

BEREAN NOTES.

JAN. 23. LESSON IV. DAVID IN THE PALACE. [B.C. 1033] [1 Sam. 18. 1-16.]

HOME READINGS.

- MONDAY—1 Sam. 18. 1-16.
TUESDAY—Gen. 41. 38-52.
WEDNESDAY—1 Sam. 18. 17-30.
THURSDAY—Mark 14. 1-11.
FRIDAY—Psa. 69. 1-18.
SATURDAY—Psa. 11. 1-7.
SUNDAY—2 Tim. 1. 1-12.

TOPIC: Blessings Gained in the Way of Obedience.

GOLDEN TEXT: When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. Prov. 16. 7.

TOPICAL OUTLINE.

- 1. The blessing of friendship, verse 1-4.
2. The blessing of prosperity, verse 5-7.
3. The blessing of protection, verse 8-11.
4. The Lord's presence, verse 12-17.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

See CONNECTING LINK at end of the last lesson. We now behold David in the Palace. Though there exposed to new perils, yet God was with him, fulfilling the GOLDEN TEXT: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." The general lesson of the whole case is, as stated in the TOPIC: "Blessings Gained in the Way of Obedience." The blessings David gained are substantially stated in the SELECTED VERSES. In the OUTLINE they are stated as follows: 1. The blessing of friendship; 2. The blessing of prosperity; 3. The blessing of protection; 4. The Lord's presence.

Our lesson describes David's life at Saul's court, while the Outline presents it as marked by four important blessings.

1. AN END OF SPEAKING. But little of the conversation between Saul and David is recorded, yet it evidently related to his family, history, and position, as was very proper in view of the honors promised to the conqueror of Goliath. Chapter 17. 25. It brought out such traits of character, that beside making the king his friend, there then began one of the most remarkable friendships recorded in history. It was a true "fellowship of souls." "Friendship is one soul in two bodies." "Friendship is another self." JONATHAN, the prince, and DAVID, the shepherd hero, had like traits. Both were courageous, prudent, patriotic, and humble, and both had a sublime faith in God. See chap. 14. 6, 10, 12, 30. SOUL KNIT WITH SOUL express the closeness of their fellowship. As loop links with loop in a piece of knitting, so did their affections intertwine. 2 Sam. 1. 26.

2. SAUL TOOK HIM. Into his service, and into the palace. NO MORE HOME. Doubtless to visit, but not to stay. The grand turning point of his life had come, yet how unpurposed and unplanned on his part! He had sought only to do his duty and honor God; now God is honoring him in return. 1 Sam. 2. 30.

3. A COVENANT. Of friendship, love, and trust, probably with the solemnity of an oath. It was afterward twice repeated. Chap. 20. 16, 42; 23. 18.

4. THE ROBE. A princely gift, that David might be suitably arrayed for his new sphere. With this were Jonathan's own sword, his bow, his favourite weapon, chap. 39. 36; 2 Sam. 1. 22, and girdle. These were both a token of love and a seal of their covenant. Special value was attached to the gift of a prince's own arms. David: best gift in return was small in comparison. See Freeman, 257.

5. DAVID WENT OUT. How will this young man fresh from his fields and locks, carry himself in his new career? The sudden and great advancement is enough to turn the head of a man of greater age and experience: how will David bear his prosperity? Employed on some affairs of government, and appointed an officer in the army, he exhibits his old modesty, prudence, and courage. His conduct was such as to win the hearts of his soldiers, the body of THE PEOPLE and the officers of the court.

6. WOMEN CAME OUT. Here is an instance of the popular favor, and an occasion of fearful subterfuge. Freeman says (253). "It was customary for the women to express their delight in victory by songs and music, and dancing in the presence of their conquerors." We express ours in a different, and often noisier, way. Their dancing was in the day-time, and in the open air, and not by the sexes together. Modern dancing parties find no sanction here. The TARET was like our tambourine. By INSTRUMENTS is probably meant the triangle. They sang responsively, one part singing, SAUL HATH SLAIN HIS THOUSANDS; and the rest, AND DAVID HIS TEN THOUSANDS; referring to the great slaughter in the late pursuit.

8. SAUL WAS VERY WROTH. Pitiful jealousy of a narrow-minded, selfish man, that could not endure the praises of one who had served him so grandly in a crisis before which he had for forty days quivered in dismay! His wrath fires up in a blaze. He suddenly suspects that this is the "neighbor," chap. 15. 28, for whom his KINGDOM is destined, and thenceforth watches him with keenly suspicious and jealous eye.

10. ON THE MORROW, Saul already knew that he had lost God's favor and forfeited

his throne, and also that God had selected his successor outside his family. A gloom had settled down upon him which had once before become insanity. His passions now so affected him that by the next day he had come into a fit mental condition for the demon which God had previously permitted to afflict him, to return and take possession, chap. 16. 14; 19. 9. Alas for the man whom God abandons and permits a devil to enter! The result was insanity, though it does not follow that every insane person is a demoniac. He PROPHECIED. His appearance, gestures, actions, and utterances were in the style of a prophets ecstasy, produced but now by the Holy Spirit, as in chap. 10. 10, but by the influence of the demon. Saul was a raving madman. DAVID PLAYED. His music once before soothed and cured him, chap. 16. 23, and again it is called into requisition.

11. JAVELIN. A heavy spear, the symbol of sovereignty, Saul's constant companion. In his fury he twice tried to pin David to the wall.

12. THE LORD WAS WITH HIM. As his protector against Saul's malice, and guide amid the perils that threaten him. Blessed presence! The Holy Spirit given at his anointing, chap. 16. 13, abode with him. Saul saw that God favored him, and became AFRAID of him as the probable future king.

13. REMOVED HIM. The first step was to send David away from the court and give him a command in the country. Here he continued the same prudent, upright conduct, winning the love of the people and at the same time increasing the fears of the king, who presently devised plans for compassing his death.

Lesson.—1. Let us receive the more precious love of the Son of the King of kings, who has loved us more than his own life. John 15. 13; 1 John 4. 9; 1 Cor. 16. 22. 2. The lesson of steadfast integrity, whether in prosperity or adversity, whether friends and foes are many or few. Psa. 101. 2; 1 Kings 9. 4, 5; Josh. 1. 7; Prov. 15. 21; Phil. 1. 27-29. 3. What a glorious support David had! THAT THE LORD WAS WITH HIM is the key to his success, and every young person may make it true of himself. Josh. 6. 27; Psa. 33. 16-19; 91. 14-13; Prov. 16. 9; 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18.

A CALL TO THE PAST.

BY MRS. J. SHEPHERD.

Come back from the land of shadows, from the land of the nevermore, Come back while we grasp in greeting, the hands we have clasped before; O whisper us words as kindly as when thou didst speak to me last, Come back for our hearts are longing for the sacred hours of the past.

O talk to us of the sunshine, the sunshine of childhood's day, Of the flowers that bloomed so brightly upon life's untrodden way, Of the pearls we sow in the dew-drop, unmoved by the morning breeze, Of the voices we heard in the forest from the grand old forest trees.

O tell us once more of the hill tops, once more of the lonely dells, Let the echoes come back from the loves, and back from the land of farwells, Let us weave again the wreaths of hopes as only the young heart weaves, O let us hear but once again the voice of the whispering leaves!

Why do we stand by the old tombs, when the grass has grown over our dead; Why do we treasure pressed-roses when the fragrance forever has fled, Why do we call in the darkness, and list for an answer in vain, Why! surely soothes the aching, and deadens the old dull pain.

Why ask for the years to live over; why blot out the cares from our life; When life's deeper meaning is ours, now its joys, its sorrows and strife. Why trace through the labyrinth windings the footmarks of pleasure and grief, And find the frail passion flower oftimes entwined with the green myrtle leaf.

Back, back to the land of shadows; to the land of the nevermore, Ye haunting, sobbing memories I cannot live ye o'er; Ye cannot bring life's years once more, nor mine again can be; The loved ones from the spirit land whose white hands beckon me. Truro, Jan. 1, 1875.

WON BY A SONG.

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"Soft and easy is thy cradle; Hard and rough thy Saviour lay. When His birthplace was a stable, And His softest bed was hay."

I stood transfixed to the spot. I was taken back to the home of my happy infanc and my sainted mother. Tears came from my hard heart. I knew I was living far from my mother's God. I had always avoided the missionaries, and everybody else who reminded me of my early teaching and broken resolutions; but the sound of that mother's song I could not resist, and from that moment my course has been changed. I have now a hope that I shall sing with my mother in heaven."

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