

KING DAVID
AND HIS SONGS

BOOKS BY MARY FABYAN WINDEATT

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KING DAVID AND HIS SONGS

A STORY OF THE PSALMS

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For
Marion Swickard

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In this book the Psalms are quoted in the Douay-Rheims translation, using the numbering system of the Douay-Rheims version of the Bible.*

* For example, the Psalm which is called Psalm 23 in modern translations, which are based on the Hebrew, is Psalm 22 in the Douay-Rheims, which is based on the Latin Vulgate. The divergence in numbering begins in the middle of Psalm 9 (Douay-Rheims version).

KING DAVID
AND HIS SONGS

CHAPTER 1

THE SECRET ANOINTING

ABOUT ONE thousand years before the birth of Our Lord, there lived near Bethlehem a man named Isai (also known as Jesse). He had eight sons whom he loved dearly, especially the youngest, a boy of 15 whose name was David.

Now one day Isai was astonished to learn that Samuel, the holy prophet of the Hebrew people, had come to see him.

“What can the great Samuel want of me?” Isai asked a bit nervously of the servant who brought the news. “What have I done?”

“I don’t know sir,” replied the servant. “But I think that the prophet comes on peaceful business.”

Isai lost no time in gathering together his household—his wife, his servants and the seven oldest boys. All must come with him to greet Samuel, and to wish him well. But he did not bother to summon David, who was away in the fields tending the sheep, for the boy was little more than a child, and Isai thought it unlikely that the great prophet would be interested in seeing him.

But in this he was mistaken. "Let me see this youngest son," Samuel commanded. So a servant was dispatched to summon David from the fields and to find someone else to watch the sheep.

Now when the servant came upon Isai's youngest boy, he found him sitting under a tree playing upon a little wooden flute. All about him the flocks were grazing peacefully, and in the branches of the tree overhead the birds were making music of their own—echoes of the youthful shepherd's happy tune. It was a pleasant sight, but the servant did not pause to enjoy it.

"Young master, you must come at once!" he cried breathlessly. "The great and holy prophet Samuel is here and wants to see you!"

David looked up in surprise. "The holy prophet wants to see *me*?"

"Yes, young master."

David laid down his flute. "All right," he said. "I'll come."

When David was brought before Samuel, the prophet's heart swelled with joy. What a fine-looking boy this was! Even more important, his clear gaze and courteous manners proclaimed him to be a lad whom one could trust—truthful, obedient, willing.

"Come here, my son," said Samuel.

Puzzled yet eager, David approached Samuel. Then the latter took some holy oil, offered a brief prayer and anointed David's head.

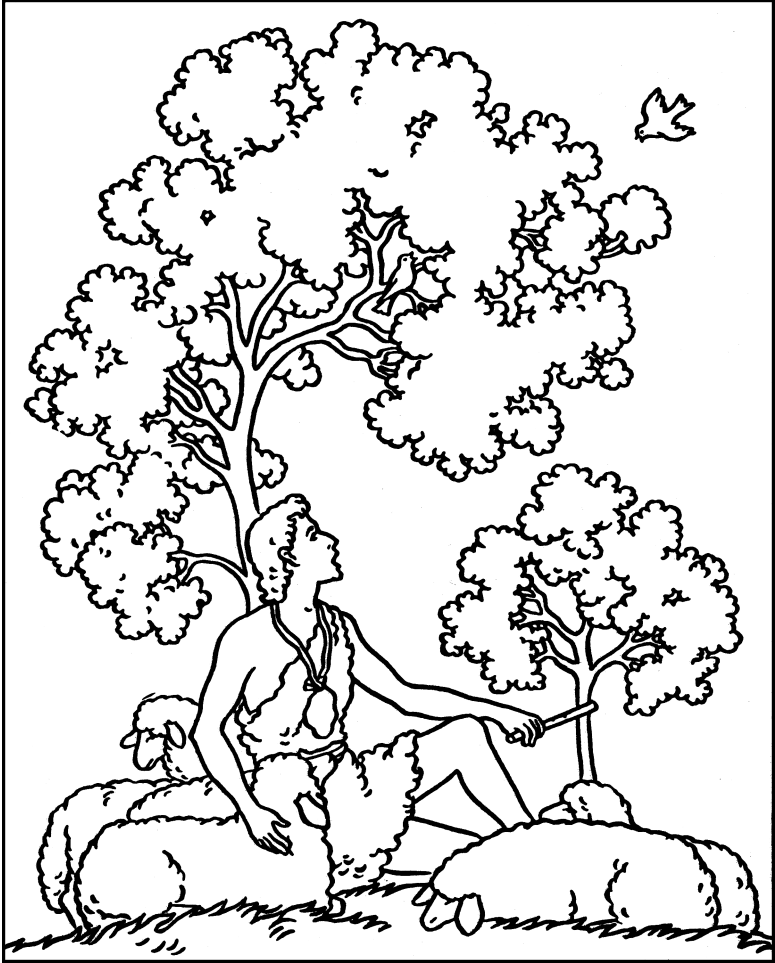
"May the Lord bless you," he said.

Everyone present was full of wonder. What was

the meaning of this action of the holy prophet? Only kings were anointed with oil. And there was already a king ruling over Israel—Saul. But when asked for an explanation, Samuel had only one answer. What had just happened was to be kept a secret. And if anyone wanted to know the reason for Samuel's presence at Isai's house, he was to be told that the prophet had come to offer sacrifice to God. This would be true, for Samuel had brought with him a young calf which even now, according to the Hebrew custom, his assistants were making ready to be slain.

The next day all was as usual at Isai's house. Father and sons were busy at their various tasks, with David out in the fields watching the sheep. Naturally the boy could not help pondering the strange events of the day before, but soon he was busy at his favorite pastime, playing the flute. He knew many songs, some handed down from one generation to another, others which he had composed himself.

"I believe I'll sing one of my own little songs," he decided. And laying down the flute, he began to consider which it should be. Then suddenly he knew. It would be one of his favorites, a song which always had brought peace to his heart when he was troubled. He had sung it many times, especially when out of doors tending the flocks. Now he would sing it again, and perhaps it would drive away the little cloud of anxiety which had been produced by the prophet Samuel's visit and lingered to trouble his heart whenever he thought of



THE YOUNG SHEPHERD KNEW MANY SONGS.

the strange thing that the holy man had done in anointing him with oil.

So David lifted his clear, young voice in song, a song of trust and confidence in God:

The Lord ruleth me: and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture.

He hath brought me up, on the water of refreshment: he hath converted my soul.

He hath led me on the paths of justice, for his own name's sake.

For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me.

Thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me.

Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that afflict me.

Thou hast anointed my head with oil; and my chalice which inebriateth *me*, how goodly is it!

And thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life.

And that I may dwell in the house of the Lord unto length of days.*

* *Psalm 22*



“SOON THE KING MAY FEEL BETTER,”
THOUGHT DAVID.