

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Third Quarter, 1903.

JULY TO SEPTEMBER.

Lesson X. September 6. Death of Saul and Jonathan.—1 Samuel 31: 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.—Prov. 14: 12.

EXPLANATORY.

THE BATTLE AND DEFEAT AT MT. GILBOA.—Vs. 1, 2, 4, 7. The next morning the battle was begun.

1. AND THE MEN OF ISRAEL FLED FROM BEFORE THE PHILISTINES. "The Philistines seem to have driven them in a state of panic up the heights, for it was upon the 'high places' that the corpses of Saul and his sons were found next day by the conquerors."

2. FOLLOWED HARD UPON SAUL AND UPON HIS SONS: the three sons who were with him in the battle. Saul had another son, Ishbosheth, who was not there, and hence survived him. SLEW JONATHAN. Fighting bravely as of yore. No doubt it was better thus for himself and for the kingdom, and saved many difficulties and complications.

THE DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.—Vs. 2-10. Jonathan was slain first as we have seen.

3. THE BATTLE WENT SORE AGAINST SAUL. The Vulgate has a striking paraphrase: "The whole weight of the battle was directed against Saul." He seems to have bravely maintained his ground for some time longer. AND THE ARCHERS HIT HIM. "Got him in range." AND HE WAS SORE WOUNDED OF THE ARCHERS. They pressed so close upon him that he saw no way of escape. He was in despair. His army was gone, his son slain, he himself was wounded and weak, and God was not with him.

4. THEN SAID SAUL UNTO HIS ARMORBEARER, DRAW THINE SWORD. LEST THESE UNCIRCUMCISED (Philistines) ABUSE ME. Mock him, torture him. He must die anyway, and he would rather die by one thrust of the sword than by slow tortures at the hands of cruel enemies, and be mutilated afterwards. BUT HIS ARMORBEARER WOULD NOT; FOR HE WAS SORE AFRAID. It would be worse than death to kill the man he was appointed to defend with his life. He could never have peace again, and the people would hold him guilty of the most dastardly murder. SAUL TOOK A SWORD, AND FELL UPON IT. Planting the hilt in the ground, he fell upon the point.

5. AND HIS ARMORBEARER . . . FELL LIKEWISE UPON HIS SWORD, AND DIED WITH HIM. Being answerable for the king's life, he feared punishment; or from a nobler motive of true fidelity, refused to survive his master.

6. SO SAUL DIED. The young Amalekite, who brought the news to David, declared that he killed him (2 Sam. 1: 6-10), but evidently he lied in hopes of reward. AND ALL HIS MEN. His personal staff, and all of his sons who were in the battle. 1 Chron. 10: 6, explains it by all his house.

7. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VALLEY. The valley of Jezreel descending toward the Jordan, on the other side of Mt. Gilboa from that by which Saul's army came to Jezreel, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF JORDAN. This is the usual sense of the Hebrew words. The panic spread even to the eastern side of the Jordan. But possibly the phrase here means "on the side of the Jordan, i. e., in the district between the battlefield and the river; which agrees better with the account of the Jebesites, and the establishment of Ishbosheth's kingdom at Mahanaim.

9. AND THEY CUT OFF HIS HEAD. To send as a trophy and proof of their victory. It was hung in the temple of Dagon at Ashdod (1 Chron. 10: 10). STRIPPED OFF HIS ARMOR, AND SENT INTO THE LAND . . . TO PUBLISH IT IN THE HOUSE OF THEIR IDOLS. "His arms—the spear on which he had so often rested—the sword and the famous bow of Jonathan—were sent round in festive processions to the Philistine cities, and finally deposited in the temple at Ashdod (v. 10) in the Canaanite city of Beth-shan, hard by the fatal field."

10. THEY FASTENED HIS BODY TO THE WALL. Together with the bodies of his sons (v. 12). "They were hung on the wall in the 'open place' (2 Sam. 21: 12; A. V., street by the gate, that all passers-by might join in exulting over the defeat and disgrace of Israel." WALL OF BETH-SHAN. Modern Beisan, a town down the valley of Jezreel toward the Jordan.

A VALIANT ACT OF GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE.—Vs. 11-13. 11. AND WHEN THE INHABITANTS OF JABESH-GILEAD HEARD. Jabesh-gilead was a city of Manasseh, east of the Jordan, about ten miles across the Jordan Valley from Beth-shan. The inhabitants remembered the splendid feat of arms by which King Saul at the very beginning of his reign delivered them from the Ammonites. They were determined to spare

them only on condition of the loss of their right eyes.

12. ALL THE VALIANT MEN. It required brave and strong men to take the bodies of Saul and his sons from off the fortress under the very eyes of the victorious Philistines. WENT ALL NIGHT. The city was ten miles distant, and the deed must be done while the soldiers were asleep. AND BURNT THEM THERE. The reason for their thus acting is clear. The mutilated trunks had been exposed for some days to the air, and the flesh was no doubt in a state of putrefaction. The bones unconsumed were reverently taken away with them.

13. AND BURIED THEM UNDER A TREE AT JABESH. R. V., the tamarind tree. Their own beautiful and famous tamarisk tree in Gilead. We learned from 2 Sam. 21: 12-14, that the bones of Saul and Jonathan were subsequently removed, by David's order, to their ancestral sepulchre.

THE SONG OF THE BOW. The battle of Gilboa was probably fought on the same day that David gained his great victory over the Amalekites, who ravaged his home at Ziklag. Three days after his return home (2 Sam. 1: 2) the news of the disaster to Saul reached him. The story of its reception is recorded in 2 Sam. 1: 1-16. Then David wrote a noble elegy, called "The Song of the Bow," which was taught to the children of Judah (2 Sam. 1: 18) not "the use of the bow," as in the old version, but "The Song of the Bow."

The elegy is given in 2 Sam. 19: 27. "How are the mighty fallen," is a kind of refrain. This elegiac song was written in the Book of Jasher (The Righteous), which says Dr. Wm. M. Taylor seems to have a collection of ancient Jewish songs or ballads, corresponding in some degree to the minstrelsy of the Scottish border, the only other question from it in Scripture being the poetical commemoration of the victory of Joshua in the Valley of Ajalon.

THE HOMES OF THE POOR.

Come away from the crowded centres
Of the city's throbbing life;
The palaces grand on every hand,
The noise and heat and strife;
From the fever of pride and passion,
That the grave can only cure,
And walk with me in the twilight hour
By the humble homes of the poor.

Here the father comes home in the evening,
From care and from danger free,
As the little ones run to meet him,
With their innocent shouts of glee.
No hireling's hand has nursed them,
Nor will guard them at night secure,
For the mother is all to her children
In the humble homes of the poor.

I love to walk in the twilight,
Where I see through the open door,
Some busy household duties,
Some at play on the simple floor.
No luxury makes them heartless,
No idleness makes them impure;
The menace to souls where Mammon rolls
Cannot enter the homes of the poor.

Come away from the hollow pleasures
Of the ballroom and banquet hall;
For the children's hour in the cottage
Has joy that exceeds them all.
Come away from the proud, for their riches
Take wing, and shall not endure,
Their pride will not weigh in the judgment day.

With the humble homes of the poor,
—Catholic Home Companion.

THE RAINBOW.

There are seven sisters that live all day
In a wonderful house of light;
And they sail away in the twilight gray,
Out on the sea of night.
And never till morn are these sisters seen,
For they stay in bed, they stay in bed—
Violet, Indigo, Blue, Green, Yellow,
Orange, and Red.

But when it is day once more, once more,
They rouse themselves from sleep;
If the rain begins to pour and pour,
It will soon be time to play bo-peep.
But they wait till the clouds have almost fled;

Then we say there's a rainbow overhead
It is only the seven sisters seen
In the house of light at the open door—
Violet, Indigo, Blue, Green, Yellow,
Orange, and Red.

—St. Nicholas.

NOTICE.

The annual meeting of the Stock-holders of The S. Hayward Company will be held at the office of the Company, Canterbury Street, St. John, N. B., on Thursday, Aug. 20th, 1903, at 3 o'clock, p. m., for the election of directors and transaction of other business legally coming before the meeting.

S. HAYWARD, President.
Dated at St. John, July 31st, 1903.
Aug. 19th.

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