

Make Life Happy.

How easy it is to spoil a day—
The thoughtless word of a cherished friend,
The selfish act of a child at play,
The strength of a will that will not bend,
The sight of a comrade, the scorn of a foe,
The smile that is full of bitter things—
They all can tarnish its golden glow,
And take the grace from its airy wings.
How easy it is to spoil a life—
And many are spoiled ere well begun—
In home-light darkened by sin and strife,
Or the downward course of a cherished one;

LESSON NOTES.

THIRD QUARTER.

B.C. 1061] LESSON XI. [Sept. 15
DAVID SPARING SAUL.
1 Sam. 24. 4-17. Memory verses, 11, 12.
GOLDEN TEXT.
Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Rom. 12. 21.

OUTLINE.

- 1. David's Chance, v. 4, 5.
2. David's Grace, v. 6, 7.
3. Saul's Gratitude, v. 8-17.

TIME.—1061 B.C.

PLACE.—The wilderness of Engedi.

CONNECTING LINKS.—David and Jonathan parted—the one returning to his father's court, the other going out to exile, and to hardship and peril, being hunted like a wild beast for his life. From Nob he took Goliath's sword, and ate in hunger of the show-bread, contrary to the letter of the law. For a time in the country of the Philistines, he feigned madness to save his life, thence to the cave of Adullam, and thence through the year he wandered from place to place in the mountains, sometimes appearing here and there, as when he smote the Philistine enemy, and again hiding from the pursuit of Saul. At last Saul finds his hiding-place, and the scene occurs which our lesson narrates.

EXPLANATIONS.—The men of David.—There had gathered around him in his life as an outlaw a band of devoted and hardy young men, who formed in after days the nucleus of his power. The skirt of Saul's robe—A piece from the outer garment which was customarily laid aside when the wearer was at rest. Heart smote him—Or, as we say, his conscience troubled him. My father, see—A reverential form of address. But Saul was really David's father-in-law. A dead dog: after a flea—That is, I am too insignificant and contemptible to cause you an hour of uneasiness.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

- 1. David's Chance. What had been Saul's attitude toward David since his flight from Gibeah? How earnest was he in his purpose to capture David? What is the story which this lesson presents? Why did Saul take three thousand men? What great temptation came to David? What proof of rectitude of character does he here manifest? What would have been the world's verdict on this act?
2. David's Grace. How far did David's care for Saul's life extend? How do David's words show that even now, though an outlaw, he was not disloyal?

What two principles seem to have controlled him? Should the same principle restrain men nowadays from doing violence to monarchs or civil rulers? How did Jewish kings differ in their tenure of office from kings to-day?

3. Saul's Gratitude.

What was David's course after Saul left the cave? How near together must they have come? What was made plain by David's address? What was the effect upon Saul? What principle had David exemplified by his course? Rom. 12. 21. What does Saul's speech show as to his own character? What strange covenant closed this interview? ver. 21. Why did not David return to court with Saul?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

How often men come within a very little of their purposes and yet fail! Why? Is it fate, or God, that directs? How often men are in danger of their lives, and do not know it! What saves them? See the difference between the worldly spirit and the godly spirit:— Says the World: "See—thine enemy." Says Conscience: "Make him thy friend." The World: "Do what seemeth good." Conscience: "It seemeth good to spare." The World: "Take the kingdom over men." Conscience: "Seek the kingdom of God." The World: "Seize thine opportunity." Conscience: "My times are in thy hand."

HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.

- 1. Study well all from chapter 20 to chapter 24.
2. Find the new tests of Jonathan's friendship.
3. Study the Psalms for allusions to this time of life. Psa. 40, and others.
4. Find how his followers had come about him. 1 Sam. 22. 1; 1 Chron. 11. 15-20; 1 Sam. 26. 6; 1 Chron. 12. 8-18, and other passages.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What test of David's character is given in our lesson? "His mercy to Saul, his foe." 2. What reason did he give for sparing him? "He is the Lord's anointed." 3. What means did he take to convince Saul of his rectitude? "He cut off his skirt." 4. What was Saul's testimony to David when he had learned of his escape? "Thou art more righteous than I." 5. What great principles of the New Testament did David exemplify? "Be not overcome," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Christian charity.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

43. How is God faithful and true? His words are always true, and his promises can never fail.—Numbers 23. 19.

B.C. 1056] LESSON XII. [Sept. 22

DEATH OF SAUL AND HIS SONS.

1 Sam. 31. 1-13. Memory verses, 4-6

GOLDEN TEXT.

The face of the Lord is against them that do evil. Psalm 34. 16.

OUTLINE.

- 1. Saul's Death, v. 1-7.
2. Saul's Burial, v. 8-13.

TIME.—1056 B.C.

PLACE.—Mount Gilboa.

CONNECTING LINKS.—The story of the last years of Saul's reign is one of tempest and sunshine. Occasionally a gleam of light bursts in upon the madness of the king. Samuel died, and Israel lamented. David lived as a freebooter in the wilderness, subsisting as he could on the country, and once more pursued by Saul. At last he formed defensive alliance with the Philistines in the country of Achish, king of Gath. Once more there came war between the Philistines and Saul, and David went forth with his new allies to battle against his people. The lords of the Philistines distrust him, and he is sent back to the Philistine country before the battle, to find his country had been invaded, and his wives carried away among the captives with the spoil. He pursued and recaptured all, utterly defeating the Amalekite invaders. Meanwhile the battle had been fought in the north which was to bring to David a return to his native

land and to a throne. Our lesson tells the story.

EXPLANATIONS.—Archers—Men who fought with bow and arrows. A very effective instrument of ancient warfare. A sword, and fell upon it—This was in ancient and classical times the favourite method of escaping death: at the hand of the enemy. Roman and Greek literature contains many instances. All his men—Not every soldier of the army, but all his immediate household. Other side of the valley—That is, on the opposite side of the great plain of Jezreel. On the other side Jordan—That is, on the western side, opposite to Jabesh-gilead. The Philistines thus had at once possession of the whole north of Palestine.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

- 1. Saul's Death. In what part of Palestine was the battle fought which this lesson narrates? For how many years had there been almost continual war with this enemy? What was the effect of this battle upon the political condition of the kingdom? What was the end of Saul? What character had he shown as king? What was the effect of Saul's death upon the country at large? What had Saul accomplished for his country by his reign? In what respects were the beginning and ending of his reign similar? What people had he made his staunch friends by his first act? 1 Sam. 11. 1-11.

- 2. Saul's Burial. What proof of the bitterness of the battle did the Philistines find upon the field? What light is shed on the barbarity of times by their action? What was the purpose of the indignity shown to Saul's body? What city of Israel came to rescue their king's remains? Was this city near the field of battle? What does their act prove concerning their character? Where were the bones of Saul and his sons laid to rest? Was this their final resting-place? 2 Sam. 21. 12-14. What covenant vow was fulfilled by this act of David? What beautiful tribute did he also pay to their memory? 2 Sam. 1. 23.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Saul's disobedience brought his ruin. It did not stop there; it ruined his family. How often one act of sin works sorrow in many lives! It spread wider. It entailed war on his country.

Do you see any relation nowadays between sin in public men and public calamity? The old world was barbarous. Hate heaped indignities on the helpless dead. How the cross on Calvary has changed all that! Christianity slowly humanizes. Learn how good a thing is gratitude. Saul saved Jabesh-gilead. Jabesh-gilead did what it could to save Saul's memory.

HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.

- 1. Find Mount Gilboah, Beth-shan, Jabesh-gilead.
2. Find how many battles Saul had fought with the Philistines. How many won, how many lost.
3. Learn why Jabesh-gilead was so devoted to his memory.
4. Compare Saul's death with that of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi for a side light upon the truth of this narrative.
5. Study carefully chaps. 1-4 of Second Samuel.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What caused the death of Saul? "Defeat by the Philistines." 2. Who else perished in the battle? "Three of his sons." 3. How much of the country was gained by the Philistines by this battle? "All northern Palestine." 4. By whom was Saul's body buried? "By the men of Jabesh-gilead." 5. What prophecy was fulfilled by this battle? "That God hath rejected Saul?" 6. What great truth was thus emphasized afresh? "The face of the Lord is," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—God's hate for sin.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

44. What is meant by saying that God is gracious and merciful? That he is full of compassion, slow to punish sin, and ready to forgive. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.—Exodus 34. 6.

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