



LESSON,—SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 1908.

David Spares Saul's Life.

I. Sam. xxvi., 17-25. Memory verse, 21. Read I. Sam. xxi.-xxvi.

Golden Text.

Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.—Luke vi., 27.

Home Readings.

- Monday, August 24.—I. Sam xxi., 1-15.
- Tuesday, August 25.—I. Sam. xxii., 1-23.
- Wednesday, August 26.—I. Sam. xxiii., 1-29.
- Thursday, August 27.—I. Sam. xxiv., 1-22.
- Friday, August 28.—I. Sam. xxv., 1-22.
- Saturday, August 29.—I. Sam. xxv. 23-44.
- Sunday, August 30.—I. Sam. xxvi., 1-25.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

No better introduction for this lesson need be asked for than is found in the story of David's escape and his securing of Goliath's sword for his own use. It may convey a useful lesson if the teacher pauses to show how the lie that David told in order to secure it and other assistance from the priest resulted in the murder of the priests by Saul. There was no need for the lie. David was in God's hands and might have trusted God to care for him, but he told the lie and had the sorrow of knowing that the death of all these priests lay at his door (I. Sam. xxii., 22). The six chapters that are considered in connection with this lesson afford an abundant supply of story material for the half hour's study. David's living in dark caves and being hunted from place to place, his rescue of the city of Keilah (Chap. xxiii., verse 1), his narrow escape on one occasion (chap. xxiii., verse 26), Jonathan's visit to David (Chap. xxiii., verse 16), the first sparing of Saul's life (Chap. xxiv.), and the incident of Nabal's churlishness, are all subjects of interest. These chapters cover some fourteen years of David's life.

FOR THE SENIORS.

It has often been remarked by Christians when reading the Psalms that the many prayers of David that God should destroy his enemies and make them fall into their own traps, spoil the otherwise beautiful hymns of praise and trust and show a religion greatly inferior to that taught by Christ, but in our lesson to-day there is fair evidence that David's religion was lived on a higher plane than such expressions would indicate. He may pray and with justice, that God would plead his cause, that God would remove his enemies and give him peace and opportunity to worship God again at His tabernacle, but he would not take such vengeance into his own hands, and even in the case of his just anger against Nabal he is thankful to be brought to a better mind by the advice of Abigail (Chap. xxv., 32, 33). It is a mighty tribute to his character that after years of causeless and bitter persecution, pushed so far that it was necessary even to remove his aged parents from the power of Saul's hatred (I. Sam. xxii., 3, 4), David could still be so amenable to a gentle word from a woman, could still leave the ungrateful city of Keilah without executing on it some sort of revenge, could so gently remonstrate with Saul, and so lovingly cling to his own land where alone he fancied God could be truly worshipped (Chap. xxvi., verse 19), and was not driven to the life of a mercenary in command of a large band of men, such a life as would have been remunerative and carried him into high honor

at a larger court than that of Israel (I. Sam. xxvii.; xxviii., 1, 2; xxix). Say that he had in mind his destiny as Israel's king,—all the more honor that no act of his strove to force the prophecy to fulfilment, and it is evident also that there was a real temptation for him to accept the honor Achish would have given him in the Philistine court. I. Chron. xii., 1-22 will give some further idea of the numbers and class of men who resorted to David during his exile, and II. Sam. xxiii., 13-17 will show the spirit of devotion there was among them for their leader.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

Verse 19. Go, serve other gods. In ancient times a stranger must attach himself to some tribe or family in order to be protected. But attachment to a tribe or family meant partaking in its sacra—its religious rites; for this was what constituted a tribe's distinction, or that of a family. Hence the stranger who went to a foreign country must perforce take part in the religion of the country and serve its gods. A great deal has been made of David's expression 'They have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord (that is, the land of Israel) saying, Go serve other gods.' According to these words, abiding in another land is equivalent to serving other gods. The phraseology rests merely on the fact that in foreign lands other gods were worshipped; it contains no proof that other gods had any reality. At most it might be supposed to imply that Jehovah was God only of Israel, but could not be found in foreign lands. It is possible that the phrase might have had this meaning, but it had no such sense in Jeremiah's days, for he counsels the exiles to pray for the peace of the land of their exile.—A. B. Davidson.

22. Behold the spear. I noticed at all the encampments which we passed that the sheik's tent was distinguished from the rest by a tall spear stuck upright in the ground in front of it; and it is the custom, when a party is out on an excursion for robbery or for war, that when they halt to rest, the spot where the chief reclines or sleeps is thus designated. No one ventures to travel over these deserts without his cruse of water (verses 12 and 16), and it is very common to place one at the 'bolster,' so that the owner can reach it during the night. The Arabs eat their dinner in the evening, and it is generally of such a nature as to create thirst, and the quantity of water which they drink is enormous. The cruse is therefore in perpetual demand.—Thomson, 'The Land and the Book.'

23. I would not put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed. What an admirable spirit of self-restraint and patience David showed in being willing to bear all the risk and pain of a most distressing position, until it should please God to bring to him the hour of deliverance. Into how many sins have men been betrayed through unwillingness to wait for God's time! A young man embarks in the pursuit of commerce; but the gains to be derived from ordinary business come in far too slowly for him; he makes haste to be rich, engages in gigantic speculations, plunges into frightful gambling, and in a few years brings ruin on himself and all connected with him. How many sharp transactions continually occur just because men are impatient, and wish to hurry on some consummation which their hearts are set on! Have not murders often taken place just to hasten the removal of some who occupied places that others were eager to fill?—W. R. Nicoll, 'Expositor's Bible.'

David's victory over Goliath and the Philistines, and even all his victories combined are lesser triumphs than his victory over the spirit of revenge.

'Respect takes nothing from our stature,' says Mr. Charles Wagner. 'Do you think that in bowing modestly to an old man as you pass him, or to a distinguished citizen, you have sacrificed a part of your dignity? On the contrary, in bowing to him you have added to your stature. In knowing what is honorable, you do yourself honor: failing in respect where it is due, you do yourself dis-

honor. The lowest of human beings is he who has no respect for anything or anybody; he has descended so abjectly far that he has no longer even a sense of what is beautiful, noble, and exalted, or of what deserves admiration, enthusiasm, and reverence.

'A man's respect increases or decreases with his conception of his own dignity. The more a man is worth in his own eyes, the more willingly does he respect men or institutions which personify human nature and society. When he has lost faith in his higher self, in his worth as a moral being,—in his soul, in short,—he loses the basis of respect. Nothing appears worthy of reverence.'

Capacity for admiration is altogether admirable, as incapacity for admiration is altogether despicable.—Lyman Abbott.

Bible References.

Rom. xii., 18-21; Luke vi., 27, 28; Prov. xxv., 28; I. Pet. ii., 17.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, August 30.—Topic—Foreign missions: Cyrus Hamlin, and missions in Turkey. I. Cor. ix., 13-23.

C. E. Topic.

Monday, August 24.—Fulfilling God's law. Gal. v., 14.

Tuesday, August 25.—Great joy to all people. Luke ii., 10.

Wednesday, August 26.—Strangers dwelling with you. Lev. xix., 34.

Thursday, August 27.—We have one father. Mal. ii., 10.

Friday, August 28.—Our brothers. Zech. vii., 9.

Saturday, August 29.—Strengthen thy brethren. Luke xxii., 32.

Sunday, August 30.—Topic—Japanese children. Mark xii., 31.

The Superintendent's Duties.

The superintendent should be chief executive of the Sunday School, and upon him more than upon any one else devolves the wise execution of plans that are generally recognized as absolutely essential to the successful conduct of the school.

Here is a bare mention of his main duties, and it can be readily seen that his office is no sinecure. To secure the best building and the best equipment possible for that building; to govern and discipline the school; to help select officers and teachers; to plan for the training of officers and teachers, (1) in the training classes, (2) in the teachers' meeting, (3) through a well-equipped professional library, (4) by inducing them to attend institutes, conventions, local unions, etc., (5) by planning for them to visit other classes and schools; to properly organize and grade the school; to plan for keeping and using a complete system of records; to plan for the observance of special days; to keep in operation a home department and a cradle roll; to inaugurate plans to build up the school; to procure class organization in the advanced classes; to plan a varied and interesting programme for each Sunday; to adopt plans to secure home co-operation; to help teachers secure home study by the pupils; to look after the regular and punctual attendance of officers, teachers and pupils; to plan impressive installation services for his officers and teachers; to keep up the educational and spiritual tone of the school; to adopt a standard and plan of exercises for promotion; to run his school the year round, irrespective of the heat or cold; to provide for a pupils' library; to be continually praying and planning for new and better things.—The 'Living Evangelical.'

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