

5. **And Samuel said, How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me**—Saul would regard the anointing of another as an act of treason, but it was not really so. David never would have usurped the throne or been guilty of a single disloyal act. (ch. 24: 5). The anointing of David was merely a prophetic indication of the man whom God, in his own way and at his own time, would place upon Saul's throne, without either scheming or action thereto on the part either of Samuel or David. Its value would chiefly lie in the careful training he would receive from Samuel; but when David was king, it would also greatly strengthen his position; for it would be known that from his boyhood he had been marked out for his high office. Never did man mount a throne with purer hands than David; and, if Saul would have permitted it, he would have been a faithful and loyal servant to the last. It was Saul really who thrust the kingdom upon David. (Payne Smith). Saul would scarcely have dared to harm the aged prophet, and Samuel's fears are only an evidence that, with all his moral heroism, he was but a man like others, subject to the infirmities of men. **And the Lord said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord**—This was true as far as it went, there was no deceit practiced. Neither Saul nor the Bethlemites had any right to know Samuel's whole motive. To have declared it would have endangered David's life unnecessarily. Is it always necessary, or even right, to tell in all cases the whole truth? If so, quarrels and ill-feeling would be multiplied to such an extent that social life would be unendurable. To have anointed David publicly would have forced Jesse to an open rupture with the king, and he must have sought safety either by fighting for his life, or by breaking up his home and fleeing into a foreign land, as indeed he was afterwards compelled to do. (ch. 22: 3, 4). Even when hunted for his life David never appealed to his anointing as giving him any claim as against the king. It remained simply a secret sign and declaration to him of God's preordained purpose, but of one as to which he was to take no step to bring about its fulfilment. "God wraps up the flower, which is in due time to open and bear fruit, within many a covering; and to rend these open prematurely is to destroy the flower and the fruit that is to spring from it. And so to have anointed David openly, and to have made him understand the meaning of the act, would have been to destroy David and frustrate the divine purpose." (Payne Smith). "Concealment of a good purpose, for a good purpose, is clearly justifiable, e. g., in war, in medical treatment, in state policy, and in the ordinary affairs of life." (Cook). Compare Moses' demands upon Pharaoh (Ex. 7: 9). It may be inferred from the command that Samuel was in the habit of holding religious gatherings in different provincial towns from time to time. (Kirkpatrick). The worship at

Shiloh seems to have been neglected and Samuel offered sacrifice, a function belonging exclusively to the priests, in virtue of his special dignity as a prophet. (ch. 9: 10; 20: 29).

3. **And call Jesse to the sacrifices**—The word used means a sacrifice followed by a feast—a peace-offering. **And I will show thee what thou shalt do**—He is to await further divine directions. The whole course of duty is not made plain at the outset. It is sufficient if the first step is clear. Light is given as it is needed. God often leads the blind by a way that they know not. If we take him for our guide, we must trust him in the dark. (Green). **And thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee**—(ch. 9: 16; Deut. 17: 14, 15). Had Samuel been left to make his own choice he would have made a grievous mistake.

4. **And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem**—(Ex. 4: 15). Fear and mental anxiety disappeared when Samuel set out in obedience to God's will. Perplexities are resolved, apprehensions are dispelled, difficulties vanish, the mind is serenely at rest when we yield ourselves to the divine will and implicitly trust God's wisdom and care. **And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?**—R. V. "came to meet him trembling." His rebukes of evil doing were dreaded, and the elders feared that in some way they had incurred his displeasure, for his appearance was sudden and at an unexpected time, or the breach between him and Saul may have made the elders afraid of incurring the royal displeasure by welcoming him. The words of the elders are evidence of the profound respect everywhere paid to Samuel. (ch. 21: 1; Acts 24: 25).

5. **And he said, Peaceably**—with no hostile intention. His visit was fraught with unpleasant consequences to no one. **I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord**—He came to offer a peace-offering, and therefore to hold a season of sacred communion with God and loving fellowship with brethren. By such visits as these Samuel revived the piety of the people during the general neglect of religion. **Sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice**—The Septuagint adds, "And rejoice with me this day." They were to wash and purify themselves and abstain from everything unclean. (Gen. 35: 2; Ex. 19: 10, 14). This outward cleansing was symbolical of inward purification by repentance and consecration of heart. (Isa. 1: 15, 16; Heb. 10: 22; Jas. 4: 8). **And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice**—Samuel apparently went to the house of Jesse and superintended their preparations for the sacrifice. We may suppose that the anointing of David took place after the public ceremonies were over, and before the feast that followed. (verse 11). A considerable interval would necessarily elapse, for the victim had to be skinned and prepared for roasting, which latter process would take some time.