



LESSON,—SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1908.

Absalom Rebels Against David.

II. Sam. xv., 1-12. Memory verses 5, 6. Read II. Sam. xiii-xvi.

Golden Text.

Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Ex. xx., 12.

Home Readings.

- Monday, October 26.—II. Sam. xiv., 1-17.
- Tuesday, October 27.—II. Sam. xiv., 18-33.
- Wednesday, October 28.—II. Sam. xv., 1-18.
- Thursday, October 29.—II. Sam. xv., 19-37.
- Friday, October 30.—II. Sam. xvi., 1-23.
- Saturday, October 31.—II. Sam. xvii., 1-14.
- Sunday, November 1.—II. Sam. xvii., 15-29.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Do you remember what David had to do when he was a little boy? He had to help with the work at home, and to spend a lot of his time looking after the sheep just as a great many little boys in Canada have to look after the cows or help feed the chickens and do a great many other little things about the home. Do you have to do any work at home? Well, David did when he was a boy, but by-and-bye he came to be king and to have little boys of his own. We don't find that he taught his little boys to do anything. He just let them have anything they wanted and do anything they liked to do. Do you think that made them love him? No, indeed, it didn't. They just grew up to be selfish and vain and one of them even wanted to be king instead of his father. That is what our lesson is about today. This son's name was Absalom. He was very beautiful, more beautiful than any other boy in Israel and his father loved him very much, but then David loved all his children very much, so much that he never wanted to punish them no matter how naughty they were. One day Absalom did something that he really was afraid his father would have to punish him; for, so he ran away from home and went to stay with his grandfather who was king of a country north of Israel. He stayed at this palace with his grandfather for three years and all the time David was wanting to have him home, so at last he sent his general Joab with some soldiers to fetch him. Absalom was a young man now, about twenty-five or thirty years old and he no sooner found that he was going to be quite forgiven when, what do you think he did? Did he say 'Oh Father, I'll try not to do so wrong again. I'll try to be good and love you as you love me?' He did just the opposite to that. He tried to make the people discontented with his father for king, and to make them think how much better it would be to have him, Absalom, for their king. He worked like that for several years until he had made ever so many people discontented with David. Although he was so good to look at there was no goodness in his heart and he was just like poison spoiling the hearts of all those that he could, until one day he thought that it would be safe for him to rebel and have himself proclaimed king.

FOR THE SENIORS.

The bitter fruits of filial disloyalty that troubled David's later days were of his own planting and nourishing. His constant indulgence is mentioned in the case of Adonijah (I. Kings i., 6), and hinted at by Jonadab (II. Sam. xiii., 4). The gross sin of his eldest son, Amnon, went unpunished and it was the rankling sense of injustice in this that drove Absalom to the more open sin, the murder of Amnon. It was plain that he expected something would have to be done about that for

he fled where he knew his act would be approved and he be supported by the king his grandfather (II. Sam. iii., 3; xiii., 37). David's almost criminal love for his children could not admit of any righteous indignation and justice. He only longed daily for the return of the culprit (II. Sam. xiii., 37), and as soon as he felt that the people favored his act received him into fullest favor again (II. Sam. xiv., 33). The son learned not only to love himself the better for his evident appreciation by king and people, but to despise his father's sense of justice. There is no more effective example of foolish parental indulgence than that afforded by David, and it is possible that Solomon's later rather drastic and widely quoted sentiments on the bringing up of children (Prov. xix., 18; xxix., 17), sprang from the knowledge of his father's great failure in this respect. It is very probable that the events described in the last chapter of II. Samuel occurred during the years in which Absalom so successfully alienated the hearts of the people. The chronicler of this book is never very particular to give events in their due sequence and in I. Chron. xxi., the same event is given directly after the incidents described in II. Sam. xii. This act of David against the wishes of the people and resulting in the three days pestilence, his drafting of the people into companies to secure the material for the new temple and other work (I. Chron. xxvii.), and the taxes which were necessary in a kingdom of this kind and required a special officer (II. Sam. xx., 24), would all serve to make the people discontented. David, too, was growing older and not so bent on warlike achievements as he used to be. Absalom was not slow to take his chance, and when he openly rebelled he had a large number of the people on his side, and a fair prospect of their numbers increasing (verse 12).

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

Among Carlyle's papers was found one on which he himself had written, 'My last letter to my mother.' 'My dear, good mother,' he wrote, 'let it ever be a comfort to you, however weak you are, that you did your part honorably and well while in strength, and were a noble mother to me and to us all. I am now myself grown old, and have had various things to do and suffer for many years; but there is nothing I ever had to be so thankful for as the mother I had. If there has been good in the things I have uttered in the world's hearing, it was "your" voice essentially that was speaking through me; essentially what you and my brave father meant and taught me to mean. May God reward you, my dearest mother, for all you have done for me; I never can!'

Carlyle's father was a rough stone mason, but Carlyle was ready to acknowledge his indebtedness to him. In his 'Reminiscences,' which were published after his death, he thus speaks of him: 'I feel to my father—so great, though so neglected, so generous also toward me—a strange tenderness, and mingled pity and reverence peculiar to the case, infinitely soft and near my heart. Was he not a sacrifice to me? Had I stood in his place, could he not have stood in mine? Thou good father, well may I forever honor thy memory.'

Verse 3. 'There is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.' The court was organized on a more extensive scale than in the kingdom of Saul. David alone was, of course, the chief justice, and was accessible to all his people. The case of the wise woman of Tekoa is enough to show this, and Absalom's insinuation of lack of due attention on the king's part to cases of wrong must be taken as the demagogue's perversion of the truth in his own interest. We hear now, for the first time, of an office whose business it was to keep track of public affairs—a monitor for the king. * * * We also hear of a scribe, apparently the king's private secretary, and two priests are now counted among the court officers. (II. Sam. viii., 15-18).—H. P. Smith, 'Old Testamentary History.'

Verse 3. Of what beasts is the bite most dangerous? Of wild beasts, that of the slanderer, of tame ones, that of the flatterer.—Diogenes.

Praise is an estimate of value: flattery is the effort to compensate for the lack of value.—H. Clay Trumbull.

Verse 12. 'Absalom sent for Ahithophel.'

What swept Ahithophel into the ranks of this great conspiracy? The reason is given in the genealogical tables, which show that he was the grandfather of Bathsheba, and that his son, Eliam, was the comrade and friend of Uriah.—F. B. Meyer.

Verse 7. 'After forty years.' R. V., at the end of forty years.' At the end of the fortieth year of David's reign. R. V. margin, 'According to Syriac and some editions of Septuagint Version, four years.' Josephus also says 'four years'; the forty is understood by some scholars to be clerical error for four, and is to be reckoned from the time of Absalom's reconciliation with his father.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, November 1.—Topic—Songs of the Heart. XI. The Sleepless Watcher. Ps. 121. (Consecration meeting.)

C. E. Topic.

Monday, October 26.—Let children praise Him. Ps. clviii., 12, 13.

Tuesday, October 27.—The multitudes praise Him. Matt. xxi., 8, 9.

Wednesday, October 28.—Praise Him every day. 1 Chron. xxiii., 28, 30.

Thursday, October 29.—All nature praises Him. 1 Chron. xvi., 32-34.

Friday, October 30.—Praise Him always. Ps. xxxiv., 1-3.

Saturday, October 31.—Praise Him with understanding. Ps. lvii., 1-7.

Sunday, November 1.—Topic—The children's hosannas. Matt. xxi., 15, 16. (Praise meeting.)

Sunday School Offer.

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