

The Quiet Hour.

David and Goliath.

S. S. Lesson. August 9, 1903.

1 Sam. 17: 38-49.

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

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Connecting Links—Ch. 16: 14-23 relates David's introduction to the court of Saul and his appointment as armor-bearer. In ch. 17: 1-3 we have a new invasion of the Philistines, who encamped on the western slope of the valley of Elah, while the Israelitish army occupied the eastern slope. The daily defiance of Israel by Goliath is described in 17: 4-11. Ch. 17: 12-31 explains how David came to the camp. In the lesson passage we come to the famous meeting of David with the giant Goliath, verses 32-37 giving the remarkable interview between David and King Saul.

I. David's Armor, 38-40.

Vs. 38, 39. Armed David with his armor; Rev. Ver. "clad David with his apparel." A peculiar kind of coat is meant, worn under the armor, to which the sword was fastened, v. 39. Coat of mail; literally "coat of scales," that is, tiny metal plates interlinked and overlapping like the scales of a fish. It was made of brass (v. 5), iron (Rev. 9: 9), and even gold, and covered the back, breast and shoulders. Had not proved it. Having never worn armor, he did not know what a hindrance it would be to one not accustomed to it. David put them off him; wisely preferring more familiar weapons. God wanted David to go into the battle lightly armed, trusting to Him rather than to weapons or coats of mail.

Vs. 40. His staff; "his club," a very effective weapon to this day. One of David's soldiers used it successfully against an Egyptian champion. (See 2 Sam. 23: 21.) Five smooth stones. He showed his prudence in providing five in case one or two should fail. Smooth. Round, water-worn stones were selected because they would go straighter to the mark. They would be found in abundance in the brook; that is, the dry stream bed in which the brook ran in rainy weather. In a shepherd's bag. . . . even in a scrip; a bag for carrying provisions or ammunition. In modern Palestine the scrip is made out of a kid's skin stripped whole from the carcass, tanned and slung from the shoulders by straps. Sling; a well-known and dangerous weapon, and usually consisting of a piece of leather with short strings attached to its opposite sides and a stone inserted. In battle the stones were either carried in a bag by the slinger, or piled at his feet. (For expert slingers, see Judg. 20: 16.)

II. David's Confidence, 42-47.

Vs. 41, 42. The Philistine; Goliath, a giant of Gath, nine feet eight inches high, counting a cubit at eighteen inches. He probably belonged to the ancient race of the Anakim, some of whom found refuge in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod, when they were driven by Joshua from the mountains of Judah, Josh. 11: 21, 22. That bare the shield; his armor-bearer, who carried the great shield, gathered up the arrows hurled against his chief, and slew those struck down by him. Disdained him. See Prov. 16: 18. But a youth; looking younger than he really

was, on account of his fair complexion. Ruddy. Compare ch. 16: 12.

Vs. 43, 44. Am I a dog? In the East dogs are greatly despised, being usually worthless and without owners. With staves; weapons apparently so unfit for the occasion. His gods. These Goliath pitted against Jehovah. Give thy flesh. To have one's body dishonored after death and left a prey to the birds and beasts, was a fate much dreaded even by the bravest warriors.

Vs. 45-47. With a shield; Rev. Ver. "a javelin," a kind of spear for throwing. The Lord of hosts. In this title the whole universe, including the earth, sun, moon and stars, is represented as a vast army of which God is the leader. The God of the armies of Israel. The Almighty fights with His people. Will the Lord deliver thee? Goliath trusted in his huge spear, David in almighty God. That all the earth may know; including the heathen who worshipped false Gods. (Compare 1 Kings 18: 36; 2 Kings 19: 19.) A God in Israel; who can give the deliverance which false gods cannot give. Assembly; the two armies camped on the opposite heights. Not with sword and spear. (Compare ch. 2: 1-10; 14: 6; Ps. 33: 16-20; 44: 6-8; Hos. 1: 7; Zech. 4: 6; 1 Cor. 1: 27, 28. The battle is the Lord's. Those for whom He fights are certain of victory.

III. David's Victory, 48, 49.

Vs. 48, 49. Hasted and ran. He thus showed his courage, and besides gained force for his throw. Sank into his forehead. "Goliath's brazen helmet was either without covering for the forehead, or else this part was removed as he went forward to the conflict." Fell upon his face. He was running, and was bending forward when the stone struck and stunned him.

Vs. 50-54 relate the slaying of the Philistine with his own sword, the panic of the Philistine army, and their pursuit by the Israelites as far as Gath.

Bible Study, Two Verses this Time.

No. 15.

Psalms 103: 15, 16.

"As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more."

David was probably an old man when he wrote this song of praise. As a flower—a beautiful flower—so he had flourished. But he knew that the wind would soon pass over it, and it would be gone, and the place that had known him so long would know him again no more.

But there is scarcely a minor note as he touches these undeniable facts. These two verses come in between the tender pity and considerateness of his Father, and the everlastingness of the mercy and righteousness of his God. They are placed rather as artistic shadows, throwing out into magnificent relief the realities of personal love before and of covenant faithfulness that follow.

This passage may be studied along with Psalm 102: 24-28. It also fits beautifully with Isa. 40: 6-8, and 1 Peter 1: 23-25. But in order to get the Divine glory of these antitheses, we need to take time to sit at Christ's feet, and to receive His own teaching of His word.

How to Conduct Family Worship.

BY THE REV. CHARLES BROWN.

The statement of the problem assumes that the practice of family worship still exists. If rumor is to be trusted, however, there are very many homes, where the parents are professedly Christian, in which this most wholesome and helpful custom has been abandoned.

Many reasons are urged in explanation or excuse; but when they are all sifted thoroughly, the result appears to be that it is extremely difficult to maintain the custom. Let us admit that at once, and then let us determine that the difficulty shall be overcome; that for the sake of our children, our servants, and ourselves there shall be the acknowledgement of God, the directing of the thought to him as the Giver of all good, the committal of the life to His guidance and authority in family worship. A custom which is invaluable in its influence on our home life is worth some costly effort to preserve, and must not be allowed to be vanquished by difficulty.

Overcoming Difficulties.

There may be difficulty in getting all the members of the household together at the beginning of the day. Then those who can should be gathered, and those who cannot should be lovingly remembered in prayer. It may be that the evening is a more favorable time for united family worship: If all can be there then, let that be the hour. There may be homes where it is literally impossible for all to meet daily. Then once or twice a week, on Saturday or Sunday, let the worship be held: Mr. Spurgeon's custom for many years was to have family worship, at which all members of the household and visitors were gathered, at six o'clock on Saturday evening. In this, as in most matters, the old adage holds: "Where there's a will, there's a way."

Conducting the Home Service.

Realising the blessing of the household which may come through family worship, we proceed to consider the problem stated at the head of this paper. The first necessity is a prepared spirit. All should have this, of course, but the person who conducts the worship must have it if the worship is to be profitable. Methods will differ with different people—they are not unimportant, but the spirit is the chief thing. The priest of the household must have compassion, and he must have sympathetic consideration of every member of the home, down to the youngest child or servant. The passages of Scripture should be carefully chosen and as carefully read. They should not be too long. From ten to fifteen verses generally are sufficient. A word or two in explanation of a difficult sentence, or connecting the reading with that of the previous day, may often be given, or the chief lesson of the passage may be pointed out. It is not well to go straight through the Bible. Many parts of it are neither suitable nor interesting for reading to children, and the object of the readings should be to interest and to profit. Wherever possible, it is good to have a hymn in which all may join—a hymn of thanksgiving and praise.

Beware of Insincerity.

But let there be reality in prayer. Let us mean what we say and say what we mean. Let us ask in "good faith, nothing wavering." Insincerity in prayer is soon detected by men, and is an abomination unto the Lord. It is sadly possible for family prayer and grace before meat to degenerate into a