

BEREAN NOTES.

Jan. 16.] LESSON III. DAVID AND GOLIATH. [B. C. 1063.] [1 Sam. 17:38-51.]

HOME READINGS.

- MONDAY—1 Sam. 17: 38-54. TUESDAY—1 Sam. 17: 1-11. WEDNESDAY—Gen. 3: 1-15. THURSDAY—1 Sam. 17: 28-37. FRIDAY—Isa. 53: 1-12. SATURDAY—John 19: 13-30. SUNDAY—1 Cor. 15: 50-57.

TOPIC: Blessings Won through Simple Faith. GOLDEN TEXT: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Phil. 4: 13.

TOPICAL OUTLINE.

- 1. The preparation of human wisdom, verse 38, 39. 2. The preparation of simple faith, verse 40. 3. The taunt of human wisdom, verse 41-44. 4. The triumph of simple faith, verse 45-51.

Where in this lesson may we learn that—

- 1. Human wisdom is not always reliable? 2. Human boasts are not always realized? 3. Faith in God is any man's best equipment? DOCTRINE: The utility of faith. Heb. 11: 6; John 6: 29.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

See CONNECTING LINK at close of Lesson II. David and Goliath is a narrative familiar to every child about us. It should be pushed beyond the mere interest of its facts to its great general lesson, which is, as stated in the TOPIC, "Blessings won through Simple Faith." Considering all the events of this narrative, we see, as stated in the OUTLINE: 1. The preparation of human wisdom; 2. The preparation of simple faith; 3. The taunt of human wisdom; 4. The triumph of simple faith. To encourage each of us to this triumphant faith, we may cling to the GOLDEN TEXT: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." THE SELECTED VERSES show this triumph as won by David.

The Occasion. We suppose a couple of years to have passed since David's anointing. Having spent some time at Saul's court as musician to the insane king, though nominally as his armor-bearer, he returned (verse 15) to his flock, while his three elder brothers joined the army of defense against the Philistine invasion. The encampment was fourteen miles south-west of Jerusalem, in the valley of Elah, which runs north-westerly, and is at this point about a mile wide. On its sides are sloping hills rising five hundred feet. On the northern slope lay the Israelites; on the southern the Philistines. Daily for forty days the two armies ranged themselves on the plain in line of battle, perhaps with some skirmishing; and twice every day the towering form of Goliath advanced from the ranks with a defiant challenge to the opposing army to put forth a man who in single combat with himself might settle the whole quarrel. He was of the race of Anak. Num. 12: 32, 33; Josh. 11: 21, 22. With the cubit at twenty-one inches and the span at half a cubit, he was eleven feet and four inches in height. He was strong in proportion, and completely clad in armor. His coat of mail alone weighed a hundred and fifty-six pounds, and his spear's head eighteen. His whole armor is estimated at two hundred and seventy-two pounds. Besides the TARGET, the SHIELD of verse 45, which his own hand used, another carried before him a large shield which covered his entire person and served as a breastwork. No wonder that before such and so armed a warrior the army of Israel quailed, and none dared to accept his challenge. At this juncture David comes on the scene. He hears the insolent defiance, and his whole soul is moved. His indignation words are reported to the king. He is soon sent for, and offers to meet the proud champion.

The preparation. A warrior's most natural thought would be that Israel's champion must be armed in the same way and as completely as was the Philistine. So Saul equipped him from head to foot out of his own army. This was simple procedure. The prayer, THE LORD BE WITH THEE, presupposed the use of all human skill. Saul did wisely. But David was not at home in this armor; he had never been trained to its use. It would only hamper him, and so make him the surer prey to his foe. He therefore PUT IT OFF, and appeared in his ordinary SHEPHERD'S equipments of crook, leathern BAG, AND SLING.

As a shepherd he was accustomed to the sling, and upon it he resolved to rely. Saul, a Benjaminite, knew its use in warfare, Judges 20: 16, and how formidable a weapon it was in the hand of an expert, hurling a stone to a hair's breadth, and often with force enough to crush shield and helmet. Most wise was David's choice. He could move lightly, and except in close combat, which he meant to avoid, he had five chances to Goliath's one. It was like the rifle against a sword and spear—the great point was in accuracy of aim. Besides this, there was his preparation of

faith. The defiance was not only of the army of Israel, but THE ARMIES OF THE LIVING GOD, and therefore of God, their captain. The contest was really between Jehovah and the gods of Philistia. David rightly thought that THE BATTLE WAS THE LORD'S, and not his own. God's spirit (chap. 16: 13.) put into his heart the victory to fight, and the belief that his victory would produce a wide conviction of Jehovah's supremacy, and also inspired him with the expectation of success through divine help. This faith had a double action: it laid hold of God, and it also gave him courage, calmed his nerves, steadied his hand, and strengthened his arm.

The Combat. Look on the scene. The two armies arrayed, and Goliath, advanced in front, shouts anew his defiance. Forth from the ranks of Israel steps a lightly moving youth, apparently armed only with a shepherd's crook. It looks like the veriest buffonery of war. What possible chance has this young man for his life? The Philistine, not dreaming of the sling, takes it as an insult that he should come to him with a stick to strike him, as he would his dog, and swears at him in his rage. They scold and threaten each other roundly after the fashion of their time, and Homer's heroes often do. But note the great difference: one is bold and confident because of his armor and his prowess as a warrior; the other trusts in Jehovah of hosts, who SAVETH NOT WITH SWORD AND SPEAR, but as pleases him. They approach each other, Goliath, heavy armed, moves slowly; but David, unencumbered, starts on a run to strike the first blow while yet out of the reach of his spear. He hurls his stone, which, crushing through helmet and skull, is imbedded in his antagonist's brain.

The Victory. The Philistine fell senseless. But David will make sure, and he has a right, according to the then usage of war, to his adversary's head as a trophy. With Goliath's own sword, till then unsheathed he finished his work. Then the Philistines, refusing to surrender according to the terms of the challenge, turned and fled down the valley, pursued by the Israelites as far as Ekron.

Lessons. 1. Each of us has his own giant to fight, and with only God to help and make victory certain. It may be pride, or bad temper, or covetousness, or indolence, or appetite, or some other sin. Gal. 5: 16, 19; Rom. 7: 19; Psa. 51: 10; 1 John 1: 7, 9; John 13: 9. 2. We ought, like David, to forget self, and put God's honor and glory first. Jer. 9: 23, 24; 1 Cor. 6: 20; Matt. 6: 33; Phil. 1: 20; 1 Kings 18: 36. 3. Nothing is too great for him who truly believes God. While he is trying to obey, he has a right to trust. Mark 9: 23; Acts 16: 31. Psa. 30: 7, 44. 6: 7; 1 John 5: 4; Phil. 4: 13; Eph. 6: 13, 18.

A very strange story is told in Toulouse of an unsuccessful attempt to rob the branch of the Bank of France in that city. The offices are close to an old bell-tower, now used as a shot tower. A distinguished stranger paid many visits to the tower—his ostensible object being the pursuit of archeology—and he was accompanied by a secretary who assisted him. One day the workmen in the tower heard a heavy fall, and running out found the stranger and his secretary lying on the ground, the former dead, the latter dying. The secretary, previous to giving up the ghost, revealed the fact that his companion was a talented engineer, who had planned a robbery of the bank, and had actually bored a tunnel to within a few inches of the coin vaults. The two accomplices had ascended the tower to have a last look round previous to completing their operations, had quarrelled about the division of the spoil, fought and fallen over. On investigation being made, it was discovered that the statements of the secretary were perfectly correct, the subterranean gallery reached to within a few inches of the strong-room.—Chron

A CONNECTICUT WEDDING FEE.—The Hartford Courant narrates the following ludicrous incident:—"A clergyman who was formerly located in this city, but is now in New York, married a little over a year ago, a couple who at once started for Europe and have recently returned. The bridegroom was a gentleman of wealth, and before he presented himself before the bridal altar he placed a \$100 green-back in his vest pocket to give the parson for the marriage fee. While crossing the ocean he discovered, greatly to his astonishment, the bill in the pocket where he had placed it, and could account for its presence there only on the theory that he must have had another bill of a different denomination, which he had given to the clergyman by mistake. On getting back to this country he determined to solve the mystery, and waited upon the reverend gentleman and inquired if on a certain date he did not marry a certain couple. The clergyman remembered the occasion perfectly. "I know I am about to ask an impertinent question," said the visitor, "but I should like to be informed what fee you received for performing the ceremony? The clergyman said he would, of course, gratify him. "I received," he went on to say, "a very small quantity of finest chewing tobacco, folded in a very small piece of paper." The only thing remaining to be done was to apologize, laugh heartily, shake hands, and make the \$100 deposit good.

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