

notably during the first siege of Jerusalem. "I have sinned—done wickedly," True penitence will acknowledge and take the blame of sin. Where penitence is not, the sinner will try to throw the blame on others, as Adam and Eve, "What have they done?" Much evil, but the magnitude of his own sin hid theirs from his view; "against me:" feeling that he was the sinner he would receive the punishment.

Vers. 18, 19. "Gad came." It was he who brought the message of punishment to David; now he brings one of mercy. In the parallel account, 1 Chron. 21: 18, we find that it was by command of the angel that Gad took that message. Gad was an old friend of David, having been with him in the cave of Adullam, 1 Sam. 22: 5; but his name has not been in the narrative since, until this pestilence. "David went up" promptly and in deep humility.

Ver. 20. "Araunah—saw the king." Araunah and his four sons had also seen the destroying angel, the sons had hid themselves in fear, but the father went forth to meet the king, "bowed himself" with true oriental courtesy; both were deeply interested in the fate of the city, which as *Dean Stanley* says (on the old tradition of Araunah having been its king before the conquest by David); "in different senses belonged to each."

Vers. 21, 22, 23. Two grand, unselfish men have met, at this threshing floor. Araunah asks why David has come to him, and then David replies, "to buy the threshing floor that the plague may be stayed." Araunah at once with noble liberality says, "take—what seemeth good," and not only does he offer the place, but he hastens to add, take also "oxen for burnt sacrifices—and instruments of the oxen for wood;" and it has come down to us, and will go down to the ends of the world that he did it "as a king," with a kingly heart and a kingly spirit; the "threshing instruments and instruments of the oxen" were made principally of wood, although the teeth or spikes of the former would be of iron for the purpose of bruising the ears of corn.

Ver. 24. The nobility of Araunah is matched by the unselfishness of David, there was all that he needed, and for nothing, but; "Nay," said he, "I will surely buy it of thee," and he adds as a reason a true principle "neither will I offer—of that which doth cost me nothing." So the king bought threshing floor and oxen for "fifty shekels of gold," about twenty-five dollars, but in 1 Chron. 21: 25, we are told that David gave 600 shekels of gold for the place, about \$5,250. We agree with the explanation that the writer in Chronicles is giving information additional to that in our portion, and that the larger sum represents a larger purchase, that is the fifty shekels of silver bought the threshing floor, a comparatively small space, and that David later on, perhaps in thankful recognition of the staying of the plague on the spot, purchased the whole hill, the homestead of Araunah as the site of the temple.

Ver. 25 "Built—an altar, as rapidly as possible, we are sure; "burnt offerings," expiatory; "peace offerings;" thanksgiving for Divine mercies, and so "the plague was stayed."

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Topical Analysis. (1) The pestilence 15: 16. (2) The repentant king, 17. (3) The merciful Jehovah, 18. (4) The accepted sacrifice—19: 25.

On the first topic we must show that *sin never goes unpunished*. We may not see the punishment, but punished it will be, for there is a God that judgeth righteously in the earth. Then *the innocent are often involved in the punishment that falls upon the guilty*. We have dwelt upon this in the introduction, so we need only reflect that broken law is no respecter of persons innocent or guilty, it must take its course although, as we have said

the people were joined in the sin, yet amongst them there would be many innocent, children and others, but they would suffer with the rest. How terrible, therefore, the responsibility of those who set in action a power which they cannot stay, and which may involve many in common suffering.

On the second topic show that *the way of penitence is the way of mercy*. David truly repented of his sin, not simply because of the pestilence, for before it was sent he confessed: "I have sinned greatly," neither did he seek to palliate his sin, or fix the guilt upon others. Nay, so far did he go in that direction as to be blind to the share that the people had in the sin, and to exclaim "these sheep, what have they done?" How different to the oft repeated repentances of Saul, wrung from him by judgments, but which were only like the morning cloud and the early dew.

On the third topic point out how merciful and gracious our Heavenly Father is, though he chastises he will not utterly destroy. For David *he provided a way of acceptance*. It was on the line of the dispensation in which David lived, an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah and the offering up of the appointed sacrifices; and for us there is a way, the way of Salvation, by the cross of Jesus Christ, and the penitent soul that seeks pardon and salvation in that appointed way, shall not miss it. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

On the fourth topic we may see how *obedience brings blessing*. God commanded, David hastened to obey, and in obedience he found the pardon for which he so earnestly sought. We must not omit to point out in this connection the noble conduct of Araunah. He had the opportunity in the extremity of the king to drive a hard bargain, but he was above it. His heart was not fettered by shekels, and, as a king, he would give to David freely all that he needed for sacrifice—threshing floor, oxen, and instruments of wood, so to-day he stands out grandly on the sacred page a noble pattern to us of unselfish liberality.

INCIDENTAL TRUTHS AND TEACHINGS.

We are never safe from temptations. Watch and pray. We may deceive others and ourselves as to our motive. We cannot deceive God.

The spirit of vain glorious pride is hateful to God, and will be punished by Him.

The heaviest chastisements for sin fall upon the children of God.

One mark of true repentance is sincere confession.

There is a way of return to God, so plain that none can mistake who look for it.

The acceptable giver gives that which cost something, the giving of which involves self-denial.

Before we speak God hears. He is merciful and ready to forgive.

Main Lesson.—"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." 1 John 1: 9; 2 Chron. 7: 14; Psa. 32: 5; Pro. 28: 13; Isa. 55: 7; Jer. 3: 12, 13; Luke 15: 21, 22.

LESSON 9.

Aug. 31,
1894.

GOD'S WORKS AND WORD.

{ Ps. 19:
1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."—Psa. 138: 2.

TIME.—Unknown; we cannot gather from the title or the Psalm itself any indication of the time of its composition; some have attributed it to David's bright unclouded shepherd days, before *Cour* life had left its stain on his beautiful nature; there is little doubt that it was written before the great sin that brought sorrow to his soul and darkened the latter part of his life.