

Ministering.

WHAT though your feet are often over weary,

On ceaseless errands sent :
And tired shoulders ache and ache so sorely
'Neath heavy burdens bent .
Be patient, lest the ones whom you are serving
Be soon beyond your care ;
Lest little wayward feet that you are guiding
Slip past you unaware.

Ah, then, Lo joy would seem so dear and blessed,
As spending months and years
In ceaseless service for the vanished darlings
So vainly mourned with tears,
But while you have your dear ones still around you,
Do not regret your care ;
Far easier aching feet and arms and shoulders,
Than aching hearts to bear

And still beyond your household duties reaching
Stretch forth a helping hand .
So many stand in need of loving comfort
All over this wide land :
Perchance some soul you did to lay, to-morrow
May with the angels sing :
Some one may go straight from your earthly table
To banquet with the King.

-The Mothers' Magazine

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

B.C. 1023] LESSON VI. [Nov. 10

DAVID'S GRIEF FOR ABSALOM.

2 Sam. 18 18-33 Memory verses 32, 33.

GOLDEN TEXT.

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him Prov 17. 25.

OUTLINE.

1. Evil Tidings, v. 18-32.
2. Great Grief, v. 33.

TIME.—1023 B.C.

PLACE.—Mahanaim, where David waited the issue of the battle.

CONNECTING LINKS.—Absalom's conspiracy was at the outset entirely successful. Large numbers of people, and some of the most prominent men of the realm, flocked to his standard. He advanced on Jerusalem, and David was compelled to precipitate flight beyond the Jordan. His rebellious son took possession of the city, and to his political crime against his father added a deed of shame. Delaying immediate pursuit, David escaped to the fastnesses beyond the Jordan, and issued summons to his faithful people. The people turned once more toward their hero king. Soldiers gathered to his standard. The armies approached each other, the decisive battle was fought, and David's army was victorious. The sequel forms our lesson.

EXPLANATIONS.—*A pillar*—A monumental column inscribed with his own name. *In the king's dole*—Probably in the lower part of the valley of the Kedron, near the pool of Siloam. *Thou hast no tidings ready*—That is, no good tidings. He had always before been a messenger of good, and Joab seems to have hesitated to have him bear evil tidings. *Between the two gates*—Perhaps a city with a double wall, and at its main entrance an outer and an inner gate. *If he be alone*—If there were many running there would have been defeat, but only one runner meant news. *The chamber over the gate*—A room in the upper part of the watch-tower over one of the gates.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. *Evil Tidings.* What was the first result of Absalom's rebellion? Whither did the king flee?

By what device did he gain time for secure escape? Chap. 15. 32-37.
From what source did help come to the king? Chap. 17. 27-29.
After the first success of the rebellion, what did David and Joab accomplish? Chap. 18. 1, 2.
Where was the battle fought which ended the rebellion? ver. 6.
What trait of David's character was shown in ver. 5?
What was Absalom's end?
Can you justify Joab's action?
What messengers bore the tidings of the battle to David?
At what place did David await tidings?
Why did Ahimaaz not tell David the truth?

2. *Great Grief.*

Who broke the news of Absalom's death to the king?
What was the meaning of his message?
Was there anything strange about David's forgetfulness of the numbers slain in the battle?
How did he once before act when a child was dead? Chap. 12. 21-23.
What circumstances could make the difference?
Can you connect David's sin (chap. 11) with Amnon's sin (chap. 13) and Absalom's (chap. 13) as productive of this disastrous battle?
Oh whom can the whole responsibility of these sorrows be laid?
Does this view excuse Absalom from sin?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Here is a wonderful illustration of this truth, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." David sowed to the flesh, from the flesh he reaped corruption. Here is another truth illustrated, "Lust bringeth forth sin: sin bringeth forth death."

Absalom lusted for power, with the lust of the eyes for the pride of life. It plunged him into sin against his father, his nation, his God; sin brought to him death, physical and spiritual.

Here is a momentous question, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Are you?

HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Read all the chapters between this lesson and the preceding one.
2. Write the story of the battle, and its ending.
3. Give the reasons that led Joab to disobey the king.
4. Locate on the map of Palestine the place of the battle, and the city where David waited.
5. Think out the political causes of Absalom's rebellion, and the political results of it. Did it affect Joab's after life?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. Where was the decisive battle between the king and Absalom fought? "In the wood of Ephraim." 2. What was the result? "The triumph of the king." 3. What had been his command concerning his rebel son? "That his life be spared." 4. Was his command obeyed? "No; for Joab slew him." 5. What truth did David prove in his old age? "A foolish son is a grief," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Personal responsibility.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

50. In what part of man is the image of God?
In his spirit or soul, which was breathed into him by the Creator. Gen. 2. 7.
51. Is, then, the soul of man created to live forever?
It is immortal, and will not die as the body dies. Ecclesiastes 12. 7.

B.C. 1018] LESSON VII. [Nov. 17

DAVID'S LAST WORDS.

2 Sam. 23. 1-7. Memory verses, 3, 4.

GOLDEN TEXT.

He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.—2 Sam. 23. 5.

OUTLINE.

1. The Psalmist, v. 1, 2.
2. His Song, v. 3-7.

TIME.—1018 B. C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

CONNECTING LINKS.—The last years of David's reign were years of sorrow. Ere he was fairly returned to Jerusalem another rebellion broke forth, which was quelled by

Joab with characteristic vigour, and the policy of conciliation which the king adopted was utterly distasteful to the generals who had won his victories. Then followed the great pestilence from Jehovah, in return for his temerity in daring to order a census of the people, which originated in the king's unholly ambitions. In the midst of this period in decline in strength, we find the psalm of this lesson recorded as the last of the long series to which his fertile brain had given birth.

EXPLANATIONS.—*His word was in my tongue*—A direct avowal of inspiration by Jehovah. *Rock of Israel*—So called because God was the firm foundation of his people. Ver. 4 needs no special explanation, but careful attention to its beautiful smiles is urged. *My house is not so*—David's family had not begun in reference to the kingdom like the day described in ver. 1, and the history had been clouded with sin, yet he rejoiced in the covenant. *Thorns thrust away*—Even as men root up, cut down, and burn thorns, so will God destroy all opposition to his kingdom.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. *The Psalmist.*

How long was David's reign?
In what sense were these David's last words?
To what three facts of his life is allusion made in ver. 1?
Where can the evidence of his literary power be found?
To whom does he ascribe all his worth as king and poet?
What doctrine of theology has been founded upon such expressions as this of ver. 2 and 2 Pet. 1. 21?

2. *The Song.*

What is the subject of this song?
What characteristics of a good ruler are here given?
In what respects is ver. 4 an illustration of a ruler's character?
From what origin had David's family arisen?
What was the covenant which God had made with David? 2 Sam. 7. 16
What desire of David's heart had not God allowed to grow?
To what are the wicked here likened?
What will be their end?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Last words are always noticeable.
The Christian's are wonderful words of joy. The sinner's have many times been the wails of those without hope. Which will ours be?
How pretty ascribes everything to God!
A beautiful character is like a morning without clouds.
God's covenant to us is surer than to David. Ours is in Christ—unalterable, eternal.
O the woe of perishing—thrust out of the way like thorns; burned with fire. So end the wicked.

HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Commit these verses to memory.
2. Repeat the story contained in the phrases "raised up on high," and "anointed of God."
3. Find proof that the covenant with David was kept.
4. Find the history of the word "Rock" used as a title of God, and all the passages that contain it.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What was the character of David's last words? "They were a psalm of praise." 2. For what principle of government does he praise God? "For justice that fears God." 3. To what does he liken such a ruler? "To a morning without clouds." 4. What does he say will be the end of those who oppose God's righteous ruler? "They shall be thrust away like thorns." 5. In what confident trust does the singer of this song rest? "He hath made with me," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The Rock of Israel.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

52. What is the other part of man?
His body, which is flesh and blood, and will die.
Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.—Matthew 10. 25.

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