

Wings.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX OF NLEMAN."

"MOTHER, O make me a pair of wings,
Like the Christ-child's adorning,
Blue as the sky, with a gold-star eye—
I'll wear them on Christmas morning
The mother worked with a careless heart,
All through that merry morning;
Happy and blind, not saw behind
The shadow that gives no warning.
He struck—and over the little face
A sudden change came creeping;
Twelve struggling hoars against Death's
fierce powers.
And then—he has left her sleeping.
Strange sleep which no mother's kiss can
wake!
Lay her pretty wings beside her;
Strew white flowers sweet on her hands and
feet,
And under the white snow hide her.
For the Christ-child called her out of her
play.
And, thus our earth-life scorning,
She went away—What, dead, we say?
She was born that Christmas morning.
—Wide-Awake.

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

B. C. 1060.] LESSON XI. [Dec. 16

DAVID SPARING HIS ENEMY.

1 Sam. 24. 1-17. Commit to mem. vs. 15-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you and persecute you.—Matt. 5. 44.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The only way to overcome evil is with good.

TIME.—B. C. 1060, two or three years after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Wilderness of Engedi, "fountain of the kid," a place in Judah, on the west side of the Dead Sea, about midway between its northern and southern ends.—Schaff.

SAMUEL.—Died about this time at Ramah, aged 80.

INTRODUCTION.—After the interview with Jonathan in the last lesson, David was an exile for seven or eight years, till the death of Saul. A part of the time he spent among the surrounding heathen nations, but mostly he lived in the mountain fastnesses of his own country. Here 600 men gathered around him. Saul sought continually to kill him. One of these attempts is recorded in to-day's lesson.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. Returned To Gibeah, his capital. Following the Philistines—Saul had been called away from pursuing David by an attack of the Philistines. 2. Three thousand chosen men—Who had been with him in his battle with the Philistines. 3. David... remained in the cave—Saul, looking from the lighted entrance, could not see within the cave; but David, in the dark, could see all that was done towards the cave's opening. 4. The day of which the Lord said—God had promised David that he should be king in place of Saul, but he was not told to kill Saul. 6. Anointed of the Lord—The divinely-appointed king. 13. The proverb—The application is, that David was not wicked, because this wicked deed did not proceed from him.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The intervening history—David's life during these years—Why David's conscience smote him (v. 5)—David's temptation to kill Saul—Why it was wise for him to spare Saul—Overcoming evil with good.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What became of David when he parted from Jonathan? For how many years was he an exile? Name some of the Psalms David wrote during this period. (Psalms 54, 55, 58, etc.) What kind of men gathered around David at this time? (1 Sam. 22. 1, 2.) How would this experience aid him when he became king?

SUBJECT:—OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD.

1. AN EXAMPLE (vs. 1-17).—In what expedition had Saul just been engaged? (1 Sam. 23. 27, 28.) What did he do with his army on his return? How did Saul learn

where David was? Why is tale bearer mean? Where was David? The character of this region of country? How many men had David? (1 Sam. 23. 15.) How could David see Saul, and yet Saul not see David? What did David's men advise him to do? Is the opportunity to do a deed a sign that God wants us to do it? What did David do? Why was he sorry for doing it? What reasons did David give for not killing Saul? Why was his course wise as well as right? Is the right always wise? How did David make himself known to Saul? What was the effect of David's conduct upon Saul? Was this sorrow true repentance?

2. THE APPLICATION.—What did Christ say about our treatment of enemies? (Matt. 5. 43-45.) Is this an easy command to obey? What does obeying it prove us to be? What does Paul say about the way to treat enemies? (Rom. 12. 17-21.) How does this method heap coals of fire on their heads? Will it succeed if we do it for that purpose? Can evil be overcome by evil? Why not? How is it overcome by good? Give some examples of such overcoming?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Great mischief is often made by an unruly tongue.
2. The best men are sometimes in adversity.
3. But this is often the best school, preparing them for better days.
4. The opportunity for doing wrong is no excuse for doing it.
5. Never seek success by wrong means.
6. The only way to overcome evil is with good.

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

12. What became of David when he was driven away from the capital? ANS. He became an exile for several years. 13. How did Saul feel toward him? ANS. He tried to kill him. 14. What happened to Saul at one time? ANS. He fell into David's power. 15. What did David do? ANS. He spared Saul's life. 16. What precept of Christ did he obey? [Repeat the Golden Text.]

B. C. 1055.] LESSON XII. Dec. 23

DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.

1 Sam. 31. 1-15. Commit to mem. vs. 11-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous has hope in his death.—Prov. 14. 32.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The wicked shall eat the fruit of their own doings.

TIME.—B. C. 1055. Five years after the last lesson.

PLACE.—(1) Shunem "two resting places," the encampment of the Philistines at the south-western base of little Hermon. (2) Plain of Jezreel, the encampment of Israel. It extended from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, and from Mt. Carmel to the mountains in Galilee. (3) Heights of Gilboa, where Israel was driven by the Philistines. Gilboa was a mountain range in the south-east of the plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, five miles from Shunem.

INTRODUCTION.—The promises Saul made David when spared by him at Engedi were soon broken, and he led his army under Abner into the wilderness of Ziph in pursuit of David. David sought shelter among the Philistines, where he remained 14 months. The Philistines came again to fight against Saul, who consults the witch of Endor. His defeat and death are foretold, and our lesson is the fulfilment of this prophecy. This lesson resumes the thread of the narrative from chapter 29. 11.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. Fled—The Philistines seem to have driven the Israelites in a panic from the plain of Jezreel up the heights of Gilboa, for it is here that the corpses of Saul and his sons were found the next day. We see the power of fear over man. Saul had often defeated these Philistines. Gilboa—See Place. 2. Saul's sons—All of his sons were killed except the youngest, Ishboseth. Took a sword, and fell upon it—His army is routed; his trust gone; his sons slain; God has forsaken him. David might have been there to help, but he has persecuted his only true friend. 5. Died with him—Being answerable for the king's life, he feared punishment. 6. All his men—Probably the soldiers of the royal body guard. 7. Other side of the valley—The side of the valley of Jezreel opposite the battlefield; i.e., the distant north, where

Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali dwell *Other side Jordan* The eastern side. The name spread even to the eastern side of the Jordan. *Forsook the cities* Because, according to the war usages of the time, if they stayed they would have lost their liberty or their lives. *House of their idols* Which were regarded as the givers of the victory. *Bethshan* 12 miles south of the Sea of Galilee, four miles west of the Jordan. *Jabesh-gilead* A city east of the Jordan, which Saul had delivered from Nahash (1 Sam. 11. 1-11.) A touching example of gratitude.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS Saul's opportunities for being a good man. The tests of his character. His working out his destiny. His sad end. The place of this battle.

QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTORY.—How many years since the last lesson? What great man died in the meantime? (1 Sam. 25. 1.) What was Saul doing during these years? In what other book of the Bible is this lesson found?

SUBJECT:—LESSONS FROM SAUL'S CAREER.

1. SAUL'S OPPORTUNITIES.—Where was Saul's early life spent? (1 Sam. 9. 1, 2.) What physical advantages had he? (1 Sam. 9. 2.) How did God prepare him for his great work? (1 Sam. 10. 6.) What great opportunity for good was given him. Did David, or any other good man, have better opportunities than Saul? What advantages have you? What kingdom? What helps? 2. SAUL'S TRIAL.—What was Saul's first great trial whether he would obey God? (1 Sam. 13.) How did he stand the test? What other great test was given him? (1 Sam. 15.) What was the result? What was the general character of Saul's life after this? Show how it was the working out of his chosen course? In what ways are we tried and tested in life?

3. SAUL'S END (vs. 1-13).—Where were the Philistines encamped? (1 Sam. 28. 4.) Where was Saul's camp? From what source did Saul seek courage and help? (1 Sam. 28. 5-7.) What was there wrong in this? Did Samuel really appear to Saul? Did the Witch of Endor have any power over him? What became of Saul's sons? Describe the death of Saul? What was done with his body? What makes this ending of Saul's life so sad? Is it any more sad than will be the end of every sinner? Compare Saul's end with that of the Jews in Christ's time? (Matt. 23. 37, 38.) What does Solomon say? (Prov. 1. 20-33.) Whose fault alone will it be if our life and hopes are so wasted?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Life is a probation, testing us whether we will serve God or not.
2. God gives us the aids necessary to make our lives a success.
3. If we fail we will only have ourselves to blame.
4. Many people have done nobly under more difficult circumstances than ours.
5. Nothing is more sad than a wrecked and ruined life.
6. "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"

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

17. What became of Saul at last? ANS. He was slain in a battle with the Philistines. 18. Where did this take place? ANS. On Mt. Gilboa, 1055 years before Christ. 19. What might Saul have been? ANS. A great and glorious king, and head of a line of kings. 20. Why did he fail? ANS. Because he refused to obey God.

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