

his reasons until there was a chance for safe and quiet talk with Abishai. *Destroy him not.* Such splendid self-control was a striking proof of David's greatness. *Stretch forth his hand*; to inflict injury or death. *Against the Lord's anointed*; the one set apart to be king by anointing with oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit imparted to the one anointed. *Guiltless*; free from sin against God, whose representative the king was. *As the Lord liveth*; as surely as God lives,—a solemn oath. *The Lord shall smile him.* Saul was God's choice as king and only God had the right to remove him. *Either* (Rev. Ver. Margin) *his day shall come*; to die a natural death. *Or, into battle, and perish*; as actually happened, ch. 31 : 1-6.

Vs. 11, 12. *The Lord forbid*, etc. David's sparing Saul was good policy, since he himself expected to be king and would not, for the sake of his own future safety, set the example of assassinating a king. But more than this, David loved Saul in spite of all the wrongs which Saul had done him. The chief reason, however, for David's sparing Saul was that David believed in God and was content to leave God to work out His own plans. *Took the spear and the cruse.* The cruse was a small jar with two handles, used for carrying water on a journey. "In a hot climate a draught of water is very refreshing at night; hence a vessel filled with water is always kept near where a person sleeps." *A deep sleep.* Arabs sleep heavily, especially when fatigued. *From the Lord*; that is, supernaturally caused (see Gen. 2 : 21 ; 15 : 12).

III. David's Reproach, 13-16.

Vs. 13, 14. *On the top of an hill*; whence he could look down upon Saul's camp. *Afar off*; so as to be in safety from Saul whom he trusted less than when he had formerly spared the king's life (see ch. 24 : 9-16). *David cried to the people*; in Saul's camp. This would be easy in the clear air of Palestine. Shepherds talk with one another across ravines and from hill to hill, though

separated by an hour's rapid walking, every word being heard.

Vs. 15, 16. *David said to Abner*; the king's chief officer and therefore, according to Eastern custom, responsible for the king's life. David bitterly reproaches Abner for lack of fidelity, and as proof that Abner had permitted some one to come near enough to the king to slay him, shows the spear and the cruse. David's reproach was meant for Saul's ears, that the king might know that David was more faithful than Abner.

Light from the East

THE CAVES OF SOUTHERN JUDAH—David's life as a fugitive from Saul's court was spent in the south of Judah, in the foothills near the Philistines on the southwest, and in the wild wilderness to the southeast. His quasi-alliance with the Philistines made him safe at times among the foothills. The lack of permanent settlements in the region of Ziph, Maon, Carmel, south of Hebron, favored David in his life as an outlaw from Saul's kingdom; he was almost beyond the reach of Saul's hand. He was only in danger when the unsettled tribesmen of the region threatened to betray him to the king. But the wilderness that stretched from south to north between these places and the Dead Sea and Jordan Valley was the safest hiding place of all. The hills are of limestone and are full of great rents and cavities that have always offered ready asylum to noble and hermit alike. In this "wilderness of Judea" I saw a hole half-way up the sheer face of a cliff out of which just before a band of robbers had been dislodged by Turkish soldiers. And half-way down many a precipice you can discover a Greek monastery. In every age these caves have been hiding places for robbers and insurgents and a refuge for those "of whom the world was not worthy." In a place such as is to-day pointed out as the Cave of Adullam, David and his men could defy half a kingdom and there was not enterprise enough in all Israel to starve them out.

THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

[SEE SKETCH MAP, LESSON V.]

Last week we visited Gibeah, the place where spies carried a report as to David's

retreat, ch. 26 : 1. To-day we will take our stand at the spot marked 19, where twentieth