

Sabbath School. BIBLE LESSONS.

BY REV. J. H. VINCENT, D. D.

Fourth Quarter.

Nov. 7.-Nov. 18. 1 Sam. 16: 1-18.

DAVID ANOINTED.

GOLDEN TEXT.

I have found David my servant; with holy oil have I anointed him.—Ps. 101.

1. The Lord said unto Samuel—The Lord reproves Samuel, who had deemed meant well, but had not thought rightly. How long wilt thou mourn for Saul?—He continued to mourn for Saul, not merely from his personal attachment to the fallen king, but also, or perhaps still more, from anxiety for the welfare of Israel. Fill thine horn—A different word from the vital spoken of at 10. To Jesse the Bethlehemite—The father of David, and thus the immediate progenitor of the whole line of the kings of Judah, and ultimately of Christ. He is the only one of his name who appears in the sacred records. A king for me—A king for me; not one to gratify the people's desires, but to fulfil all my will, as is said Acts 13, 22, and to serve my glory. Or, my king; the Hebrew phrase, to me, or for me, being commonly used for the word mine.

2. How can I go—The sacred historian does not conceal from us that Samuel himself was afraid, but relates the fact; here is an evidence of veracity. If Saul hear . . . kill me—This protest against the plain direction of the voice of God rests naturally on the fact that Saul was still, notwithstanding the divine sentence of rejection, rightful king of Israel, and would regard the designation of another to the office (if it could not be kept concealed from him) as an act of treachery and revolt, even though Samuel should plead the divine command in his justification. The Lord said—That there was some foundation for Samuel's anxiety, we may infer from the fact that the Lord did not blame him for his fear, but pointed out the way by which he might anoint David without attracting attention. Say, I am come to sacrifice—At this time, when the ark was separated from the tabernacle, there was no one fixed place for sacrifice; and Samuel, though only a Levite, being established as God's prophet, was authorized and commissioned by him to offer sacrifice.

3. Call Jesse to the sacrifice—Three directions are to be distinguished: (1) Samuel is to invite Jesse to the sacrificial meal, it is a slain-offering that is spoken of with which was connected a feast; he is to be associated with Jesse in the feast in the narrower circle of the family. (2) Samuel is to await direction from above, "I will tell thee what thou shalt do." This exhibits the specifically divine factor (of which Samuel is to be organ) in the choice of the new king of Israel. (3) He is to anoint as king him whom God shall name.

4. Samuel did—The troubled condition of soul which could not accept God's thoughts and ways disappeared before the strict obedience of the will, which bowed before the Lord's will. Came to Bethlehem—From his home at Ramah, ten miles to the north. Trembled at his coming—There was evidently something unusual in Samuel's coming to Bethlehem, and the elders, knowing that Samuel was no longer at friendship with Saul, foreboded some evil. Comest thou peaceably—The anxious inquiry of the elders presupposes that even in the time of Saul the prophet Samuel was frequently in the habit of coming unexpectedly to one place and another, for the purpose of reproving and punishing wrong-doing and sin.

5. I am come to sacrifice—It is evident from this that the prophet was accustomed to turn his visits to account by offering sacrifice, and so building up the people in fellowship with the Lord. Sanctify yourselves—Change your clothes, and wash your bodies in pure water, and prepare your minds by meditation, reflection, and prayer, that, being in the spirit of sacrifice, ye may offer acceptably to the Lord. And he sanctified

Jesse—That is, took care that they should be sanctified.

6, 7. He looked on Eliab—The eldest son of Jesse. The Lord said—The voice of God inwardly teaches Samuel two things: (1) In respect of Eliab's person, he is not to infer from his imposing exterior that he was the chosen of the Lord. With this humbling correction, which connects itself with verses 1 and 2, he is taught (2) a general truth respecting the difference between divine and human modes of thought and judgment. Not what man sees, to which we must supply the words "sees the Lord." Look not on . . . the height of his stature—This seems to be a plain allusion to the external appearance of Saul. Chap. 9, 2. That which chiefly recommended him to the favor of Israel was his size and beauty. The Lord looketh on the heart—Not according to the agreeable appearance which commends itself to the eyes, but according to the moral worth hidden in the depths of the heart, according to the disposition of soul that pleases him, does the Lord judge, who preveth the heart and the reins.

8, 9. Abinadab—Jesse's second son, of whom nothing is known except that he probably followed Saul to the battle in the valley of Elah, Chap. 16, 8. Shammas—Mentioned also in chap. 17, 13. He was the third son of Jesse, and father of Jonathan, "a very subtle man," Amnon's friend, (2 Sam. 13, 3,) and of Jonathan, who slew a giant of Gath. 1 Chron. 20, 6, 7.

10, 11. Seven—That is, including the three who had already passed. There remaineth yet the youngest—According to the chronology generally given, this was not more than ten years before David became king of Judah, at the age of thirty years. 2 Sam. 5, 4. Hence he must have been twenty years old, and twenty-two years old at his encounter with Goliath. There is some reason, however, to suppose that the events should be dated several years earlier, (for the Scripture gives no figures,) and that David was sixteen years old at the time of his anointing. He keepeth the sheep—Either therefore he did not thoroughly understand David's great wisdom and valor, or he judged him unfit, by reason of his mean education. We will not sit down—"We will not surround," namely, the table; we will not sit around it to eat till he come.

12. Ruddy—Red; it may refer either to the face or the hair, but as it is used of the hair in Gen. 25, 25, we prefer so to understand it here and in chap. 17, 42. These three are the only passages where the word occurs. Of a beautiful countenance—Rather, beautiful as to the eyes. This indicates that his eyes were keen and penetrating, enlivened by the fires of genius, and beaming with a generous warmth, by which the hearts of men and women were alike affected. The Lord said—By a special moving of the Spirit upon the mind of Samuel.

13. Samuel anointed him—It does not appear that Samuel informed David of his destiny, as he did Saul; but the special movings of the Spirit on his heart, and the successive developments of Providence in his favor, must have gradually convinced him that he was sooner or later to be recognized as the Lord's anointed. At a later time this seems to have been openly revealed. In the midst of his brethren—Sure of his course, Samuel (verse 13) performs the ceremony of anointing David. The Spirit of the Lord came—A spirit of prudence to behave himself wisely upon all occasions, with a spirit of courage, so that he durst grapple with a lion and a bear; and the spirit of prophecy, in which he was afterward very eminent. In short, a spirit fit for a prince. From that day forward—The words "from that day forward" denote the continuity of the impartation of the Spirit to David's inner life, and indicates its unbroken development under the guidance of the divine Spirit to full fitness and capacity for the royal calling. Samuel . . . went to Ramah—That David was in constant communication with him (and perhaps with the prophetic school there) is quite certain from the following history. Compare 19, 20, sq. In this intercourse with the prophet of the

Lord he learned the meaning of Samuel's enigmatical act, and under the progressive occupation and enlightenment of his inner life by the Spirit from above, received the knowledge of the duties of his royal calling and the preparation to fulfil them. For the present his election and anointing to be king of Israel remained a divine secret.

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