

royal office." It is supposed that he wrote the 27th Psalm about this time. David was anointed again king over Israel (ch 5: 3).

III. DAVID'S REIGN AT HEBRON. 5. The men of Ja'besh-Gil'e-ad—Jabesh-Gilead, a city to the east of the Jordan. The first message David received when made king was a report of the kindness shewn to the memory of Saul by the valiant men of Jabesh-Gilead (1 Sam. 31: 12, 13). Blessed be ye of the Lord—David's first act as king was to send a message of thanks to the men that shewed kindness to Saul; assuring them at the same time that he would requite them well for it. Their conduct displayed (1) gratitude towards their benefactor; (2) Fidelity towards their king; (3) Reverence towards God. (Pulpit Com.) 7. Be ye valiant—Men of "valor" or "virtue." They had paid their last respects to Saul, and David desired to win them over to himself as Saul's successor. Anointed me king—The men of Judah through their elders anointed him king. It afforded the men of Jabesh-Gilead a favorable opportunity for joining David and acknowledging him as king. 8. Ab'ner—Cousin of Saul (1 Sam. 14: 50). "A prince and a great man" in the army of Saul (ch. 3: 38); "Captain of the host," that was Saul's. Ish-bo-sheth—This name signifies "man of shame." His real name was Ish-ba'al (1 Chr. 8: 33; 9: 39). He proved a weak and inactive king. Indeed he seems to have been little better than a puppet in Abner's hands. (P. Thomson). Ma-ha-na'im—"A walled city of Gilead east of the Jordan." 9. Made him king—Abner was determined to perpetuate the line of Saul on the throne, notwithstanding the Lord had rejected Saul from being king over Israel (1 Sam. 15: 26; 13: 14). Ishbosheth was called of man to be king; David was called of God. The divine calls and appointments in life are supreme. The Ash'ur-ites—Members of the tribe of Ashur in the northwestern part of Galilee. Jezreel was in the southern part, Ephraim in the mountains south of Galilee, and Benjamin, still further south on the borders of Judah. (Peloubet). 10. Reigned two years—Five years were spent in regaining possession from the Philistines. 11. Seven years and six months—the time of David's reign at Hebron.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

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I. *The evident repose and serene trust of David in the Lord.* This is evidenced by his waiting further instructions before taking further action. This waiting for orders would not (humanly speaking) be an easy thing. Events had been of the most stirring kind in this man's life. He had long since been designated to a kingship. Obstacles had been thrown continually in his way. But now the coast seemed clear. Saul was dead. David had poured out his soul in an elegy of magnanimous spirit for the mighty who had fallen. Yet the discipline through which he had passed had taught him not to anticipate and precede the purposes of God, but to wait patiently for him. Serenity was his frame of mind, "my times are in Thy hand" was his song. So should we at all junctures in life trust in the Lord and wait patiently for him.

2. *God reveals the pathway of life's duty to us one step at a time.* He does not open before us great stretches into the future, or place above us the numerous steps of ascending stairways. God mercifully veils the future from us lest its splendor should dazzle us, or its darkness appal us. But one step at a time he will open up the way. This method of God's cultivates our patience and tests as well as develops our faith in him. Our part is to do well our present duty. The issue will never disappoint us in the ultimate. He sees the end from the beginning. Let faith only be strong enough to step out into the seeming void and straightway we shall find the road beneath our feet. All history since the days of the pilgrim patriarch from the other side of the flood who went out not knowing whither he went, proves that. Let us not be too ambitious to discover the

plans of God, rather let us amid the uncertainties be satisfied to cry "keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see the distant scene—one step enough for me."

3. *The important thing is to lay our case before God and take our instructions from him.* It is well to feel that we should consult God about everything.

Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry,
Everything to God in prayer.

We all love to see the picture of the king in later days who took a letter received from another king—a letter which perplexed him sorely, and spread it out before God in the place of prayer and sought his counsel. But we are too prone to seek the advice and counsel of our friends and neighbors on such things. We have some perplexing problem and immediately we away to see some friend in whose judgment we say we have every confidence. This is well in its place. There are many we believe specially fitted by God to counsel others. But God's mercy-seat ought to be the first place sought. We should ascertain his will, praying that he may take away all selfishness and wrong motive and preserve us from being influenced by any considerations other than the highest. David perhaps had been advised by his followers to make some move to check any action being taken by Ishbosheth and Abner, but he wanted to know what God's will was in the matter.

4. *If we seek in the right spirit God will reveal his will to us.* We cannot tell in what way he will do this in each case, but we are