

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes

Third Quarter, 1903.

JULY TO SEPTEMBER.

Lesson VI. August 9. David and Goliath.—1 Samuel 17: 38-49.

GOLDEN TEXT.

If God be for us, who can be against us?—Rom. 8: 31.

EXPLANATORY.

SAUL'S ARMOR: EVERY MAN TO HIS OWN WEAPON.—Vs. 38-40. SAUL ARMED DAVID WITH HIS ARMOUR. Literally, "clothed David with his dress," a military dress worn underneath the armor. AS HELMET OF BRASS. The helmet was probably made of skin as a rule. A COAT OF MAIL. A corselet. David must have been at least twenty years old, or he would not be large enough to wear Saul's armor at all. Remember that the king was an unusually large man.

39. AND DAVID GIRDED HIS SWORD UPON HIS ARMOUR. Fastening it to the military dress worn under the corselet. AND HE ASSAYED TO GO. He tried to walk, but staggered under the unusual weight. That he made the attempt at all showed David's courtesy, and his deference to superiors. FOR HE HAD NOT PROVED IT. That is, he had never before tried to wear armor, and did not know how much strength it required, and how it would clog the movements of a novice. Therefore he frankly told Saul, I CANNOT GO WITH THESE.

AND DAVID PUT THEM OFF HIM. As Augustine said, "He desired to go forth to the battle in the lightest possible armor: strong in the Lord, not in himself; armed not with steel but with faith." God would show, as in the case of Gideon (Judg. 7: 2), that the victory was his alone.

40. AND HE TOOK HIS STAFF IN HIS HAND. "His club," Professor Smith translates it; and adds, "A very ancient weapon, and still effective among the Bedawin. One of David's soldiers used it successfully against an Egyptian champion (2 Sam. 23: 21)." "The shepherds of the East always carry a staff, to beat bushes, and low brushwood into which flocks stray, and where reptiles abound." AND CHOSE HIM FIVE SMOOTH STONES OUT OF THE BROOK. Smooth, that they might fly more swiftly and accurately; five, to use in succession, if the first failed. Conder says that the sides and bed of the ravine lying between the two camps are still strewn with rounded and water-worn pebbles, which would have been well fitted for David's sling.

AND PUT THEM IN A SHEPHERD'S BAG WHICH HE HAD, EVEN IN A SCRIP. The scrip was a small leather bag, especially the wallet in which a traveler would carry food and other

necessaries. When Christ sent forth the twelve disciples (Matt. 10: 10), he told them not even to take a scrip for their journey. Professor H. P. Smith thinks this was "probably a technical term for the slinger's box or bag, in which he carried his ammunition." AND HIS SLING WAS IN HIS HAND. "The sling has been in all ages the favorite weapon of the shepherds of Syria. The Benjamites were especially expert in their use of it; even the left-handed could sling stones at a hair and not miss (Judg. 20: 16).

GOLIATH'S DISDAIN: HOW THE WORLD SCORNS THE MAN OF GOD.—Vs. 41-44. THE PHILISTINE CAME ON. He must have been a terrible object, with his majestic stature, and his clanking armor glittering in the light. AND THE MAN THAT BARE THE SHIELD WENT BEFORE HIM. His armor-bearer, whose duty it was to carry the great shield, collect arrows hurled against him for him to discharge again, and slay those whom his chief struck down.

42. DISDAINED HIM. The Jews have a legend that Goliath, ridiculing David, threw back his head in laughter, a gesture which shifted his helmet so that his forehead was exposed to David's missile.

43. AM I A DOG. Eastern town dogs are public scavengers, degenerate and despised. "As the friend of man, endowed with noble intelligence, the dog had no place in Hebrew life." THAT THOU COMEST TO ME WITH STAVES? Goliath did not notice the sling. "The staff was ordinarily employed not against men but beasts." This kind of abusive dialogue is common among Arab combatants still. Note also the long, boastful harangues that Homer introduces before the duels of his heroes. AND THE PHILISTINE CURSED DAVID BY HIS GODS. These gods were such abominable idols as Dagon (the fish-god?), Baalzebub, god of flies, and Astarte, goddess of impurity. The combat thus became a question not merely between David and Goliath, but between God and idols.

44. I WILL GIVE THY FLESH INTO THE POWERS. So Hector, in the Iliad (XIII. 831), defies Ajax:—"Thy flesh

Shall glut the dogs and carrion birds of Troy."

DAVID'S CONFIDENCE: HOW GOD'S MEN SHOULD MEET THE WORLD.—Vs. 45-47. David was not a man to be daunted by big words. He made light of the giant's ponderous weapons.

45. THOU COMEST WITH A SHIELD. Rather "a javelin." Clearly an offensive weapon is meant. "But I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the hosts of heaven, of the armies of Israel, or both." "Lord of Sabaoth" is the Hebrew form of this splendid title. The God of ARMIES OF ISRAEL. What Saul had lost, David had found—the armor furnished by faith in his divine commission.

46. THIS DAY WILL THE LORD DELIVER THEE INTO MINE HAND. Literally, "shut thee up." UNTO THE POWERS OF THE AIR. David repeats Goliath's threat (v. 44). THAT ALL THE EARTH MAY KNOW THAT THERE IS A GOD IN ISRAEL. "That Israel hath a God." Driver translates it, "So Elijah against the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18: 36), and King Hezekiah in his prayer for deliverance (2 Kings 19: 19).

47. AND ALL THIS ASSEMBLY. David spoke, "looking round on the heights before and behind, topped by crowds of soldier." SHALL KNOW THAT THE LORD SAVEETH NOT WITH SWORD AND SPEAR. This is the burden of the famous song of Hannah, mother of Samuel (1 Sam. 2: 1-10). Jonathan expressed a similar sentiment before his bold attack on the Philistines (1 Sam. 14: 6). FOR THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S. "This was a touch of the same spirit that Cromwell caught when he chose 'the Lord of Hosts' for his battle cry at Dunbar, and greeted the fount of his foe with the words of the psalm, 'Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered.'"

DAVID'S VICTORY: TRUST IN GOD JUSTIFIED.—Vs. 48-50, and to the end of the chapter. 48. THE PHILISTINE DREW NIGH. In his contempt and anger, very likely Goliath did not stop to receive from his armor-bearer either his helmet or his shield. DAVID HASTED, AND RAN TOWARD THE ARMY (the Philistine troops drawn up) TO MEET THE PHILISTINE. David thus showed his courage, and his eagerness for the combat. He ran also, as Geikie says, that he might sling a stone with greater force.

49. TOOK THENCE A STONE, AND SLANG IT, FIRST WHIRLING HIS SLING AROUND HIS HEAD. AND SMOTE THE PHILISTINE IN HIS FOREHEAD. Goliath's armor, if indeed he wore the whole of it, covered all his person but his eyes and the part of his forehead just above, almost the only part where a small stone hurled from a sling could inflict a fatal injury. "The head-pieces, then do not appear to have possessed visors." Eyes and forehead would have been protected by the shield, whose use Goliath seems to have disdained. THUS THE STONE SANK INTO HIS FOREHEAD. Goliath's forehead would be an easy mark for David. Warren in Underground Jerusalem, says: "I was very much pleased with the precision with which my black

friend could sling smooth stones; he had no difficulty in hitting a bird sitting on a bush at 40 or 50 yards." AND HE FELL UPON HIS FACE TO THE EARTH.

DAVID'S COMBAT—A Type of Christian Experience. 1. As David was amazed at the supineness of the Hebrew warriors, and indignant at the insults offered by Goliath, so every Christian should be eager to avenge upon Satan the insults he offers constantly to Christ.

2. Satan appears in many gigantic forms, which we must fight;—our own sin, the iniquity around us, mammon, corruption, crime, intemperance, impurity, infidelity.

3. Our adversary, Satan, is mightier than we. The disproportion is far greater than in David's case. But we also may advance "in the name of the Lord of Hosts," and in his all-sufficient strength.

4. Like David, we must reject the weapons of the world,—selfish prudence, cynical maxims, regard for money, and the like.

5. But, like David again, we must use some weapon—the one that God has given us. Each soul has its own best way of fighting God's enemies and doing God's work. Discover that way, practice it, use it.

TOO BUSY TO BE KIND.

"I sometimes think we women, nowadays, are in danger of being too busy to be really useful," said an old lady, thoughtfully. "We hear so much about making every minute count, and always having some work or course of study for spare hours, and having our activities all systematized, that there is no place left for small wayside kindnesses. We go to see the sick neighbor and relieve the poor neighbor, but for the common, everyday neighbor, who has not fallen by the way, so far as we can see, we haven't a minute to spare. But every body who needs a cup of cold water isn't calling the fact out to the world, and there are a great many little pauses by the way which are no waste of time. The old-fashioned exchange of garden-flowers over the back fence, and friendly chats about domestic matters, helped to brighten weary days, and brought more cheer than many a sermon. We ought not to be too busy to inquire for the girl away at school, or to be interested in the letter from the boy at sea. It is a comfort to the mother's lonely heart to feel that somebody else cares for that which means so much to her. Especially we ought not to be too busy to give and receive kindnesses in our own home. May no one be able to say of us that we are too busy to be kind."—The Young Woman.

LIFE INDEED.

God has been wrestling with you patiently and lovingly for many years. He has sought by the prosperity and happiness that he has sent you to make you conscious of his tender love and care and to draw you to him by the cords of gratitude. And when you failed to perceive him in the daylight, he has met you in the darkness. He has thrown his strong arm around you and still you have not known him. He has wounded you—he has had to wound you—because you struggled against him. Can you not now see that it is he? And is it not idle to resist him? Oh, if men only knew that God is not their enemy, but their best friend! If instead of holding him off or trying to break away from his embrace, they would cling to him, as Jacob did, exclaiming: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!" As soon as that prayer is offered the blessing comes and the morning breaks. There would have been no need of the long struggle if the soul had only yielded sooner to him whose one supreme desire is to bless and save it.—Edward B. Coe, D. D., in Life Indeed.

CONSCIENCE.

The death of Charles IX. of France was a terrible one. He had authorized the massacre of the Huguenots on the fearful night of St. Bartholomew, and was haunted by its horror during his dying moments. "I know not how it is," he said to his surgeon, Ambrose Pare, "but for the last few days I feel as if a fever." My mind and body are both disturbed. Every moment, whether I am asleep or awake, visions of murdered corpses, covered with blood, and hideous to the sight, haunt me. Oh, I wish I had spared the innocent and the imbécile." He died two years after the massacre, and to the last moment the horrors of the day of St. Bartholomew were present, without ceasing, to his mind.—Smiles on "Duty."

ELISHA'S FAREWELL.

When Christmas Evans was dying he shouted, in a joyous strain, four lines of a Welsh hymn, then, waving his hand, he said, in English, "Good-bye; drive on." Such was the prophet's farewell. He was passing hence but those who loved him must see that God's work did not fail after he had gone from the head of the host.—E.

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