilderness, we should still be followed. In the same old times at which we have just glanced, devotion has often sped in alarm from the world into the wilderness. The devotee has many a day made his escape to some stern solitude, where, a cave his house, a litter of leaves his bed, roots his food, his drink the crystal spring—he has tried to crucify every natural inclination, to strain all humanity out of his body, and to steep his soul in ghastly meditations, that thus he might keep out Satan. But old legends testify that on such lives Hell has often spent its utmost fury, and that in such conditions poor souls have suffered most from the poison of idle thought or polluting fancy. Though the first Adam was tempted in a garden, the second was tempted in a wilderness. There it was, that through forty days, with no rich fruits to stay the sting of hunger, no clear stream rippling over golden sands to slake his thirst, no shelter from the fiery day or the freezing night, and where—beauty banished, grim desolation sat enthroned, He who afterwards died for us was tempted, and the wilderness was the

memorable field in which man's great representative fought with man's great foe. After this, let no follower of his hope to escape 'the fiery darts of the wicked one,' by living in any willfulness of self-inflicted poverty or pain. The principle of seeking retirement from the world of temptation, either in some kind of Eden or in some kind of wilderness, is always being tried in some form or other, and always fails. We may be led into temptation even when we feel most secure from it by communion with God. When was Christ Himself tempted? Bishop Hall says, 'No sooner has Christ come out of the waters of baptism, than He comes into the fire of temptation. No sooner does the Spirit come in the form of a dove, than He is 'led by the Spirit into the wilderness.' No sooner doth God say, 'This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased,' than Satan darts the suggestion of doubt, 'If Thou be the Son of God.' We have in Christ's appearance a rehearsal of what is likely to be our own. It is a specimen of what is common in the tempter's strategy. After a season of profit and privilege you may expect to be caught in some artifice or challenged to some deadly fight. The robber of the soul waits for the moment when the soul, being most happy, is least cautious, and has most to lose. 'It is the man bringing his dividend from the banker's door who has most cause to dread the pilferer's hand.' It is said of Jesus, whose steps we are to tread in, that 'He being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the Wilderness.' This strikes us as a strong contrast to the reckless rush and flippant levity with which men often plunge into dangers so great that it would need a miracle to bring them out unscathed. 'Be ye filled with the Spirit' is the Divine law for us. Can we, when thus filled, go, from our own preferences, into the haunts of sin? Our Father never sends His children into them on any needful errand, or for any wise discipline, without this preparation. 'He never,' says an old writer, 'suffers his castles to be besieged till they be provisioned.' With this equipment, it may be His will that we should enter fields where we have to face the full array of evil, and brave the full blast of storms. But, however charged with the Spirit's influence, we shall not step into a post of great moral hazard without clear orders. While only led by our own inclination into a risk, we have no Divine guarantee of protection. Led and filled by God Himself, our souls are safe anywhere. Not only so, but temptations will be made subservient to the highest purposes of profit to man and glory to God. Overcome, they will keep us closer to Him who is leading us, make us lowlier God-ward, and more sympathetic man-ward. Victors who have been tempted are the wisest teachers, and the strongest helpers of those who are tempted now. Still, though the result may be so gracious, the process is so trying that it is right to say, 'Father, if it be possible, spare me. It is not my own choice to go, if it be Thy will lead me into some other path, but if it be Thy will to lead me in this I will go. I will go in the strength of the Lord God, making mention of Thy righteousness and that only.'

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Lesson VII.—NOVEMBER 18, 1883.

DAVID ANOINTED.

1 Sam. xvi. 1-13.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 6, 7.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him."—Psa. lxxxix. 20.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. The Lesson, 1 Sam. xvi. 1-13.

T. Saul and David, 1 Sam. xvi. 14-23.

W. David and his Kingdom, Psa. lxxxix. 15-37.

F. The Son of David, Jer. xxiii. 1-8; xxxi. 27-37.

F. Born in Bethlehem, Matt. ii. 1-12.

S. Recognized, Luke ii. 21-40.

S. Anointed with the Holy Spirit, Matt., ch. 3.

A DIVINELY CHOSEN KING ANOINTED.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. The Sacrifice, Vs. 1-5. II. The Choice, Vs. 6-12.

III. The Anointing, Vs. 12, 13.

QUESTIONS.—In what condition was Saul? Was David to become king at once? Whose son was he? Where did he live?

Vs. 1-5.—What gentle reproof to Samuel? vs. 1. What warning here? To what should we always submit? Of what was Samuel afraid? What direction given by Jehovah? What does this teach us?

Vs. 6-12.—How was Samuel deceived? How are we often? Of what did God remind him? What should this teach us as to ourselves? As to others? Who was the chosen one? What was his appearance? Why did God choose David? Acts xiii. 22.

Vs. 12, 13.—What did God say of David? What was done? Was this publicly known? What did it signify?

Scripture Searchings.—Trace David's descent back to Abraham. What great gift is promised to those who "obey Christ"?

The interview between Samuel and Saul recorded in Lesson VI, was their last one. Each went to his own home—Saul to Gilgal, and Samuel to Ramah. The decision to rend the kingdom from Saul was final and irreversible; and in our present Lesson, the first step is taken towards the preparation of his successor. And Samuel, whom the Lord used to depose Eli, to raise Saul to the throne, and to acquint him with his rejection, is sent to choose and anoint David as the second king of Israel.

NOTES.—Vs. 1.—How long dost thou mourn? Samuel had a sincere affection for Saul, and seems to have shut himself up in Ramah, to an indulgence in grief for his rejection. Seeing I have rejected him. The Lord takes the whole responsibility of the act, and will care for whatever disorders a change of dynasty may occasion. Fill thine horn with oil. Anointing with the holy oil of the tabernacle was a symbol of appointment to the office of prophet, priest, or king. Jesse, the Bethlehemite. With whom Samuel was evidently acquainted. Bethlehem (meaning house of bread), was an old Syrian town called Ephrath, in Gen. xlviii. 7. It was a little one among the thousands of Judah, never having risen to any special eminence, although connected with the greatest events of revelation. Jesse was the son of Obed, and grandson of Boaz and Ruth; and, most likely, had inherited the property of Boaz, and was in good circumstances. A king among his sons. Jesse had eight sons, of whom David, the youngest, was now about twenty years old.

Vs. 2-5.—How can I go? A question which shows the great prophet to have been human, like the rest of us. The circumstances were trying. It would be regarded as an act of treason by Saul, if he heard of it, and one worthy of death. Besides, there may have been a lingering unwillingness, on Samuel's part, to shut the door so completely upon all hope of Saul's restoration. Take an heifer. . . . say, I am come to sacrifice. "The Lord here counsels duplicity," say the enemies of the Bible. But it is no more duplicity than the act of Gideon's three hundred men in surrounding the camp of the Midianites, and blowing their trumpets, as if a great army was behind them, or any other lawful stratagem in war. Though David is to be anointed, it is not necessary to do it so openly as to stir up civil war. Call Jesse to the sacrifice. As there was no one fixed place for sacrifice, he could choose Bethlehem, and invite Jesse to the feast, and designate the future king. I will show thee. God opens our way one step at a time.

Samuel did that which the Lord spake. The old habit and spirit of obedience prevailed over any unwillingness. He is true to the motto of his childhood, "Speak; thy servant heareth." The elders of the town ("probably sitting in the gate to carry on the town business.") Trembled at his coming. (Bible Union Version, hastened to meet him.) Bethlehem was an obscure town, and not within the usual circuit of Samuel, as judge. The elders were therefore fearful that his coming betokened something extraordinary, like a judgment; especially did they fear some evil, as they probably knew of the estrangement between Samuel and the king. To their great relief, he declares he comes peaceably, and to the honor of their town, he comes to sacrifice to Jehovah. Sanctify yourselves. The same command that was given Israel by Joshua, to prepare for crossing the Jordan. It included washing their persons and clothes, and other external symbols of preparation. Samuel took special care that Jesse and his sons should have the necessary purification. Vs. 6, 7.—Eliab. (My father's God). The eldest son of Jesse. Of noble appearance, personal beauty, tall, and finely proportioned, as vs. 7 intimates. Perhaps there was a certain resemblance to Saul in this splendid looking young man, which made Samuel's heart warm towards him, and he said (to himself): Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. Literally, the Lord's Christ, or Messiah. I have refused him. There had been enough of choosing a king for his bodily inches and beauty, in Saul's case, who had been selected to please the people. Now the Lord will choose one to please himself. Man looketh on the outward appearance. That is as far as man can see clearly. When he looks into the hearts and motives of others, he is likely to err greatly. The Lord looketh on the heart. Which to him is an open page. The Bible Union Version renders: For man looketh at the eyes, and Jehovah looks at the heart. Vs. 8-10.—Abinadab and Shammah are made to pass before Samuel for his survey; and now, taught by the Spirit, he makes no mistake to be corrected, as at first; but at once sees that neither of these is the chosen one. We notice how emphatically the idea is presented that this selection was to be the Lord's own choice. We meet these three eldest sons again in xvii. 13. Seven. That is, including the three already mentioned. Vs. 11, 12.—Are here all thy children? Jesse had been called, with all of his sons, to the feast, but he had not obeyed. He judged by outward appearance, and thought it of no consequence to bring in the youngest, who, in his estimation, was a mere child. But Samuel had been instructed by the Lord that one of the sons was to be anointed king, and the Lord had refused all the others. We will not sit down (to the feast) till he come. David was keeping the sheep—a menial employment, fit for women, servants, and children; but one which, as in the case of Moses, was blessed to him in preparing him for his future position. Ruddy Red haired and fair of skin, a mark of rare beauty in the East. Of a beautiful countenance. (Eyes, Bible Union Version.) Goodly to look to. A fine specimen of manly beauty, bright and engaging in his whole appearance. So also Joseph (Gen. xxxix. 6), and Moses (Ex. ii. 2). Vs. 13.—Anointed him. For what purpose, Samuel did not disclose. In the midst of his brethren. Who may have thought that he was called to the office of prophet, but did not dream that he was set apart as king. The oil was the symbol of the Holy Spirit, and with the symbol, came the Spirit himself, and David (beloved) was thenceforth a consecrated man. It was to him as the Pentecostal season to the apostles. From that day forward. Though Saul continued to reign for a while, the Spirit was with David and not with Saul, and David was the hope of Israel. Yet as the raising of Saul at once to power resulted in his failure, David is to be subjected to discipline, in order that his faith may be developed by trial, before he assumes the sceptre. SUGGESTED LESSONS. When God bids us go into difficulty and danger, he will be present to protect us from harm. Bringing the sacrifice of Christ with us, we shall both be safe, and be taught the Lord's will. God always has a man for every emergency and knows just where to find him. Positions of obscurity are often the fittest places for the development of the Lord's heroes. In the choice of David, God shows himself to be a sovereign. Whom God chooses for his service, he endows with his Spirit to perform their work.