

The Christian Messenger.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1876.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, February 20th, 1876.—David established King.—2 Samuel v. 17-25. B. C. 1056-1046.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 17-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established." 2 Chronicles xx. 20.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, 2 Samuel ii. Tuesday, 2 Samuel iii. Wednesday, 2 Samuel iv. Thursday, 2 Samuel v. Friday, Psalm xxiv. Saturday, Psalm lxxviii. Sunday, 1 Chronicles xiv. 8-17.

ANALYSIS.—I. First attempt and failure, Vs. 17-21. II. Second attempt and failure, Vs. 22-25.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.—So far was David from being pleased with Saul's death that he took the life of the young Amalekite who pretentiously brought to him the news. A crisis, however, had come; and by divine direction he removed from Ziklag to Hebron, where the men of Judah at once made him king, the rival house of Israel meanwhile, under Ishbosheth, Saul's son, maintaining its dynasty at Mahanaim, beyond Jordan. It continued, however, but seven years and a half, ending in the cold-blooded murder of Ishbosheth by two captains of his body-guard. His rival being thus wickedly put out of the way, there was nothing to prevent David from becoming king, not only over Judah, but over all Israel.

Thus, after reigning seven years and a half at Hebron, he was formally offered and he readily accepted the crown of every Israelitish tribe. Three hundred thousand warriors joined in celebrating his accession in a three days' festival. His first act was to give the nation a new capital by taking the stronghold of Jebus, so strong that lame and blind men were deemed sufficient for its defence. But it was captured by the agile Joab, who received the promised reward. It was at once called "The City of David," and made the royal residence. David reigned here thirty-three years. The Philistines did not purpose to admit his kingly authority, however, nor to surrender their long domination over Israel. It is of their resistance that this lesson properly treats.

EXPOSITION.—See the same narrative with scarcely a variation in 1 Chronicles xiv. 8-17. The title of our lesson might mislead us as to its nature. David was king by divine election from the day he was anointed at his father's house. He was king, in fact, from the time of his second anointing, immediately after Saul's death, ii. 4. For seven and a half years, he continued king over Judah only. He was then anointed a third time as king over all Israel, on the voluntary submission of the other tribes, v. 3. It was the report of this last anointing and enlargement of authority, that waked up the Philistines and brought them on in force. They had learned something of the power of this king as long ago as Goliath's time. He had since lived in their territory long enough to make them acquainted with his genius and heroism, and now that the whole of Israel owned him as king, they saw at once that he would not, as for the last seven years, be occupied in maintaining himself against rivals among his own people; and besides he would have a ten-fold greater force to turn against them. It was policy to strike a sudden mighty blow before David had time to get his forces in trim for action. But how can their repeated attacks be called the establishment of David as king? The intent of the attacks was his overthrow. Could they have succeeded, he would indeed have continued king, but as a tributary, with none of that glory of independent sovereignty which characterized his subsequent reign. By breaking the powers of the Philistines, he confirmed and enlarged his own.

I. First attack.—Verse 17.—The expression "all the Philistines" shows that this was no mere raid, but a combined effort of the whole nation to meet a great emergency, and break, once for all, the dangerous power of David. The Philistines were a confederacy, under five princes or chiefs, having five great cities as centres of power. These were

Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. These princes all united in this attack, and each put in all the effective force at his command. Come up to seek David. Their country was the lowlands on the sea coast, and hence moving into the interior of Judea they went up. See in this the value of a single life, if it be of one able to inspire and lead others. And David heard of it and went down to the hold. The promptness and suddenness of the move, found David unprepared. He was obliged to betake himself to a "hold," or fortress going down, perhaps, from Jerusalem. Vs. 6-10. It is with good reason believed to have been "the cave of Adullam," where in former days he had found refuge. 1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2. This cave was six or eight miles southwest of Bethlehem. See 2 Sam. xxiii. 13. It is probable that the reference there is to these same two battle, with the Philistines.

Verse 18.—Come and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. The Rephaim were a race of giants, anciently on the east of Palestine, mentioned in Gen. xiv. 5, and elsewhere. They were early dispersed, and some of them settled west of Jordan. This valley would seem to have taken its name from them, as its former occupants. Josh. xv. 8.

Verse 19.—David inquires of the Lord [Jehovah]. David was wont to honor God in prosperity as well as in adversity. He knew from experience as well as from revelation, that Jehovah was his hope and helper. In such a critical time as this, remembering that he was asking as God's anointed, and as king of God's chosen people, there was peculiar fitness in this enquiry. A prayerful, trustful, humble, obedient spirit, ever has heavenly direction. Go up: for I will doubtless, etc. It seems from Isa. xxviii. 21, that Baal-perazim was a hill. The word "doubtless" is here equivalent to assuredly. The Hebrew idiom is "giving I will give." God's known purpose to save him did not take away his own purpose to save himself.

Verse 20.—Baal-perazim. Literally "master of breaches." Hence, Place of breaches. It took this name from the event of this day, and did not have it before. The comparison of David's onset to a breach of waters shows the suddenness, impetuosity, force, and overwhelming effect of the attack. The event might well give name to the hill, because of both its nature and its results; and the name would thus be a perpetual memorial of the event which well deserved to be remembered. The hill is spoken of in Isa. xxviii. 21, as adjoining "the valley of Gibeon."

Verse 21.—There they left their images. Their gods, so far from saving their worshippers, could not even save themselves; instead of keeping their owners from destruction were themselves destroyed. The Hebrew in 1 Chron. xiv. 12, tells that they were burned, but here it is only said that they were taken away, i. e., destroyed.

II. Second attack.—Verse 22. Come up yet again. They had been beaten but not conquered. They saw more clearly than at first that now was their time—that David as king of Israel was another matter than Saul as king. Down with David, was the cry.

Verse 23.—Again David enquires. A king, he yet owns God his king. At the army's head, yet Jehovah is his Head. Shall I go up? Implying that now, as before, he was on lower ground than the Philistines, perhaps again at his cave. Fetch a compass. March around in a circuit. Mulberry trees. "The name of a tree like a balsam-shrub, now growing about Mecca. So called from the dropping of a resin when the leaves are cut."

Verse 24.—The sound of a going in the tops, etc. The sound of a marching, as of troops, God's unseen forces, the signal of the presence of God coming in power. Then thou shalt bestir thyself. Bestir thyself because God stirs for thee. Follow, not lead him. Work with him, not against or without him. The march of God, not the tramp of human feet. Let God lead in our revivals, but let not man fail to be up and at work with God.

Verse 25.—Obedience, and victory. Smote the Philistines from Geba, etc. Geba, or Gibeon, a few miles to the north of Jerusalem. Gazer was far down to the southwest on the borders of Philistia. So complete was the victory. David honored God, and God honored

David. This battle seems to have satisfied the Philistines, and left David in security to build up his great kingdom.

QUESTIONS.—Where was David when the news of Saul's death reached him? To what place did he then remove? Who elected him at once king? Who was at the time king of Israel? Where and how long did Ishbosheth reign? Who killed him? After his death how far was David's kingdom extended? What was his first act as king over Judah and Israel? How strong was the fortress of Jebus? Who took it? What did it at once become? How long did David reign at Jerusalem? How long had he reigned at Hebron? Who at once resisted his kingly authority?

Vs. 17. Who were the Philistines, and where did they dwell? What "hold" is possibly meant?

Vs. 18. Where was the valley of Rephaim?

Vs. 19. Of whom did David inquire? Why? Is it an example in anything to us? See Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

Vs. 20. What is the meaning of Baal-perazim?

Vs. 21. Why did they leave their images? Has image-worship ever saved anybody?

Vs. 22. Why did they go up again? What were these mulberry trees?

Vs. 24. What is meant by "the sound of a going"? What by "bestir thyself"? What does this indicate as to Christian duty when God's Spirit is among the plants of the vineyard?

Vs. 25. How far were the Philistines driven? What was then true of David's fame? Few of us will ever be in earthly honor as David was; what may we be that is better? Rev. i. 6.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, February 27th, 1876.—The Ark brought to Zion.—2 Sam. vi. 1-15.

YOUTHS' DEPARTMENT.

For the Christian Messenger.

My Little Farm.

My little Farm has shady walks
And walls of living green,
With garden, orchard, ivied cot,
All smiling, neat and clean.

Two handsome cows, ten milk white sheep,
Some fowls of purest breed
Adorn its grounds; my horse is famed
For beauty, strength and speed.

Arranged with care, performed with skill,
My work is never toil;
No flies nor grubs destroy my plants,
No weeds infest the soil.

What nature lacks, with ready hand
Fair science quick supplies;
And wondrous crops from teeming fields
In due rotation rise.

Thus balmy seasons come and go,
Each fraught with golden fruit;
And best of all this farm's my own,
Its title none dispute.

I need not say this model place
Is hid from vulgar eyes,
Yet if you wish to see it, friend,
I'll tell you where it lies.

There is a realm not far away,
A bright enchanting land,
Where plans take shape and castles rise,
Untouched by mortal hand.

There lovers dwell and poets dream,
Each happy as a king,
And there in peerless beauty smiles
The little farm I sing.

S. S.

For the Christian Messenger.

Jot Tings for Boys and Girls about Missions.

Last week dear Editor you put me, I mean my article, in the Youths' Department. By so doing you did not offend me in the slightest, for my special delight is to instruct and please the youth of to-day, and to seek their interest in divine things. For, boys and girls, you are Nova Scotia's true Band of Hope, I mean to look round your Department for my Master's sake, and see if there are not some who will respond as did the prophet of old, to the question "Who will go?"

Before you all answer—Send me let me state that my enquiry is respecting going to work in God's vineyard—work! Mind, I say, work! not who will go and gather the grapes, and enjoy the clusters of Eschol for themselves. No! no! in asking for labourers for my Master, my appeal is to the true and sturdy hearted among you, who are willing to go forth into the wild forests of sin—with the battle axe of the Lord, to hew down the goodly trees chosen by the heathen, because they will not rot, that they may be unto them gods. Boys and girls, who count not their lives dear unto them, can carry the fire

from God's true altar, to burn up the abominations of the heathen, so that the waste places may blossom as the rose; and instead of the fir-tree, the sweet smelling myrtle may spring up to show God's purity and love.

To encourage and stimulate the timid, and to interest all in this good work, so far my ink has been used, and the following jottings it is hoped will prove a quickener of the true volunteer.

In no work has the power of God been more manifest than in our modern Foreign Mission field. How mighty are the results of feeble beginnings. I say modern Foreign Mission work—for Jesus sent out the first foreign missionaries—and did not restrict their field. They were to 'go into all the world' and 'make disciples, or Christians, of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'

These baptisers you see were the true pioneers in the ancient mission field, and the following figures will also show them to be still in the first rank in modern missionary enterprise. For in the year 1792 the Baptist Missionary Society was formed in England. In 1795 the London Missionary Society. In 1796 the Scottish Missionary Society. In the same year the Glasgow Missionary Society. In 1800 the Church (Established) Missionary Society. In the year 1816 the General Baptist Missionary Society, and in 1817 the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

Who was this modern missionary, some may ask, who started, by his example, so many societies in England in a few years? His name was Carey. Some of my young friends may say, "But we cannot do what he did, he was not a poor unknown school boy, or boy on the farm as I am." True you can never do what he has done, there is no need to be for it, he did his work thoroughly. But you can do greater things by faith and perseverance.

It was in the year 1783 Dr. Ryland baptised the future apostle to the benighted millions of India. Boys and girls, in my next, you shall hear something more about this wonderful Missionary.

Meantime look up your cents, and ask God to bless missions and missionaries, is the advice of your friend,

J. F. AVERY.

Halifax, N. S.

(From the Advocate and Guardian.)

A True Story.

[The following letter was read by Mr. Ralph Wells, at a Thanksgiving festival.]

FRIEND Tom, if I may call you so, I know you are surprised to get a letter from me, but I hope you won't be mad at my writing to you. I want to tell you my thanks for the way you talked to me when I was in prison, it has led me to be a better man. I guess you thought I did not care for what you said, & at the first go off I didn't, but I need you was a man who had done big work with good men, & want no Sucker, nor want gasing, and all the boys knod it.

I used to think at nite what you said, & for it I knocked off swearing a month before my time was up, for I saw it was no good nohow—the day my time was up you told me if I would shake the cross [quit stealing] & live on the square for three months it would be the best job I ever done in my life. The state agent give me a ticket to here, & on the car I thought more of what you said last to me, but didn't make up my mind. When we got to Y— on the cars from there to here I pulled off an old woman's leather [robbed her of her pocket-book], I hadn't no more than got it off when I wished I hadn't done it; for a while before I made up my mind to be a square bloke for three months on your word, but forgot it when I saw the leather was a gif [easy to get], but I kept close to her, & when she got out of the cars at a way place, I said, mam, have you lost anything & she tumbled her leather was off [found her purse was gone], is this it, says I, giving it to her. Well, says she, if you arn't honest, but I hadn't got cheek enough to stand that sort of talk, so I left her in a hurry.

When I got here I had \$1 and 25 cents left, & I didn't get no work for 3 days, as I aint strong enough for a roust-about [deck hand] on a steam bote. The afternoon of the 3d day I spent my last 10 cents for two moons [large round sea

biscuit] and cheese, & was thinking I would have to go on the dip again [picking pockets], when I thought of what you once said, about a fellows calling on the Lord when he was in hard luck, & I thought I would try it one anyhow, but when I tried it, I got stuck on the start, and all I could get off was Lord give a poor fellow a chance to square it for 3 months, for Christ's Sake, Amen, & I kept a thinking of it over and over as I went along. About an hour after that I was in 4th St., & this is what happened, & is the cause of my being where I am now, & about which I will tell you before I get done writing. As I was walking along I herd a big noise & saw a horse running away with a carriage with 2 children in it, I grabbed up a peace of box cover from the sidewalk and run in the middle of the street, and when the horse came up I smashed him over the head as hard as I could drive, the bord split to pieces & the horse checked up a little & I grabbed the reins and pulled his head down until he stopped. The gentleman what owned him came running up and as soon as he saw the children were all rite, he shook hands with me and gave me a \$50 greenback, & my asking the Lord to help me, came into my head, & I was so thunderstruck I couldn't drop the reins nor say nothing, he saw something was up, & coming back to me said, my boy are you hurt? & the thought come into my head just then to ask him for work, & I asked him to take back the bill & give me a job, says he, jump in here and lets talk about it, but keep the mone.

He asked me if I could take care of horses, & I said yes, for I used to hang round livery stables, and often would help clean & drive horses, he told me he wanted a man for that work and would give me \$16 a month & board me. You bet I took that chance at once, that nite in my little room over the stable I sat a long time thinking over my past life & of what had just happened, and I just got down on my knees & thanked the Lord for the job, & to help me to square it, and to bless you for putting me up to it, & the next morning I done it again & got me some new togs [clothes] & a bible, for I made up my mind, after what the Lord had done for me I would read a little every nite & morning, & I ask him to keep an eye on me.

When I had been there about a week, Mr. Z— (that's his name) came in my room one nite, and saw me reading the Bible. He asked me if I was a Christian, and I told him no—he asked me how it was I read the bible instead of papers and books. Well, Tom, I thought I had better give him a square deal on the start, so I told him all about my being in prison & about you, & how I had almost done give up looking for work, & how the Lord got me the job, when I asked him, & the only way I had to pay him back was to read the Bible & square it, & I asked him to give me a chance for three months. He talked to me like a father for a long time & told me I could stay, & then I felt better than ever I had done in my life, for I had given Mr. Z— a fair start with me, & now I didn't fear no one giving me a black cap [exposing his past life] & running me off the job.

The next morning he called me into the library & gave me another square talk & advised me to study every day & he would help me one or two hours every nite, & he gave me an arithmetic, a spelling-book, a geography, and a writing-book, and he hers me every nite. He lets me come into the house to prayers every morning & got me in a Bible-class in the Sunday-School, which I likes very much, for it helps me to understand my Bible better.

Now Tom, the 3 months on the square are 2 months ago, and as you said, it is the best job I ever did in my life, & I commenced another of the same sort right away, only it is God helping me to last a lifetime, Tom. I wrote you this letter to tell you I do think God has forgiven my sins, & herd your prayers, for you told me you should pray for me, I no i love to read my word & tell him all my troubles, & he helps me i know for I have plenty of chances to steal, but I don't feel as I once did, & now I take more pleasure in going to church than to the theatre & that wasn't so once.

Our minister and others often talk with me & a month ago they wanted me to join the church, but I said no not

The sud Morton, cl Morton, of 4 months January, w by a deep Mr. Morton hearted, st He had b employ of which he George M. wheel-wrig Feeling ill some slimp boarding. Dieatur again em baffled th on the Sa passed aw of his me hope of a l a wife and N. S., to v have the s husband a and he h His body the ceme A funeral W. G. Pa "Berwick At Winc Mrs. Eliz age. At Shul 9th, at the Esq., John of his age. At Winc Hensley, J College, al ral, in the On the l Rev. Can Divinity a versity of On the l year of h On Frid late Edwar age.

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