

gion, and especially Christianity, has given a tremendous impetus to humanitarian benevolence, Luke 14 : 13, 14 ; Rom. 15 : 1. The beggar at the gate Beautiful showed deep discernment in seeking help from religious people, Acts 3 : 2.

2. *The intimation of kind intentions*, vs. 5-8. David, having found the object for which he was looking, brings Mephibosheth to court (v. 5), receives him graciously (v. 6), and announces his good intentions (v. 7), which are acknowledged with characteristic Oriental abasement, v. 8. Start a discussion on the scope of our Lord's discouragement of ostentatious benevolence, Matt. 6 : 1-4. Make clear that, whilst benevolence for the sake of parade is wrong, a useful purpose may yet be served by making known to a deserving object (and even to the public, as an incentive) our intention to perform a plain duty in beneficence. The apostle Paul openly announced the good intentions of the church at Corinth, 1 Cor. 16 : 1, 2. We should not leave undone a good deed simply because we cannot under the circumstances keep others from knowing about it. In fact, for the sake of the influence we exert, Jesus pointedly tells us we should act in such a way that men may "see" our good works, Matt. 5 : 16.

3. *Kindness performed and justified*, vs. 9-13. Saul's servant, Ziba, with his sons and their following, were installed in office (vs. 9, 10), and every honor was shown to Mephibosheth, vs. 11-13. Barbaric kings have often brought dwarfs and deformed creatures into their courts to serve as a foil to their own perfections and glory. David's motive is above such suspicion, v. 7. He possessed in large measure the spirit of Christ, Eph. 2 : 4-7.

### For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

This Sabbath is the "Day of Universal Prayer for Sunday Schools". One thing most earnestly to be prayed for, is that the scholars should become truly sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty—come back to the Father's house, if they have strayed away from it ; realize that they belong to God's family, if they have not so wandered.

The Lesson is peculiarly appropriate ; for the story illustrates God's compassion in

sending for the wanderer ; his love in receiving him, when he returns ; his joy in giving him his proper place as one of the King's sons. If it can be so handled as to make the scholars *feel* the heavenly Father's love, and the gladness and glory of sonship in that Father's family, it will be a great day.

The interest of the story centres, first, upon DAVID. Bring out by questions, and by hearing the scholars tell the story, how busy David had been since he had come to the throne, with his battles, and with the bringing together in one the twelve tribes of which his people were composed, and with the multifold duties of administration. Not too busy, however, to forget his old friendship with Jonathan, and the pledge of kindness to Jonathan's children (see v. 17). So like God's remembrance of needy men, and of His pledge of kindness to them, for His dear Son's sake.

Then, the consultation with Ziba, and the message to Mephibosheth to come to the king. Luke 14 : 17 will help to carry God's invitation home.

The scene shifts to—

MEPHIBOSHETH. Let one of the scholars give the first chapter of Mephibosheth's story, ch. 4 : 4. That was when he was a little child. Now he is a man, and with a son of his own (v. 12). Bring out clearly the figure of this lame, helpless man, born a prince, now a dependent on a stranger's bounty (v. 4). How like ourselves—born to be sons of God, but alas ! how often maimed and beggared by our own thoughtlessness or folly !

Then, have some one picture the arrival of the messengers (v. 5), and the terror of the summons to David's court : perhaps David would punish him as belonging to the family of his old enemy, King Saul ! When we hear the voice of God in our souls, are we not afraid ? For have we not been enemies of God by our wicked works ?

MEPHIBOSHETH AND DAVID. This brings the climax. There are three scenes, each one of which should be made vivid and memorable.

(1) *Welcomed*. Go over the details—the lame man's dread ; David's melting love ; the word of cheer, "Fear not, for I will