

The Quiet Hour.

David Becomes King.

S. S. LESSON—2 Sam. 2: 1-10. September 13, 1903.

GOLDEN TEXT—Ps. 133: 1. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

BY REV. PROF. JORDAN, D.D., KINGSTON.

Connecting Links—The first chapter of 2 Sam. takes up the thread of David's history at the point reached in 1 Sam. ch. 30. Two days after his return to Ziklag from the pursuit and defeat of the marauding Amalekites, a young man of that race brought him news of the battle of Gilboa. The messenger gave a lying account of the king's death, saying that he himself had slain Saul. Instead of bringing him the favor of David, as he had expected, his story brought upon him the punishment of death as a murderer, ch. 1: 1-16. The remaining verses of this chapter give David's song of lamentation over the death of Saul and Jonathan. David now begins his career as king. He reigned seven and a half years at Hebron over Judah alone, and then entered on his rule of thirty-three years at Jerusalem, over the whole nation, ch. 5: 1-10.

I. David Receiving a Kingdom, 1-4a.

V. 1. After this. The death of Saul and Jonathan left David as the only possible ruler. After years of preparation, the time for the fulfilment of the Lord's promise (1 Sam. 16: 12) had come. Enquired of the Lord through Abiathar, the high priest, by means of the Urim and Thummim, the object worn on the ephod of the high priest, as the sign of his authority to ask counsel of the Lord. Since the northern part of the kingdom was held, partly by Philistines, and partly by Saul's adherents, the only two portions open to David were the regions beyond Jordan to the south, and the hill country of Judea. He was divinely guided to choose the latter district, and to make Hebron his capital. Unto Hebron; a wise choice, because: (1) Hebron was centrally situated; (2) it was so placed as to be easy of defence against attack; (3) David had spent much of his fugitive life in its neighborhood and the homes of most of his men were there; (4) it was a place of importance as a priestly city, and an ancient royal city.

Vs. 2-4a. His two wives. David was intending to settle in a permanent home. The Jezreelitess. Compare 1 Sam. 25: 43. The Jezreel here referred to is not the same as that of v. 9, but a city in the mountains of Judah. Abigail Nabal's wife; Nabal's widow, whom David had married, 1 Sam. 25: 40-42. The Carmelite. Nabal's possessions were near Carmel, a town in the hill country of Judah (Josh. 15: 55), to be distinguished from the more famous mountain range bearing the same name. And his men; the six hundred of his chosen band, 1 Sam. 27: 2. Every man with his household. After years of roaming in exile, each one was now to settle down to the duties of peace. Cities of Hebron; the towns and villages of the district round Hebron. Men of Judah; an assembly of David's own tribe, who elected him king. He had probably secured beforehand the support of the elders, 1 Sam. 30: 26. They anointed David king. The private anointing of David by Samuel (1 Sam. 16: 12, 13) was the sign of David's divine appointment; this, of the people's choice. Both were necessary. David was

anointed a third time, when he became king over all Israel, ch. 5: 3.

II. David Rewarding Loyalty, 4b-7.

Vs. 4b, 5. Men of Jabesh-Gilead... they that buried Saul. These men, whom Saul had once helped in great straits (1 Sam. 11: 1-11), had penetrated the lines of the victorious Philistines, and, taking the bodies of Saul and his sons from the walls of Bethshan, had burned them and buried the bones to prevent further insult, 1 Sam. 31: 11-13. David sent messengers. The message was not only an expression of gratitude, but an appeal to be received as Saul's rightful successor. David felt that, if he could secure the support of the capital of Gilead (1 Sam. 11: 1), the whole country would soon acknowledge his sway.

Vs. 6, 7. Kindness and truth; that is "mercy and faithfulness," divine attributes which are frequently coupled together, Ex. 34: 6; Ps. 25: 10; 40: 11; 57: 3; 86: 15. Requite you this kindness. The Cambridge Bible renders, "show you this good," and explains as referring to "the honorable embassy of thanks, and the friendly spirit which it attested." Be ye valiant. There was need of courage, for the Philistines were still over-running the land. David encourages the men of Jabesh to hold out bravely, until he can come to their aid. The house of Judah have anointed me king. This was a formal announcement of his kingship and a bid for their allegiance. As, however, Gilead became the headquarters of David's rival, Ish-bosheth, it would seem that the embassy was unsuccessful.

Vs. 8-10. Abner; the uncle (1 Sam. 14: 50; 1 Chron. 8: 33; 9: 39), or, as many think, the first cousin of Saul. He was commander-in-chief of the Israelitish army during Saul's reign. It was most natural, both on account of his relationship to Saul and of his office that Abner should become the champion of Ish-bosheth. Ish-bosheth; Saul's fourth and youngest son, not mentioned before. He was a mere tool in the hands of Abner. In 1 Chron. 8: 33 he is called "Esh-baal" ("man of Baal"). Ish-bosheth ("man of shame") was probably a nickname applied to him on account of his character. A father would scarcely have given such a name to his son. To Mahanaim ("two hosts" or "armies"); a walled city of Gilead east of Jordan, the scene of Jacob's vision, Gen. 32: 2, 10. This city was chosen as the capital of Ish-bosheth's kingdom. It afterwards became the retreat of David, when he fled from Absalom. Gilead; the whole district occupied by the Israelites east of the Jordan, Josh. 22: 9. Since the greater part of Saul's territory was in the hands of the Philistines, it was impossible to set up the kingdom in Palestine proper. Ashurites; probably the same as "Asherites" (Judg. 1: 32), that is, the tribe of Asher. They dwelt in the north-western part of Galilee. Jezreel; a city in the plain of Esdraelon. Here the name refers to the plain, rather than to the city itself. Ephraim; the inhabitants of the mountain south of Galilee. Benjamin; the tribe of that name, who dwelt still further south. All Israel, "Ish-bosheth's dominions were gradually extended, until they included all the country which afterwards formed the kingdom of Israel, as distinct from that of Judah" (Cambridge Bible.) Two years; probably reckoned from the time when Ish-bosheth's

authority was established over all Israel. They coincided with the last two years of David's reign in Hebron, the previous five-and-a-half years having been occupied in the reconquest of the lands from the Philistines. The two kingdoms were at war during the whole seven-and-a-half years.

Shortly after the deaths of Abner and Ish-bosheth, David was recognized as king over all Israel. He removed the seat of government to Jerusalem, which for political, civil and military reasons was the most suitable capital for the united kingdom.

Daily Bible Study—Four Verses This Time.

No 18.

Psalm 103: 19-22.

BY MRS. ANNA ROSS.

"The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all."

The covenant and the commandments have led the Psalmist right up into the presence of the throne, from whence the commandments come, and round about which the covenant rainbow glows.

He began with a soul that was sluggish in praise. Was he not just like ourselves? He had to begin by urging his soul to be "stirred up." His holy name to magnify and bless. But that soul is now mounting with more than eagle's wings, till it is above the earth, beyond the stars, up even into the presence of the throne in the heavens, where God sits King, ruling over all.

Let us follow carefully the track of this man who at first found it hard work to sing the praises of the Lord.

He began by calling to remembrance the personal benefits of God's salvation.

His heart was enlarged by that meditation, and he went on to consider his own God and Saviour as the deliverer of all that are oppressed.

In Moses and Israel he studied His peculiar method of doing his work.

Then he turns his thoughts from God's doings to Himself, as to His mercy, as to His anger, as to His dealings with transgressors and transgression, as to His paternal tenderness.

The littleness and frailty of the flowers of the field upon whom this paternal love is lavished are now placed alongside of the infinitude of the portion that that love has mysteriously deeded over to them—the two eternities of mercy, the never-ending righteousness, the everlasting covenant and the commandments of the King.

These last are to his spirit eagle's wings, and on them he has mounted up into the presence of the throne whence both covenant and commands have come.

Now "stirring up" needed now. His own one tongue can never express the praise that surges up for expression.

He takes—not his harp; that is forgotten now. He lifts up his human voice to the angels and archangels in the inner circle about the Throne,—“Bless the Lord, ye His angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word.”

But even these cannot give volume enough to the praise firing his once sluggish soul, and he sounds forth a further and wider call,—“Bless ye the Lord, all His hosts, ye ministers of His that do His pleasure.”

But he cannot stop yet, for birds, and summer leaves and rocks and tumultuous waters, and the swelling oceans of the