



LESSON, SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8, 1908.

**David Grieves for Absalom.**II. Sam. xviii., 24-33. Memory verse 33.  
Read II. Sam. 18.**Golden Text.**

A foolish son is a grief to his father. Prov. xvii., 25.

**Home Readings.**

Monday, November 2.—II. Sam. xviii., 1-17.  
 Tuesday, November 3.—II. Sam. xviii., 18-33.  
 Wednesday, November 4.—II. Sam. xix., 1-15.  
 Thursday, November 5.—II. Sam. xix., 16-30.  
 Friday, November 6.—II. Sam. xix., 31-43.  
 Saturday, November 7.—II. Sam. xx., 1-13.  
 Sunday, November 8.—II. Sam. xx., 14-26.

**FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.**

We were studying a story last Sunday and we stopped in the middle of it. It was about a king who lived a great many years ago, and about a very handsome prince who was as bad as he was handsome. We learnt how this wicked prince rebelled against the king, his father, and got a great many people to follow him. Who knows the names of the king and the prince? Yes, David and Absalom. Did Absalom rebel against David because David was unkind and cruel to him? No, for David loved his son very dearly and let him always have anything he asked for. Now, however, he wanted to be king instead of his father, and where our lesson left off last Sunday was where he was proclaimed king by the people that followed him. David and all those who still loved and served him hurriedly went away from Jerusalem because David was afraid Absalom would come and destroy the city if he remained there, and so cause a great deal of suffering. There were a great many sad things that happened to David while he was hurrying away from his wicked son, but also he found that there were a great many people who loved him still and were anxious to help him all they could. (II. Sam. xv., 19-23; xvii., 27-29). One of his friends stayed in Jerusalem and sent David news of all that Absalom was planning, so David knew when his son and that army with him were coming up to fight against David. He had had to hurry over the river Jordan and was staying at a city not far from some rather thick woods, and near here the two armies met in the battle that comes into the story to-day.

**FOR THE SENIORS.**

David certainly experienced the ways of meanness as much as any man. In the depths of his sorrow and bitterness over his much loved son's ingratitude, he is met by Ziba (II. Sam. xvi., 1-4) who does not spare to add to the broken-hearted king's distress the false story of Mephibosheth's desertion. Ziba had his own interests at heart and so could make the king's misery a rung in his own ladder to success. He could moreover use his master's goods to secure David's favor. Shimei the Benjamite followed up this with his curses (II. Sam. xvi., 5-13). But there was a bright as well as a dark side to David's troubles, and he found out in this trial what strong and sturdy friends he had. The story of his flight from his son is full of incident. In fact, the whole story of Absalom's rebellion is replete with interest. Characters come out here wonderfully. Absalom's utter heartlessness at the thought of David's death (II. Sam. xvii., 2, 4) is in strong contrast to David's yearning love and care (II. Sam. xviii., 5) for his son. Joab's harsh-

ness and impatience are evident in verse eleven where he curtly mocks his informant. Yet he could be patient with the persistence of Ahimaaz as he evidently cared for the young athlete, the warlike son of the high priest who so much loved David. The persistence of Ahimaaz is of interest as it was evidently due to his love for David. He felt that he could tell the king the news in such a way as to prepare him for Absalom's death. He knew this would grieve David, and indeed, had no intention of telling that part of the news at all (verse 29), but he could remind the king that the victory was from God, and in his eagerness, in spite of the delay in setting out, he arrived first before David. The trained runner, the Cushite servant, did not have his feet winged with love. The relationship of the various prominent figures in this history should be noted. Joab and Abishai, two of David's generals were his nephews, sons of his sister Zeruiah, and Amasa, Absalom's general, was the son of another sister Abigail (I. Chron. ii., 13-17), so that Joab and his brother, Amasa and Absalom were all first cousins. Joab cared nothing for the relationship, however, when he found that Amasa stood in his way (II. Sam. xx., 8-10). David never seems to have forgotten that Joab was accountable for Absalom's death (I. Kings ii., 1, 5, 6). After the battle he degraded his disobedient general and exalted above him the rebellious Amasa (II. Sam. xix., 13). Joab was fearless and brave; his treatment of David as though the king were a spoilt child (II. Sam. xix., 5-7), was justly deserved by David, but showed the nephew's utter disregard of diplomacy. But he was a crafty and cruel man of whom David seems to have stood in awe; very probably David's having used Joab as an accomplice in that dark hour of his sin against Uriah, kept the king somewhat in subservience to his overbearing general. At any rate, there was no love lost between the king and his greatest general of whom he often spoke bitterly. At the last, during the dying days of David, Joab sought to continue his power with a new king in aiding the rebellion of Adonijah, but was slain at the order of Solomon shortly after. David's love for his sons was of the deepest. His lament over Absalom has never lost its pathos. It is echoed by many a father to-day, and in many cases the sorrowing father could find the early indulgence of his children at the root of his trouble as surely as it was at the root of David's. More than blind love is required in the training of children.

**(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES.')**

'Sowing and Reaping.' "It is a law of the harvest that we reap more than we sow." Then how careful ought we to be of the seed we are sowing day by day, if we would reap a rich harvest of golden grain for the Master. Very much depends upon the manner in which the seed is sown, and the fertility of the soil to receive the seed, that it may take deep root and spring up and remain productive. In nature, like produces like, often in manifold ratio. In grace the seed sown sprang up and brought forth some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold. Are we sowing constantly what it will be our joy and pleasure to reap in the vast eternity that lies before us all?"—The Christian.

Absalom from out the far-off past is still pointing our modern youth to certain great lessons his career teaches us:

- (1) 'The way of transgressors is hard.'
- (2) The success of the wicked is short, and then he is like chaff which the wind bloweth away. 'Not considering that the successes of the foolish and wicked form the first rod of their chastisement.'
- (3) Sin is sometimes attractive at first, but at last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.
- (4) The way to true success is not through disobedience to parents.
- (5) No failure is so terrible as the failure of a life; no ruin like the ruin of a soul.
- (6) The death of the wicked is lighted by no ray of hope.
- (7) They that sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind.

Says an old writer: 'As Noah was drunk with his own wine, Goliath beheaded with his own sword, the rose destroyed by the canker bred in itself—so are we undone by ourselves.

The bitter waters of Meribah and of Marah, that we drink so deep of, are of our mingling and embittering; the rods that scourge us are of our own making; sin, like a friar, whips itself. We may thank our own folly for our own bane.'

On the other hand, one of the strongest reasons why a parent should be good is that he may influence his child in the right direction.

David's question, 'Is the young man safe?' every parent and every friend of young men should ask. Is the young man safe from intemperance, from bad companions, from bad books, from dishonest conduct, from bad habits? Is he safe in Jesus Christ? Is he safe in a good home and among good influences? Is he safe for this world? Is he safe for eternity? Ask yourself, also, what you are doing to make him and keep him safe.

**(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')**

'How a Young Man may be Safe.' Jesus Christ, that young man who knew young men, said a young man may do what he pleases. He said to Peter: 'Simon, to-day you can follow Me or not; you can feed My lambs or not; by and by it will be different.' You are free to-day. You young men are not even committed to any profession, or if you are you can easily shift it off. I have chosen and can not change. When you put the seed underground and it gets to be along in September you must abide the harvest, but in March you can put in any seed that you please. Young men, you have your life before you with all its glorious opportunities. Be sure you choose rightly. Take a grip upon manhood, modest, heroic, and being great enough to do that, settle firmly back. A Christian is Christ's knight. As He believes, I will believe; what He demands, I will do; what He promises, I will trust. I pledge myself to this and with this I begin, and I will go on to the end.—Alexander MacKenzie, in 'Northfield Echoes.'

The best safeguard of a young man is a perfectly open and affectionate relation to his parents.—Le Baron R. Briggs.

**Junior C. E. Topic.**

Sunday, November 8.—Topic—Commending our Society. V. By missionary and evangelistic zeal. Matt. xxii., 1-10.

**C. E. Topic.**

Monday, November 2.—The commandment given. Deut. vi., 4-7.

Tuesday, November 3.—What God requires. Deut. x., 12, 13.

Wednesday, November 4.—The one God. I. Cor. viii., 5, 6.

Thursday, November 5.—God's command to us. Micah vi., 8.

Friday, November 6.—To walk in His ways. Deut. v., 32, 33.

Saturday, November 7.—To love the Lord your God. Deut. xi., 13-15.

Sunday, November 8.—Topic—The greatest commandment. Matt. xxii., 35-40.

'I shall leave my camel untied,' said an Arab once to Mahomet, 'and trust to Providence.' 'Tie it up tight,' said Mahomet; 'and then trust to Providence.' So you that say, 'I will pray and trust my church, or my class, or my work to God's goodness,' may rather hear the voice and wisdom which says: 'Do thy best; work as if all rested upon thy toil; as if thy own arm would bring salvation.'—Spurgeon.

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