

LESSON NOTES.

THIRD QUARTER.

THREE MONTHS WITH DAVID AND THE PSALMS.

B. C. 1023.] LESSON VIII. [Aug. 24.

THE PLAGUE STAYED.

2 Sam. 24. 15-25. Commit to mem. vs. 24, 25.

GOLDEN TEXT.

So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.—2 Sam. 24: 25.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 2 Sam. 19. 1-23. Th. 2 Sam. 21. 1-17. 7. 2 Sam. 19. 25-43. F. 2 Sam. 23. 1-17. W. 2 Sam. 20. 1-22. Sa. 2 Sam. 24. 1-14. Su. 2 Sam. 24. 15-25.

TIME.—In the later years of David's life, probably not long before or after the last lesson, B.C. 1023.

PLACE.—Jerusalem. The threshing-floor of Araunah was on the summit of the eastern hill, afterwards called Moriah (Jerom.) Jewish tradition identifies this place, with the scene of Abraham's sacrifice. Here the temple was afterwards built, the Holy of Holies, it is thought, covering this exact spot.

PERSONS.—(1) Gad, the "seer," a prophet who joined David in "the hold, and kept with him in his wanderings" (1 Sam. 22). Doubtless David's confidential counsellor, and probably the historian of this event (1 Chron. 29. 29.) (2) Araunah, called in Chron. Ornan, a Canaanite, one of the old inhabitants of Jerusalem, who had been allowed to remain and keep his property. He is called king in v. 23. He probably had become a convert to the Jewish religion.

STATE OF THE KINGDOM.—Though these troubles of David are related as the working out of his sin, yet, on the whole, the kingdom was large and prosperous, victorious over enemies, and increasing in wealth and power.

INTRODUCTION.—The plague recorded in to-day's lesson grew out of a census taken by David. 1. The census was not a mere numbering of the people, but a formal and military enrolment, either for using their labour or for strengthening the army. 2. David's object in taking it—(a) pride; (b) for increase of taxes; (c) to obtain free labour for his public works; (d) to consolidate the power in the throne; (e) to prepare for foreign conquests. 3. The sin of numbering the people—(a) the bad motive, pride of David; (b) this pride and its consequent sins among the people, v. 1; (c) a step against the liberties of the people; (d) concentrating power in the throne, and not in God and the people. It was away from the true idea of the kingdom.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—15. So the Lord sent a pestilence.—In punishment for the sin of David and the people (v. 14.) Time appointed.—Not the three days (v. 13), for v. 16 shows that the sentence was not fully executed, but either (1) the time fixed by God's purpose, or (2) the time of assembly, i.e., the hour of evening sacrifice, 3 o'clock p.m., thus the plague would not last one full day. Seventy thousand.—Sennacherib's army lost 185,000 in one night (2 K. 19. 35.) 16. The angel.—It was a vision seen by David (comp. 1 Chron. 21. 16-30.) Repented him, i.e., changed his actions, as a man would who repented. 17. I have sinned.—The spirit of a true penitent; yet it need not be supposed that the people were wholly guiltless. 19. David went up.—Obedient as well as penitent. 22. Oxen, threshing instruments.—Then in use at the "floor." 23. As a king.—Either read (1) the whole, O king, does Araunah give unto the king, or (2) the whole did king Araunah give unto the king—24. Fifty shekels of silver.—About \$30. But in 1 Chron. 21. 25, it is 600 shekels. The first sum may have been for the floor, and the latter for the whole hill. 25. Burnt offerings.—A sacrifice of expiation. Peace offerings.—A sacrifice of thanksgiving.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—David's restoration.—The revolt of Israel.—The three calamities in David's reign.—The last years of David's reign.—The state of the kingdom.—David's sin in taking the census.—The parallel account in Chronicles.—Moriah, Araunah, Gad.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How was David brought back from his exile? Mention some incidents by the way? How did the tribes of

Israel receive him? Who led a new revolt? How was it put down? When did the three years' famine probably occur? What was the occasion of it? How old was David at the time of this lesson? What mark of age had he shown? (ch. 21. 17.) What sin led to the last great calamity of his reign? Show why it was a sin? What was this calamity?

SUBJECT: REPENTANCE.

I. THE RESULT OF WRONG-DOING (vs. 15, 16).—What came upon Israel? Why did the calamity come in this form? What reason did David give for his choice? What kind of a spirit did this show in David? Was David's reason a good one? How long was the plague to last? How long did it last? How destructive was it? Was this a greater destruction than natural causes have been known to produce? Where did the plague stop? What is meant by "the Lord repented him?"

II. A REPENTANT KING (vs. 17-24).—How was David first convicted of wrongdoing? (v. 10.) Into what relations to God was he brought? (v. 14.) What confession does he now make? (v. 17.) What kind of a spirit does he show in taking all the blame upon himself? Was it true that the people had done no wrong? Why were the people punished? What was David commanded to do? How did he meet this command? What spirit was shown here? Who was Araunah? How did the two meet? What did David want? What did Araunah offer? What do the words "the Lord thy God accept thee" show respecting Araunah? How did David reply to the offer? What spirit does this show? How much did he pay for the floor and the oxen? Reconcile this with 1 Chron. 21. 25. What did David then do? What did the burnt offering signify? What the peace offering? What spirit did David show here? Mention six characteristics of the repentant heart shown in this experience of David.

III. THE FRUITS OF REPENTANCE (v. 25).—How was the plague stayed? Had the full measure of punishment been inflicted? What effect had David's repentance upon his relations to God? What effect upon the consequences of his sin? Could he ever be as though he had never sinned at all? What was the name of the hill on which the altar stood? What afterwards stood there?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

- 1. "The hand of the Lord" may be seen in His giving supernatural efficacy to natural agencies.
2. The Lord in mercy cuts short punishment when we bow.
3. The penitent is severe upon his own faults, while he excuses those of others.
4. The more the repentance, so much more the blessing.
5. It is a bitter reflection to a good man that his folly and sin should have brought evil on others.
6. God hates robbery for a burnt offering.
7. How can that gift leave a trace which has left no void?
8. A cheap religion is a poor religion.
9. The cost of the Mosaic sacrifices was one chief element of their moral value.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in Concert.)

- 14. How was David brought back to his kingdom? Ans. By the tribe of Judah.
15. What sin did David commit in the latter years of his reign? Ans. He took the census of his people from wrong motives.
16. What punishment came upon Israel in consequence? Ans. A plague which carried off 70,000 in one day.
17. How was the plague stayed? Ans. By the mercy of God, accompanying the repentance of David.

B.C. 1055-35.] LESSON IX. [Aug 31.

GOD'S WORKS AND WORD.

Psa. 19. 1-14. Commit to mem. vs. 7-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy name.—Psa. 138. 2

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God reveals Himself to us by His works and by His Word.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Psa. 19. 1-14. Th. Acts 17. 22-31. T. Isa. 40. 12-28. F. Psa. 119. 97-105. W. John 1. 1-16. Sa. Heb. 1. 1-14. Su. Deut. 11. 18-32.

TIME.—It is uncertain when in David's life this Psalm was written, but probably in his earlier manhood, and before his great sin. Between B.C. 1055-1035.

AUTHOR.—David.

ADDRESS.—To the chief musician, and therefore to be used in the public service of song.

INTRODUCTION.—David studied God's two great books, Nature and Revelation, and gives us in this Psalm some of the results of his studies. We should study them both, for "Our Father" wrote them both, and each helps us to understand the other.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. Firmament.—The expanse, the heavens. Handy-work.—i.e. His hand-work, the work of His hands. They show His goodness, wisdom, power, greatness, exactness, faithfulness. 2. Day unto day.—Day uttereth speech to day,—it is continuous. 3. There is no speech, etc.—Either (1) they are understood by all nations and people, for they speak a universal language, or (2) leaving out the italics in the verse) they have no speech nor language, their voice is not heard; yet, (v. 4) their line is gone out, etc. 4. Tacit line.—i.e. Measuring line, that measures their extent. In them.—The heavens, which are the sun's tabernacle. 5. As a bridegroom.—Bright, beaming, glorious. As a strong man.—His work is done easily, joyously. 7. The law of the Lord.—God's revealed will, especially the ten commandments. The Lord.—Printed in capitals. The testimony.—God's witness to what is right and true. The same as the law. 9. The fear of the Lord.—Reverential fear. Is clean.—Is pure, and makes others pure. The judgments.—The decisions, what God decides to be right. 12. Who can understand his errors? (1) they are so many; (2) they are often unconscious; (3) they are far-reaching in their influence. 13. Presumptuous sins.—Defiant, done against knowledge and in the face of command. The great transgression.—(Leave out "the") not a particular sin but much sin.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The 19th Psalm, its author, etc.—How nature shows God's glory.—What we can learn of God from nature.—The law of the Lord.—God's works and His word agree.—The reward of keeping the law.—Secret faults.—Presumptuous sins.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Who wrote this Psalm? When was it written? Into what three parts is it divided? What is the meaning of the Golden Text?

SUBJECT: GOD REVEALED IN HIS WORKS AND WORD.

I. GOD REVEALED IN HIS WORKS (vs. 1-6).—What two names are given to the heavens? How do they declare God's glory? What do we learn about God from nature? (Rom. 1. 20; 2. 14, 15; Psa. 145. 3; Psa. 102. 25-27; Psa. 139. 7-10; Psa. 104. 24; Psa. 33. 4, 5.) Meaning of verse 2? What two meanings may be given to verse 3? Which is the better? What is their "line?" What description is given of the sun? How can the study of God's works help us to understand His word? Is there any real conflict between true science and true religion? Does nature reveal to us all we need to know? What are some of the things it cannot do for us?

II. GOD REVEALED IN HIS WORD (vs. 7-11).—What is meant by "the Law of the Lord?" What four names are given to it here? Why is Lord in these verses printed in capitals in our Bibles? Why is the name given to God in these verses different from that on the first six verses? What four words are given here to describe God's Word? Show how it is perfect; sure; right; pure. What four things does God's Word do for us? (vs. 7, 8) Show how it does each of these. Meaning of "fear of the Lord?" Of "His judgments?" To what does the Psalmist compare God's Word? In what respect is it more precious than gold? In what respects is it sweeter than honey? What is the reward of keeping God's commands?

III. A PRAYER FOR HELP TO OBEY GOD (vs. 12-14).—Why can we not understand our errors? What are "secret-faults?" From what other kind of sins would he be kept? From whose dominion would he be preserved? What did he desire for his words and thoughts? When are these acceptable to God?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

- 1. The Christian should study both the works and the Word of God.
2. There can be no conflict between what God says and what He does.
3. We learn from Nature the wisdom, power, greatness, faithfulness, and goodness of God.

4. But we cannot learn all we need about forgiveness, and love, and heaven, and our duties to God and man.

5. God's Word gives us new hearts, a sure hope, wisdom, and joy, and salvation.

6. God's Word is an inexhaustible treasure.

7. Good persons desire to be holy in secret as well as in public, in thought as well as in deed.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in Concert.)

1. In what two ways does God reveal himself to us? Ans. By His works and by His Word. 2. What do His works teach us about God? Ans. His wisdom, power, greatness, goodness, and truth. 3. What four qualities has His Word? Ans. It is perfect, right, sure, and pure. What four things does it do for us? Ans. (1) Converting the soul, (2) making wise the simple, (3) rejoicing the heart, (4) enlightening the eyes. 5. What should be our prayer? (Repeat v. 14.)

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