

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

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INTERNATIONAL LESSON

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October 5—Solomon Succeeding David.—1 Kings 1: 22-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.—1 Chron. 28: 9.

The Books of the Kings take up the narrative of Hebrew history where those of Samuel leave it. Tradition ascribes their authorship to Jeremiah. But this is far from certain. The books were largely compiled from existing documents, and have always had a place in the Jewish canon. Originally the two were one, and were first divided, for facility of reference in the Septuagint.

David had now completed his threescore and ten years, and was old and out-worn. His life had been one of exposure and fatigue, the result of which is often seen in premature decay. Confined to his chamber and to his bed, he depended upon others for knowledge of what was transpiring in the kingdom. And some things were just now taking place which did not accord either with his, or the divine purpose.

Of his sons, Adonijah was now the eldest. As such the succession to the throne seemed to be his. But he was not fit to rule. And by divine appointment this distinction was to fall to another. David had sworn to Bathsheba that Solomon should be his successor. And how this consummation was hastened by Adonijah himself we are told in this chapter. In the part before us we have.

1. A faithful prophet.—It was not the sole or the chief business of the ancient prophet to foretell events. He was a special messenger of God to convey any and every expression of his will to instruct, to counsel, to reprove, to forewarn, to cheer. Nathan had been David's counsellor about building the temple, and his reprover for sin (2 Sam. 7th and 12th). His appearance here is as one still faithful to God and to his king. He knew it was God's will that Solomon should succeed to the throne, and he made haste to apprise the king of a conspiracy which aimed to thwart that will. Adonijah was young and strong and evidently in favor with the people, and David was old and weak. Nevertheless Nathan stood firm on the right side. On that side he was bold and willing to help.

2. A respectful subject.—It is worth noticing that in coming into the king's presence, Nathan paid to him due honor. He had dared to denounce his sin but here he prostrates himself before the ground. Respect for superiors shown in customary and becoming ways is a virtue. A Christian ought always to be faithful, but he ought also to cultivate and exhibit good manners. And in nothing do good manners appear so much as in proper deference for those who in age, quality or office are above us.

3. Inordinate ambition.—That which now brought the prophet into the king's presence was Adonijah's attempt to usurp the throne. Not much is told us but much is intimated, respecting Adonijah's character. Of attractive person, "a goodly man," like Amnon and Absalom he was a spoiled child, wayward, headstrong, ungoverned. "His father had not displeased him at anytime in saying, 'Why hast thou done so?'" (v. 6) His mother's name, Haggith, dancer, suggests a character wanting in moral depth. He was far from fit to rule. His exclusion of Solomon and the others mentioned from the festivities indicate that he knew of Solomon's election to the throne. He had the memory of Absalom's folly and ruin as a warning against such a course. Nevertheless he "exalted himself, saying, I will be king" (v. 5).

Few passions are either so powerful or corrupting or ruinous of happiness as ambition. Aspiration after any kind of real excellence, or power for usefulness, is good. But "Ambition is the troublesome and vexatious passion that can afflict the sons of men. It is an infinite labor to make a man's self miserable." Chastened and held in check it may excite to worthy effort; but allowed to dominate it is a blighting curse.

4. Willing helpers in wrong doing.—Sacrifices and feasts were customary at the accession of a new king in oriental lands, and Adonijah's feast was understood to have a political purpose. He had already made a show of royalty (v. 5). Nevertheless he was a usurper. His whole movement was a conspiracy. And those who joined it could see this. Nevertheless among those who joined him were "the captains of the host (Joab being chief) and Abiathar the priest," besides "all the king's sons" save Solomon. How did this happen? Joab was a thoroughly worldly man, always ready to serve the successful side. Abiathar, a better man, may have grown jealous of Zadok's favor with David. And so worldly and selfish considera-

tions took them over to the side of the usurper. How often is this the case? We wonder at it, and yet who knows that he will not himself at sometimes do the same. It is easy to imagine that the side just now ascendant is right, easy to join a popular movement, and to find plausible reasons for so doing. 6. Arrogance defeated and the right man made king.—Wicked schemes, however planned and supported, do not always prevail. So it was in this instance. But the defeat was not accidental. It came about by the prompt action of Nathan, and the resolute will of David. Loyal to God and David, Nathan made haste to apprise the king of what was going on; and the king, weak as he was in body, showed himself still the man of courage and energy he had always been. Wrongs seldom defeat themselves. Good men must be quick to see and resolute to meet rising danger.

It is interesting to notice David's regard for his own pledge (29, 30). He would keep it at any cost. He roused himself on his sick bed to assure its fulfillment. Fidelity to pledges marks a noble character.

It is instructive to observe his recollection of past mercies as reasons for keeping his vows. As God has so often delivered him out of straits and danger, he would now still trust him and rely upon his help. He sees in such mercies a ground both of obligation and of trust.

Solomon, of all David's sons, had most of his father's good qualities. He was God's choice, and was best prepared for royal responsibilities. That all this while he does not appear on the scene, but patiently and trustfully leaves all to the will of God and the guidings of his providence, is a special mark of self control and faith. And God's purpose prevailed.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Here we are again reminded of the folly of parental indulgence. Much of Adonijah's wickedness and of David's fresh and last misery came of it.

2. God fearing and unselfish men are the best counsellors. Nathan was not a schemer for himself.

3. There is great blessing in true friends who hasten to our help in an evil time. David and Solomon had true friends in Nathan and Zadok and Benaiah. Good men are likely to have such helpers.

4. Nathan was a prophet and Zadok was a priest, and yet they meddled with public affairs.

5. Wickedness is never profitable. So Absalom and his associates had found. So Adonijah and those who joined him now discovered. Its day is short. Its gains impart no good while they last.

6. The enthronement of Solomon was the defeat of Adonijah. So bring in the true and the right and good, and the false and wrong and evil are thereby expelled. Exterminate sin by cultivating holiness.

7. Jesus is the world's rightful king, but there are many usurpers who would supplant him. We must stand by him against them. And he will prevail.

Beating His Wife.

How does that woman feel against whom her husband lifts his hand? Who has been beaten by the lover of her youth—the person who, in some form or other, "courted" her once upon a time? It appals one to think of it!

A woman—a creature like ourselves, easily made to weep, easily made to ache in body or in heart, a being who often is the mother of a little babe at the time! Why, it is like some horrible dream to think that some men do whip their wives! The men we know have always protected us, always worked for us, lovingly caressed us, saved us all the toil and pain they could, and never insulted us. Yet most of us have had our feelings dreadfully injured, and coaxed up very often indeed. Most of us hardly think our lot soft enough, our male relation gentle enough with us. A short, hasty reply, such as men give each other constantly, we consider "brutal" if given by a man to a woman. We expect so be considered much more delicate than men; and indeed we are. We can do wonderful things with our frail little bodies under strong impulses, and wear ourselves out in the good cause. We watch and nurse very bravely, but we can not fight. Fancy one of us, broken down with privation and hard work, having nothing nice to wear, nothing nice to eat, no sweetness in her life except what she can get out of a miserable little baby with hollow eyes, when she walks up and down with it; fancy her being beaten by her husband besides! I can't write about it. My words tumble over each other with excitement. Whipped by a husband! Five, ten or fifteen years ago when she was a pretty girl in an apron and a pretence of a cap, at service, Mike or Jack came shambling past the area evenings chewing straw! spoke to her, came in, took her to walk, kissed her, offered himself, took her to church and married her; and she at least thought him in love with her. At any rate she thought she loved him.

And now he beats her; strikes her with that great sledge hammer fist; black her eyes; leaves bruises on her arms; or perhaps being merciful, takes a broom to her, because she can't get dinner without market money, or has answered him back, or remonstrated when he gave little Ted some gin to drink. How does she feel! How can she live! Nothing can be worse, it seems to me. You may say "that sort of the people" as much as you like. We are all made of flesh and blood and weak little bone, and we know how a baby's head feels against our bosoms, and how the man we love can thrill us with his touch. I don't believe the lessons on the piano, or having a knowledge of French, or even a classical course at college can alter that. And perhaps a woman who has no intellectual resources suffers most when her heart is wounded. We must just think of this: All good women feel pretty much alike toward their husbands. Fancy baby's father beating you.

Oh, of all the terrible paragraphs we read in those agonizing daily papers, the most wretchedly pitiful, I think, are those headed "Arrested for Beating his Wife."—New York Leader.

Facts and Fancies.

Dr. Pratt, of London, states in a lecture that in 1,000 married men, between the ages of 24 and 30 there are six deaths; in the same number of bachelors there are ten deaths; widowers number twenty-two.

The early German settlers on the Schuylkill were mainly members of the Society of Friends, and it is claimed for them by Mr. Buck, in his historical address at Norristown during the late centennial exercises, that the earliest protest against negro slavery in the English colonies was prepared by these German settlers, at Germantown, February 18, 1688.

An English manufacturer advertises that his safety matches may be eaten by children with positive benefit to their appetite and digestion.

A large whale became entangled in a submarine cable near Panama, and in his efforts to extricate himself was severely injured by the wire that he died the same day.

In Mount Morris, Mich., a family, believing its members to be bewitched by an old woman in the neighborhood, nicked the ears of all its pigs and cows to drive out the devils.

A sample of American cheese in London when analyzed proved to contain neither milk nor any of its derivatives: its chief ingredients were lard and coloring matter. It came from New York State.

A flash of lightning cremated a farmer near Galveston, Tex., a few days ago. He was working in a field with a thrasher when from a cloudless sky a flash of lightning descended, knocking him senseless on a pile of straw, which was ignited and burned him to a crisp. A minister who was in the vicinity was rendered unconscious by the violence of the shock.

A cordwainer, aged 104, and his son, aged 85, arrived at Liverpool, N. S., the other day from St. John, N. B., on a visit to some friends. During the day the son, while seeing the sights, strayed away from his father, who rushed around for some time asking everyone he met: "Have you seen my boy? The reunion which afterward took place was very affecting.

While John D. Walford was digging a well near Uniontown, Pa., one day last week, he put in a blast which failed to go off. Descending into the well he was suffocated. A friend went down and tied a rope around his body, but while it was being drawn up the rope became unfastened and the body fell fifteen feet to the bottom. When it was recovered life was entirely extinct.

Dakota is said to have 40,000 head of stock (valued at \$1,000,000) chiefly on what are termed the "bad lands" west of the Missouri river, but what are really very good lands for stock raising.

Ex-Governor Hendricks narrowly escaped death in a railroad accident by which twenty-six persons were injured, near Farmer City, Ill., on Wednesday of last week. As it is he was severely bruised.

Miss Kate Magruder, the daughter of the Confederate General John Bankhead Magruder, recently arrived in Baltimore from Europe and during the coming season will make a concert tour through the United States, assisted by her brother, Henry R. Magruder.

The 5645th year in the Hebrew calendar began at sunset on Friday last. Impressive church services and a general observance of the event by the reform as well as the orthodox Jews always marks the first day of the New Year.

At Lynport, Pa., while Mr. and Mrs. Perry Love were absent a servant placed their infant child in a room and went out. When the parents returned they found the baby had been almost devoured by rats. One finger had been eaten off and the flesh gnawed from the face and breast. The child had almost died from loss of blood.

Another Earthquake.

OHIO, MICHIGAN AND INDIANA SOMEWHAT SHAKEN UP.

MUNCIE, Ind., Sept. —A distinct earthquake shock passed through this state from the southwest to the north-east at 2.30 o'clock this afternoon places heard from generally report the same results as were noticed here viz.: Buildings shaking, glass breaking, furniture moving, dishes and tinware falling from the tables and shelves and the people running into the streets from fright.

CINCINNATI, O., Sept. 19.—A few minutes before three o'clock this afternoon the telegraph operator at the Bee Dine depot, Cincinnati, receives dispatches from all along the road, from Cincinnati to Lafayette, Ind., inquiring if an earthquake shock had been felt in Cincinnati, and stating that it had been perceptible at offices from which inquiries had been sent. About three o'clock, Cincinnati time, operators perceived a slight tremor in the building. The same thing was noticed in various offices in the city, but it was not attributed to the earthquake until telegraph dispatches from the west came in.

It was quite different in some of the suburbs in Cincinnati. In Clifton the agitation was so violent as to ring bells on tables and in some instances on the doors. At Cumminsville, in the north-western ward, Cincinnati, the tremor was felt so distinctly as to cause quite an alarm, not only in the public schools where the pupils with difficulty kept in their seats, but also private houses. The houses of Captain Frazier in Cumminsville was so violently shaken that the inmates became alarmed.

In the Mornington school house, northeastern Cincinnati, the agitation was felt, which was recognized at once by the teachers as being caused by an earthquake. Here too it required all the authority of the teacher to avoid a panic. The shock was so slight in the business portion of Indiana as not to be noticed by a majority of the citizens.

In Covington, Ky., the Mr. Worthington's residence on Fourth street was so violently shaken that his little daughter lying sick in bed screamed with terror saying that some one was moving the bed.

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