

"Whoever will undertake this dangerous enterprise, let him try this underground passage, and when he has entered the fortifications by its means, let him smite the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul." **He shall be chief and captain**—is not in R. V. It is a quotation from 1 Chr. 11: 6. Possibly David desired some one to supersede Joab; but Joab, with a few men took the fortification. **There are the blind** (R. V.)—This became a proverbial saying for these poor cripples. **9. Dwelt in the fort**—"The stronghold" (R. V.) The victory was David's, who made the citadel his palace, and immediately took steps to fortify the summit. **Millo**—The rampart or entrenchment of the citadel. (Bible Dictionary).

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGDOM. **10. Went on and grew**—"Waxed

greater and greater" (R. V.) The beginning of a new era of increasing national prosperity and religious progress and activity. The secret of all this prosperity and progress was due to the fact that "the Lord God of hosts was with him." **11. Sent messengers**—David being securely established in his kingdom, he opens up trade and commerce with Hiram, king of Tyre. **Carpenters and masons**—How degenerate Israel had become in skilled workmen, having to import them from Tyre. **12. Perceived**—Whatever doubts and misgivings David may have had in the past, he now fully realized and appreciated the fact that he had been divinely called and appointed to rule over Israel. It is a good thing when men truly realize that they are in their right calling in life.

## PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *The saying "Everything comes to him that waits" has much truth in it.* A great many people precipitate failure by "discovering" themselves rather than waiting to be discovered. The divinest right of kings to reign is the right consequent on merit and fitness. A long course of training had brightened and intensified all the splendid natural powers of David till the whole land came to recognise his peculiar fitness to be ruler over it. In the long run men find their level, or rather the world finds it for them. That being true, it becomes the duty of people who are religious patriots and who live under a representative form of government to see that they place in power over them only such men as will command respect, and whose ability and integrity ensure honest administration of public offices. If this were done men would not be seeking places and offices with the deplorable results we so often see, but the places and offices would seek and find the men who ought to fill them. We can all take part in such a christian citizenship movement as this. Religion and patriotism are concurrent, for we would doubt the religion of the man whose soul was so dead that he did not love his country.

2. *Work well done in subordinate positions paves the way for promotion.* David was now being rewarded for the toil and travail of his earlier life. "Thou ledest out and broughtest in Israel." Even though Saul was king the faithful and courageous conduct of his subordinate David was noticed, and ultimately secured practical and open recognition. So in every walk in life we best fit ourselves for a higher position by doing conspicuously well our part in the lower place. This thought should prevent us from feeling that any work however apparently menial is really so in any true sense. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Life has nothing more heroic to shew us than the sight of some man or woman in answer to the call of duty to God and man loyally treading day by day paths of apparent drudgery. Such faithfulness wins

approval from God and recognition (sure though sometimes slow) from the best elements in humanity.

3. *We have here in a figure a noble ideal of duty set before all in authority. Thou shalt feed (shepherd) my people Israel.* The peculiar governmental system. If Israel may not be perpetuated, but what an excellent thing it is when the rulers of the people in civil affairs are also competent to be their leaders in religious life. Such men would realise that their sphere lies in the direction of this test—they would not feel that it is their business to get as much as they can out of the people during their term of office, but rather would realise that it is their duty to do as much as they can for the people. To be a good shepherd implies a love for the flock—a genuine interest in their safety and welfare. It involves a willingness to spend and be spent in their service and to count no work done for them as too arduous. Especially is it the duty of the shepherd to look well after the weaker and poorer members of the flock. It is not well for the ruler either in church or state to manifest great interest in the strong and influential people to the exclusion of the weak and the poor. It is more Christ-like to brave the dangerous road and the stormy night in looking for the one that is lost than to enjoy ease with the ninety and nine.

4. *David's capture of Jerusalem was possible only by the companionship of the unseen.* It seems quite clear that the Jebusites considered their position impregnable. In their opinion the blind and the lame could hold it against the trained soldiery of David, as a child in certain situations can withstand a mailed warrior. But the place was important from a strategic standpoint, while within the borders of Judah, it was far enough north to command Israel. Hence the value of securing it and in spite of difficulties "what ought to be can be" with the help of God. Many of the prevalent evils of our time, such as the liquor traffic, seem so solidly intrenched that their supporters laugh at all the efforts of God's people to