

sion the life and unselfish conduct of Jonathan made on David. A beautiful illustration of the far reaching effect and influence of a noble, godly life. **All the land of Saul**—Not only the lands of Gibe'ah but probably "Saul's estates generally." True friendship will be generous. **At my table**—David extended to Mephibosheth the kindly hospitality and friendship of his home, receiving him as a member of his own household. All true believers are received and adopted into the family of God (Rom. 8: 16-18). **8. What is thy servant**—David's kindness shown so overpowers Mephibosheth that in the gratitude of his heart he can scarcely find words suitable to the occasion. The more fully we know our true selves the more will we wonder at the goodness and loving kindness of the Lord shewn us.

III. THE MAGNANIMOUS KING. **9. Called to Ziba**—Ziba was a strange mixture "of craft and fidelity and selfishness." He was now called to witness the king's munificent gift to Mephibosheth, and the privileges he was about to confer upon him. **10. Thy sons**—Fifteen in number (ch. 19: 17). **Thy servants**—Slaves, to the number of twenty (ch. 19: 17). **Shalt bring in the fruits**—

To Ziba and his sons was committed the management of the estates. Mephibosheth "would live at Jerusalem as a nobleman and Ziba, as is usual in the east, would pay a fixed proportion of the value of the produce to his master" (Pulpit Com.) It is well to study in this connection the incidents in after years that took place bearing on Ziba's treachery and false accusation of Mephibosheth and the reconciliation of David (2 Sam. 16: 1-4, 24-30). **11. So shall thy servant do**—Ziba made fair promises, but sooner or later the real character of a crafty, selfish nature will reveal itself. The unfaithfulness of Ziba came to light in after years. **12. A young son**—Meaning a little child. **Mi'cha**—He became the representative of the house of Saul, whose offspring became "leading men in the tribe of Benjamin until the captivity. **13. Dwell in Jerusalem**—"The story of Mephibosheth may be used as a little parable of the spiritual history of every one who is restored to God. (1) A prince; (2) lost; (3) Sought; (4) Found; (5) Self-abased; (6) Comforted; (7) Exalted; ended with more than he had lost, and adopted as one of the king's sons." (Pulpit Com.)

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

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1. Leisure from conflict gives our best impulses opportunity to develop. We find that exemplified in the case of David. In the last lesson we saw how when he had an interval of peace in his striving life he felt himself moved to build a more permanent place of worship. Here we find him making enquiry as to whether there was any descendant of his old enemy Saul left that he might show him a kindness. Manifestly he could not have taken either of these steps if his hands were still tied by conflicts. It took his whole time to look after his military operations. All experiences fall into this same line. Nations in the throes of revolution, or internal agitation, or war with others, have no time for benevolent undertakings. European and American peoples in an armed camp had no time to help Armenia. Churches divided and vexed by factional fighting will do little in the cause of God and humanity. Individuals harassed in a life which is a running fight have no time for the gentler deeds of living. Let us strive to avoid all unnecessary conflicts, that our lives may have freedom for the nobler things.

2. If opportunities for doing good are not present we should look for them. David made special enquiry to find if there were any left of the house of Saul to whom he might do a kindness. This search for opportunity was a guarantee for the genuineness of his intention. We often find people who are profuse in their profession of willingness to do good, to perform deeds of charity, etc., but who say that no opportunity presents itself to them. It is quite clear that such people are not very much in

earnest. It is difficult to understand how any one can live in a world of trouble without finding opportunity for benevolent deeds, except on the principle that "there are none so blind as those who do not wish to see." In any case it is one of the marks of genuine intention not to wait till opportunities "present themselves" by running against us, but to go out and find them, if need be, by special enquiry.

3. The cases that most need our help have to be sought out. Mephibosheth was certainly one in great need of help. His lameness practically unfitted him for any active employment. He was the son of a fallen house. He was poor, as evidenced by the fact that he was in the house of Machir, and dependent on the charity and support of friends. And yet with all this he did not obtrude himself on the notice of David and claim (or even ask by his presence) for help from his father's greatest friend. And so all engaged in charitable work know that the most deserving are not the most clamorous. Too much assurance and brazenness in asking for help makes us from experience suspect bad habits as the source of the trouble so proclaimed, and leads us to feel that our charity in such a case might be misdirected. We should be prudent and discriminating in our doing of good, lest we encourage undeserving and vicious paupers. We should know that often the most deserving suffer silently, and have to be sought out and delicately assisted.

4. From this incident we can understand the better how David was a man after God's