

Vers. 9, 10. David now puts the carrying out of his intentions into the hands of Ziba; he was to manage the estates for Mephibosheth; none would know them so well as he; possibly, indeed, as is suggested, he had been in occupation of them since the death of Saul. All the arrangements of David show his desire that Mephibosheth should be treated as a prince of royal blood. Ziba, with his sons and servants would form no inconsiderable retinue for the lame prince.

Ver. 11. "According to all—shall thy servant do:" perhaps Ziba intended honourably to carry out the king's charge, and for anything we find to the contrary did so for seventeen years, but there came a temptation too strong for him at the rebellion of Absalom, and by false insinuations of treason he alienated David's heart from Mephibosheth and got from the king the estates of his master; finally, however, they were divided, each having half. See chap. 16: 1-4; and 19: 24 30.

Ver. 12. "A young son—Micah:" must have been quite a child at this time, as Mephibosheth himself was not, probably, much over twenty; he never appears as an actor in the history, and the only mention of his name is in the genealogies of his tribe in 1 CHRON. 8: 34; 9: 41; he wisely abstained from being mixed with the political changes of the country; as his name is not mentioned at the time of Absalom's rebellion, he had probably left the capital, perhaps foreseeing and not wanting to be caught in the coming storm.

Ver. 13. "In Jerusalem:" as was the king's wish, rather than upon his estate, he remained steadfastly loyal to David, though first deceived and then misrepresented by Ziba, and we last see him welcoming the returning king on the banks of the Jordan and showing the same gentleness and humility under false suspicions that he did when first brought before David.

#### HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Perhaps instead of a "Topical Analysis," it will be more profitable to look at the characters and action of the three men who are prominent in our lesson, (1) David, (2) Mephibosheth, (3) Ziba.

David comes before us here in one of the brightest and most admirable traits of his character. There is nothing, so far as we can see, to detract from our praise, or to dim the lustre of his generous action. It was *spontaneous*, it does not appear that any one suggested this course to David, but out of the tenderness of his own heart, and the remembrance of what he owed to Jonathan, he would do good to any that belonged to the family of his old friend. Let us teach to cultivate tender and loving feelings to all, especially to those who have a claim upon our gratitude. It was *unnecessary*, that is, so far as David was concerned, not a solitary man of Israel would have thought evil of him if he had never moved toward helping a son of his ancient enemy, Saul. Even supposing that it was known Mephibosheth was alive, which is hardly likely except to a very few, it would be the last thing to suppose that David would care to seek him out, unless, indeed, as was the custom, to destroy the only hope of a rival dynasty. It was a *faithful act*. David had made a covenant with Jonathan, it was sealed with the name of Jehovah, and David could not rest until he had, if there was a chance, carried out the obligation of his promise to his dead friend. A noble example of faithfulness to a promise, let us imitate it. It was *on behalf of one of the family of an enemy*, his bitter, persistent enemy; a man who had sought his life again and again, and would assuredly have succeeded but for the protecting hand of God; he rose above the teaching with which he had been surrounded: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy," and anticipated the precept which bids us "Love your enemies." Well would it have been for David if he had followed this to the end. Well will it be for us if we make it the rule of our lives. Further, *he took trouble to carry it out*, he did not content

himself with saying: "If any of the family of Saul should be alive and I hear of it, I will do something for them." No, he caused enquiry to be made, a search for any who could give him information, and he was rewarded by finding one for whom he sought. Finally, *it was a large hearted act*. It was no niggardly dole that David meted out to Mephibosheth; he gave as a king with a kingly heart, restored all the estates of Saul, took the lame man into his own house to eat bread at his table continually. You will of course point out how this action of David faintly mirrors the goodness of God to us in Jesus Christ; get from scholars the points of similarity, how they come out, and then dwell upon the debt we owe to our everlasting King.

*Mephibosheth*.—Of him we can say but little; evidently coming before the king in fear and trembling, not knowing for why he had been brought he was *humble*. The son of a prince, the grand-son of a king, he had lived dependent on the kindness of friends; all his hopes of the throne, if he ever had any, which is hardly likely, had perished, and he would assure David in the strongest terms, how unimportant he was, yea how far beneath his notice. His actions and his words are in keeping, "he fell on his face and did reverence" and he spake of himself as that vilest and most contemptible thing "a dead dog." He was *grateful*. This comes out more vividly later on, at the return of David after the death of Absalom; deceived, misrepresented, accused of treason, he goes to meet David at the Jordan with touching simple faith and frankness and his actions lead the king to reverse, to some extent, the sentence he had passed upon him through misrepresentation. There are few characters in holy writ so touching, in his helplessness, his humility and his gentle faith, as Mephibosheth.

*Ziba*.—A man of mixed characters, as we have him here, faithful, shrewd, prosperous, and apparently glad to be the means of helping a son of his old master. Yet, as we find him in the incident alluded to above, deceitful, selfish, and willing that the king's anger might be excited against Mephibosheth although he knew not but that it might carry with it the sentence of death to the lame prince. It is a miserable thing to seek to rise on the ruin of others, as Ziba did. Let us caution our scholars against giving way to that which leads to such conduct—Selfishness and covetousness; if these get possession of the man, there is nothing at which he will stop to carry out his ends.

#### INCIDENTAL TRUTHS AND TEACHINGS.

Children are often favoured by God and man because of pious parents.

We should remember the debt of love we owe to the dead and seek to repay to the living.

Imitate the spirit of David, think of an enemy as one to whom you would do good only.

Our love should be active, going out to seek the lost.

Let our love and compassion be wide as the compassion of God.

Never make an enemy where you can make a friend.

But make friends of enemies.

Mephibosheth blessed "for Jonathan's sake"; we "for Christ's sake."

Main Lesson.—The love of God to sinners, John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 8; Titus 3: 4-7; 1 John 4: 9.

#### LESSON 5.

August 3, }  
1884. }

#### DAVID'S REPENTANCE.

{ Psalm 51  
1-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"My sin is ever before me."—Vs. 3.

TIME.—B.C., 1034. David had been king more than twenty years.