

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSONS.**July 26. 2 Samuel vii: 4-16.**

It were well, in considering such a passage as this, to get a clear conception of what is intended to be gained by its study. "God's Promises to David" is the title of the lesson in the calendars. Is it intended to show that the promises were as mutable as the allegiance of the chosen people? The promise is very definite and any possible reservation is provided for in the 14th and 15th verses. "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee." As the house of David and his kingdom were not established forever, Jerusalem being held by the Babylonians in 587 B. C., it is safer to conclude that Nathan the Prophet made a mistake on this occasion, than to suppose that God had anything to do with it. This view is supposed by some to be subversive of religion and the Bible and sacred things generally. David's throne was most decidedly a temporal one, and his kingdom of this world. To say that it was spiritual and perpetuated in the sovereignty of Him whose "kingdom is not of this world," is to get a meaning out of the life of David entirely different from anything that is warranted in the historical account of it. If we accept the whole narrative, as an allegory of occult teaching, as is conceivable, we may learn something from the house of cedar that David was to build for himself, and from the more glorious house that his son Solomon was to construct after him. No historical trace has ever yet been discovered of the traditional temple, so it is the more probable that the allegorical view is the correct one.

August 2. 2 Samuel ix: 1-13.

The fact that in the character of David we have the portrayal of one who lived a life utterly uncurbed by anything outside his own desires, is generally lost sight of in the endeavour to make it appear that one who was

declared by his admirers to be a man after God's own heart must have all the virtues and none of the vices of the race. David, with all his poetry and worship was a deceitful, revengeful, adulterous and passionate cowboy, who could only to-day, outside Arabia, be matched on the prairies of the west. He had all the rough generosity and the courage of his class, but we cannot overlook the eleventh chapter of II. Samuel, a narrative of the most contemptible meanness to a loyal friend; nor that death-bed scene recorded in I. Kings ii: 1-10, where his former pardon of one who had offended him recurred to him as a temporary weakness which he could not leave in its humanity, so that he charged his son, as he was a wise man, to carry out the ruffianism of his heart. Eight years before Shimei had called him a man of blood, a man of Belial, which was little less than the truth, and, in assurance of the reputation, he told Solomon with his dying breath, "Thou knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him, and thou shalt bring his hoary head down to Sheol with blood." We may be excused if we fail in enthusiasm over the present benefaction. The last descendant of Saul, of whose throne and property and wives even (II. Samuel xii: 7-8) David had possessed himself, crippled in both feet, the son of his own bosom-friend Jonathan, seems to have been rather astonished at receiving from King David enough to live upon.

August 9. 2 Samuel x: 8-19.

Milton said of the tribal wars of the early Saxon period in England that they were but quarrels of "kites and crows," and little can be gathered from "David's Victories" beyond the fact that the spirit of turbulence and bloodshed was as prevalent among the chosen people and their neighbours as in other nations. David at this time depended on the generalship of Joab, one of his mighty men of valour, of whom there were thirty-seven, as appears in II. Samuel xxiii. Were the previous and subsequent incarnations of David known to us we could better appreciate the lesson of such a life as this. With the record