



LESSON,—SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 1908.

Saul Tries to Kill David.

I. Sam. xviii., 6-16. Memory verses 14, 16.
Read I. Sam. xviii., xix.

Golden Text.

The Lord God is a sun and a shield. Psa. lxxxiv., 11.

Home Readings.

Monday, August 10.—I. Sam. xviii., 1-16.
Tuesday, August 11.—I. Sam. xviii., 17-30.
Wednesday, August 12.—I. Sam. xix., 1-11.
Thursday, August 13.—I. Sam. xix., 12-24.
Friday, August 14.—Ps. xviii., 1-24.
Saturday, August 15.—Ps. xviii., 25-50.
Sunday, August 16.—Ps. lix., 1-17.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Do you remember where David was when we first heard about him? Out in the fields looking after his father's sheep, but Samuel wouldn't have anybody sit down to the feast until this young shepherd boy was called in. After that he just went back and looked after the sheep until one day he was sent for to go to the King's court. We are told that this happened several times; that he would go for a while and play on his harp for the king and then came back to the little town of Bethlehem and mind the sheep again. I wonder if there is any boy in this school who would not begin to think he was too great to keep on looking after the sheep or cows if the King of England kept sending for him? But David didn't; that was his work when he was not at Court, and he did it. It was while he was looking after the sheep one day that his father told him to go instead to see how his brothers were getting on in the army, and you remember how it was then he saw and slew Goliath, the giant soldier of the Philistines. Our lesson story to-day tells us what happened after that. David was a young man now, and God was going to give him higher work than keeping sheep. We are told that he went no more home to his father's house; he lived at Court; but it was because he could tell about how he had fought the lion and the bear while he was looking after the sheep that King Saul allowed him to fight Goliath. You know we often talk about climbing the ladder of prosperity, and in climbing a ladder it is just as necessary to put each foot carefully on the lower rungs as on the higher. So, in getting on well in this world it is just as necessary to do the first and the little things well, as the big and the great things that come later. If David had been a careless, neglectful shepherd boy, he would never have been the great king he became later. Now here he was at court; he had killed Goliath and so helped the Israelites to conquer their great enemies the Philistines; and we learn too that the king's eldest son, the Crown Prince, Jonathan, was David's closest friend, so perhaps you think everything was going to be fine for David; no more work, no more trouble of any kind. But, indeed, it was not. While he was at court David must have, often wished he could be just a shepherd again, for now his life was full of trouble all because the king was jealous of him.

FOR THE SENIORS.

It is curious in this study to notice how soon Saul became possessed with the idea that David was the man intended by God as his successor (I. Sam. xviii., 8, 9; xx., 30, 31), and how in spite of his conviction that this was the Divine decree, he blindly and persistently fought against it. It is not the only such instance recorded in the Bible.

Herod's attempt to include the promised Messiah in the slaughter of the innocents at Bethlehem was along the same line. Both believed it possible for a man to thwart God's will, and in that showed how cheaply God was held in their hearts. The picture of Saul at this time is one of the most painful and pitiful possible. His experience had narrowed instead of broadened his outlook, and that because he had persistently placed self before him. Anyone who continually reckons everything by its effect on himself will soon find that object alone looming on his horizon and blotting out all real light. It is conceivable that an added bitterness in Saul's lot may have been caused by the consciousness that his act had shut his son Jonathan from the succession, although his splendid character and military prowess would have seemed to make him eminently fitted for the position. Howbeit, there is no surprise that Saul being the man he was should have bitterly hated David, yet fearful always of forfeiting his people's approval, he dared not dishonor the national hero in any way. Later on enmity was openly displayed, but that was when the edge of popular enthusiasm for David was blunted and when, too, his own disease of jealous hatred had so developed that he could even attempt to slay his son for taking David's part. The characters of Saul and David at this point make a most interesting study. It is true that later on the temptation of place and power led David into serious sin, but at the time of this lesson there could not be a brighter picture of unsullied manhood, while Saul exemplifies the ruined life of lost opportunities.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE'.)

14. Jehovah was with him. God being with him in all that he does, he is not only kept from retaliating on Saul, not only kept from all devices for getting rid of one who was so unjust and unkind to himself, but he is remarkably obedient, remarkably faithful, and by God's grace remarkably successful in the work given him to do. It is indeed a beautiful period of David's life—the most blameless and beautiful of any. The object of unmerited hatred, the victim of atrocious plots, the helpless object of a despot's mad and ungoverned fury, yet cherishing no trace of bitter feeling, dreaming of no violent project of relief, but going out and in with perfect loyalty, and straining every nerve to prove himself a laborious, faithful, and useful servant of the master who hated him.—W. Robertson Nicoll.

Many years ago Rubenstein was playing to a company of musicians in Steinway Hall, and with one accord they broke out in applause at the close of a brilliant improvisation. 'Friends,' exclaimed the great musician, 'please do not applaud! Your applause directs my thoughts from the music to myself, and I cannot play.' The one whose heart is turned in on itself can never make beautiful music for others. One who is exclusively occupied with his own feelings and wants can have little regard for the feelings and wants of others. I will ask God's help in putting self out of my heart.

Let us kill envy by starvation. And how shall we do it? By withdrawing the thought, on which it feeds, and providing another kind of thought which shall be as poison. There is only one way of doing it. We must pray for those we envy. We must tell God all about it, and in these conditions the evil thing will languish away and die. We must look at the enviable one in our Master's presence, and he will become to us the lovable one. Envy is asphyxiated in the atmosphere of prayer.—J. H. Jowett.

Centre all your thoughts on self, and you will have abundance of misery.—Charles Kingsley.

The love of our neighbor is the only door out of the dungeon of self.—George MacDonald.

(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES'.)

Verse 10. Such prophesying survives among the fakirs of India and sheiks, or dervishes,

of Mohammedanism. They 'rave' (margin of R. V.), they foam, and throw themselves into many an unnatural posture. They become dangerous, not only to others, but also to themselves when so frenzied; still, lookers-on regard them as performing religious exercises or prophesying.—Shweir, Mount Lebanon, Syria.

'Jealousy is said to be the offspring of Love. Yet unless the parent makes haste to strangle the child, the child will not rest till it has poisoned the parent.—Hare's Guesses at Truth.'

'But through the heart Should Jealousy its venom once diffuse, 'Tis then delightful misery no more, But agony unmixed, incessant gall, Corroding every thought, and blasting all Love's Paradise.'—Thomson's Seasons.'

'Of all the passions jealousy is that which exacts the hardest service and pays the bitterest wages.'—Colton in Lacon.'

Bible References.

Psa. lxxxiii., 1, 4-6; Song of Solomon viii., 6; I. John ii., 11; Prov. xxvii., 4; Eph. iv., 31; Psa. xlvi., 1.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, August 16.—Topic—Lessons from the sea. Ps. cvii., 23-32.

C. E. Topic.

Monday, August 10.—Love thy neighbor. Lev. xix., 18.

Tuesday, August 11.—Be just to thy neighbor. Lev. xix., 15.

Wednesday, August 12.—Do no evil to thy neighbor. Ps. xv., 1-3.

Thursday, August 13.—Help your neighbor. Isa. xli., 6.

Friday, August 14.—Speak truth to thy neighbor. Zech. viii., 16, 17.

Saturday, August 15.—Please your neighbor. Rom. xv., 2.

Sunday, August 16.—Topic—The man who was a good neighbor. Luke x., 29-37.

The Sand Map.

We get frightened at names, and give up a good thing because we think we cannot get it or work it when we do get it. Very few primary teachers have the best equipments, such as separate room, small chairs, organ, black-board, etc. But that is no reason why there should be an utter barrenness in the furnishings for the primary room or class. Every teacher can have some of these things and by ingenuity can largely make up for this lack in Sunday School aids.

One of these is the sand map. The child learns largely by what it sees. The eye is the most important gate into its soul. You may talk of a mountain or a lake and it will have little idea of the meaning. You may speak of a horse and there will be no interest. But just hold up an old broomstick and say, 'Children, this will be a horse,' and see how their eyes sparkle. Imagination will then take it up and complete the picture.

But the sand map. Anybody can have it. A shallow box, three or four inches deep, tight enough to hold some nice clean sand. The width can be eighteen inches by thirty inches in length. Then a small piece of looking-glass or tin to represent water; some sticks to represent men and women or anything desired. Have some red tinsel to represent fire, a few small boats, etc., and one is ready for almost any lesson. Let each need suggest what one should have on hand. The sand can be dampened so that rivers and mountains and roads can be made and all for a little trouble and no expense. One by one such articles may be obtained until any teacher may be almost independent of the more elaborate equipment in Sunday School work.—'Living Epistle.'

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