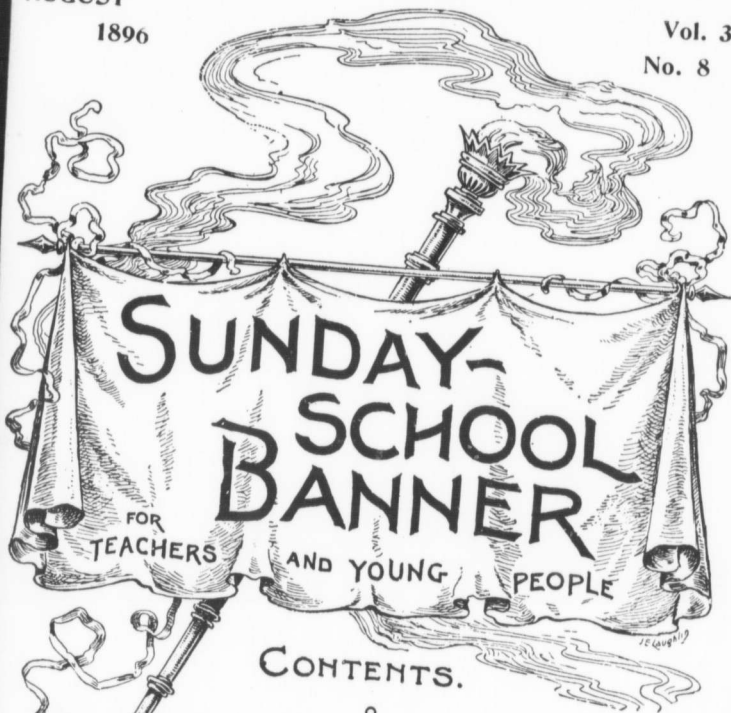


AUGUST  
1896

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No. 8



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# SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. XXX.]

AUGUST, 1896.

[No. 8.

## Eighth International Sunday-school Convention.

FEW movements of modern times enlist more active sympathy than the Sunday-school work of Canada and the United States. According to the latest statistics of these two countries and Newfoundland a total of 11,695,207 (1893) teachers and scholars are engaged in studying every Sunday the same portions of Holy Scripture. The only common nexus or organization of this great army is the International Sunday-school Convention which meets once in three years. Its last session was at St. Louis, the one before in Pittsburg, the previous one in Chicago, and before that in other leading cities including one in Toronto in 1881. At St. Louis an earnest request was made to have the convention at the city of Montreal, but the city of Boston also put in such an earnest claim that it was decided to hold it at the Hub City. This meeting is one of special importance in that the committee, by whom the International Sunday-school Lessons are selected will be this year appointed. These gentlemen render their valuable services without compensation.

The International system is more fully obtained on this continent than in Europe, although a very large number of schools in Great Britain, and a less number on the continent, also adopt the International system.

The Lesson Committee represents the principal Protestant denominations of Great Britain and America. They have nothing whatever to do with the preparation of the lesson notes and comments. They merely select for a period of six or seven years the Scripture lessons. The denominational Sunday-school editors and pub-

lishing houses prepare their own notes and comments for their own Sunday-school periodicals and commentaries.

The literature that is thus created is of enormous volume and of very great value. The *Sunday-school Times* at Philadelphia, the *Sunday-school Chronicle*, of London, are interdenominational organs of very large circulation, and employing high-class talent in their preparation. The publications of the great denominational houses, the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Anglican, Congregational and other societies, are of still vaster volume. They are of every grade from large illustrated octavos to cheap fly leaves which fall thick as leaves in autumn. They are adapted to every need from the wealthy city school to the remotest hamlet in the country, and are a great unifying force organizing into one grand army the schools scattered over two hemispheres.

As these pages pass through the press the International Convention is in session at Boston. We will furnish a concise report of its proceedings in our next number.

## Opening Exercises.

THE opening exercises are no small part of the influences that go to make up the power of the Sunday-school as a whole. The first five minutes of a Sunday-school ordinarily decide the impressions of the session for the day. It behooves the superintendent, therefore, to consider well what is said, and how it is said, at the beginning. There is, in our opinion, nothing that so solemnizes the school and puts the teachers and pupils into a reverent and devotional mood as a strict observance of the regular Order of Service for the opening of the school. If you have not tried it, do so, and in all probability you will continue the practice.—*Our Young Folks.*

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD QUARTER: STUDIES IN OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

B. C. 1040.]

LESSON V. DAVID'S KINDNESS.

[Aug. 2.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love. Rom. 12. 10.

## Authorized Version.

2 Sam. 9. 1-13. [Commit to memory verse 7.]

1 And Da'vid said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jon'a-than's sake?

2 And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Zi'ba. And when they had called him unto Da'vid, the king said unto him, Art thou Zi'ba? And he said, Thy servant is he.

3 And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Zi'ba said unto the king, Jon'a-than hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.

4 And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Zi'ba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Ma'chir, the son of Am'mi-el, in Lo-de-bar.

5 Then king Da'vid sent, and fetched him out of the house of Ma'chir, the son of Am'mi-el, from Lo-de-bar.

6 Now when Me-phib'o-sheth, the son of Jon'a-than, the son of Saul, was come unto Da'vid, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And Da'vid said, Me-phib'o-sheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!

7 And Da'vid said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jon'a-than thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

8 And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?

9 Then the king called to Zi'ba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.

10 Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Me-phib'o-sheth thy master's son shall eat bread always at my table. Now Zi'ba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then said Zi'ba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Me-phib'o-sheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

12 And Me-phib'o-sheth had a young son, whose name was M'icha. And all that dwell in the house of Zi'ba were servants unto Me-phib'o-sheth.

13 So Me-phib'o-sheth dwelt in Je-ru'sa-lem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

## Revised Version.

- 1 And Da'vid said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him
- 2 kindness for Jon'a-than's sake? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Zi'ba, and they called him unto David; and the king said unto him, Art thou Zi'ba? And he
- 3 said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Zi'ba said unto the king, Jon'a-than hath yet a
- 4 son, which is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Zi'ba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Ma'chir the son of Am'mi-el, in Lo-de-bar. Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Ma'chir the son of Am'mi-el, from Lo-de-bar. And Me-phib'o-sheth, the son of Jon'a-than, the son of Saul, came unto Da'vid, and fell on his face, and did obeisance. And Da'vid said, Me-phib'o-sheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! And Da'vid said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jon'a-than thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.
- 8 And he did obeisance, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a
- 9 dead dog as I am? Then the king called to Zi'ba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, All that pertained to Saul and to all his house
- 10 have I given unto thy master's son. And thou shalt till the land for him, thou, and thy sons, and thy servants; and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have bread to eat: but Me-phib'o-sheth thy master's son shall eat bread always at my table. Now Zi'ba had
- 11 fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then said Zi'ba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king commandeth his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Me-phib'o-sheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the
- 12 king's sons. And Me-phib'o-sheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all that dwell in the house of Zi'ba were servants unto Me-phib'o-sheth. So Me-phib'o-sheth dwelt in Je-ru'sa-lem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and he was lame on both his feet.

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**TIME.**—About B. C. 1040. **PLACES.**—Jerusalem; Lo-debar. **CONNECTING LINKS.**—Perhaps David's psalm of thanksgiving (2 Sam. 7. 18-29) was written between the last lesson and this. David now subdued the Philistines and the Moabites, conquered the King of Zobah and the Syrians, put garrisons in Edom, and dedicated to God the spoil which he got from these nations.

**HOME READINGS.**

- M.* David's Kindness. 2 Sam. 9. 1-13.  
*Tu.* David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. 20. 11-17.  
*W.* A sorrowful parting. 1 Sam. 20. 35-42.  
*Th.* A glad welcome. 2 Sam. 19. 24-30.  
*F.* Constancy in friendship. Prov. 27. 1-10.  
*S.* A blessed memory. Job 29. 1-16.  
*S.* The love of Christ. Eph. 3. 8-19.

**LESSON HYMNS.**

No. 10, New Canadian Hymnal.

Let earth and heaven agree,  
 Angels and men be joined.

No. 172, New Canadian Hymnal.

Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of  
 kindness,

Sowing in the noontide, and the dewy eve.

No. 184, New Canadian Hymnal.

There are lonely hearts to cherish,  
 While the days are going by.

**QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.****1. Loyal Friendship, v. 1-5.**

What was the king's question, and by whom asked?

Why did David ask it?

Why had he not asked it before?

Of what covenant was he now mindful? (1 Sam. 20. 42.)

Who was the servant?

What kindness did God propose to show in verse 3?

What did the servant answer?

Who was this son, and how had he become lame? (2 Sam. 4. 4.)

Where was he at this time?

Why was he kept in retirement?

What had David said of Jonathan's love? (2 Sam. 1. 26.)

What was the measure of that love? (1 Sam. 18. 1.)

What is the mark of true friendship? (Prov. 17. 17.)

**2. Royal Grace, v. 6-13.**

What was Mephibosheth's attitude toward David?

What three promises of good did David make?

What was Mephibosheth's answer?

What did the king tell Ziba that he had done?

What did he order Ziba to do?

How many sons had Ziba?

How many servants?

What was Ziba's pledge to the king?

How may we show royal grace? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

What was Mephibosheth's after-history? (2 Sam. 16. 3, 4; 19. 24-30.)

How was David, in this story, a type of Christ?

**Practical Teachings.**

How does this lesson illustrate—

1. The power of friendship?

2. An example of generosity?

3. Our privilege in Christ?

Where are we taught—

1. To remember favors?

2. To requite favors?

3. How to win friends?

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.****1. Verses 1-5.**

1. How long was David King of Israel before he thought of his vow? How may we account for the delay?

2. What position did Ziba hold?

3. Tell how Mephibosheth's lameness was caused.

4. What is known of Machir? Where did Mephibosheth live?

5. What made David's kindness to him remarkable?

**2. Verses 6-13.**

7. What was David's provision for him?

8. How did he show that he felt unworthy?

9. What arrangement was made for tilling the estate?

10. Why was the food mentioned in this verse necessary?

11. Was Ziba always true to his master and to his king?

12. How long did members of Saul's family survive in Israel?

13. What was Mephibosheth's after-history?

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

Worldly greatness is short-lived. True piety will make us to love our enemies. God cares for the fatherless and afflicted. For Christ's sake God raises us from poverty to noble rank and royal possessions. Lameness is no bar to sonship. The best loved saints may suffer from disabilities. If we are heirs of God, however obscure or poor, we will be owned and provided for by and by.

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

Who was David's enemy?

Who was his loving friend?

What had become of Saul and Jonathan?  
 What did David want to do?  
 Whom did he find was still living;  
 For whose sake did he show this kindness?  
 What had Jonathan said to David?  
 Where did David have Jonathan's son brought?  
 What did he say to him?  
 What great honor did he show him?  
 Who invites us to eat at the king's table? **The great King.**

Did the lame man accept the invitation?  
 Have we accepted the invitation of our King?  
 What great change took place in the life of Mephibosheth?  
 Will it change our lives to accept our King's invitation?

### How to be Happy.

Get love from God to give to other people.  
 Try to help somebody every day.  
 Think more about others than about yourself.

## LESSON OUTLINE.

BY J. L. HURLBUT.

### "The Kindness of God."

#### I. A COVENANT KINDNESS.

*Kindness for Jonathan's sake.* v. 1.

We have sworn both of us. 1 Sam. 20. 42.  
 God....not....forget the covenant. Deut. 4. 31.

#### II. A FORGIVING KINDNESS.

*Away from the house of Saul.* v. 3.

Reward me good....thee evil. 1 Sam. 24. 17.  
 The Lord....forgiving iniquity. Exod. 24. 6. 7.

#### III. A GRACIOUS KINDNESS.

*And David said, Mephibosheth.* v. 6.

By grace are ye saved. Eph. 2. 8.  
 Not according to our works. 2 Tim. 1. 9.

#### IV. AN ENRICHING KINDNESS.

*Restore thee all the land.* v. 7.

That ye....might be rich. 2 Cor. 8. 9.  
 The unsearchable riches of Christ. Eph. 3. 8.

#### V. AN ADOPTING KINDNESS.

*As one of the king's sons.* v. 11.

Power to become....sons of God. John 1. 12.

Children of God by faith. Gal. 3. 26.

#### VI. A COMMUNING KINDNESS.

*Did eat....king's table.* v. 13.

Our fellowship....Father. 1 John 1. 3.  
 Will sup with him. Rev. 3. 20.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY.

### General Statement.

God's wonderful promise filled David's heart with delight and gratitude. Making his way to the tabernacle, he gave thanks in a psalm full of sublime utterance. In the next scene he appears as Israel's warrior king. As the first part of his reign draws to a close he remembers the divine command to overthrow the Canaanites, and proceeds vigorously to obey it. Hence his conflicts with the Philistines, Moabites, the King of Zobah, and the Syrians, narrated in chapter 8. 1-15. And now that he was victorious over his enemies, his army strengthened, his government secure, his commerce extended, his capital enlarged, his palace erected, and general prosperity attained, David paused to look after individuals. Remembering how true had been Jonathan's friendship—leading him to sacrifice Saul's regard and his own interest for love's sake—David tried to find some of his house to whom he might show kindness in return. From Saul's land steward he learned that Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan, survived. Now, Mephibosheth was but five years old at his father's death, and had spent the intervening years in retirement with one of the great families beyond Jordan who had been deeply attached to the house of Saul; so David had never seen him. A royal invitation brought him to court, and a place at the king's table was assigned him. Saul's family estate, which had fallen to David, was provided to enable him to maintain an establishment suitable to his rank. Ziba was appointed steward of the property on condition of receiving one half the produce in remuneration of his oversight, while the balance was to be paid as rent to Mephibosheth, the new-found owner of the land. The true friendship of David for Jonathan was revealed by his exalting this unfortunate cripple to a place of honor; and more especially, when we bear in mind that the universal Eastern custom was, and is, to destroy all the members of a former royal house, do the king's nobility and generosity appear.

**Verse 1. And David said.** This must have been after he had reigned over all Israel for seven years at least. **Any that is left.** It might not have seemed safe to make the inquiry sooner. But now the kingdom was united and had become firmly established, and there was little possibility

that any member of the house of Saul could again divide it. **For Jonathan's sake.** A league of friendship had been made between David and Jonathan which was to extend to their children (1 Sam. 18. 3; 20. 16, 42). (1) *We should constantly seek opportunities to do good.*

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**2. Ziba.** This slave of Saul seems to have become a freeman at his master's death. He was now prosperous, with fifteen sons and twenty slaves. He had cared for Mephibosheth in his need, and therefore, knowing the facts and having some influence, he thought he might venture to place them before the king.

**3. House of Saul.** The name recalled bitter wrongs, but for his friend's sake David was willing to forget his own sufferings. **The kindness of God** means kindness or mercy such as God shows to men—large and free and forgiving. He spares those he has advantage against, and so must we. **Jonathan hath yet a son.** He had been saved from the Philistines when Jonathan was slain on Mount Gilboa. He was kept in obscurity afterward lest David should regard him as a rival. **Lame on his feet.** The nurse in her haste let him fall when she fled from Jezroel, on hearing of the death of Saul and Jonathan. He was then five years old. Fifteen years passed away before he was brought to David's notice. (2) *The fatherless are under God's faithful care.*

**4. Machir.** This was a rich man, probably of the tribe of Manasseh. Josephus calls him "the principal man of Gilead." He afterward showed kindness to David when he fled from Absalom (2 Sam. 17. 27). **Lo-debar.** A town east of the Jordan not far from Mahanaim, possibly the same as the *Debir* of Josh. 18. 26. In this neighborhood Ishbosheth held his court for the seven years David reigned at Hebron. Its location remains unknown.

**5. Sent and fetched.** David did not merely dispatch a royal command, but supplied the means of travel, as Joseph did when he brought Jacob down to Egypt.

**6. Fell on his face.** Probably fearing that he had been suspected as an aspirant to the throne of his grandfather Saul, and had been brought into the king's presence to receive sentence of death. The picture of David's royal power and glory in contrast with the poor crippled son of Jonathan, the last scion of Saul's fallen house, comes out in greater splendor the deeper the latter humbled himself before the former. His crippled condition made obedience more difficult and noticeable. (3) *What we dread as an ill often turns out to be a decided good.*

**7. David said unto him, Fear not.** The visible terror he manifested would imply that the messenger had not made known to him the king's purpose. Did David recognize in his features any resemblance to the friend he loved so well? **The land of Saul.** This family estate which was at Gibeah had fallen to David in right of his wife (Num. 27. 8), or been forfeited to the crown by Ishbosheth's rebellion (2 Sam. 12. 8). **At my table.** Be a royal courtier, and have the privileges of a member of the royal family. This is a recognized mark of honor in the East.

**8. He bowed himself.** Whether as the result

of misfortunes or through defect in the make-up of his character he lacked strength and show of manliness. **A dead dog.** Even a live dog is in the East regarded as an object of extreme contempt. "A dead dog" expresses the deepest depth of degradation, as joining the loathsomeness of a corpse to the viciousness of a dog.

**9. I have given.** In most oriental kingdoms the monarch is regarded as supreme owner of all the property of his subjects, and takes and bestows estates at will; but in Israel not even the king could take an inheritance out of a family line. **Thy master's son.** Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson; here named as his son. **All that pertained.** The original estate must have been large, and was no doubt increased during Saul's reign.

**10. Shalt till the land.** Suggesting that Ziba was already in occupation of it. He was now to be steward, and to receive half the produce in remuneration for his labor. **May have food.** Though Mephibosheth himself was to be a guest at the royal table, he required the revenue of this estate for the support of his family and household. **Always at my table.** David's plan provided for one unfitted for active life, honored with a son, and gave as little chance as possible to stir up rebellion. **Twenty servants.** All of whom would now become the servants of Mephibosheth. (4) *The change of fortune experienced by Mephibosheth was but slight when compared with that of a poor sinner who is suddenly made an heir of God.*

**11. Then said Ziba.** Ziba submitted to the royal command, though doubtless with inward unwillingness at being remanded from the position of a proprietor back to that of a servant. Eighteen years later, during Absalom's rebellion, Ziba betrayed his master and (apparently falsely) accused him of treachery to David. The king believed him, took away Mephibosheth's property, and gave it to Ziba. But later when he had Mephibosheth's side of the story he restored to him one half of what had been taken. **As for Mephibosheth.** Scholars say this clause should read, "So Mephibosheth did eat at David's table."

**12. A young son.** Through whom the house of Saul was perpetuated down to the time of the captivity (1 Chron. 8. 34).

**13. Dwelt in Jerusalem.** He seems to have remained loyal to David through all the temptations of Absalom's rebellion; and, if so, was greatly belied by his servant, who with oriental cunning managed to rob him of half his estate. **And was lame.** See how this affected his future career (2 Sam. 16. 1-4; 19. 24-30). David's kindness did not go unrequited. For when he fled from Absalom and had reached Mahanaim, Machir of Lo-debar, the friend of Mephibosheth, provided him with beds and utensils and food and luxuries, because his people were hungry and thirsty and weary in the wilderness (2 Sam. 17. 27-29).

## CRITICAL NOTES.

BY PROFESSOR W. W. DAVIES.

We have no exact data to determine the time of this lesson. It is said (2 Sam. 4. 4) that Mephibosheth was five years old when Jonathan, his father, was killed on Gilboa, and we are told in the twelfth verse of this chapter that he had a young son. From this it has been inferred that he could not have been younger than twenty years of age; or in the seventh or eighth year of David's reign at Jerusalem, about 1040 B. C. The question of Hebrew chronology is shrouded in mystery, consequently no one ought to dogmatize on the subject. This incident is not mentioned in Chronicles.

**Verse 1. Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul?** It seems strange that he had lost sight of the child of his bosom friend Jonathan. We must, however, remember that David and Jonathan had seldom seen each other during the last few years of the latter's life. Besides the rivalry between Ishbosheth and David would preclude much intercourse between the two families, and then Mephibosheth was timid and weak to a fault. **That I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake.** Notice the form of the question above. David's gratitude to Jonathan was such that he was anxious to help any of his relations. The account of the covenant between David and Jonathan should be read at this point. (See 1 Sam. 20. 12, 17.)

**2. Ziba.** From the meager data in regard to this man, it is evident that he was a friend of Saul, and had shrewdly managed to retain control of some of his possessions. His character is not above reproach. (See 2 Sam. 16. 1-4, and 19. 24-30.)

**3. The kindness of God.** This is most probably a Hebraism, meaning exceeding great kindness. Comp. "mountain of God" in the sense of high mountain (Psalm 68. 15). Others take it to mean such kindness as God himself would show, "unfailing, unsought, unlimited." **Which is lame on his feet.** The story of the crippling of the young prince is told in chap. 4. 4, where we learn that Mephibosheth's nurse, on hearing of the death of Jonathan in the Philistine war, fled with her charge; in her efforts to rescue the child, it seems that he fell in such a way as to cripple him for life. The fact that the young prince was crippled and helpless was perhaps sufficient reason why he made no effort to gain the throne of his grandfather, which would have naturally fallen to Jonathan, his father, had he lived.

**4. Behold, he is in the house of Machir.** It is evident, from 2 Sam. 17. 27-29, that Machir was a man of great wealth, as well as of a noble heart. Why he was attached to Mephibosheth we are not told; but was he not one of God's noblemen who

did much good with little parade? Years after this, when David was a fugitive before Absalom, Machir came to his aid, mindful perhaps of the king's kindness to Mephibosheth. **Lo-debar.** This place was beyond Jordan not far from Mahanaim. Its exact location, however, has not been discovered, for that reason it is not possible to say whether Machir belonged to Gad or Manasseh.

**6. Mephibosheth.** He is called Merib Baal in 1 Chron. 8. 34, and Meri-baal in 1 Chron. 9. 40. It is difficult to say which is the original, or why the change was made. Yet there are other instances of substituting *baal* for *bosheth*, or vice versa, as Esh-baal and Ish-bosheth (1 Chron. 8. 33; 2 Sam. 2. 8); Jerub-baal and Jerub-besheth (Judg. 6. 32; 2 Sam. 11. 21). Mephibosheth signifies "Dispenser of shame," and Meribaal, "Hero of Baal," or "The Lord's Hero." There was a time when the title "Baal" was given to the God of Israel, for the name is often found in compound forms "in the families of both Saul and David."—*Iriker. Fell on his face.* This was the usual posture of a subject in the presence of a king. There is no need, therefore, in thinking that he was afraid that David was about to put him to death as the last representative of Saul's family. David in his memorable interview with Jonathan fell on his face. (See 1 Sam. 20. 41.)

**7. Fear not.** If Mephibosheth had any fears that David, like an oriental despot, would put him to death, these fears are at once dispelled with the assurance that kindness is to be shown for his father's sake. **Will restore thee all the land of Saul.** In most cases the possessions of the late king would pass as crown lands into the hands of the new ruler. Compare the words of Nathan, who says to David, "I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives," etc. (12. 7). Whether David had taken them or whether they had been given to some distant relatives, they are now restored to the rightful owner. **Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.** Thus he is treated as one of his own sons or most intimate friends.

**8. A dead dog.** No animal was treated with more contempt in the East than the dog. A dead dog would be doubly despised, for here "the vileness of a corpse is added to the vileness of a dog."—*Kitto.* (Comp. 2 Sam. 3. 8; 16. 9; and 1 Sam. 24. 14.) A dead dog is a dog which can do no harm, therefore unworthy of notice.

**9. Thy master's son.** "Son" is used here as often in the sense of descendant or grandson, as "father" is employed for "grandfather" in verse 7. **10. Thou shalt till the land for him.** Whether the lands had been cultivated by Ziba

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previous to this time is not known; it looks, however, as if they had been. David therefore does not take them from him, but simply tells him that henceforth the produce of the land must be given to his lord. We are not to suppose, however, that Ziba, his sons, and servants had to cultivate Mephibosheth's farm without remuneration. It is not improbable that he received fifty per cent, or one half the products, for the labor. (See 2 Sam. 19. 29.) Ziba an was unscrupulous man, and would take all he could get. (See 2 Sam. 16. 1-4.) "He seems to have contrived to make himself comfortable notwithstanding the wreck of his master's fortunes; more comfortable than Mephibosheth, who was living in another man's house."—*Blaikie*. **That thy master's son may have bread to eat.** "Master's son" in this verse, as "Saul's son" in verse 6, refers to Mephibosheth, and not to his son Mica, mentioned in verse 12. This does not contradict the statement that Mephibosheth was to eat at the royal table. It simply means that his large household (1 Chron. 8. 35-40; 9. 40-44) was to be supported by the family estates. **Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.** This shows that the land restored to Mephibosheth must have been quite extensive, else the service of so large a force would not be needed in attending to it.

**11. Then said Ziba, etc.** Ziba was shrewd enough to consent without the least opposition. He knew well that David was king. But as he had made no effort to support the grandson of his lord in the past, he must have felt indignant at the necessity now placed upon him. He will, however, bide his chances. (See 2 Sam. 16. 1-4.) **He shall eat at my table.** This as it reads is the language of David. But why should David repeat the same words three times? The words "said the king" are not in the original. The following emendation, based on the Greek version, has been proposed: "So Mephibosheth did eat at David's table, as one of the king's sons." Here the word "David" is substituted for the suffix (pronoun) "my."

**12. Mica.** As already pointed out, Mephibosheth had a large family. The names of his other children are given in 1 Chron. 8. 35, ff.

The great lesson of this lesson is that it always pays to be kind and merciful. For as David is gracious to the son of his bosom friend, Jonathan, so years afterward good Maehir shows kindness to the troubled king.

### Thoughts for Young People.

#### Hints and Helps in Building Character.

**1. We should be slow to break friendships.** Some are always changing their companions. They are "Hail, fellow, well met" with one to-day, and cold and distant to-morrow. This arises from readiness to admit to intimacy without sufficient testing.

The friendship that is quickly cemented is easily dissolved. Quarrels between friends are the bitterest; and yet one should never cease to hope for reconciliation. Coleridge tells of two who had been friends in youth, but

They parted—ne'er to meet again!  
But never either found another  
To free the hollow heart from paining—  
They stood aloof, the scars remaining;  
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;  
A dreary sea now flows between.

Let Shakespeare's rule be ours:

The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel.

**2. We should cultivate a pleasing manner.** Rough diamonds are always precious, but they are much more beautiful when cut and polished. Strength and gruffness do not always go together. Persons who show consideration for the feelings of others will be favorites, and will find doors open for them which would be closed to the coarse and vulgar.

**3. We should be especially courteous to those below us in station.** Our treatment of those weaker, poorer, or in any way lower than ourselves reveals what we really are more than anything else. We must take care to be as affable and polite in our intercourse with the unfortunate as we are in the presence of equals, or in the inclosure of the family circle. Charles Kingsley says of Sir Sidney Smith that "the love he won was because without any conscious intention he treated rich and poor, his own servants and the nobleman his guest, alike courteously, considerately, affectionately, bearing a blessing and repeating a blessing wherever he went."

**4. We should let our piety show itself in service.** Do something that only a Christian can do. Somebody you know is downcast; take trouble to bring him cheer. Somebody you know is going wrong; see if you cannot won him back to safety. A companion is being wronged; show yourself openly on his side, and dare to sympathize. *Ich dien*—"I serve"—the motto of the Prince of Wales, is a princely motto, but never so beautiful as when it is worn by those who have pledged allegiance to Christ.

### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

BY J. T. GRACEY, D. D.

*Verse 2.* Ziba is spoken of as a servant of the house of Saul, which indicates that he was or had been a slave belonging in some way to Saul's family, though the term slave would be only equal to servant. Hired service was little known anciently. The word *ebed*, or servant, however, was applied to the king's prime minister, to the steward of a rich man as Eliczer. Bond service did not originate

with the Hebrews. They found it already in existence among surrounding nations, and adopted it, but greatly modified it. In fact, they made man-stealing a crime, and required that slaves be treated as if they were hired servants. So far as Hebrews came into bond service it was with the limitation first that the bondage could not continue longer than six years, and must end with the jubilee year, whether six years or six hours only, or whatever time may have elapsed. At the jubilee every Hebrew bondsman could have freedom for himself and his family, and his land must be restored to him. If they were Israelites they must be liberally rewarded at the close of the term of service. Property in foreigners who were held as slaves came under different regulations. These slaves might be inherited from father to son, as also were the children born in slavery. Some were war captives, but if Jews were captured in war they could not be reduced to slavery by Jews. Some slaves became such by penalty for crime, like modern penal servitude. Some were bought of slave dealers at from thirty to forty shekels. If a married man was made a slave by Israelites his wife was to go out with him at the end of the six years' service. An unmarried slave was given a wife by his master, but she and her children remained as the property of the master. If the slave himself chose to remain with his wife and children he became a slave forever, and his master bored his ear with an awl.

However Ziba became a slave, he appears to have purchased his liberty, and to have acquired a good deal of property. He furnishes an illustration of gratitude and fidelity, too, not at all infrequent among orientals to the members of a master's family. Mephibosheth was a cripple and probably could have been of no use to him, as his nurse in attempting to flee with him from danger, when he was five years old, stumbled and let him fall, which resulted in his being lamed for life in both his feet.

*Verse 7.* David restored to him all the land of his father Saul, located in Gibeath, on the land of Saul's family, of which he was steward, having control of all the property, but the grandson of Saul, Jonathan's son, was not known to the king and his heirship had not been recognized. Under Hebrew law, however, his title could not be diverted. It was evidently the intention of Jehovah to attach the Israelites to the soil, for which purpose the land was divided by lot and measurement among the tribes, families, and individuals, every citizen being allotted a piece of ground which he was to cultivate and leave to his descendants. These allotments of land were sacredly marked off, not by fences but by boundary stones, according to a custom at least as old as Job's time, and which has prevailed among Romans, who used posts, and is still used among Persians and Hindus. There

would be no need to have a survey or investigation as to the actual property, for it was a serious crime ever to disturb or remove to the slightest extent any of the boundary pillars.

David recognized that Mephibosheth had not disputed the kingly succession, as he might have done with Ishbosheth, his uncle, as the son of a deceased heir apparent. His claim to the kingdom would, however, have been questioned, since custom required that the son born to a king who was actually reigning at the time took precedence of the son of a deceased heir apparent, though the latter were older than the former. There was still, however, enough possibility of rousing a following in an eastern country for Mephibosheth to be a dangerous factor in the political world as the last scion of the house of Saul; and, as it was not unusual for kings to murder all relatives of his predecessors as possible heirs to their throne, for greater security to themselves, Mephibosheth may have anticipated such a fate and hence made his obeisance falling on his face, and hence David said to him, "Fear not."

David directed that Mephibosheth should eat bread at the royal table. Eating bread at court was of two kinds, the one public and ceremonious, the other private. This, and similar passages referring to eating at the king's table, probably had reference to state occasions, wherein official rank is studiously observed both as to the right to be invited and the order of assignment of sittings. The orientals are great sticklers for the most delicate shades of discrimination in their honor on all state occasions, when it is not unusual for the monarch to specify the number of their attendants, even in coming to the banquet hall. Mephibosheth would need his ordinary living at his own home, hence Ziba was directed to cultivate the estate and store in barns or deliver in Jerusalem.

### By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

*David's kindness.* The origin of the word "kind" is interesting. It comes from the word "kin." So that to be kind is to consider others as though they were your kin, your own family. The word has wrapped up in it the thought of universal brotherhood.

*David's gratitude.* David showed that he remembered Jonathan's loving service and the vow between them. A little boy who had been a hospital patient and had received very loving service from the nurse, said to her one day, "My mamma will never hear the last of you."

Ingratitude is the most common of vices. Has God been good to you? Then show your gratitude by word and deed. Let your friends "never hear the last" of your Father.

*Golden Text.* God is the author of all that is good

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in human life. You know this world is thought to revolve, like all the worlds, in a diffusive ether that no man ever saw, but every color on every flower is the reflection of that ether as its waves strike upon the earth. No man hath seen God at any time, but every note of purity and goodness and love, every color of love—and how many its colors are!—is the reflection of the universal God.—*Lyman Abbott.*

Captain Barends, of the steamship *Normannia*, on a recent trip from New York to Southampton rescued with great difficulty all the crew and passengers of a sinking ship. When the captain reached Hamburg he found the following dispatch awaiting him from the German emperor: "I express to you my full appreciation of the rescue of the crew of the English vessel *Arno*, so happily accomplished with persevering courage under arduous circumstances." If the German emperor, a man, is pleased with service for humanity, shall not God, who is the author of all loving-kindness, be pleased?

**The Teachers' Meeting.**

The lesson may be taught under two divisions:

1. David's obligation; and 2. How he met it;
- (1) Show what Jonathan did and sacrificed for his friend. Explain the covenant made between them;
- (2) Account for David's delay in keeping it: Division of the kingdom; wars with neighboring nations; internal organization; ignorance that Jonathan had a surviving son;
- (3) Point out how Mephibosheth was discovered;
- (4) Make clear David's nobility of treatment: Suffering from house of Saul since covenant was made; kindly greeting to Mephibosheth; special mark of honor; provision for household. . . . Another plan would be to trace a parallel between David's treatment of Mephibosheth and God's treatment of the sinner—
- (1) Mephibosheth was sought out in his indifference. We try to forget God, but he seeks us that he may welcome us to a seat at the king's table;
- (2) He was sought out in his deformity. We are less fit to come into the presence of a holy God;
- (3) He was received for the sake of another. By Christ's merits we find favor;
- (4) He received a rich inheritance. When God forgives he makes rich indeed;
- (5) He was favored in being accorded daily audience with the king. So we can walk with God. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."

**OPTIONAL HYMNS.**

No. 1.

There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
I sing of his mercy.  
What a friend we have in Jesus,  
O scatter seeds of loving deeds.

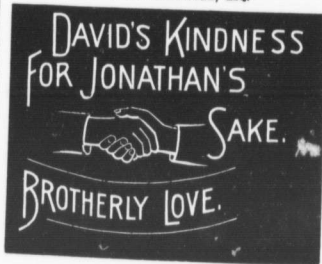
No. 2.

O sing the pow'r of love divine,  
God loved the world of sinners

O my heart is thrill'd,  
Kind words can never die.  
Have you had a kindness shown.

Blackboard.

BY J. T. HARTNAGEL, ESQ.



BY GEORGE W. PHASE, ESQ.

**KINDNESS.**

DAVID | GOD  
FOR  
JONATHAN'S | JESUS'S  
SAKE  
SHOWS KINDNESS TO  
JONATHAN'S | REPENTANT  
SON | SINNERS.

DAVID'S | GOD'S  
PROMISE:

"I will surely show thee kindness."

**FULFILLING THE LAW.**

FREELY YE  
HAVE RECEIVED | SHALL GIVE.

THE LAW OF LOVE  
EXEMPLIFIED  
BY  
DEEDS OF KINDNESS.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another."



## Before the Class.

BY EDWIN P. ST. JOHN.

Begin by bringing up, by question if possible, the story of the friendship of David and Jonathan as related in the lessons of the fourth quarter of 1895. (See 1 Sam. 18. 1-4; 19. 1-7; 20. 14-17, 42; 23. 18.) Call attention to 1 Sam. 20. 16 (margin), indicating that there was between them a "blood covenant," sealed by shedding and perhaps drinking either each other's blood or that of a sacrifice. Utilize the opportunity for review by tracing from the death of Jonathan the steps by which David gained his present opportunity to fulfill royally his part of the covenant. Note how his religious activity would naturally remind him of his promise, perhaps forgotten for twenty years.

Now take up the lesson text. Use the map to indicate the locations of the places mentioned. In connection with Mephibosheth tell of the accident which produced his lameness (2 Sam. 4. 4), and of his refuge at Lo-debar, near Mahanaim, the seat of his uncle's kingdom while David reigned in Hebron. Show how his birth during David's exile, his physical infirmity, and the fear that David would, according to oriental custom, put to death all the family of the preceding dynasty would help to keep his existence unknown to David.

Finish the story of the lesson text, and show its further relation to the life of David by a very brief glance ahead to the treachery of Ziba (2 Sam. 16. 1-4, and 19. 24-30), and the friendliness of Mochi, the friend of Mephibosheth, in David's time of need (2 Sam. 17. 27-29).

For the application remind the class of the blood covenant between the king's son and the outlaw. Show how Christ and the Christian stand in the same relation, joined by a covenant sealed by the

shed blood which we drink in symbol in the commemorative sacrament. Note the fitness of the "love feast" and the offering for the poor of the church in connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for the covenant binds us to show the kindness of God to the household of Jesus. They and he are one. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of those my brethren, ye have done it unto me." If we ask who they are, he says, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother," etc. (Mark 8. 35).

Now we may ask five questions: (1) Have we forgotten that while Jesus is no longer here to be ministered to in the body we owe a duty to his children, "the travail of his soul," and that this is a test of our love to him (1 John 4. 20, 21)? (2) Do we remember that what we owe is "the kindness of God," that which he has already given us (1 John 4. 10), and that which proceeds from God dwelling in us (1 John 4. 16)? (3) Do we seek, as David did, for opportunities unknown to us for fulfilling these duties (Luke 14. 12, 13)? (4) When we seek to show kindness to the members of the family of Christ, are we content to supply simply the lower physical and mental wants by gifts of money, or do we bid them "sit at my table," and thus give of ourselves to their hearts (James 2. 8, 9)? (5) As David "for Jonathan's sake" would do kindness to the whole house of Saul, his enemies, should not we, for Jesus's sake, include in our loving ministry not merely "the household of faith," but the whole world for whom he died?

## References.

FREEMAN'S HANDBOOK. Ver. 6: Oriental bowing, 9.

A. D. 1034.]

## LESSON VI. DAVID'S VICTORIES.

[Aug. 9.

**GOLDEN TEXT.** The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

Psalm 27. 1.

## Authorized Version.

[Read chapters 8 and 10.]

2 Sam. 10. 8-19. [Commit to memory verses 11, 12.]

8 And the children of Am'mon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate; and the Syr'i-ans of Zo'bah, and of Re'hob, and Ish'tob, and Ma'a-cah, were by themselves in the field.

9 When Jo'ab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Is'ra-el, and put them in array against the Syr'i-ans:

10 And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Ab-i-sha'i his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Am'mon.

## Revised Version.

- 8 And the children of Am'mon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syr'i-ans of Zo'bah, and of Re'hob, and the men of Tob and Ma'a-cah, were by themselves in the field. Now when Jo'ab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Is'ra-el, and put them in array against the Syr'i-ans: 10 and the rest of the people he committed into the hand of Ab-i-sha'i his brother, and he put them 11 in array against the children of Am'mon. And he said, If the Syr'i-ans be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of

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11 Am'mon, the Am'monites and the Hittites,

12 Be for our brethren,

13 And we will see with you: and we will be with you as we were with you:

14 And the Syr'i-ans returned to Jerusalem:

15 And the Am'monites and the Hittites returned together.

16 And the Syr'i-ans came to the host of Hiram:

17 And Is'ra-el came to the army of Hiram:

18 And David said to the Syr'i-ans, smote Shimei:

19 And Hadad-zebul, the king of the Am'monites, and the king of the Am'monites,

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11 And he said, If the Syr'i-ans be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Am'mon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.

12 Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.

13 And Jo'ab drew nigh, and the people that were with him, unto the battle against the Syr'i-ans: and they fled before him.

14 And when the children of Am'mon saw that the Syr'i-ans were fled, then fled they also before Ab-i-sha'i, and entered into the city. So Jo'ab returned from the children of Am'mon, and came to Jerusalem.

15 And when the Syr'i-ans saw that they were smitten before Is'ra-el, they gathered themselves together.

16 And Had-a-re'zer sent, and brought out the Syr'i-ans that were beyond the river; and they came to He'l'am; and Sho'bach the captain of the host of Had-a-re'zer went before them.

17 And when it was told Da'vid, he gathered all Is'ra-el together, and passed over Jor'dan, and came to He'l'am. And the Syr'i-ans set themselves in array against Da'vid, and fought with him.

18 And the Syr'i-ans fled before Is'ra-el; and Da'vid slew the men of seven hundred chariots of the Syr'i-ans, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Sho'bach the captain of their host, who died there.

19 And when all the kings that were servants to Had-a-re'zer saw that they were smitten before Is'ra-el, they made peace with Is'ra-el, and served them. So the Syr'i-ans feared to help the children of Am'mon any more.

Am'mon be too strong for thee, then I will  
12 come and help thee. Be of good courage, and  
let us play the men for our people, and for the  
13 cities of our God: and the Lord do that which  
seemeth him good. So Jo'ab and the people  
that were with him drew nigh unto the battle  
against the Syr'i-ans: and they fled before  
14 him. And when the children of Am'mon saw  
that the Syr'i-ans were fled, they likewise fled  
before Ab-i-sha'i, and entered into the city.  
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15 mon, and came to Jerusalem. And when the  
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16 gether. And Had-a-re'zer sent, and brought  
out the Syr'i-ans that were beyond the River:  
and they came to He'l'am, with Sho'bach the  
captain of the host of Had-a-re'zer at their head.  
17 And it was told Da'vid; and he gathered all  
Is'ra-el together, and passed over Jor'dan, and  
came to He'l'am. And the Syr'i-ans set them-  
selves in array against Da'vid, and fought with  
18 him. And the Syr'i-ans fled before Is'ra-el; and  
Da'vid slew of the Syr'i-ans the men of seven  
hundred chariots, and forty thousand horsemen,  
and smote Sho'bach the captain of their host,  
19 that he died there. And when all the kings  
that were servants to Had-a-re'zer saw that they  
were put to the worse before Is'ra-el, they made  
peace with Is'ra-el, and served them. So the  
Syr'i-ans feared to help the children of Am'mon  
any more.

**TIME.**—Perhaps B. C. 1094. **PLACES.**—Rabbath, or Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites; a plain surrounding the fortified city of Medeba; Hamath, a Syrian metropolis not far from Damascus. **ENVIRONMENTS.**—David's career as an outlaw had been hard, but as soon as he became monarch of the united people everything else seemed within his reach. The nation was ready for reorganization, and it was comparatively easy to extend the empire from the edge of Egypt to the Euphrates. Read 2 Sam. chaps. 8 and 10, to understand how this war was precipitated. King Hanun must have supposed himself wholly able to cope with David, whose sudden rise was a wonder to all surrounding nations. In the battle which we are to study Joab was in command of the Israelites.

### HOME READINGS.

M. David's Victories. 2 Sam. 10. 8-19.

Tu. A song of victory. Exod. 15. 1-11.

W. Divine preservation. 1 Chron. 18. 1-13.

Th. Trust in God. Psalm 144.

F. Deliverance from God. Psalm 18. 32-50.

S. Praise for deliverance. Psalm 54.

S. The soul's warfare. Eph. 6. 10-20.

### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 430, New Canadian Hymnal.  
"Be ye strong in the Lord and the power of  
his might!"

### No. 410, New Canadian Hymnal.

Fear not! God is thy shield,  
And he thy great reward;  
His might has won the field;  
Thy strength is in the Lord.

### No. 198, New Canadian Hymnal.

The Lord is my light, then why should I fear?  
By day and by night his presence is near;  
He is my salvation from sorrow and sin;  
This blessed persuasion the Spirit brings in.

### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Lord's Battle against Ammon,  
v. 8-14.

What three nations became tributaries to David?  
(2 Sam. 8. 2, 6, 14.)

What dignity did the Ammonites offer? (Verses  
1-5.)

Who came out against Israel?

What allies had the Ammonites?

Who was in command of Israel?

Whom did Joab array against the Syrians?

Who was in command against Ammon?

What agreement did Joab and Abishai make?

How did Joab exhort his brother?

How did the battle with the Syrians go?

How did that with Ammon turn out?

What did Israel do with Ammon later? (2 Sam. 11. 1.)

**2. The Lord's Battle against Syria,**  
v. 15-19.

What did the Syrians do after this first defeat?  
What allies did they summon?  
Where did the army gather?  
What leader had charge?  
What did David at once do?  
What was the result of the battle?  
How many Syrians were slain?  
What did the dependents of Syria do?  
What did the Syrians fear to do?  
What may all to whom the Lord has given victory say? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. To plan for victory?
2. To work for victory?
3. To trust God for victory?

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**

**1. Verses 8-14.**

8. Where was this battle fought? By whom were the Ammonites aided? How did Joab secure an advantage over them?

9. What was the plan of battle chosen by the enemy? How did Joab arrange his forces?

10. State what you know of Abishai.

11. What agreement did Joab make with Abishai?

12. Why was great courage needed? What would make the Hebrew soldiers brave? Did Joab count upon God's aid?

13. Which branch of the armies was the first to flee?

14. What caused the Ammonites to give up the fight? Why did Joab not follow up the victory?

**2. Verses 15-19.**

15. What did the Syrians do after their defeat?

16. What led Hadarezer to engage in the conflict?

17. Why did David go with the army in person? Where was the battle fought? Name some of the results that followed this great victory. What became of the alliance between the Syrians and the Ammonites?

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

A suspicious spirit will cause us to injure our friends. It takes courage to be faithful to do hard things and suffer painful ones. For love of country and home and life people will do and dare. Our chief reliance should be upon God. It takes bitter experience to teach some people wisdom. Ruin will be the fate of all who oppose Christ and his cause. Are we on the safe and winning side?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

Who were the Ammonites? **A heathen people.**

What did David do when their king died?

Why did he do this?

What does this show in David? **A kind and faithful heart.**

How did the new king treat David's servants?

To what did this lead?

What does this teach us? **How wrong it is to think evil.**

Who came to help the Ammonites?

Who was the captain of the Israelites?

What kind of a man was he?

Who won the first battle which was fought?

What did the enemy then try to do?

Who went out to battle this time?

What was the result?

Why did the Lord help David fight?

What battle have we to fight?

Who will fight for us?

What have we to do? **Trust the Lord and do right.**

**Where are My Enemies?**

In my own heart and all about me.

They will conquer me if I do not conquer them.

God will help me fight if I look to him.

**LESSON OUTLINE.**

**The Requirements of God's Warfare.**

**I. ABLE LEADERS.**

*Joab saw....he chose.* v. 8, 9.

Look ye out....men. Acts 6. 3.

A wise master-builder. 1 Cor. 3. 10.

**II. CHOSEN WARRIORS.**

*All the choice men.* v. 9, 10.

Chosen us in him. Eph. 1. 4.

From the beginning. 2 Thess. 2. 13.

**III. MUTUAL HELPFULNESS.**

*Help me....help thee.* v. 11.

With one mind striving together. Phil. 1. 27.

One body in Christ. Rom. 12. 5.

**IV. COURAGE.**

*Be of good courage.* v. 12.

Be strong in the Lord. Eph. 6. 10.

Quit you like men. 1 Cor. 16. 13.

**V. FAITH.**

*The Lord do....good.* v. 12.

Trust in the Lord. Psalm 73. 8.

The victory....faith. 1 John 5. 4.

**VI. PERSISTENCE.**

*They gathered....David gathered.* v. 15-19.

Keepeth....unto the end. Rev. 2. 26.

Endureth....saved. Matt. 10. 22.

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## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

## General Statement.

The summary of David's wars and victories contained in chapter 8 and the chapter from which today's lesson is taken shows his wonderful military genius. At the beginning of his reign he found Israel sorely pressed by enemies. The standing army was therefore raised to three hundred thousand experienced soldiers, besides a band of six hundred heroes noted for deeds of personal valor. His generals were unrivaled for military skill and bravery. An account of three of his great campaigns, prior to the engagement with the Ammonites, is given. These were against the Amalekites, Philistines, and Moabites. In each case David's cause was just. Israel was not the offending party, but on the contrary had suffered in material prosperity through incursions which rendered life and property insecure, which inflicted severe cruelties, and which endangered national existence. David's wars were the wars of the Lord. Wherever his sway was extended foul idolatries and the rule of brute force were swept aside and a reverent and enlightened government set up in their stead. The war with the King of Ammon was brought on by an abominable affront, greatly aggravated by the kindly disposition of David toward the son of his old friend. By hiring mercenaries from Aram—ancient Syria—for five hundred thousand pounds' weight of silver, King Hanan was able to bring into the field an army of thirty thousand men. The scene of the battle was near to the city of Medeba, in the mountains of Moab, east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. David's general was the courageous and crafty Joab. A severe conflict resulted in victory for the cause of Israel, which was soon followed by other victories decisive against all foes. As a result, now for the first time the promise made to Abraham that his posterity should possess all the land from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates was fulfilled. Rich spoils were taken from the conquered foes. These included gold shields and exceeding much copper, and all manner of vessels of gold and silver and brass. These treasures were dedicated to God to be used in Solomon's temple. Out of the brass taken from the Syrians Solomon afterward made the great brazen sea and the pillars of brass (1 Chron. 18, 8, 11). The interests of mankind were therefore in some measure involved in the cause espoused by David. While we deprecate war, it is possible for us, too, to get things that are now the instruments of unrighteousness consecrated to the service of God, and also help to extend the kingdom of God by our temporal gains.

**Verse 8. Children of Ammon came out.**

From Rabbath, their capital city, to the open country. **Put the battle in array.** Not daring to advance into hostile territory they took an advantageous position and awaited attack. **Zoba.** In the northeast, near the Euphrates. **Rehob.** In Asher, in northern Galilee. **Ishtob.** Literally, *Men of Tob*, a district southeast of the Sea of Galilee. **Mnacah.** Beyond the waters of Merom. **By themselves in the field.** They had not been able to join the Ammonites before Joab appeared. "The field" was the treeless prairie surrounding Medeba. This was an Israelite town lying in the tribe of Reuben, four miles southeast of Heshbon. It is mentioned on the Moabite stone as having been recaptured by Mesha, and in the time of Isaiah was a Moabite sanctuary (Isa. 15, 2).

**9. Front of the battle was against him.**

His position was between Rabbah and Medeba, with the Ammonites in front and the Syrians behind. Hence he had to fight both armies at the same time. The natural advantages were with the enemy, as the Ammonites had their city to fall back into, and the Syrians a plain well fitted for cavalry and chariots. **Choice men.** His choice of the picked men to attack the Syrians and his taking command of this division in person indicate that the mercenary troops were the most formidable part of the Ammonite force. (1) *We may be so sur-*

*rounded by difficulties that no way of escape seems possible.*

**10. Hand of Abishai his brother.** Abishai was the eldest of the three sons of Zeruiah, David's sister, and brother to Joab and Asahel. He was captain of the second three of David's mighty men.

**11. Syrians be too strong.** If Joab's assault on the Syrians failed, Abishai could hardly turn away from the Ammonites without ruining his entire division of the army. The understanding may have been not to attack both armies at the same time.

**12. Be of good courage.** The peril of their position demanded extraordinary bravery. **Play the men.** The part of valiant men. **The cities of our God.** The people, the land, and the cities were God's. If the cities fell into heathen hands they would be given over to the worship of heathen gods. The city of Medeba, for which they now fought, was still in possession of the Reubenites, but was besieged by the Syrians. Justice, patriotism, love of family, and self-love urged these men to unusual valor. **That which seemeth him good.** An expression of trust combined with resignation to God's will. (2) *When we contend for what is God's, we may u!! have courage.*

**13. They fled before him.** They that are hired to fight have usually a great care to save themselves, with light regard for the cause for which they fight.

**14. Saw that the Syrians.** News of the defeat or victory spreads rapidly on great battlefields. **Then fled they also.** News of the Syrian defeat broke the spirit of the Ammonites, and they retired at once within the walls of the city. **Joab returned.** He did not attempt a siege. This battle was fought late in the year, and fall and winter made campaigning in Palestine impossible.

**15. When the Syrians saw.** When their generals had succeeded in reorganizing their force, and the extent of the damage inflicted by Joab's onset could be measured. **They gathered themselves together.** Their soldierly habits enabled them to re-form quickly after defeat. As Joab had returned to Jerusalem in triumph the broken force could be united without fear of molestation. (3) *When we contend against wrong we should never think it useless to try again.*

**16. Hadarezer.** The name is spelled Hadarezer in 2 Sam. 8. 3. His kingdom included not only the principality of Zobah, but extended across the river into Mesopotamia. **Brought out the Syrians.** The defeat of the soldiers whom he had rented out to the King of Ammon forced him to declare a Syrian war against David. **Beyond the river.** Euphrates. These were doubtless his vassals and tributaries. **Shobach the captain.**

He was to Hadarezer's army what Joab was to David's.

**17. When it was told David.** The movements of the Ammonites and Syrians would be closely watched at such a time. **Gathered all Israel together.** His action implies no reflection on Joab. When the two great military forces of the time were preparing for a final duel and Israel's existence was at stake it would have been unbecoming for the king to stay at home.

**18. Seven hundred chariots.** The numbers vary in Chronicles, but any number higher than four hundred was represented by a system of markings so involved that errors frequently resulted.

**19. Kings that were servants.** The vassal kings. **And served them.** They transferred their allegiance to David. This was the chief link in the chain that led to the subjection of all Syria to David and the extension of his kingdom to the Euphrates. About the same time the Edomites invaded Judah in southern Palestine. Joab and Abishai, with a portion of the army, were dispatched to meet them. In the Valley of Salt near the Dead Sea Edom was defeated, garrisons placed in the conquered district, and David's empire extended south as far as the desert.

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

David was now firmly established on his throne, the ark had been successfully removed into the new tabernacle, and all the tribes of Israel had been united into a strong, harmonious, central government. There was nothing to be feared now from any internal enemy. This quiet state of peace was not to endure long, for it seems that the sweet singer of Israel, who never appears to have engaged in an aggressive war, was not to enjoy peace for any length of time; for, no sooner had harmony been established at home than foreign envy and jealousy brought on several wars in rapid succession. The exact order of these conflicts cannot be given, for it is evident that no reliable chronology is to be looked for in the Books of Samuel. From the eighth chapter of this book, which every scholar should read, we find that David defeated the Philistines and Moabites (1-2); the people of Zobah and Damascus (3-8); Hamath and Edom (9-14); and in to-day's lesson we learn he was also victorious in the fierce war with the Ammonites, who had hired a large force of mercenary troops to help them. Besides these wars, we must not forget his conflicts with the Philistines soon after his accession to the throne (2 Sam. 5. 17-25).

The army of David consisted of about 300,000 men, almost all infantry. (See, however, 2 Sam. 8. 4.) This was divided into twelve divisions of 24,000 each, which served one month at a time. (See 1 Chron. 7. 1-15.) In case of war all were

liable to be called out together. When David took a census, some years later, the number was much higher, namely, 800,000 in Israel and 500,000 in Judah, or all males capable of bearing arms (2 Sam. 24. 9).

**Verse 8. The children of Ammon.** (For parallel account see 1 Chron. 19.) These were the descendants of Lot (Gen. 19. 38). They lived on the east side of Jordan between Moab and Bashan, or between the Arnon and Jabbok. Their capital was Rabbah ("great city"), known in the Greek period by the name of Philadelphia. **Came out.** Started on their war expedition. They were a warlike people, much more so than the kindred tribe Moab. They had made war upon Israel twice before (Judg. 3. 12, ff. and 10. 7, ff.). **At the entering in of the gate.** It seems that they did advance far, but prepared for battle at the very gate of Rabbah. **The Syrians.** This is the Aram of the Hebrew Bible. The word is vaguely used for a large territory or a number of countries between Phoenicia and the Euphrates, or even beyond. The word is generally limited or defined, as in this verse, by some other, as Zobah, Damascus (8. 5), etc. **Zobah.** This was northeast of Damascus and south of Hamath, or between the Orontes and Euphrates. **Rehob.** Not Beth-rehob in Asher, but Ruhaibeh, about twenty-five miles north of Damascus. Others identify it with Rehoboth, not far from the junction of the Chaboras with the Eu-

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phrases (Gen. 36. 37). **Tob.** The region between Syria and Ammonitis. It was here that Jephthah took refuge (Judg. 11. 3). **Maucah.** Perhaps a district at the base of Hermon not far from Geshur. The "Ishtob" of the Authorized Version is clearly a mistake for "men of Tob." **Were by themselves in the field.** In 1 Chron. 19. 7, we read, "and pitched before Medeba." This was once a town of Reuben (Josh. 13. 9), but now perhaps captured by the Ammonites. It was four miles southeast of Heshbon. This is one of the places mentioned on the Moabite stone. It seems that the Syrian allies failed to form a junction with the Ammonites, but were separated by about one day's march.

**9. The battle was set against him before and behind.** This is another way of saying that he had an army on either side of him. He marches between them so as to hinder the Syrians from joining the Ammonites. **He chose of all,** etc. Joab was compelled to divide his forces. He takes the best troops and joins battle with the allied Syrians, whom he regarded as the more dangerous, and he sends the rest in command of Abishai, his brother, against the Ammonites.

**11.** Whether Joab and Abishai were to attack at the same time is not clear, but the probability is that Joab would attack the Syrians while Abishai simply kept the Ammonites from their allies.

**12. Be of good courage.** Joab, it is said, was a man of few words; but the speech, though very brief, had the desired effect. A more literal translation would be: Be valiant, and show yourself valiant, etc., for the cities of our God. The cities of Israel where Jehovah was worshipped, which, if the Ammonites were successful, would fall into heathen hands and become centers of idol worship. "Every noble motive of life, love of right, love of country, love of family, and self-love, urged those men to unusual valor."—*Harbut and Doherty.* **And the Lord do that which seemeth him good.** The tense of the verb is future, "Jehovah will do," etc. The language is a mixture of bravery and resignation, as much as to say, "Whatever is the will of God, let us fight like men."

**13. They fled before him.** Mercenary troops seldom furnish the best soldiers. They fight for gold, not for glory; for pay, not for principle. Or, as Tacitus would say: "There would be for them neither glory in victory, nor shame in flight."

**14. They likewise fled before Abishai.** The Ammonites saw their danger and the impossibility of a junction with their impregnable fortress. **Then Joab returned . . . to Jerusalem.** The general reason assigned for this movement on the part of Joab is that it was too late in the season to carry on a successful siege. (See chap. 11. 1.) It is probable, however, that Abishai with a portion of the army was left near the capital of the Ammonites.

**15. They gathered themselves together.** How long afterward is not stated; it must, however, have required considerable time to send messengers to Mesopotamia and assemble large forces for another campaign.

**16. Hadarezer.** The name is written Hadadzer in chapter 8. 5, but Hadarezer in Chronicles. The two Hebrew letters ד and ז are so similar as to be confounded by beginners in Hebrew. There is no doubt that Hadadzer is the correct form. Hadad was the name of a Syrian god. Compare the name Benhadad. The king's name translated into English would be "Hadad is help." **The River.** Whenever the word is written with a capital in the Revised Version it means the Euphrates. **Helam.** This place has not been identified, though various places have been suggested. The same word is again given, though the spelling is slightly different in the original, in verse 17. The word does not occur in the account of Chronicles. The word as far as the letters are concerned might be rendered "their force," or "their army," that is, "the army came with Shobach." But it is better to regard it as a proper name. **Shobach.** Shophach (according to 1 Chron. 19. 16-18) was the commander-in-chief of Hadarezer's army.

**17. He gathered all Israel together.** David foreseeing the formidable struggle about to take place, and the necessity of the most brilliant generalship, assumes control of the entire army. We have no reason to think that he takes command in person from any dissatisfaction with his generals, or "that the adventure was too critical to be entrusted to any lieutenant." David was a great military leader, full of the military spirit. It would have been impossible for him to stay at home when the battle of battles was to be fought.

**18. The men of seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand horsemen.** The number in 1 Chron. 19. 18, is given as seven thousand chariots and forty thousand footmen. There is evidently an error of some kind. This is not strange, since the Hebrew method of employing letters and dots for numerals was liable to give occasion to serious errors. It is best to acknowledge that the text in Samuel or Chronicles is corrupt; which, it is impossible to tell. (Compare 2 Sam. 8. 3, *f.*, with 1 Chron. 18. 4, and this verse with the parallel account in 1 Chron. 19. 18.) **And smote Shobach . . . that he died there.** This was a death-blow to the Syrians.

**19. All the kings.** The petty kings or vassal princes who had come to the help of Hadarezer. **Made peace with Israel, and served them.** They threw off the yoke of the Syrian king and became the subjects of David. Though not stated in so many words it is probable that Hadarezer also made peace with Israel at this time. Some think that he violated his treaty, engaged in a third war, and was totally defeated. (See chap. 8. 3-8.)

## Thoughts for Young People.

## Good Soldiers of Jesus Christ.

The battlefield is not a sequestered nook to which we may or may not resort. It stretches from sky to sky. Everyone born into the world must enter the arena—not as an idle spectator, but to engage in a lifelong and a life-and-death conflict. We must range ourselves either with the forces of God or evil. Christ's is the winning side. Under his banner and leadership, and with his weapons and allies, we may fight a good fight.

1. *Note what it is to be a soldier of Christ.* We are not born soldiers nor compelled to serve. When we volunteer Christ enrolls us and sends us forth to fight against his enemies and ours. His soldiers are well provided for. From his wardrobe we are clothed, out of his armory equipped, at his table fed, and from his treasury paid. Regiments have to be worn, marches endured, and battles fought.

2. *Study the qualifications of a good soldier.* Some are idle, they only swell the numbers and count on pay-day and at reviews. Far different are those who do not fight for pay, but whose joy it is to serve. Obedience is one trait. When the boiling lava swept through Pompeii the Roman sentinels perished at their posts.

"Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do or die."

Courage is an essential. It is not one battle and then rest. The foes are many, subtle, and fierce. We shall have to stand against customs that our conscience condemns. The thought of our Commander's smile will help us to "dare to be a Daniel." Just as the common soldier said to David, "Thou art worth ten thousand of us" (2 Sam. 18. 3), so each one of us, drawing upon the forces of heaven, may be a host in himself.

## Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The entire war which is narrated in this chapter was precipitated by an indignity which can only be felt in its force by those familiar with the oriental reverence for the beard as a sign of manly dignity and as man's finest ornament. The king Hanun had been bereft of his father by death, and, as was not unusual, David sent an embassy of condolence. Hanun's attachés induced him to believe that David's motive was to acquaint himself under this cover with Hanun's resources, and he was led to treat the embassy insultingly, shaving off half their beard and removing one half their clothing to the waist. No greater indignity could have been shown.

Many orientals would rather lose their lives than lose their beards. The Turks used to regard beard-

less Europeans as runaway slaves. Only in seasons of sorrow and great calamity would orientals neglect their beards. In deep affliction they would cut off or tear out their beards, or cover them up. Moses forbade their even rounding the corners of the beard (Lev. 19. 27). Arabians had almost an idolatrous reverence for the beard.

Among men in the East only the nearest relatives were permitted to touch one's beard. Children and other near kinsfolk might gently touch it as a sign of love; a fugitive might raise his hand to it while praying for succor; and he who put his hand on his own beard and swore by it bound himself by the most solemn of oaths, to violate which would render him infamous. At present in Palestine the Jews strictly conform to their law, and allow the beard its natural growth. After reaching manhood it is a great reproach to shave off the beard. The younger men shave chin and face, allowing the hair of the upper lip to grow, and in some districts it is allowable to do this till a man reaches the age of forty. Lepers were required to remove the beard as a part of their ceremonial treatment (Lev. 14. 9).

Verse 16. Hadarezer, or, better, as in 2 Sam. 8. 3, Hadadezer, was the name of the Syrian and Assyrian sun-god, and this captain bore his name. Thus far, therefore, the contest between Jehovah worship and idol devotion comes into the foreground, and the triumph was for Jehovah. The peculiarities of the attributes of the sun-god add force to the triumph. This god was Shanas, the "establisher of heaven and earth," "the warrior of the world," "the regent of all things," "the supreme ruler who casts an eye on expeditions," "the vanquisher of the king's enemies," "the breaker-up of opposition," with special influence which caused monarchs "to assemble their chariots and their warriors;" he "goes forth with their armies," and chases their enemies before them, and brings them back to their own country with victory. But, on the contrary, this warrior bearing his name is thoroughly routed, though he was the chief warrior of a nation the males of whom were all trained to war, and though he had seven hundred chariots, a great host among those small nations, whatever the numbers may mean, in a time when numeration was imperfect and unreliable.

Verse 19. When all the kings who were his servants or vassals went over in their allegiance to David, it will be remembered that David dedicated to Jehovah a thousand shields. In 2 Sam. 5. 3, we saw that David made a "league" with the elders of Israel. He now makes a "league" with all those who had been vassals of Hadarezer. This government by "leagues" was of a very loose sort, often meaning that Asiatic tribes expected more of the king than they should render him, and the tribes were ready to turn to a new sovereign on the slightest cause. Russia, far more than any power

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in Europe, has understood how to hold these Asiatic peoples by this kind of league; hence she has extended her loose sort of sovereignty so widely over oriental nations.

### By Way of Illustration.

*David, the warrior.* David and Napoleon, while alike in many things, were totally unlike in the great end for which they were striving. Both started in obscurity and rose to the highest pinnacle of earthly glory. Both started with the conviction that they were destined by a higher power to achieve great things. Both passed through many afflictions, public and private. Each having reached the summit of greatness, fell from it. And yet there was a vast difference between David and Napoleon. Napoleon died the death of a selfish, ambitious egotist, whose later successes had fostered within him an exaggerated sense of his own powers. With a desire at first to serve France, he soon entered upon a mad scheme to make France serve him. "Your first duty," said he to his brother Louis, when he made him King of Holland, "is to me; your second to France." In all this, David was his opposite. In the midst of his bitter disappointments he cried out, exultingly, "Hope thou in God." Israel's king is only the servant of Israel's God; David is nothing, God is everything. Through all his career he exhibits an unswerving faith in a righteous kingdom.

The warrior who has God on his side can be full of courage. Gustavus Adolphus was such a hero. The pictures which historians draw, representing the king and his warriors on an occasion of great difficulty kneeling with uncovered heads and pleading for God's help and guidance, reveals one element of his power. On the morning of the battle of Lutzen, he offered this prayer, "O Jesus, help me to fight this day for the glory of thy name." When this prayer was offered, and Luther's great hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God," had been sung by the entire army, the command was uttered, "In the name of Jesus, forward, march."—*Central Christian Advocate.*

*Golden Text.* The stone that falls to earth is nothing but a lump of rock, while that which still follows after the comet is in its measure a part of a stream of light and beauty. Our lives will be miserably petty and sad if they get off into a lonely selfishness or narrow worldliness; as they enter into and become part of a greater, a divine and heavenly life, they are glorified.—*S. S. Times.*

Christ is our leader in the battle against sin and he must prevail. A king going into battle found his generals greatly discouraged because of their smaller forces. He was a great warrior and he said to them, "I know our forces are smaller, but how much do you count me for?" In the battle against

evil, how much do you count God for? Do you believe God's word to Abraham, "I am the Almighty God?" In the war against sin, do you count in the "I believe in God the Father Almighty" of your creed?

### Before the Class.

With map (preferably one drawn in outline on blackboard or paper) show the extent of the kingdom over which David was made ruler when the tribes assembled at Hebron, and indicate the territory occupied by the surrounding nations. Reviewing the story of David's growing power and prosperity, as recorded in the preceding lessons, show how this led to jealousy on the part of the neighboring kings and resulted in a series of wars. Indicate the field and result of each of them in order: (1) With the Philistines (2 Sam. 5, 17-25; 8, 1); (2) with the Moabites (2 Sam. 8, 2); (3) with the Ammonites and the Syrians (2 Sam. 10); (4) with the Edonites (2 Sam. 8, 13, 14, and 1 Chron. 18, 12). In all these wars "the Lord gave victory to David whithersoever he went." At the close the bounds of his kingdom were those foretold more than four hundred years before.

The story recorded in the lesson text gives us a glimpse of two campaigns against the Ammonites and Syrians, and is chosen as a typical scene from these wars of David. In its study notice (1) that the enemies were the aggressors (2 Sam. 10, 1-7); (2) the strength of the enemies in numbers (2 Sam. 10, 6; 1 Chron. 19, 7) and in position (verses 8, 9); (3) the wise disposition of the forces (verses 9-11); (4) the resting upon God when they had done their best (verse 5); (5) the victory (verses 13, 14); (6) the renewed attack of the Syrians and their defeat (verses 15-18); (7) the effect upon the allies and vassals of the Syrians (verse 19).

Make the application in the line of personal Christian experience. Show by reading of New Testament references how often Christian life is alluded to as warfare (1 Tim. 1, 18; 6, 12; 2 Tim. 2, 3; 4, 7, etc.). Point out the enemies to be overcome (2 Cor. 2, 5, etc.). Find some of the many promises of victory to the Christian.

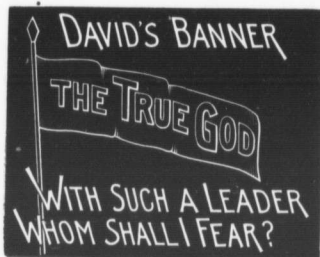
Note the parallel with the story of the lesson text: (1) The weapons of the Christian are none of them offensive (Eph. 6, 13-17—the sword "is the word of God"); (2) his enemies are strong (Eph. 6, 12, etc.); (3) he must use his own best powers of mind and will in the conflict (Phil. 2, 12); (4) after he has done his best his reliance must be upon God (Phil. 2, 13, 1 John 5, 4, etc.); (5) the necessity for continual watchfulness and repeated battle with sin (2 John 8; 1 Cor. 16, 13); (6) every victory over particular sin weakens the power of all sin over his life.

In closing emphasize the fact that, while there are sinful tendencies in fallen human nature, holi-



ness is the normal condition of man; and if in reliance upon God he manfully takes up the struggle with sin, all the unperturbed powers of the universe conspire to give him victory.

### Blackboard.



## LIGHT AND SALVATION.

### THE LORD MY

LIGHT	SALVATION
LOVING LEADING ME	SHIELDING STRENGTHENING ME
WHOM SHALL I FEAR?	

### LESSON VII. DAVID'S CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS. [Aug. 16.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Psalm 51. 10.

#### Authorized Version.

**Psalms 32. 1-11.** [Commit to memory verses 1-5.]

[Read also Psalm 51.]

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. *Se'lah.*

#### Teachers' Meeting.

Begin by pointing out how children love to see soldiers on the march, at drill, or under review. Notice their fondness for drill companies, Boys' Brigades, and for pictures and stories depicting great battles and grand heroes. Explain how one nation, while preferring peace to war, yet if surrounded by cruel, barbarous people, might sometimes have to fight in self-defense. 1. Describe a battle-field: (a) location, (b) natural advantages. 2. Draw out causes of war: (a) protect defenseless, (b) retain territory, (c) bless other nations through Israel. 3. Picture contestants: (a) generals, (b) mode of warfare. 4. Notice reasons why Israel should have most courage: (a) past experience, (b) valuable spoils, (c) increased prosperity through protection to life and property. A good practical application can be made by showing the evil within us that must be conquered, the wrongs in our own neighborhood we should do our best to put down, and the need for organization of the best forces in the nation to defeat our worst foes.

#### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

##### No. 1.

Battling for the Lord.  
Soldiers who to Christ belong.  
Soldiers of the cross, arise.  
Sound the battle cry.  
Onward, Christian soldiers.

##### No. 2.

Soldiers of the cross, arise.  
O, we are volunteers.  
Forth, to the fight.  
Go forward, Christian soldiers.  
Soldiers of Christ.

#### Revised Version.

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity,  
And in whose spirit there is no guile.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old  
Through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me:

My moisture was changed as with the drought of summer. [*Se'lah.*]

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid:

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5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. *Se'lah.*

6 For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found; surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. *Se'lah.*

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye.

9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.

11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;  
And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. *[Se'lah.]*

6 For this let every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found; Surely when the great waters overflow they shall not reach unto him.

7 Thou art my hiding place; thou wilt preserve me from trouble;  
Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance. *[Se'lah.]*

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go;  
I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee.

9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding;  
Whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in,  
Else they will not come near unto thee.

10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked;  
But he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.

11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous:  
And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

**THE PENITENTIAL PSALMS.**—This is one of the so-called penitential psalms, the others being Psalms 6, 8, 51, 102, 130, 143. It is generally believed to have reference to the great sin of David's life (see 1 Kings 15. 5), and to be designed to extol the mercy of God in granting him forgiveness. In that case it had a notable relationship with Psalm 51, in which we read the earnest pleadings of a broken and contrite heart, acknowledging terrible guilt, confessing bloodguiltiness, and praying for mercy and pardon. When Nathan convicted David of his sin the king did not deny, but confessed his deep guilt, and cried out, "I have sinned against Jehovah" (2 Sam. 12. 13). Psalm 51 is but an expansion of these words. Then Nathan responded, "Jehovah also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die." Psalm 32 is assumed to be David's celebration of that most gracious act of Jehovah. A comparison of the seven penitential psalms will be of great advantage to the student.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. David's Confession and Forgiveness. Psalm 32.  
T<sub>u</sub>. The sinful nature. Rom. 7. 14-25.  
H. Hope for the penitent. Joel 2. 12-19.  
Th. Confession of sin. Ezra 9. 5-15.  
F. Prayer for forgiveness. Psalm 51. 7-19.  
S. Cleansing. Ezek. 36. 22-31.  
S. Praise for pardon. Psalm 103. 1-18.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 124. New Canadian Hymnal.  
Oh, for a heart to praise my God,  
A heart from sin set free!

#### No. 126. New Canadian Hymnal.

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;  
I want thee forever to live in my soul.

#### No. 127. New Canadian Hymnal.

Blessed be the Fountain of blood,  
To a world of sinners revealed.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

##### 1. Confession of Sin, v. 1-5.

- When is a sinner blessed?  
What experience is suggested by these verses?  
Does the second verse mean that there are men who do not sin? (Psalm 14. 2, 3.)  
What is David's own testimony on this point?  
What, then, can the meaning be?  
How did David feel when he hid his sin? (Verse 3.)  
What was the effect of God's hand upon him?  
To whom did David speak, and for what purpose?  
What was the result?  
What assurance has everyone who makes confession? (1 John 1. 9.)  
What should be the prayer of every sinner? (GOLDEN TEXT.)  
Wherein lies the worth of confession?  
Why will not God forgive without a man's confession?

##### 2. Confidence in God, v. 6-11.

- What promise of God makes the assurance of verse 6 doubly sure? (Isa. 55. 6, 7.)

From what source alone does David look for deliverance?

What authority is there for believing that this was David's own experience? (Rom. 4. 6.)

What blessings does David expect will come from forgiven sin? (Psalm 51. 10-13.)

What is the warning of verse 9?

Who have many sorrows?

Who is sure of abundant mercy?

Who are exhorted to great joy?

When should God's people rejoice? (1 Thess. 5. 16.)

In what attitude does God stand toward the willing soul that confesses its sin?

What sort of character does God desire to form in men?

### Practical Teachings.

1. **SIN.**—Who has not sinned? Who has not been scourged? "The wages of sin is death."

2. **FORGIVENESS.**—Who has not been forgiven? Often has forgiveness come from father and mother and friend. But has God forgiven? Why not? He is willing. "There is forgiveness with Thee, that thou mayest be feared." Hear Jesus pray, "Father, forgive them."

3. **PEACE.**—Have you peace? Said Jesus, "Peace I leave with you." You may have it, but not in sin. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That sin needs forgiveness?

2. That sin calls for confession.

3. That true penitence brings pardon!

### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

#### I. Verses 1-5.

1. What is meant by transgressing? What is God's forgiveness like?

2. How does God regard the forgiven one? From what must we be free?

3. What is the effect of trying to hide our guilt and fear?

4. How was God's hand heavy upon David?

5. When did he acknowledge his sin? How did he show that he was in earnest? To whom did he confess?

#### 2. Verses 6-11.

6. When saved ourselves what should we do? May we seek the Lord too late? To what does David compare God's judgment? How does he describe the believer's safety?

7. From what is God our refuge? Show that a great change had taken place in his case.

8. Whom does he seek to instruct?

9. If we fail to follow the advice of good men and seek the Lord, what then?

10. What will follow sin?

11. Why should Christians rejoice? Is shouting ever justifiable? To what kind of heart does Christ compare the good ground?

### Teachings of the Lesson.

Timidity causes many to keep their griefs to themselves. The silent mourner is the greatest sufferer. When God's Spirit strives with us we should lose no time in seeking the Saviour. Religion is valued most in great danger. When saved God does not leave us to ourselves. If gentle means do not avail God will use severer ones. People pay dear for the pleasures of sin. Religion is good for this life.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What great and good man fell into sin?

Had God forgotten to help him?

What had David forgotten to do?

What was David's sin?

Is selfishness always sin?

Does God love the sinner?

Whom did he send to David to show him his sin?

What did David do when he saw his sin?

Against whom had he sinned?

What did he have to do?

Can anything be hidden from God?

How do we know that David suffered when he was trying to hide his sin? (Verses 3, 4.)

What may we learn from the eighth verse?

### I will Remember—

That God knows all I think or say or do.

That he is sorry when he sees me going wrong.

That the safe way is to go and be forgiven.

### LESSON OUTLINE.

#### Three Conditions.

#### I. THE SINFUL CONDITION.

1. *I kept silence.* v. 3.

Covereth his sins....not prosper. Prov. 28. 13.

2. *My bones waxed old.* v. 3.

No soundness....thine anger. Psalm 38. 3.

3. *Thy hand was heavy upon me.* v. 4.

Thine arrows stick fast. Psalm. 38. 2.

#### II. THE SEEKING CONDITION.

1. *I acknowledged my sin.* v. 5.

I will arise and go unto my father. Luke 15. 18.

2. *Every one....pray unto thee.* v. 6.

Come boldly....throne of grace. Heb. 4. 16.

3. *In a time....mayest be found.* v. 6.

Seek ye the Lord....found. Isa. 55. 6.

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## III. THE SAVED CONDITION.

1. *Blessed . . . transgression is forgiven.* v. 1.  
Being justified by faith. Rom. 5. 1.
2. *The Lord imputeth not iniquity.* v. 2.  
Not imputing their trespasses. 2 Cor. 5. 19.

3. *Thou shalt preserve me.* v. 7.  
In his pavilion. Psalm 27. 5.
4. *Mercy shall compass him.* v. 10.  
Goodness and mercy. Psalm 23. 6.
5. *Be glad in the Lord.* v. 11.  
Rejoice evermore. 1 Thess. 5. 16.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

## General Statement.

David was now about fifty years old, and had reigned as king nearly twenty years. The nation was highly prosperous. There were no rebellions at home. The brilliant victory of our last lesson was succeeded by the siege of Rabbah in the following spring. Then, when "all Israel" was massed at the metropolis of the Ammonites, striking deathly blows for king and country, David tarried at Jerusalem. This was one secret of his downfall. From his youth he had been a man of war. No call "to the field" needed repetition. Now when he could hear it and sleep he was morally sick, though he knew it not. Prosperity had brought sloth and self-indulgence in its train. The double crimes of adultery and murder were committed (2 Sam. 11). Some months after Uriah's death Joab sent to David the message contained in 2 Sam. 12. 27, 28. The king went to Rabbah, was successful, and returned. Bathsheba's child was born a little later, and then came Nathan's visit. By a beautiful parable Nathan got the king by condemning another to condemn himself unconsciously. The sentence pronounced by God and the subsequent death of the child brought David to the deepest and sincerest repentance. In Psalm 51, supposing to have been written at this time, we read the earnest pleadings of a broken and contrite heart, in to-day's lesson the happiness of one restored to the divine favor as contrasted, in his own experience, with the misery of an impenitent concealment of sin. Like Paul (1 Tim. 1. 16) he represents his own experience of forgiveness as designed to be an example and encouragement to others. His crime must be judged from his times, his surroundings, and from the standpoint of his repentance and sorrow. If the Bible unveils the sin in bold details, it also shows how David's whole after-life was darkened by the shadow of that great eclipse. It is seen that even in the case of God's friends "sorrow tracketh wrong as echo follows song, on, on, on." The chief emphasis should be placed on repentance, pardon, and the gift of forgiveness, fullest joy, and subsequent usefulness. By Augustine this psalm was deemed so precious that during his last illness he caused it to be written upon the wall of his chamber, opposite his couch, so that his eyes might easily rest upon its comforting sentences.

**Verses 1, 2. Blessed.** The word is plural, *O the blessedness!* denoting the multitude of blessings which accompany pardon. (1) *Though ours may not be the joy of angels who have never sinned, we may possess the blessedness of the forgiven.* **Transgression** means crossing a boundary; "breaking faith;" falling away; breaking God's law by entering the forbidden fields of sin. **Sin** is, literally, missing a mark; deviation from a path. The word for **iniquity** conveys the idea of distortion, "perversion," and contrasts the crooked ways of sinners with the straight line of duty. (2) *However varied the aspect of sin, its original is the same.* To meet these aspects of sin we have a threefold description of forgiveness. **Is forgiven.** The burden of sin is taken away and the heart made to feel glad and free. When this takes place the sinner is regarded and treated as if he had never sinned. The teacher should make plain to the scholars how forgiveness is obtained for them. **Covered.** So that its foulness no longer meets the eye of the judge. "Hidden," not from memory, but from judgment. **Imputeth not.** As the canceling of a debt which

is no longer reckoned against the offender. (3)

*Let us not brood over sins which God refuses longer to look at. In whose spirit there is no guile.* No deception of himself; no dissembling toward God. (4) *There can be no forgiveness without sincerity on our part.*

3. This verse and the next shed light on David's history, and show that before Nathan approached him with his pointed parable (2 Sam. 12) his conscience was active and his life wretched from remorse. **Kept silence.** Silent before God, but not silent to himself. **My bones.** His guilty secret wore away his life's foundations. Youthful spirits departed, and old age came suddenly, because of mental agony. **Roaring.** The chained lion seemed to be an apt figure of his own inward groaning because of unconfessed sin.

4. **Day and night.** Through the day his royal robes covered an aching heart; night brought heavier shadows to his burdened soul. **Was heavy upon me.** Partly by remorse of conscience, partly, perhaps, by actual sickness. God's chastisement is always in love. **My moisture.** Like a plant

that is shriveled and dried up by intense heat. In Palestine green valleys are quickly rendered parched and desolate by intense heat. (5) *Every pain sent by God may be turned by us into an angel to beckon us nearer to him.* If a child burns his finger with fire or cuts it with a sharp knife, the pain is very great. This is to guard him against the fire or knife the next time. If no pain ensued he might be so careless as to cut or burn his hand so severely as to lose it for life. So God sends suffering after sin to deter from sinning. It is uncertain whether the expressions of verses 3 and 4 are figurative, referring to mental anguish only, or whether they suggest that David's trouble of conscience resulted in illness and physical suffering.

**5. I acknowledged.** This was during Nathan's visit (2 Sam. 12, 13). About a year elapsed between the commission of the crime and its confession. **Have I not hid.** By the two psalms written at this time (one of which was given to the musician of the temple service) he publicly made known his sin and confession. Nothing was palliated or withheld. **Thou forgavest.** The original expresses the immediateness of the pardon. (6) *Thorough healing will depend on thorough probing and removal of the evil that caused pain.* (7) *God's forgiveness has a breadth and power which man's can never possess.*

**6. For this.** Rather, *Therefore let every one.* David presents his own experience of pardon as an encouragement to others. **Mayest be found.** Literally, *in a time of finding.* The meaning is, let no one delay, for there is a time of not finding (Prov. 1. 28). **The great waters.** Conviction of sin and punishment come like an overwhelming mountain torrent. Penitence will arrest the impending judgment; persistence in sin will cause the offender to perish. **Not come nigh.** He will be safe like the one who stands secure on a rock out of reach of the raging flood. (8) *If we seek the Lord early we are sure to find him.*

**7. Thou art my hiding place.** An allusion either to the terror-stricken manslayer and the city of refuge, or to the rocky crags which were inac-

cessible to an enemy. **Compass me about.** A little while ago every event of life was an accuser, but now wherever he turns he finds a new song. "It suggests the picture of a company of singing angels, joining hands about the son that was lost and is found, and making him the center of a circle of joy."—*Van Dyke.* (9) *Some of the richest lessons of wisdom are learned under the rod of discipline.*

**8. I will instruct thee.** David is addressing another godly person overtaken in transgression, and offers to point out to him the path of safety. (Compare Luke 22, 32, and Psalm 51, 13.) **With mine eye.** The Revised Version has, "I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee." The idea is that of one who is telling another what way he is to take to reach a certain place, and he says he will keep an eye upon him, he will not let him go wrong. The popular view which represents Jehovah as the speaker in this verse and the next seems to us forced and inaccurate, although it is upheld by a few scholars.

**9. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule.** The mule is a proverbial type of stubborn persistence. **Bit and bridle.** If men will not be governed by reason, God will use force. **Lest they come near.** Better, "else they will not come near"—will not be subject to your control. (10) *Saints are drawn to God by love, sinners by fear.*

**10. Many sorrows.** From them there is no escape and in them no victory while he remains wicked. **He that trusteth.** This implies that he has confessed and forsaken his sin, and now gives himself up to God in trustful obedience. **Compass him about.** Surrounded on all sides by mercy, harm can come to him from no direction.

**11. Be glad in the Lord.** The cause for exultation is in the knowledge, possession, and enjoyment of God. **Shout for joy, all ye.** The saved cannot refrain a hearty outburst of song, and kindred spirits must share the joy of a pardoned soul. (11) *There is no need to seek for pleasure in the way of sin, while there is such fullness of joy at God's right hand.*

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

The story of David would be very incomplete without some reference to his poetical works, for David was not simply a great king but a great poet as well. As the composer of sacred lyrics the world has never seen his equal; at least, no hymns of any age or clime have exerted the influence upon the enlightened nations of the earth as those commonly ascribed to the pen of David. The Book of Psalms, the hymnal of the ancient Jewish Church, is better known the world over than any other collection of sacred songs. That David was the author of a very large number of these is es-

tablished beyond reasonable doubt, despite the efforts of modern destructive critics to refer all the psalms to a post-Davidic age, if not to post-exilic times. Though the titles of several psalms have been shown to be untrustworthy, it is a great mistake to reject the superscriptions of them all for that reason.

It is a wise arrangement of the Lesson Committee to introduce at least two psalms for our study this quarter. These reveal to us not only the poetic talent of David, the warrior king, but also the tenderness of his feelings, the depth of soul, and

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It would be difficult to overestimate David's services as king, in the early development of the kingdom of Israel, or of the visible Church of God on earth. Had David not succeeded Saul, or had Absalom accomplished his designs and become the King of Israel, the consequences might have been truly fearful. But somehow most people in our day will thank God, not for the work of David as king on the throne of Israel, but for the beautiful psalms or songs bearing his name. This is natural, for where is the pious man who has not been benefited by the words of David? His hymns are adapted to every condition of men all through the ages; they are so full of comfort for the sorrowful, of encouragement for those cast down under the grievous burdens resting upon them. It is, therefore, not without reason that most Christian men and women in the dark hour of trouble, bereavement, or difficulty of any kind turn instinctively to the Psalter. No book of the Bible has aided devotion more than this ancient Hebrew hymnal.

This psalm is the second of the so-called seven penitential ones (the others are Psalms 6, 38, 51, 102, 139, 143), and it is supposed to have been from the pen of David about one year after his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah. (See 2 Sam. 11, 26, f., and 12, 1-13.) Psalm 51 must have been written somewhat earlier; for everything in that psalm shows that the soul is still smarting under the tortures of a bad conscience, before a thorough repentance had taken place; while the psalm which we study to-day contains the experience of a man who has obtained forgiveness and who is in full communion with his heavenly Father.

The word **maschil**, occurring here for the first time, but found also in Psalms 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142, as well as 47, 8, is one of several terms in the psalms that have never been satisfactorily explained. It has been rendered: "didactic poem," "meditation," "a melodious or skillful poem." The verb from which most Hebrewists derive it denotes to be wise or skillful.

**Verses 1 and 2. Blessed.** This word is not an adjective but a noun on the plural construct, and might be rendered: "(Oh) the blessednesses of;" that is, freely translated into English: "How exceedingly happy!" **Transgression.** A breaking away from the good, a revolt against God. **Forgiven.** The word literally means "to lift up, or remove," as a heavy burden. Transgression or guilt is regarded as a heavy weight crushing one to the earth. Compare the phrase, "taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1, 29). **Sin.** This is a failure to satisfy the demands of the law or, as the original signifies, "to miss the mark." (See Judg. 20, 16, where the verb is thus literally translated.) **Covered.** In such a way as not to attract the avenging eye of God. "A man whose sin is covered is a man over

whose sins the covering of expiation lies in God's holy sight." — *Delitzsch.* **Imputeth not iniquity.** Iniquity has been defined as inequality or absence of just dealings, a depravity of nature. The three words are taken from Exod. 34, 7, "where the doctrine of forgiveness is first fully and explicitly expounded." — *Alexander.* **In whose spirit . . . no guile.** Not only the man whose outward conduct is correct, whose words and deeds are above reproach; but whose heart, the source of all thought and desire, is also pure and holy. (See 1 John 1, 8.)

**3. When I kept silence.** Which was nearly one year. (Comp. 12, 14.) **My bones waxed old.** The word "bones" is often used poetically for the whole body, or the man himself. (See Psalm 35, 10.) The body suffered so much from the mental strain as to grow old and feeble.

**4. Day and night.** A current phrase for incessantly (Psalm 1, 2). **Thy hand was heavy upon me.** Afflictions and calamities were regarded as coming from the Lord, hence they are called "his [punishing] hand." (See Psalms 38, 2; 39, 10; and Job 23, 2; 53, 7.) **My moisture.** A word of uncertain meaning, but probably referring to the marrow. Thus the entire body, his very bones, and even the marrow of these bones were consumed by the sin he was trying to conceal. The figure is that of a plant drying and withering before the scorching heat of the sun. **Selah.** This word has never been translated satisfactorily. It has been rendered "rest," "interlude," forever, "amen" (sing), "loud or strong." Those not satisfied with this explanation should consult their Bible dictionaries.

**5. I acknowledge my sin.** The tense is future, as if he would say, "I resolved after months of concealing that I should confess my sins." Sin cannot be hidden from the eye of God as long as man is unwilling to bring it to the light of day. Paradoxical as it may sound, the only way to hide sin is to bring it to light. **The iniquity of my sin.** This is most probably a Hebrewism meaning grievous sin. There are but few adjectives in Hebrew, consequently two names are used in order to intensify the thought. Some, however, render the first word "guilt," then read, "guilt of sin" or "sinful guilt."

**6. For this.** Because God pardons sin, and joy is the result of confession. **Everyone that is godly.** More literally, every gracious or kindly disposed man. **In a time when thou mayest be found.** Before the heart is too hard, before the temptations come like an irresistible torrent. This implies that there is a time when pardon cannot be found. Not that God ever ceases to be gracious, but that the sinner grows indifferent to his condition. (See Isa. 55, 6, and Jer. 29, 13.) **The great waters.** A very common figure for danger in a country like Palestine, where the mountain tor-

rents would rise rapidly, and where no bridges were built for the safety of the people. (See Isa. 28, 2, and 30, 28.) The great calamities of divine judgment upon the wicked cannot overwhelm those at peace with God.

**7. Thou art my hiding place.** Or, as St. Paul expresses the same idea, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." The figure is taken from the many caverns in Judea which had served as hiding places for David when a fugitive before Saul. The two beautiful hymns, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," and "Rock of Ages" were suggested, it is said, by this verse. **With songs of deliverance.** There is no sweeter or loftier song than the song of those redeemed; forgiveness of sins brings songs to every penitent soul.

**8. I will instruct thee.** Most commentators think that the psalmist, and not Jehovah, is the speaker. David, having experienced pardon, now begins to preach salvation to those lost in sin, to those who are in the same state that he was previous to his conversion. We have the same sentiment in Psalm 51, 13. **I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee.** The Authorized Version is quite incorrect and misleading. The meaning is, "I shall keep a watchful eye upon thee, and at the same time counsel thee, so that thou mayest not go astray." Those who make God the speaker in this and the next verse, think that the change from speaking to God to speaking to man is too abrupt. The same objection is true, only in a greater degree even, if we make God the speaker.

**9. Be ye not as the horse.** Listen to wisdom, be not irrational. (See Isa. 1, 3; Jer. 8, 6.) Let your service be a reasonable voluntary one. Do not compel God to treat you as if you were beasts. In all righteous governments, those who will not yield willing obedience will be forced. **Else they will not come near unto thee.** Bit and bridle are absolutely necessary; otherwise they would not come near man and do his work.

**10. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.** Suffering according to the Old Testament, was, as a rule, regarded as the direct result of personal sin. Though sin is the greatest source of suffering and sorrow, it is never safe to trace the calamities of life to the sin of the individual. **He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.** No one enjoys as many of God's mercies as he who is in perfect communion with him.

**11. Be glad, etc.** It is the privilege and duty of every soul washed in the blood of the Lamb to sing the praises of his Redeemer. What an experiences found in this psalm! Let us analyze it step by step: 1. A consciousness of transgression, sin, and iniquity. 2. An effort to conceal these and the consequent sorrow and pain. 3. Confession or acknowledgment of sin. 4. Forgiveness and reconciliation. 5. The safety of the penitent sinner

who trusts in God. 6. The activity of the truly converted in leading others to God. 7. The sense of joy resulting from faith in God and activity in his service.

## Thoughts for Young People.

### Think of the Other Side.

There are two sides to everything. A picture has a front and a back, a door an outside and an inside, a carpet an upper and an under side. The one we see gives but little idea of what the other is like. From looking at the under side of a carpet we could not readily guess what the pattern is like. The sad moan which comes from many a wasted life and wrecked character and broken heart is, "O, if I had only thought!"

**1. There is another side to Satan's allurements.** These everyone must meet. Nobody escapes. Satan's plan is to turn the bright side toward us. He lets us see the broad, easy path of sin, but not the ruin it leads to. He tempts us with the pleasures, but says nothing about the wages of sin. At the other side of the brief enjoyment is pungent and lasting sorrow. A wise man has said, "If we could always see the back of sin as well as its face there would be very few sinners." Little fishes do not get caught on purpose, but they are so greedy after the bait that they do not see the hook behind it. Little mice do not get caught on purpose, but the cheese is so tempting they do not stop to think about the trap. So after we have decided that a forbidden thing is desirable, that we can have it easily, that no one need know, that it is only once and no harm can come of it, till we yield, we immediately are ashamed, disappointed, and filled with the sickening fear of being found out and punished.

**2. There is another side to the difficulties in God's service.** God's plan is to let us see the dull side first—the cross before the crown. Men screen weak things and prop rotten things, but God subjects all his people to the ordeal of severe testing. From this rich compensations result. Bunyan says, "Temptations at first are as the lion that roared at Samson, but if we overcome them the next time we see them we shall find a nest of honey within them." Two boys had each a coin given him to spend on his own pleasure. One saved his and bought flower seed, which kept his garden gay and sweet all summer. The other spent his money on a skyrocket. After the "bang," the shower of sparks, and the momentary excitement, there was nothing left but a piece of burnt stick and a disagreeable smell. Think of the harvest we may reap if we are always brave for God.

**3. There is another side to the great joy of a forgiven sinner.** We are never the better for yielding to temptation, not even when pardoned. David, mastered by lust and forgiven afterward, was not

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in as good case as Joseph who resisted it. The sadly mauled moth wriggling out of the spider web will never fly the better for its entanglement; the bird escaping from the fowler's snare gains no new strength of wing; the fish breaking away in agony from the angler finds a hook in its mouth which adds little to the joy of life. Sin always leaves scars. It is good to be saved out of sin; it is better to be kept from sinning.

### By Way of Illustration.

*Verses 1 and 2.* "Iniquity," "sin," "transgression." Iniquity means a falling out of the way. Life is pictured as a straight, clearly-prescribed path such as Bunyan saw in his vision; and every sin is a stepping aside. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life."

Sin signifies missing the mark. As a slinger when he threw a weapon might miss the object at which he aimed, so in sinning we are missing the object. Every man is born to a noble destiny. But he who lives in sin misses his destiny and misses his prize. Transgression means the overleaping of a boundary. Sin and iniquity may be partly due to weakness or ignorance, but transgression, "to clear a boundary at a leap or to push it down," is the work of an excessive and uncontrolled strength. They are the presumptuous sins which push aside the laws of God.

*Verses 3-6.* *Conscience.* We are told that at Gibraltar there is a sentinel with match in hand, guarding the entrance to the tunnel which leads out to the "neutral ground." If there were any insurrection in the garrison he could at once light the whole train and blow the tunnel up; and to insure watchfulness the sentinel is relieved every two hours. God has made everyone the keeper of his own heart habitation. Conscience is the sentinel. A conscience drugged, a conscience scared or smothered, leaves us at the mercy of any insurrection within or any snares from without. To enlighten our consciences and to strengthen them, God offers us his Spirit. What a crime it is to quench the Holy Spirit!

*Confession.* A German prince traveling through France visited the arsenal at Toulon where the galleries were kept. The commandant offered to set at liberty any slave whom he selected. In conversing with the prisoners the prince met with universal complaints of the injustice of their confinement. At last he came to a man who said, "I have been a wicked, desperate wretch. I deserve punishment." The prince procured his release.

*Verses 7-9.* Some students remember a scene in a village prayer meeting when Dr. Mark Hopkins, then over seventy years of age, said, "One tide bears in on me still, that I am a sinner, and my only hope is in the mercy of the Saviour." At the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr.

A. J. Gordon's settlement over his Boston church, he said, "Do not praise me; I do not know what I may do before I am done with life." Such confessions not only indicate daily dependence upon divine strength, but they become a blockade against future sin, if uttered with an humble, trusting spirit.

### Before the Class.

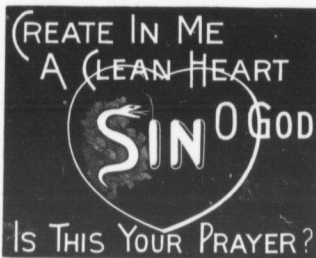
Indicate the time of the lesson—during the latter part of the period studied in the last lesson—a time when David seems to have been living in luxury and comparative ease while his army was winning victory in the field. Be sure that the class, unless children, understand what David's sin was. (If it is not best to discuss it in the class, it will be well to ask the members to read 2 Sam. 11 and 12 during the week before the lesson is taught.) Let the sin be seen in its strong contrast to the general tenor of his life, and show that it was less heinous in the light of those times than if it were committed today. At the same time let it be understood that he sinned against the express command of God and against his own conscience; and that because of his regal position it was especially harmful in its influence, and because of his religious leadership it gave "great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme."

Taking up the lesson text observe that as Psalm 51 is David's confession and prayer this is his song of praise for forgiveness. In it we find the story of his own experience and the lessons that he has learned and would teach to others. (1) In verses 1 and 2 we find the joyful outburst of a forgiven soul. (2) Verses 3 and 4 tell of his bitter experience during the year that he concealed his sin. (3) In verse 5 he tells of his confession and forgiveness. Now he turns from his personal experience to speak the words of warning and exhortation which a truly repentant soul must speak to those in danger of falling. (4) In verse 6 he exhorts the followers of God to pray to him before the punishment for their sins comes upon them. (5) Having in verse 7 expressed his trust in God, a promise of the divine guidance is given him in verse 8. (6) Verses 9 and 10 contain words of warning to the unreasoning and wicked. And (7) verse 11 is a final outburst of joy expressed in exhortation to all the righteous to rejoice in such a God of forgiving love.

Sin, punishment, repentance, confession, forgiveness, joy, are words that have not changed their meaning since the days of David. We can all understand his experience, and his words speak their lessons to our hearts. Seek to impress these thoughts upon the class. Enforce by the words of Christ and the apostles the truths that sin can be covered only by God; the penalty follows sin as effect follows cause; repentance and confession prepare the way for forgiveness; joy follows pardon; our sins should serve to guide others in the way of holiness.



Blackboard.



## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS.

## DAVID

KEPT SILENCE	ACKNOWLEDGED
ABOUT HIS	HIS
SIN	SIN

AND WAS

TROUBLED	FORGIVEN
BURDENED	BLESSED.

WHAT BROUGHT THE CHANGE ?

DAVID'S  
DETERMINATION

"I WILL CONFESS MY TRANSGRESSIONS."

"If we confess our sins he is faithful . . . to forgive."

## The Teachers' Meeting.

This psalm records: (1) David's joy to the new experience of forgiveness (verses 1, 2); (2) His memory of the bitter days of guilt (verses 3, 4);

(3) His confession and forgiveness (verse 5); (4) His confident trust in the protection of God (verses 6, 7); (5) His counsel to others (verses 8, 9); (6) His closing exhortation to joy in the Lord (verses 10, 11)... Observe the words used with reference to sin, and their meaning.... Show from the lesson some of the miseries of the unrepentant condition: (1) Remorse; (2) Bitter memories; (3) Guilty consciousness; (4) Physical suffering... The steps to pardon as here shown: (1) Repentance; (2) Confession; (3) Prayer.... The privileges of the unforgiven sinner as here exhibited: (1) Happiness; (2) Protection; (3) Safety; (4) Wisdom from experience (verse 8); (5) Rejoicing.... The benefits of the forgiven sinner to others: (1) As an encouragement (verse 6); (2) As an example; (3) As an adviser.... Or, take the outline suggested in *Illustrative Notes*. It is entitled "The Story of a Forgiven Sinner." (1) His sin. Explain terms used. (2) His discipline, not punishment, but treatment which led to his repentance. (3) His confession, whole-hearted, public. (4) His forgiveness, immediate and complete. (5) His blessedness: (a) He is delivered from trouble—the sorrow ending when salvation came; (b) He receives instruction and guidance—what a privilege to have such personal care! (c) He is surrounded by God's grace; (d) He possesses joy; the past is forgiven; God is his friend; his conscience is at ease; the future cannot alarm.

## OPTIONAL HYMNS.

## No. 1.

Come, said Jesus' sacred voice.  
Hasten, sinner, to be wise.  
Just as I am.  
Prince of peace, control my will.  
Lord, at thy mercy-seat.

## No. 2.

Hear thou my prayer.  
Still, still with thee.  
I bring my sins to thee.  
Come, every soul by sin oppressed.  
O what amazing words of grace.

B. C. 1024  
and 1023.

## LESSON VIII. ABSALOM'S REBELLION.

Aug. 23.

**GOLDEN TEXT.** Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Exod. 20. 12.

## Authorized Version.

2 Sam. 15. 1-12. [Commit to memory verses 4-6.]

[Read chapters 15 and 16.]

1 And it came to pass after this, that Ab'sa-lom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2 And Ab'sa-lom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any

## Revised Version.

- 1 And it came to pass after this, that Ab'sa-lom prepared him a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Ab'sa-lom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man had a suit which should come to the king for judgment, then Ab'sa-lom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou?

Aug. 23.

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man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Ab'sa-lom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Is'ra-el.

3 And Ab'sa-lom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but *there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.*

4 Ab'sa-lom said moreover, O that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Ab'sa-lom to all Is'ra-el that came to the king for judgment: so Ab'sa-lom stole the hearts of the men of Is'ra-el.

7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Ab'sa-lom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in He'bron.

8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Ge'shur in Syr'i-a, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Je-ru-sa-lem, then I will serve the Lord.

9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to He'bron.

10 But Ab'sa-lom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Is'ra-el, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Ab'sa-lom reigneth in He'bron.

11 And with Ab'sa-lom went two hundred men out of Je-ru-sa-lem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity and they knew not anything.

12 And Ab'sa-lom sent for A-hith'o-phel the G'il'o-nite, Da'vid's counselor, from his city, *even* from Gi'loh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Ab'sa-lom.

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thy matters are good and right; but there is no

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came to the king for judgment: so Ab'sa-lom

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7 And it came to pass at the end of forty years,

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let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed

unto the Lord, in He'bron. For thy servant

vowed a vow while I abode at Ge'shur in Syr'i-a,

saying, If the Lord shall indeed bring me again

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As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet,

then ye shall say, Ab'sa-lom is king in He'bron.

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G'il'o-nite, Da'vid's counselor, from his city,

*even* from Gi'loh, while he offered the sacrifices.

And the conspiracy was strong; for the people

increased continually with Ab'sa-lom.

**TIME.**—B. C. 1024 and 1023. **PLACES.**—

Jerusalem; Hebron.

**ENVIRONMENTS.**—

Many causes combined to make possible Absalom's rebellion. David's sin in the matter of Uriah the Hittite forfeited his position as a moral leader. The sin of Amnon, with its bloody revenge by Absalom, disgraced and stained the royal household. Like most other despots, David's hold became weaker as one approached the capital and central government, and many a disloyalty had begun within the limits of Judah. Absalom, restored to the favor of his fond and foolish father, used his opportunity. Born of a royal mother, physically beautiful, impetuous, vain, selfish, disdainful, ungrateful, reckless, conspiracy came easy to him.

### HOME READINGS.

M. Absalom's Rebellion. 2 Sam. 15. 1-12.

Tu. David's flight. 2 Sam. 15. 13-23.

W. David's submission. 2 Sam. 15. 24-31.

Th. Shimei's curse. 2 Sam. 16. 5-14.

F. Absalom's wicked intent. 2 Sam. 17. 1-14.

S. Causing sorrow to parents. Prov. 19. 20-29.

S. Rebellious children. Isa. 1. 1-9.

### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 92, New Canadian Hymnal.

Hark! the Saviour's voice from heaven  
Speaks a pardon full and free.

No. 98, New Canadian Hymnal.

Depth of mercy, can there be  
Mercy still reserved for me?

No. 102, New Canadian Hymnal.

What shall I do, where shall I flee?  
I have no refuge, dear Saviour, but thee.

### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Politic Prince, v. 1-6.

Who was Absalom?

What trouble had he previously given to his father?

Who had brought about reconciliation?

For what did Absalom intend to use his restoration to the king's favor?

What was the meaning of his display, described in verses 1-3?

Of what ambition was this a sign? (See 1 Kings 1. 5.)

What personal element aided in Absalom's purpose? (2 Sam. 14. 25.)

What was wrong in his course?

Where did Absalom go to seek the people?

Whom did he question, and how?

What flattery did the prince utter?

What did he say about himself?

How did he honor those who would honor him?

To whom did he show these favors?

How widely did he thus extend his influence?

Why ought "the men of Israel" to have suspected evil? (See Prov. 29. 5.)

Can you account for the seeming ignorance of Joab and of the king?

## 2. The Unnatural Son, v. 7-12.

Why did Absalom need the king's permission to go to Hebron?

Can you explain the difficulty connected with the time mentioned in verse 7?

How long had Absalom been in Jerusalem after his banishment? (2 Sam. 14. 28.)

How long, then, must his conspiracy have been growing?

What spirit among the people could be traced by the ease with which Absalom accomplished his purpose?

Who was Ahithophel?

What is meant by hearing the sound of the trumpet?

How successful was the conspiracy?

What is shown by it concerning the character of the people?

What is shown by it concerning the character of David?

What command did Absalom violate? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

### Practical Teachings.

1. See how sin overreaches itself. Absalom was heir to the throne. All he needed was to wait. He hastened and lost all.

2. See how hateful ambition is when sinful. It made Absalom a hypocrite, a liar, a murderer, an adulterer; and at last leaved him.

3. Sin may run prosperously for a while, but God holds its tether; and when he will it thrusts a dart through Absalom's heart and hangs Ahithophel. Where are we warned against—

1. The wiles of the flatterer?
2. The pretenses of the hypocrite?
3. The sin of the ungrateful son?

## QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

### 1. Verses 1-6.

1. Where are horses first mentioned as in use by the Israelites? How did Absalom make himself conspicuous?

2. Where were Eastern courts held?

3. Why had David neglected to deal out justice?

4. How did Absalom seek to win favor with the people? What effect would his favorable decisions have?

5. What caused the people to pay him respect? What mark of condescension did he show?

6. Why did people follow his lead?

### 2. Verses 7-12.

7. Where did he wish to pay his vow? What advantage would he have there?

8. Where was Geshur? How did Absalom propose to serve the Lord?

9. Why did David give his consent?

10. For what were the spies sent out? How was the news conveyed through the land? What two classes favored Absalom's cause?

11. How many guests went with him? Would their presence have any influence? Why was Ahithophel invited? Explain why so many were ready to forsake David?

### Teachings of the Lesson.

To be good where we are is better than to pretend how good we would be in some other place. Those who crave most for high position are usually less fitted for it. Parents are willing to believe the best about their children. Good people are often imposed upon. Wrongdoing may lead to a kind of temporary success. There is trouble in store for everyone who sins against kind parents. To be in the majority is no proof that we are right.

## QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was David's wicked son?

Whom did he try to please?

What did this show?

What bad thing did he do that made him leave home? **He killed his brother.**

With whom was he once more at peace?

Where did he live now? **In Jerusalem.**

What did he begin to do next?

Why did he do this?

Why did he go out in such grand style?

Why did he speak so kindly to the men he saw?

What is very evil in the sight of the Lord? **Pre-tending what we do not feel.**

What did Absalom ask of the king after a while?

What did he say he wanted to do?

What wicked plan had he made?

Did the king know his plan?

### Lessons for Me.

Selfishness leads to evil acts.

Disobedience to parents will be punished.

God sees all our deceit and marks it.

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## LESSON OUTLINE.

## The Fast Young Man.

## I. HIS VANITY.

*Chariots....horses....men.* v. 1.

Much praised.... for his beauty. 2 Sam. 14. 25.

Man looketh.... appearance. 1 Sam. 16. 7.

## II. HIS AMBITION.

*O that I were made judge!* v. 4.

Lay not wait, O wicked man. Prov. 24. 15, 16.

Greatest among you.... servant. Matt. 23. 11.

## III. HIS INSINCERITY.

*Put forth his hand....kissed him.* v. 5.

By.... fair speeches deceive. Rom. 16. 18.

Flattereth.... spreadeth a net. Prov. 29. 5.

## IV. HIS FILIAL IMPIETY.

*Absalom said unto the king.* v. 7.

Honor thy father. Exod. 20. 12.

The eye that mocketh. Prov. 30. 17.

## V. HIS HYPOCRISY.

*Vowed a vow.* v. 8.

Whited sepulchers. Matt. 23. 27, 28.

Be not rash. Eccles. 5. 2-5.

## VI. HIS POLITICAL CORRUPTION.

*Sent spies throughout.... tribes.* v. 10.

Mine own.... against me. Psalm 41. 9.

Many rise up against me. Psalm 3. 1.

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

## General Statement.

Eleven or twelve eventful years lie between our last lesson and that of to-day. These years witnessed Amnon's crime and death, Absalom's exile, and Joab's artifice to secure his recall. Dr. Geikie also places here the numbering of Israel and the pestilence which followed it. While David's own life had proved that his fall was but a passing lapse from which he soon recovered himself, the seed of his sin, under God's great law, gradually yielded its sad harvest. A glance at the circumstances will suffice to show how this rebellion stood related to David's own sin. As a parent he failed to punish Amnon for his dastardly crime. It is said "he was very wroth." But the anger was only the sheet-lightning of passion, and then only a solitary flash. This led Absalom to murder Amnon. Again punishment is omitted. But through fear Absalom sought refuge at the court of his maternal grandfather, Talmai, King of Geshur. Here he remained three years. It is probable that he regarded himself as unjustly blamed for having done what his father should have done. This exile, with its enforced idleness, gave him opportunity to nurse his fancied wrongs, and plan for redress. He regarded himself as rightful heir to the throne. But Bathsheba's influence would be exerted in favor of Solomon. Psalms 41, 55, 38, and 39 are by some referred to this period. If properly so they show that the king must have been too sick to administer justice. Absalom was of imperious mien and beautiful presence. Rising early to meet the "cases" needing judgment, by an appeal to the scenic appetite of the Eastern, appearing in splendid equipage he set off his personal claims. By flattering the people, and speaking evil of his father, he made some believe that a change was necessary. When his plans were fully formed, on pretense of wishing to offer a sacrifice to God, he obtained permission to go to Hebron, where, by his appointment, other conspirators met him and proclaimed him king. "Sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." To have those whom we have nursed, fed, clothed, and prayed for, turn against us, is the last dreg in life's cup of bitterness. This was now David's doom.

**Verse 1. It came to pass.** As the fulfillment of Nathan's prophecy (2 Sam. 12. 10, 11). **After this.** The recall of Absalom and his readmittance to favor. This was done without repentance on his part. **Chariots and horses.** He imitated the magnificence of foreign monarchs in order to make an impression on the people. **To run before him.** In oriental fashion. Dr. Trumbull says when his little party started from Cairo for the pyramids a handsome young "sais" clad in blue, scarlet, green, and gold, ran before them at the top of his speed, calling out for a clear path among the camels, donkeys, and foot passengers. Horses were a novelty among the Hebrews, having only been recently introduced from Egypt. (1) *True greatness is not dependent on outward show.*

**2. Rose up early.** To show his zeal and be on hand before the king, who would probably sit

in the gate during part of the day. **Way of the gate.** On one side of the street which led to the door of the king's palace, in which door David administered justice. Here he intercepted such persons as came to Jerusalem with complaints of wrong, and by flattering arts sought to ingratiate himself in their good will. **Had a controversy.** A suit, as in verse 4. Foreign wars, extensive building enterprises, the love of pleasure, and probably the weakness of advancing years, led David to neglect his duty as the only "court of appeal" in all Israel. **Absalom called.** Thus showing friendly familiarity and affecting a particular interest in each newcomer. Such generosity and civility would make him a favorite. (2) *Flattery bequiles the unwary to their ruin.*

**3. Thy matters are good.** "Thy cause is just." This the citizen already believed. He

would contrast Absalom's interest with David's unconcern. **No man deputed.** There is no official hearer appointed. The king takes no interest in the wrongs of the people.

**4. O that I were made judge.** Many imagine because they see some details which they could improve, that therefore they could do the whole work better. Absalom was too wily to express a wish to be king. (3) *Pride and envy often underlie hostile criticism.*

**5. To do him obeisance.** His princely bearing and retinue would lead all of lower rank who came near him to show their deference.

**Took him, and kissed him.** Instead of allowing them to do him homage as the king's son, he feigned humility and condescension. By such means politicians court power in all lands.

**6. Stole the hearts.** Robbed his father of the people's affection, and transferred it to himself. The multitude failed to penetrate his motives, or foresee the tendency of his consent. (4) *All success depends upon winning men's hearts.*

**7. Forty years.** A transcriber's error for four. The Arabic and Syriac versions read "four years;" so does Josephus. These would be reckoned from Absalom's return to Jerusalem and beginning to plot for the throne. **Pay my vow.** It is uncertain whether he had ever made any such vow as he here pretends. **In Hebron.** This was his birthplace, the capital of Judah, a famous high place, and far enough distant for his purpose. It was here that David had first been anointed king. (5) *Religion is too often used as a cloak for serious evils.*

**8. Geshur** was northeast of Bashan, and midway between Damascus and the Sea of Galilee. Absalom was the grandson of the King of Geshur. **If the Lord.** It is probable that all this talk was pretext and lies. **Serve the Lord.** By offering a sacrifice.

**9. Go in peace.** David seems to have no suspicion of the black conspiracy veiled under this pious proposal. He was probably at this time a lax monarch. Had he not been so engrossed in luxurious self-indulgence he would not have been so deaf to the complaints of his subjects and blind to the treachery of his son. (6) *Lack of self-restraint is the door through which fatal influences creep.*

**10. Sent spies.** These were to ascertain the feelings of the people, and to fan the flame of discontent, but were only to sound the rallying cry in places where they could reckon upon support. **The sound of the trumpet.** The signal for revolt, like the hoisting of a standard in modern times. He was to be proclaimed king simultaneously all over the country. **In Hebron.** For his purpose the place was well chosen. It is probable that the tribe of Judah resented its absorption into the nation at large, and the city of Hebron contained many persons who were aggrieved by the removal of the court to Jerusalem.

**11. Two hundred men.** These were men of distinction, and went as invited guests to a feast, like Samuel's in 1 Sam. 9. 22. Their high standing would create an impression that the king patronized the movement.

**12. Sent for Abithophel the Gilonite.** So called from his native city Giloh, a few miles south or southwest of Hebron. He was one of David's chief counselors and a man of great sagacity (2 Sam. 16. 23). **Offered sacrifices.** This was no holy service, but a means to blind the king and people, and help to inaugurate sedition. **The people increased.** Those whom he had complimented and caressed not only joined his cause, but used their influence to win others. A general dissatisfaction must have existed against the person and government of David. (7) *Success founded upon tricks and wrong can never be permanent.*

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

"Whosoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." No one realized the awful meaning of these terrible words more than King David. For though he had repented with bitter tears, the clouds of sin continued to hover over his unhappy household till his last day. Sin cannot be committed with impunity; its traces cannot be effaced. How dreadful the words of the heroic Nathan: "The sword shall never depart from thine house. . . Thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before Israel and before the sun" (chap. 12. 10-12). The royal sinner cannot bribe Heaven, but must be exposed like the vilest criminal before all men, who will no more think well of him; and then what inward tortures must be in that heart, once so pure and so full of the Spirit of God?

**Verse 1. And it came to pass after this.** After being received into the favor of his father. The

phrase, is, however, often used without any chronological force, to begin a story, like our "Once upon a time." **That Absalom prepared him a chariot and horses.** The plural form chariots of the Authorized Version is wrong, for the Hebrew equivalent is singular. The reference is to a magnificent state carriage, drawn by richly caparisoned horses, and attended by fifty men as escort. He had acquired a taste for such display, most probably, at the court of his grandfather, in Geshur (chap. 3. 3), whither he had fled after the murder of Amnon, and where he remained three years (2 Sam. 13. 38). Such pomp and display were very pleasing to the populace, and served to make Absalom very popular. Compare the case of Adonijah (1 Kings 1. 5). Horses were prohibited by the law (Deut. 17. 16), but, alas! David was growing lax, and like many a father in our day, tolerated evils

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**2. And Absalom rose up early.** Early rising was common in the East, as most business was transacted early in the day. The fact that the king's son was at the gate at an early hour, mingling freely with the people, made him a favorite. **Beside the way of the gate.** Near the road leading to the court. In ancient times the public business was transacted at the gate of the town. Later the word "gate" was used by accommodation for a court of justice, where the law was administered. "The sublime porte," synonymous with the Turkish government, denotes "high gate," and takes its name from the principal gate of the sultan's palace at Constantinople. **When any man had a suit.** This is better than controversy. The same word occurs in verse 4, where it is correctly rendered. The king was the supreme court, the final court of appeals. In small kingdoms, the king could easily settle all cases himself, but in large empires this would be impossible, and judges would have to be appointed. It seems that Absalom was trying to work himself into such an office; since this would give him an excellent opportunity to please the people, and throw out many insinuations against the king, who was now becoming old. **Of what city art thou?** This is a perfect picture of the unscrupulous politician on the eve of election. Such interest on the part of the prince in the welfare of disappointed litigants could not but produce the desired effect; for they all desired to have a good influential friend at court.

**3. See thy matters are good and right.** He would of course listen to the case, and pronounce the same judgment on every occasion, regardless of the merits of the point at dispute. **There is no man deputed by the king to hear thee.** The king himself is either too busy, or too far removed from his subjects. He is supreme ruler, and therefore unconcerned about the welfare of his loyal people. Indeed, it is not improbable that David, engrossed with great state questions, had neglected some minor things. He does not directly accuse the king of willful injustice, but of gross neglect.

**4. O that I were made judge.** No doubt Absalom expected to be king; Amnon, his oldest brother, was dead, as was also most probably Chileab, the son of Abigail. There were, however, influences working against him, and the most powerful, was Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. Though he really desired to become king, he dares not make that known at the beginning, and simply utters a wish to be made judge, not for his own sake, but for the good of the people. **I would do him justice.** This is a very strong insinuation that the poor litigants, or suitors at the gate, did not receive their rights under the system then in vogue.

**5. To do him obeisance.** Such respect as was due a prince of the realm. **Put forth his hand,** etc. Made himself most familiar with them, as much as to say, "Please forbear, I am simply your brother, not your superior." The demagogue, the plague of all times, is seen in every act and heard in every word. How many places of power and influence in Church and in State have been gained by the most unworthy flatterers just in this manner! Agamemnon is often quoted as a man of this type.

**6. Stole the hearts of the men of Israel.** There are thieves and thieves, and the very worst thieves, very often, are those who do not pass under that name. The transgression of Absalom could not have been characterized in more appropriate language. It was, as Blaikie says, "swindling in high life," appropriating valuable property on false pretences.

**7. At the end of forty years.** This as it stands is unintelligible; it can neither refer to the age of Absalom nor to the reign of David. It is doubtless another instance, very common in this book, of careless copying. Though the original manuscript was inspired, we need not believe that all copyists were. There is no doubt that we should, with the Syriac, Arabic, Vulgate, Josephus, and others, read four instead of forty. The meaning then is clear, namely, that the open rebellion of Absalom broke out four years after the reconciliation with his father after four years of trifling with the hearts of the people and intriguing against the king, his father. **Let me go and pay my vow.** The king, naturally a religious man, would be delighted beyond measure with the manifestation of such a religious spirit in his wayward boy. But what hypocrisy! How many mean things have been done in the name of religion! **In Hebron.** His native place (chap. 3, 2, f.), the city where he worshipped Jehovah when a boy, therefore apparently very dear to him. Moreover, Hebron was one of the most sacred spots in all the land, the burying-place of the patriarchs, the home of many priests, the first capital of David, where perhaps were many who had violently opposed the removal of the royal residence to Jerusalem. There is reason for believing that the tribe of Judah had grown lukewarm toward David, and that Absalom was reasonably sure of support from this tribe. "It is probable that the old tribal jealousies had been revived." . . . "Such a spirit of discontent would account for the slackness of Judah to bring back the king when the rebellion was over (chap. 19, 11)." — *Kirkpatrick*.

**8. Geshur.** This country was northeast of Bashan and adjoining Argob, and corresponded with El-Lejah of our times. **I will serve the Lord.** This simply means, that he will pay the vow which he then vowed.

**9. Go in peace.** So gratified was David with this pious deed of his son, and so free was he from

suspicion, that he consented at once. The law of Moses (Lev. 17. 3, f.) required that sacrifice should be offered in one place; had David insisted upon the observance of this law, the insurrection might have been avoided. But David in this, as well as in other points, yielded to custom. What safety there is in keeping God's law, regardless of public opinion!

**10. Absalom sent spies.** These were sent to sound the people, and to create sentiment favorable to the young rebel. There would be all over the land those smarting under some wrong, real or supposed, as well as a host of disappointed politicians ready for any change. **The sound of the trumpet.** The conspiracy had been well planned. These trumpeters had been stationed at convenient distances all over the land, so that they could all blow almost simultaneously, at the very time Absalom was proclaimed king at Hebron. The advantage of such a course is evident, since many would swear allegiance at once to the new king.

**11. With Absalom went two hundred men.** These were the special guests, invited to the religious feast at Hebron, and were, without doubt, from the best families in Jerusalem. For then, as now, it would have been very difficult to forgo the honor of escorting a prince on any kind of an expedition. Society does not always insist upon a spotless record, especially where there are wealth and influence. **In their simplicity.** Knowing nothing of the conspiracy. The presence of two hundred people from the best citizens of Jerusalem would produce a wonderful impression, and would doubtless influence many to rally around the standards of the new king. No doubt that these two hundred, willing or unwilling, would have to stay at Hebron. It was sharp practice, any way we look at it.

**12. Ahithophel the Gilonite.** Ahithophel, a resident of Giloh, a city not far from Hebron, in the hills of Judah (Josh. 15. 51), supposed by some to have been the grandfather of Bathsheba (chap. 11. 3, and 23, 34), was famous for his wisdom and safe counsel (chap. 15. 23). He was a member of David's council. His advice to Absalom proves also that he was a man of great insight. This advice, if Absalom had followed it, might have defeated David. Besides being notorious as an arch-traitor, he is "the first deliberate suicide on record" (chap. 17. 23); for like Judas, with whom he is often mentioned, he hanged himself.

### Thoughts for Young People.

#### Success in Life.

A blacksmith stood beside his anvil in the smithy. In one hand, by means of tongs, he had a piece of metal at white heat, and in the other his hammer, while all around him were tools which

could help fashion the pliant material at his will. He paused to decide the question, "What shall I make of it?" That is the supreme question for young people. What shall we make of life with its forces and opportunities? It is good to begin with a right aim.

**1. What some pronounce success is failure.** The idea of some is that success consists in a good position or wealth. But if these are gained at the expense of moral health, or by means of tricky and dishonest practices, when viewed from God's standpoint such lives have dismally failed.

**2. What some brand as failure is success in the highest sense.** Milton completed his *Paradise Lost*, and a bookseller only gave him seventy-five dollars for it. Yet he did not fail. Christ's life was passed in poverty and closed in darkness; but he "reigns from the cross."

**3. A distinct aim is an essential.** A man may run very hard in a race, but if he be running away from the goal all his energy will not help him. Many who truly succeed finish the work in their own minds first. Forming an ideal is a long step. Many remain unfulfilled prophecies through lack of other qualities.

**4. Christian character is the all-important thing.** This counts for more than all other things put together. A flaw here will bring sure disaster. The saddest wrecks on the broken waters of society are those who have accomplished other things but failed to become Christians. A distinguished professor kept photographs of his students. He divided them into two lots. One he called his basket of addled eggs. They were portraits of men who had failed though they once promised much. Shall the hope of our friends and of Christ be realized in us? Suppose a girl bought a new dress and paid for it, would she be satisfied if the storekeeper said the purchaser could not have it just yet as she wanted to wear it herself, but perhaps when she had done with it the rightful owner would receive it. Christ wants us now. Let us give him our allegiance.

### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The chariot was adopted by the Jews from the Egyptians if not actually imported from Egypt, where they seem to have come into use as early as B. C. 1550. Down to David's time the Israelites possessed but few chariots, partly because they were prohibited by Jehovah. Solomon maintained a force of 1,400 chariots, which it is estimated cost 600 shekels each, and the horses each 150 shekels. The Assyrian chariots were similar to the Egyptian, the bow being the weapon of battle, and were richly mounted with quivers full of arrows; the Greeks used spears; the Persians and probably the Syrians and ancient Britons used a class of chariot mounted with sharp sickle-shaped blades which cut to pieces whatever came in their way. In the

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remains of Egyptian and Assyrian art are numerous representations of chariots, showing how highly they were ornamented. Whether the "iron" chariots of Scripture were strengthened or plated with metal or were furnished with scythes seems still doubtful. The ornaments consisted of paneled and inlaid valuable woods and metals. The Egyptian monuments show that the strength of the armies of the Pharaohs was in their chariots. The chariots of the army of Cyrus were capacious enough to carry twenty men fighting from them.

The ancient Persians, who worshiped the sun, dedicated certain horses and chariots to it. The kings of Judah fell into the same idolatry. The rabbins say the kings and nobles rode in chariots when they went forth to meet the morning sun, and these chariots of the sun were those which Josiah burned (2 Kings 23. 11). The Hindus believe that their god Siva sends his angels with a green chariot to fetch the souls of those devoted to him. One of their holy kings is reputed to have been taken to heaven in a chariot, without the pain of dying, as Elijah was.

The chariot was sometimes used for state show, or by noble private persons. One of the most interesting of the Egyptian paintings represents a person of quality arriving late at an entertainment, drawn by two horses, attended by running footmen, one of whom hastens to knock at the door of the house, another advances to take the reins, a third bears a stool to assist his master in alighting. Most of them carry their sandals in their hands that they may run with the greater ease. "Absalom prepared him horses and chariots, and fifty men to run before him." These were mere attendant outrunners, for show of royal state pomp, distinct from the warrior's footmen, and the common messenger service, though they might on occasion be used for these purposes.

### By Way of Illustration.

*Verses 1-6.* "So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." Stole them! It was a miserable, lying, thievish transaction. It is possible to *gain* the hearts of men by fair and honest means. Sincere attachment and affection gives and receives, receives and gives. There is fair exchange and no robbery. But Absalom traded lies and sneers and empty promises and other "nothings" for honest and loyal devotion.

*Verses 7-9.* *Hypocrisy.* A very skillful painter in London exhibited a piece representing a friar in his holy dress. View the painting at a distance, and you would think the friar to be in a praying attitude. His hands are clasped together on his breast, his eyes meekly cast down like those of the publican in the gospel; and the good man appears to be quite absorbed in humble adoration and devout recollection. But take a nearer view and the de-

ception vanishes. The book which seemed to be before him is discovered to be a punchbowl, into which the wretch is all the while, in reality, only squeezing a lemon. How good a representation of a hypocrite!

Lapidaries tell us of the Chalydonian stone, that it will retain its virtue and luster no longer than it is inclosed in gold. A fit emblem of the hypocrite, who is only good while he is inclosed in golden prosperity.

*Verses 10-12.* Murder of parents was by the Roman law punished in a much severer manner than any other kind of homicide. After being scourged, the criminals were sewed in a leathern sack with a live dog, a cock, a viper, and an ape, and so cast into the sea. Solon in his laws, made none against parricide, conceiving it impossible that anyone should be guilty of so unnatural a barbarity.

### The Teachers' Meeting.

An introduction: Have you ever sown seed? What is it like? A dead thing; no bright color; no sweet odor. Is it really dead? Put it into the ground; place a stick to mark where it is, and by and by you will find many things. *Our actions sow seeds in others' lives...* A building suddenly fell, and it was found that the supports had been eaten through—honeycombed—by a small worm. So David's throne suddenly tottered, but the germs of destruction had been long growing... I. David's home life: (1) His adultery with Bathsheba and his killing of Uriah furnished to Amnon an example in lust and to Absalom an example in murder. They were links in a chain of events which included Absalom's exile and rebellion. (2) His marriage with Maachah, the heathen beauty who became mother of Absalom. (3) His utter neglect of parental duty, as in Amnon's case. II. Absalom's training: (1) A godly father (in sentiment, at least) and a heathenish mother. (2) Luxurious life in palace. (3) Rare personal beauty inviting flattery. (4) Paternal training probably interfered with by state cares. (5) The moral choice was his own. III. Facts that led to the rebellion: (1) Change in David's character—love of pleasure undermines the heroic element. (2) Alienation of tribe of Judah; in moving from Hebron David had seemed to desert his early friends. (3) Intrigues in court. (4) Heavy taxes levied to sustain foreign wars. (5) Sense of the injustice of Absalom's exile. (6) Sincere preference for Absalom as heir (he was handsome, brave, affable, and as eldest son might claim royal rights; but David was sure to select Bathsheba's son; so Absalom's only chance lay in rebellion). IV. Favorable conditions: (1) Peace gave chance of dissension. (2) Grievances demanded redress. V. Characterize the plot. It involved: (1) Hypocrisy; (2) filial impiety; (3) political corruption; (4) disregard of best in-



terests of nation. Was this the return to make to a kind father? . . . Against what sins are we warned in this lesson? (1) On David's side; (2) on Absalom's side; (3) on people's side.

### Blackboard.



### DISHONOR

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UPON

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FATHER.

HIS ACTIONS | OUR ACTIONS  
TURN MEN  
FROM

THE KING | THE LORD  
TO | TO  
HIMSELF. | THE WORLD.

"Look well to thy ways."

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Tho' troubles assail,  
Deep are the wounds,  
I lay my sins on Jesus,  
Broken in spirit,  
My Jesus, as thou wilt.

No. 2.

Here on earth where foes surround us,  
Whenever trials press my soul,  
I am sheltered in Thee,  
Be with me every moment,  
Fear not, O troubled soul.

### References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 1: Running footmen, 314. Ver. 8: Vows, 851.

### Before the Class.

**Introduction.** Trace the series of events which lead up to the lesson of to-day. David had sinned, deeply sinned against God. The results of this sin were now coming upon him, and the prophecy (2 Sam. 12. 10-12) was being fulfilled. Amnon sinned, and was slain by Absalom in revenge. In consequence of this, Absalom was banished from the country, remaining in exile for some years. He finally returned, was forgiven, and restored to his position in the kingdom. His ambition is aroused, a wicked purpose is formed in his heart, and he begins to plot against the king.

**Lesson text.** Put upon the blackboard or present to the class in some other way the following outline—Flattery, Falsehood, Faithlessness. Take up each one of these points separately, showing the evil of each and the results which might naturally flow from them. Absalom, because of the wicked purpose in his heart, flattered each man who came to the city into the belief that his cause was just and right, and that if only Absalom was judge justice would be given to all. What baseness! What wickedness! The record truly characterizes this action when it says, "So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." Impress the thought that Absalom's action was the outcome of a wicked purpose. What, then, shall we do? Let it be writ large—Form right purposes and suffer not an evil purpose to have lodgment in the heart.

Flattery had done its work, and the next step in the carrying out of Absalom's purpose was in order. But to bring about this next step he had to resort to falsehood. One wrong act leads to another, and the steps downward are easily taken. The lie passes for truth, David is unsuspecting, and Absalom descends a step lower in the way of dishonor and ruin. A lie is weak and usually needs other lies to support it or cover it, and thus one is led deeper and deeper into the mire of moral degradation.

The crowning act comes on apace. The conspiracy grows, and Absalom is at last proclaimed king. The veil of secrecy is lifted and the Faithlessness of the king's son is shown forth to the world. We may cover our acts for a time, but a day will come when the searchlight of God's truth will be turned in upon our lives and all things shall be revealed in their true relations.

**Specific application.** The lesson to-day is a lesson of warning, and the injunction, "Look well to thy ways," comes home to us with force. We see Absalom bringing dishonor upon his father by his

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words and his actions, and, as we shall see in the next lesson, disaster and death upon himself. A wrong ambition, a wicked purpose, led him to evil action with its consequent misery to himself and to others. Let us then beware of the beginnings, and watch and pray that we enter not into tempta-

tion. Let us strive to form right purposes, that in the actualizing of these purposes we may bring honor to God's name, and instead of turning many hearts away from the king, as did Absalom, turn many unto the King, into the "way of righteousness."

B. C. 1023.]

LESSON IX. ABSALOM'S DEATH.

[Aug. 30.]

GOLDEN TEXT. The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous : but the way of the ungodly shall perish. Psalm 1. 6.

Authorized Version.

Revised Version.

2 Sam. 18. 24-33. [*Commit to memory verses 22, 23.*]

[Read chapters 17 and 18.]

24 And Da'vid sat between the two gates : and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and beheld a man running alone.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running : and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman said, Methinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of A-him'-a-az the son of Za'dok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

28 And A-him'-a-az called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he bowed himself before the king with his face to the earth, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

29 And the king said, Is the young man Ab'sa-lom safe ? And A-him'-a-az answered, When Jo'ab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.

30 And the king said unto him, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

31 And behold, Cu'shi came ; and Cu'shi said, Tidings, my lord the king : for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32 And the king said unto Cu'shi, Is the young man Ab'sa-lom safe ? And Cu'shi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept : and as he went, thus he said, O my son Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son Ab'sa-lom ! would God I had died for thee, O Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son !

24 Now David sat between the two gates : and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked,

25 and, behold, a man running alone. And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running : and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, another man running alone. And

27 the king said, He also bringeth tidings. And the watchman said, Methinketh the running of

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28 good man, and cometh with good tidings. And A-him'-a-az called, and said unto the king, All

is well. And he bowed himself before the king with his face to the earth, and said, Blessed be

the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord

29 the king. And the king said, Is it well with the young man Ab'sa-lom ? And A-him'-a-az

answered, When Jo'ab sent the king's servant, even me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but

30 I knew not what it was. And the king said, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned

31 aside, and stood still. And, behold, the Cu'shite came ; and the Cu'shite said, Tidings for my

lord the king : for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32 And the king said unto the Cu'shite, Is it well with the young man Ab'sa-lom ? And the

33 Cu'shite answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise up against thee to do thee

hurt, be as that young man is. And the king

was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept : and as he went, thus

he said, O my son Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son Ab'sa-lom ! would God I had died for thee,

O Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son !

TIME.—B. C. 1023. PLACE.—Mahaim. CONNECTING LINKS.—The conspiracy grew apace, and David was compelled to fly from Jerusalem. "Weeping," and with every sign of woe, he passed from the Mount of Olives across

the Jordan and on to the ancient sanctuary, Mahaim. Judah had deserted him, and his only hope, under God, now lay in the loyalty of Israel. Hushai the Archite, David's friend and counselor, pretended to adhere to Absalom, and, having been

accepted as one of Absalom's advisers, he antagonized the crafty counsels of Ahithophel the Gilonite. The acceptance of Hushai's false advice brought about Absalom's destruction. By adventurous spies David was kept fully informed of the progress of the rebellion. Absalom pursued him with a great army, and soon a battle took place at the "wood of Ephraim," which resulted in the rout of Absalom's army and the death of that wicked prince.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M.* David's anxiety for Absalom. 2 Sam. 18, 1-8.  
*Tu.* Absalom's defeat and death. 2 Sam. 18, 9-17.  
*W.* David's grief. 2 Sam. 18, 19-33.  
*Th.* David's return. 2 Sam. 19, 9-15.  
*F.* Destruction of the ungodly. Psalm 52.  
*S.* Honor to parents. Matt. 15, 1-9.  
*S.* Counsel to the young. Prov. 4, 14-27.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 57, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Saviour, more than life to me,  
 I am clinging, clinging close to thee.
- No. 53, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Oh, sometimes the shadows are deep,  
 And rough seems the path to the goal.
- No. 297, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 A few more years shall roll,  
 A few more seasons come.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

- I. The Anxious Father**, v. 24-30.  
 Where did David take his station?  
 Where was the watchman posted?  
 What did the watchman first discover?  
 What said the king about the runner?  
 What then did the watchman see?  
 Whom did he think he recognized?  
 What did the king say of Ahimaaz?  
 What message did Ahimaaz deliver?  
 What question did the king ask?  
 What was the answer?  
 What command did the king give?  
 Why did not Ahimaaz tell the whole truth?
- 2. The Lost Son**, v. 31, 32.  
 Who next came with tidings?  
 What was his message?  
 What did the king ask?  
 What was Cushi's reply, and what was its full meaning?  
 Was there anything strange about David's utter forgetfulness of the numbers slain in battle and the homes desolated by their death?

What bearing would a victory won by Absalom have had on the continuance and prosperity of the theocracy?

What says the GOLDEN TEXT about the plans of the wicked?

#### 3. The Hopeless Sorrow

, v. 33.

How was the king affected by the news?

Where did he go to sorrow?

What was his lament?

Who always causes grief to his parents? (Prov. 17, 25.)

How had David acted on a former occasion when a child died? (2 Sam. 12, 21-23.)

What could make the difference?

Can you connect David's sin (chap. 11) with Amnon's sin (chap. 13) and Absalom's sin (chap. 13) as productive of this disaster?

On whom can a large measure of responsibility for these sorrows be laid?

Does this view excuse Absalom from sin?

#### Practical Teachings.

1. Here is a wonderful illustration of this truth, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." David sowed to the flesh; from the flesh he reaped corruption.

2. Here is another truth illustrated, "Lust bringeth forth sin; sin bringeth forth death." Absalom lusted for power, with the lust of the eyes for the pride of life. It plunged him into sin against his father, his nation, his God; sin brought to him death, physical and spiritual.

3. Here is a momentous question, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Are you?

Where in this lesson are we shown that—

1. Sin brings sorrow?
2. Sin brings disappointment?
3. Sin brings death?

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- 1. Verses 24-30.**  
 24. How did David show his interest in the battle?  
 25. Who told him that a messenger was coming? How did he know that the army was not beaten?  
 26. Who reached the king first from the battle? Why did he expect good news from Ahimaaz?  
 27. What prevented him from telling all he knew? What good habit had Ahimaaz formed?  
 28. What wrongs had David suffered from Absalom? How did he show his strong affection?
- 2. Verses 31, 32.**  
 31. Who was Cushi? How did he prepare the king's mind for bad news?  
 32. In what delicate way did he hint at Absalom's fate? Why could he speak more freely than Ahimaaz?

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**3. Verse 33.**

33. Where did the king seek privacy? How did he show his intense grief? Was his wish a wise one? What made him lose all interest in the victory?

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

Parents think of children away from home. Their intimacy with wicked advisers causes anxiety and fear. When we have no knowledge of the doings of absent ones we are influenced by their previous history. When young people get into trouble it is not they who suffer most. No man is safe out of Christ. If we should die suddenly, what evidence would our friends have that we were safe?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

What had Absalom made the people of Israel think?

What did they do when he rebelled against David?

Was this right?

What did David do when he heard the news?

What brook did he cross that Jesus crossed?

**Kidron.**

How was David treated?

Who else was treated with scorn and hatred?

Who won in the great battle?

How was Absalom slain?

Why could not Absalom hope for success?

Where did David wait to hear news of the battle?

What was the first question he asked?

What did he do when he heard the fate of his son?

Of whose love is this a picture?

**Remember—**

That disobedient children are punished.

That if we disobey our King we shall perish.

That God loves and pities us in our sins.

**LESSON OUTLINE.****The News of the Victory.****I. THE MEMORIAL.**

1. *Lieared up for himself a pillar.* v. 18.  
Their inward thought . . . forever. Psalm 49. 11.

2. *Called after his own . . . name.* v. 18.  
The name of the wicked shall rot. Prov. 10. 7.

**II. THE WATCHER.**

1. *Sat between the two gates.* v. 24.  
His heart trembled. 1 Sam. 4. 13.

2. *In the nurture . . . of the Lord.* Eph. 6. 4.

**III. THE THINGS.**

1. *All is well.* v. 28.

To the righteous . . . shall be well. Isa. 3. 10.

2. *Hath delivered up.* v. 28.  
All enemies under his feet. 1 Cor. 15. 25.

3. *As that young man.* v. 32.  
Ungodly . . . like the chaff. Psalm 1. 4.

**IV. THE SORROW.**

1. *The king was much moved.* v. 33.  
A son that causeth shame. Prov. 19. 29.

2. *Went up . . . and wept.* v. 33.  
Others which have no hope. 1 Thess. 4. 13.

3. *Would God I had died.* v. 33.  
Yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom. 5. 8.

**EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.****General Statement.**

When the news of Absalom's conspiracy reached Jerusalem David immediately sought safety in flight. Whether from the weakness of age or because he had calm confidence in God, whether cast down by the memory of his sin or dispirited because of the ingratitude of his much loved Absalom, he left the crown to the usurper. A wail of sadness rent the air as the old king, bowed down with grief and walking barefoot, left the city he had rebuilt, and parted with true and valued friends. With him went the body guard of Philistines, the regular soldiers, officers of the court, and his faithful band of six hundred warriors, declined, as God had said of Jerusalem, "This is my rest." In their flight David was met by Ziba, who brought bread, fruits, and a skin of wine. Ziba (probably falsely) accused Mephibosheth of treachery, and secured for himself the property of the poor cripple. Passing on, the king was cursed and stoned by Shimei, an old adherent of the house of Saul. News of the defection of Ahithophel, his shrewdest counsellor, now reached him. In the midst of these trials he stopped to worship God. When Hushai offered to accompany the king he was advised to go and pretend to be an adherent of Absalom. After Absalom's arrival in Jerusalem a council was held at which Ahithophel proposed to pursue David at once with twelve thousand men, and pledged himself to slay the king only. Hushai recommended delay till Absalom should be strengthened in the capital. This would give David all he wanted—time. The advice was taken and the council separated. Hushai to communicate with David, and Ahithophel to commit suicide. David made his headquarters at Mahanaim, a sturdy fortified town near the Jabbok. Three months after Absalom was made king the battle was fought in the wood of Ephraim. Amasa commanded for Absalom,

while the three divisions of David's army had for generals Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. David wished to assume command himself, not to gratify revenge, but to protect his son from the fury of the soldiers. He was persuaded, however, to take charge of the reserves. The first shock decided the fortunes of the day, and Absalom's army fled in confusion. When he got entangled the men whose hearts he stole left him to perish alone by the hand of Joab. They cast his body into a great pit, piled stones upon it, thus giving him burial which accorded with the punishment prescribed by law (Deut. 21. 18-21), and every passer-by hurling a stone as Arabs do now at detested graves. David sat between the gates anxiously awaiting for news. When the truth was learned he gave pathetic expression to his grief. The eternal interests over which he must have thought caused an agony time might soften, but could never efface.

**Verse 24. David sat.** Awaiting the result of the battle at Mahanaim, a city north of the Jabbok, on the east of the Jordan. The place is not certainly identified, but at *Jerash*, which has the best claim, there still stands an ancient gateway, which may occupy the spot where David was waiting. **Between the two gates.** There were two gates, an outer and an inner, with the thickness of the wall between them. This formed a room, shaded and secure, where the king sat during the day, while the battle was raging in the wood of Ephraim. **The watchman.** "The captain of the gate." **Went up to the roof.** Over the gate was a room, such as in oriental cities is often used as a guard-room for police purposes, and above this was the roof surrounded by a parapet. Here stood the watchman. **A man running alone.** After the victory was assured, Joab, the commander of David's army, sent as a messenger with the news Cushai, or "the Cushite," that is, the Ethiopian, and probably a slave. But when Ahimaz besought the privilege of also bearing tidings, he allowed him to follow the Ethiopian. Ahimaz took another and easier route, though a little longer; outran his predecessor, and was the one whom the porter now saw.

**25. The watchman cried.** Calling from the tower to the ground, where David was waiting. Such a cry would cause intense excitement. **If he be alone, there is tidings.** If he had been flying from a defeat, there would have been other fugitives with him. David showed his usual quickness of apprehension by even so slight a remark. **He came apace.** In the East trained runners accompany every army, and often are able in a day's journey to outrun a horse.

**26. Another man running.** This was the Cushite, or the Ethiopian, who had started in advance of Ahimaz, but had been distanced in the race. **Called to the porter.** This porter was probably an assistant of the "captain of the gate," and was so stationed that he could hear the watchman from above, and transmit the word to the king. **He also bringeth tidings.** We imagine the beating heart of the old king, eager for, yet dreading, the news.

**27. Ahimaz.** He was a young priest, the son of Zadok, who had already shown trustworthiness, skill, and courage in bringing to David news of Absalom's plans (2 Sam. 15. 27; 17. 17-21).

Joab had at first declined to permit him to bear news of the battle, knowing that the message of Absalom's death would bring sorrow, and he preferred to let the Ethiopian slave carry the evil tidings; but after Cushai had gone a distance, as Ahimaz was still eager to run, he allowed him, thinking that he would arrive after Cushai. **Zadok.** He was the chief priest in the line of Eleazar, the elder son of Aaron, as Abiathar was in the line of Ithamar, the younger son. The two were associated in the duties of the priesthood, and both were for David in the war, though at his suggestion they remained in Jerusalem with the ark, when the king fled from Absalom. **He is a good man.** David knew him well, and remembered how boldly and faithfully he had brought to him the word from Absalom's council. **Cometh with good tidings.** David rightly judged that one of such high position would not be sent with news of a defeat. (1) *It is worth while to try to win for ourselves a good name.* (2) *The good tidings of the Gospel should always be borne by good men; and how welcome should they be to us for their message's sake.*—M. Henry. (3) *The wandering child is still embraced in his father's love.*

**28. All is well.** In the original, the one word *shalom!* ("peace!") **Fell down to the earth.** Prostrating himself before the king, after the manner shown on the Egyptian and Assyrian monuments. **Blessed be the Lord.** The young priest did not forget in the hour of triumph from whom the victory came. (4) *It is well for us ever to keep in mind the giver of all success. Delivered up the men.* Literally, "shut up the men," by thwarting and putting down their projects. **Lifted up their hand.** There was something unnatural and revolting in Absalom's rebellion against and seeking to destroy a kind father, while David refused to slay his bitter enemy Saul. (5) *Evil is still restricted by God's power, working both directly and indirectly.*

**29. The king said.** Better for David had it been if he had asked this question earlier; and of himself, rather than of another. He had failed to keep his wayward son safe from evil companions and from terpestuous passions; and his anxiety in that moment showed that he felt that not all the wrong had been on Absalom's side. (6) *There are times when care comes too late, and must give place*

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to remorse. **Is the young man Absalom safe?**

Literally, "Is it peace to the youth Absalom?" The question shows the tenderness of the father overmastering the duty of a king; but its excuse lay in David's own guilty consciousness that his own sins had led to Absalom's crimes. (7) *If children knew how deep and unselfish is the love of their parents, they might less often neglect it.*

**When Joab sent.** The text should probably read, "When Joab the king's servant sent me thy servant." **I saw a great tumult, but I knew not.** This was false, for Ahimaz knew that Absalom was dead (verse 20), but preferred to let the Ethiopian slave bring the unwelcome news. (8) *His regard for truth probably weakened in the presence of the king's distress.*

**30. Turn aside, and stand here.** He takes his place among the courtiers surrounding the king, standing, for none might sit in the royal presence, and awaits a reward for his service.

**31. Cush came.** The Ethiopian, who had started in advance but had been outrun by Ahimaz. **Tidings, my lord.** The slave speaks bluntly and without consideration for David's feelings. **The Lord hath avenged thee.** "Judged thee out of the hand of thine enemies;" meaning that God had given David justice in his cause. (9) *The events of daily life do not happen by chance.*

**32. Is the young man Absalom safe?** As before, the uppermost thought in David's mind is for Absalom's life and safety. **The enemies of my lord . . . be as that young man.** Perhaps the slave did not know the tenderness of David's feelings, and spoke as one who looked at Absalom's

rebellion in its true light. A crime it was, and Joab was politic in disregarding David's instructions and putting Absalom to death, for not otherwise could the throne be ever again secure. (10) *That wrong be punished is for the best interests of society.*

**33. The king was much moved.** It added to his agony that his son was cut off in the midst of his crimes, with no opportunity for repentance, and especially that his guilt was the fruit of David's own sins. (11) *See in David's sorrow how surely sin brings to pass its bitter results.* **Went up.** By the stairs beside the gate to the room above it, occupying the space between the two walls. This was the nearest place where he could be alone. **Thus he said.** Eight times he repeated his wail over his lost son. "There is an old Jewish legend that with each cry one of the seven gates of hell rolled back, and on the eighth the lost spirit of Absalom was admitted to paradise."—*Dean Stanley.* **Would God I had died for thee.** Too late now the vain wish to die for Absalom, when once he might have lived for Absalom. Yet he mourned, until recalled to his kingly duties by the sharp rebuke of Joab. Then at last he took his place before the people, and went back in triumph to his throne. Absalom left one daughter, who became the ancestress of kings and a patron of idolatry. His pillar in the King's Dale has long since perished, for the monument which now bears his name is of later date, and Absalom left no memorial save the record of wasted opportunities and a ruined life. (12) *When young people get into trouble it is not they who suffer most.*

### CRITICAL NOTES.

Absalom's rebellion and temporary success, the flight of David, and the utter overthrow of the rebels, together with the death of their leader in the "forest of Ephraim," are given with unusual fullness of details; for that reason, both pupil and teacher should read the entire account as found in chaps. 15-18. This will do more good than the reading of any lesson helps or commentaries, for all that is really known on the subject is given in these chapters. The battle was fought some ten or twelve weeks after the events described in the last lesson; the exact location of the forest of Ephraim is not known, but it was probably in some of the woodlands not far from Mahanaim. There is but little reason for thinking that it was fought within the borders of the tribe of Ephraim, since everything points clearly to some place on the east of the Jordan. The fatal blunder of Absalom was in rejecting the counsel of the shrewd and far-sighted arch-traitor Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17. 1-15), and in adopting the recommendations of David's bosom friend, who was acting as a spy in the camp of Absalom. Ahithophel proposed to march at the

head of the army and overtake David and his followers, capture and slay the king, and thus end the war at once. It is not impossible that Absalom was unwilling to allow Ahithophel to have such a victory all at once, and thus become exceedingly popular with the soldiers at the very outset. Besides, the advice of Hushai, who counseled the gathering of the people from Dan to Beersheba, must have appealed to the vanity of the haughty usurping son. Moreover, in spite of the deceit and lying of Hushai, Jehovah overruled affairs.

No judge, in passing sentence upon Absalom, could have summed up the case more forcibly than Dr. Clarke, quoted by Hurlbut and Doherty in their excellent *Notes*. These are his words: "Absalom's life was quadruply forfeited to the law: 1. In having murdered his brother Amnon. 2. In having excited insurrection in the State. 3. In having taken up arms against his father (Deut. 21. 18, 21). 4. In having taken to himself his father's concubines (Lev. 18. 29). Long ago he should have died by the hand of justice."

**24. David sat between the two gates.**

Many oriental cities had two or even three walls. If this was true of Malainaim (the city of the two camps, Gen. 32. 2-10), then David waited for tidings in the space between. Most commentators, however, think that the wall had an inner and an outer gate. This would be a convenient place to receive news from the battle; besides, the public and official business of the city would be transacted at the gate, since it must have been the headquarters of the king and his counselors. **Watchmen.** Walled cities were guarded by day and night, especially in war times, by watchmen, whose business it was to notice every movement of the enemy on the outside, as well as to see that all was quiet on the inside. **Roof.** The word means a covering spread over something; here the solid masonry over the archway. The principal gates of cities were often finished into large towers with several rooms; the flat roof over the upper story would serve well for the watchman.

**25. If he be alone.** If only one man came, it was a certain proof that he was the bearer of messages from the army; whereas if many came running it would show that the royal army under Joab had been routed. **Tidings.** This word in the original usually, not necessarily, denotes good news; in verse 27 the adjective "good" is written with it. This is the same word that we translate "gospel." **Apace.** With a quick step. The Hebrew of this first clause literally rendered runs thus: "he ran and ran and reached [the gate]."

**26. Saw another man running.** Why two messengers were sent is explained in verses 19-25. **The porter.** The gatekeeper, or the sentinel in charge. The Septuagint, Vulgate, and many modern exegeses read "toward the gate" for "to the porter." The word as printed denotes "porter." However, since it is only a question of vowels, the other reading is possible without violation to the original text. This agrees better with verse 24, when the watchman cries directly to the king.

**27. Is like the running of Ahimaaz.** Ahimaaz had borne other messages to David (see 2 Sam. 17. 15-18), and besides being quick-footed might have had some peculiarity about his gait. **He is a good man.** To bring good tidings meant a good reward, thus men whom the king desired to honor would be selected for the work. (See verse 20.)

**28. All is well.** These three words stand for the Hebrew *shalom* ("peace"), meaning either "peace be to thee," or "there is peace." **Blessed be the Lord thy God.** The Lord, who does all things well, deserves praise for his goodness to-day. **Which hath delivered up.** The verb translated "delivered" in this place is from a root meaning "to shut up," though the piel form is best rendered by "deliver." But even in English there is a close relation between delivering up and shutting up or capturing.

**29. Is it well . . . with Absalom ? Or**

more literally, "Peace to the young man Absalom?" Absalom means "father of peace." Were the three Hebrew words rendered literally, we should have, "Peace to the young man the father of peace." We are not to suppose, however, that David was in a frame of mind to recognize such a play upon words. **I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.** He evades a direct answer, for he knew that Absalom was dead (verse 20). It would have been better for him to have incurred the displeasure of the king than to have evaded the truth and incur the displeasure of the King of kings. Lying is always wrong and sinful. People who will act evasively in one case will not hesitate to do so in another. To conceal a part of the truth is not very different from lying, no matter what the motive may be. The teacher or editor who will excuse lying under any circumstances is in poor business, and to say the least is not the best type of a Christian. Had it not been for Ahimaaz's ambition to be the first messenger to the king, he might have escaped this temptation. Ambitious men generally encounter great trials. We also know that Ahimaaz had consented to act as a spy for David. (See 2 Sam. 17. 16.) How hard it is for a spy to be an honest man!

**31. And behold the Cushite came.** (Cushi of the Authorized Version is misleading, for the Hebrew Cushi is not a proper name, but rather refers to the nation to which he belonged, that is, a Cushite or Ethiopian. It is almost always written with the definite article; the word Moor or Negro would be an excellent translation. **Tidings.** In the original we have a verbal form: "Let there be tidings [announced]." **The Lord hath avenged thee this day.** The Cushite and slave recognized Jehovah, whose name he employs, as supreme and the author of victory. "Avenged" is not a happy translation, since the verb means "to judge," or "to secure the right," or perhaps "to pronounce a verdict in one's favor."

**32. Be as that young man is.** That is, dead. The Negro slave had not yet learned the art of dissembling; he therefore tells the truth in unmistakable language, without any evasion whatever. This proves that culture and truth do not always go together.

**33. The chamber over the gate.** The tower built over the gate had a chamber in it. **My son.** This expression is repeated five times, which makes it very emphatic in Hebrew. The powerful king is entirely lost in the loving father. The heinousness of Absalom's crimes disappears in the intensity of David's love. **Would God that I had died for thee.** The word God is not in the original. This language of David reminds us of Moses's words (Exod. 32. 32), and St. Paul's (Rom. 9. 3). They also would have died, if by so doing they might have saved others. How at this moment the words of Nathan must have rung in David's

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cars: "The sword shall never depart from thy house!" How sad it is to think that our sins, though forgiven long ago, may bear fruit in later times, and may hurt not only ourselves, but our children. As Professor Blaikie has observed, there were three elements in David's grief: "(1) The loss of another child. (2) The fact that this beautiful boy had died in open rebellion against his father. (3) And that in this rebellious state he had passed to the judgment seat of the King of kings."

"Cut off even in the blossoms of his sin,  
No reckoning made, but sent to his account  
With all his imperfections on his head."

The weakness of David appears in a very strong light in this chapter as well as in the first part of the following. Though twenty thousand had been left on the field of battle, he seems to care for Absalom only. He allows his personal cares, his private interests, to overbalance those of the state. The unreasonableness of his conduct made a fearful impression upon his followers, and were it not for the statesmanship of Joab, it might have proved very disastrous. Supposing Absalom had been successful, what would have become of the religion of Israel? Would he have built the temple of Jehovah or continued the worship of God at the tabernacle?

## Thoughts for Young People.

### The Fast Young Man.

One Old Testament character was described in a few words: "he driveth furiously." He was type of a large class in modern life. This headstrong and reckless daring are more characteristic of youth. In the nursery a proclamation of independence is made. On the rocking-horse a vehement spirit is displayed that bodes ill for the future unless got well under self-control. The tendency of the times is to throw off restraint and give a loose rein to forces that will carry headlong to ruin.

"In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;  
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;  
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,  
That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening prey."

1. *The characteristics of the fast young man.* He has a dash and brilliancy which challenge admiration. Handsome in form and feature, courtly in manners and enthusiastic in spirit, he is taken as a very prince of good fellows. Back of all the graciousness is concealed baseness. The extravagance and love of display lead to the sacrifice of dearest interests, the betrayal of sacred trusts, and the perpetration of foullest crimes. The tendency of such a life is to burn out every trace of nobleness and drag down into depths of shame.

2. *The causes that produce him.* A common cause

is wealth of natural endowment. This inflates vanity and inflames ambition. So with natural gifts, as witness Byron, Burns, and Poe. Another is to be reared in the lap of luxury, to have means to gratify every desire without the need of labor. Sometimes the cause is parental mismanagement, which allows unlimited indulgence, or parental sin, which forfeits childhood's reverence.

3. *The consequences of fast living.* Many fast young men, with shattered health, blackened reputation, with nothing to live for, nothing to love, will close their career in a felon's cell or try the suicide's hand. Their companions suffer with them. Against the fascinating wiles of such perilous friendship none can be too watchful? One of the saddest consequences is the grief caused to broken-hearted relatives.

### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

David beheld a man running, who probably represents the professional runners of the East. Samuel foretold (1 Sam. 8. 11) that swift runners would be in attendance on the king, a custom well known in the East. David himself was a swift runner, for which he praises God. These runners were distinct from the footmen who accompanied the chariots, and were used as messengers, though swift running was greatly prized as an accomplishment of a warrior. These runners are much used in India, as post carriers, and for special service in transmitting orders of the government. They exhibit individuality in their motion in running, and just as a person is known by his walk, he may be known by his peculiarity of gait in running; hence David's watchman recognized the running of Ahimaaz, who was known as swift of foot. Endurance is as much esteemed in running power, however, as fleetness, as these runners often have to cover very long distances.

David's grief was inspired by more than usual paternal affection, as every king of the East had special desire to see the son of his own loins succeed to the throne. His repetition of the name of the deceased, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, . . . O Absalom, my son, my son!" is in accord with the common language of lamentation in oriental countries, quite more emphatically and generally than the mere accidental use of such form of expression of grief sometimes occurring with us. It was, one may say, the proper formula, or the ritual language of such sorrow.

David, after the reproof of Joab for his excessive grief, anointed his head and washed his face and appeared at the gate of the city; the public place for hearing cases to be adjusted and giving judgment, as well as the place to ratify bargains. This ancient custom still obtains in the East. When Dr. Pococke returned from viewing the town of ancient Byblus, he says, "The sheik and the elders



were sitting in the gate of the city, after the ancient manner, and I sat awhile with them."

### By Way of Illustration.

**Parental love.** All love is divine in the sense that it comes from God. Parental love gives us a faint idea of God's love for his children. Love descends much more than it ascends. Parents love children more than children love parents. God loves us infinitely more than we love him. A father in good circumstances in one of the eastern States had a reckless son, who disgraced himself, and brought shame upon his family by his misconduct. From home the prodigal went to California to become even more reckless. For years the father heard nothing from him. Learning he was in a certain city, he sent a messenger with this message, "Your father loves you." The bearer found the boy in a low gambling hell. He called him out and delivered his message. The gambler was brought to himself. The thought of a father who loved him still broke the spell of Satan. He abandoned the game, his companions, and his cups to return to his father. The heavenly Father sends a like message to every prodigal.

Bishop Warren, in writing about the parable of the Prodigal Son, says: "The pearl of this pearl of parables is the father's love that many waters cannot quench nor floods drown. In looking at the love of Christ, we are apt to forget that of the Father. But Christ is just the manifestation of the Father's love. This world can never be wholly dark again to any sinner. There are kisses of peace, feasts of plenty, robes of honor, and infinite love that runs to bring them."

**Parental responsibility.** The care of a child is one of the most sacred trusts that can be confided to anyone as parent or teacher. Christ loved children and he speaks of them as his lambs. Peter was to show his love for his Master by feeding the lambs. Dr. Potter tells the story of a young man who stood at the bar of a court of justice to be sentenced for forgery. The judge had known him from a child, for his father had been a famous legal light, and his work on *The Law of Trusts* was the most exhaustive work on the subject in existence. "Do you remember your father?" asked the judge, sternly, "that father whom you have disgraced?" The prisoner answered, "I remember him perfectly. When I went to him for advice or companionship, he would look up from his book on *The Law of Trusts* and say, 'Run away, boy, I am busy.' My father finished his book, and here I am." The great lawyer had neglected his own trust with awful results.—*Talmage*.

What if God should place in your hand a diamond, and tell you to inscribe on it a sentence which should be read at the last day! What care, what caution, would you exercise in the selection!

Now this is what God has done. He has given you the immortal minds of your children, more imperishable than the diamond, on which you inscribe your spirit and example, and you will meet it at the judgment.—*Payson*.

### Before the Class.

**Introduction.** Review the last lesson, emphasizing the steps in Absalom's downward career, bringing into clear light the thought that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Very briefly present to the class, or, better, draw from it by questions, the series of intervening events: David's flight from Jerusalem; the sending back of the ark; the sorrowful ascent of Mount Olivet and the service of worship on its summit; the treachery of Ahithophel and the acceptance of Hushai's services; Ziba's treachery and Shimei's cursing; the return of Absalom to Jerusalem; Absalom's acceptance of Hushai's counsel and the rejection and suicide of Ahithophel; the arrangements by David for the battle which took place near Mahanaim; and lastly, the result of the battle.

**Lesson text.** Place upon the blackboard the following outline—Anxiety, Hope, Bitterness. In this lesson we see plainly the result of a wrong choice, the following of our own way instead of the "way of the Lord." Although the text is taken up with the account of David the father, still in our minds we picture Absalom the son lying under the trees in the forest of Gilead. Note, first, the father's Anxiety, coupled with Hope. He sits in the gateway waiting and watching for news from the field. Ahimaaz is seen afar off, and David's hopes rise, for Ahimaaz "is a good man and cometh with good tidings." And he brought good tidings indeed, but not the news the king was anxiously, so anxiously waiting for. If his anxiety for Absalom had been shown in earlier years and in a different way the end might have been different. So to-day we are anxious about many things and let the "one thing needful" escape us. But another messenger is seen by the keen-eyed watchman, and David waits with eagerness for the news. It is given, and all his hopes are dashed to the ground. These hopes were founded upon a misunderstanding of God's laws, and so were doomed never to be realized. So with many of our own hopes. We cannot see, or rather we will not see, that broken law always brings its results. The result may not come immediately upon the breaking of the law, but it is sure to come, for "the word of the Lord is sure." And then comes Bitterness. "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee!" O the bitterness of blasted hopes, the sorrow in the cry, "Too late, too late!" If David had been more thoughtful in living for Absalom he might not have been called upon to pass

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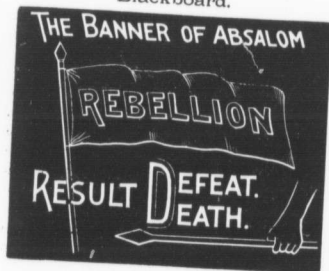
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through this valley of bitterness. The end of wrongdoing is always bitterness to ourselves and to those who love us.

*Specific application.* The lesson is evident. Be anxious about the eternal things, and let not our time be so taken up with things of this earth that we lose the things of heaven. Remember that there are but two ways in which to walk, and that "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Let us, then, build our hopes upon the solid foundation—the promises of God. And, finally, let us remember that in the way in which we are tempted to walk by the spirit of evil within and without there is sorrow and suffering, and the end thereof is bitterness itself.

#### Blackboard.



#### TWO WAYS.

WAY OF THE WISE  
FULL OF LIGHT  
LEADING TO LIFE.

WAY OF THE WICKED  
FULL OF DARKNESS  
LEADING TO DEATH.

THE WORD OF THE LORD IS SURE.

#### The Teachers' Meeting.

Draw the map, showing Hebron, Jerusalem, Jordan Valley, Mahanaim. Indicate the journey of David, and tell the story, and mark the supposed place of the battle. . . . A word-picture: (1) Of Absalom's death in the thicket; (2) Of David's watching at the gate; (3) Of the messengers and David's sorrow. . . . Draw out the practical lessons

of two aspects of the lesson, first, concerning Absalom, and, secondly, concerning David. Show how Absalom's fate illustrates the career of the fast young man of to-day, and how David's sorrow illustrates parental love. . . . Do not forget to show the Christ in the lesson. If David loved his son, God loves his children still more. But David could not save Absalom, though he was willing to die for him. Our Saviour saves us by dying for us.

*Illustrative Notes* gives the following terse and suggestive outline: 1. Notice Absalom's opportunities and advantages: (a) Princely position; (b) Personal attractiveness; (c) Agreeable manners; (d) The example of wise and good men. 2. Notice the cause of his failure: (a) Neglected early training—father too busy—mother a heathen (similar cases, Nero, Lord Byron); (b) Princely position; (c) Ungoverned passions, as in Amnon's murder; (d) Lust of power, ambition for office ruins many; (e) Utter lack of moral principle. In spite of appearances principle leads to success as lack of it dooms to failure.

#### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

##### No. 1.

Father, I stretch my hands to thee.  
Weary of earth.  
Is this thy time of trouble?  
I need thee every hour.  
Must Jesus bear the cross alone?

##### No. 2.

The great Physician.  
The rock that is higher than I.  
Tell it to Jesus.  
The Lord he is my strength.  
Go tell it to Jesus.

#### References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 24: Double gates, 282. Ver. 26: The watchman; the porter, 283. Ver. 33: The chamber over the gate, 284.

#### Thoughts for the Quiet Hour.

— Good men should seek opportunities of doing good. For the most proper objects of our kindness and charity are such as will not be frequently met with without inquiry. The most necessitous are the least clamorous.—*Henry*.

— What is love? Two souls and one body. Friendship? Two bodies and one soul.—*Low*.

— Good men in this world are in the midst of danger. All trees are set in the wind; but the tallest endure the greatest violence of the tempest.—*Jeremy Taylor*.

— As the clouds of guilt and sorrow are blotted out from the firmament of a man's prospect the sun of his joy will arise.—*South*.

## PRIMARY TEACHERS' DEPARTMENT.

### Some Mother's Child.

AT home or away, in the alley or street,  
Wherever I chance in this wide world to meet  
A girl that is thoughtless or a boy that is wild,  
My heart echoes softly, 'tis some mother's child.

And when I see those, o'er whom long years have  
rolled

Whose hearts have grown hardened, whose spirits  
are cold;

Be it woman all fallen, or man all defiled,  
A voice whispers softly, 'Ah, some mother's child.'

No matter how far from the right she has strayed;  
No matter what inroads dishonor has made;  
No matter what elements cankered the pearl—  
Tho' tarnished and sullied, she is some mother's  
girl.

No matter how wayward his footsteps have been;  
No matter how deep he is sunken in sin;  
No matter how low is his standard of joy;  
Tho' guilty and loathsome, he is some mothers'  
boy.

That head hath been pillowed on some tender  
breast;

That form hath been wept o'er, those lips have  
been pressed;

That soul hath been prayed for, in tones sweet and  
mild;

For her sake deal gently with—some mother's  
child.

### The Expelled Scholar.

WHAT is to become of the boy whom we expel?  
How can we account for that soul which we have  
driven out? It is our business to gather in and to  
hold for Christ his outcast ones, and we dare not  
look our Lord in the face and confess that because  
we lost patience with one foolish soul we trust him  
beyond the reach of the Gospel. Besides, we should  
in many cases only increase the very evil we deplore.  
While the boy is with us, we know the extent of the  
mischief he is doing, and we may in a measure  
counteract it. Expel the boy from the school and  
we do not thereby break his power over his com-  
panions. He is still their associate, distinguished  
now by a bad pre-eminence. Though we prevent  
him annoying us during school hours, we leave  
him at large, without restraint, to influence our  
boys all the rest of the week.—(Lon.) S. S. Chronicle.

### The Kindergarten in the Sunday-School.

BY MRS. W. F. CRAFTS.

In a recent number of *The Kindergarten News*,  
the query is raised by one who is evidently a

seeker after truth as to whether or not "subjects  
like those treated in the Sunday school lesson can  
be made strictly kindergarten work."

One of Froebel's biographers says: "Whoever  
doubts Froebel's deep understanding of the Bible  
and the Christian idea should see a Bible which  
he possessed from childhood, whose leaves are worn  
quite thin by constant use, and all whose margins  
are written on with remarks testifying to his  
earnestness and deep spirit of inquiry."

There are kindergartens in which Bible verses  
are daily recited, not in parrot style, without a  
thought of their meaning, but intelligently and im-  
pressively, connected with the occupations, giving  
the stories told, and the passing events celebrated.  
Such kindergartens truly represent their founder,  
Friedrich Froebel.

In the last International Kindergarten meeting  
a committee was appointed to make a selection of  
stories appropriate to be told in the kindergarten.  
The committee was instructed to include Bible  
stories. So it must certainly appear that the  
Bible is considered by those who speak authori-  
tatively an appropriate book to be used in the  
kindergarten. How will those "Bible stories" be  
told to the children? In very much the same  
charming way that other stories are told. We can-  
not conceive of a Bible story told in a kindergar-  
ten according to old time methods, while chil-  
dren sit as passive listeners, more or less attentive,  
but more disorderly and inattentive than otherwise.

If their lesson should chance to be about "The  
Good Shepherd," we can imagine how they would  
be seated at little tables with blocks in front of  
them to build the sheepfold described by their  
teacher, and how all might put their blocks to-  
gether to form one large sheepfold; how each  
child might be given a small toy sheep to put into  
the fold; how all might stand on the floor and  
represent the fold; how they might engage in the  
lovely finger play, representing the lambs, the  
meadows, the water trough, the hayrack, the  
measure for meal, and the barn; and how at last  
they might be told the story of the Good Shepherd,  
and how little children are called "his lambs;" how  
some strains from "Flee as a bird to your moun-  
tain" might be played upon the piano to make an  
uplifting environment; how a picture of the Good  
Shepherd, such as Holman Hunt's, might be  
shown to the children, and how at last they might  
be taught to chant the twenty-third Psalm. Then

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they would probably be given some occupation to deepen the impression, such as drawing a picture of a lamb that had been outlined by perforations, or they might be given colored worsted to stitch it.

A Bible story told in this way is the practical working out of the coordination of educational practices in the picture, the story, the poem, the occupation, the games or dramatic representations of the dominant idea.

Bible stories would not be included by a Committee on Kindergartens if they were not subjects that could be treated after the manner of the kindergarten.

Is not the query answered? If the Bible is in use in the kindergarten, cannot our Sunday school lessons be considered appropriate material for kindergarten methods? We hold that it may be so considered.

On a certain occasion Miss Constance Mackenzie, Directress of the Public Kindergarten of Philadelphia, had given an address on the "Developing Power of the Kindergarten." At the close of the paper, discussion was invited. The question was asked, "Can kindergarten principles be applied to Sunday school teaching?" Miss Mackenzie wisely replied that the principles of arousing self-activity on the part of the scholar and free development could not be claimed solely by the kindergarten, that they belonged to all true systems of education, and that being thus of general application they should most certainly be used in Sunday school teaching.

If the querist, however, has in mind the right of a Sunday school class thus taught to be called a Froebel kindergarten, we must emphatically say, No. In the appliances of the kindergarten, materials purposely chosen from the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms are selected, and they are presented in educational sequences, unfolding the power of the child in a most symmetrical way. This is not the work which the Sunday school proposes to do. Instead, it presents things which relate to the kingdom of God, and the Bible must largely be the material. In order to make the distinction clear we propose the name Bible kindergarten as applied to our Sunday school classes. Let it be understood that this proposition in no way interferes with the kindergarten of the Church. That is a grand movement to have churches take up the education of little children in their most impressive years, and is a system that requires the child's attendance for a certain portion of every day of the week, excepting Saturday. So that when a class of little children is met only on

the Sabbath day, and ostensibly for instruction in the regular Bible lesson, it is a thing distinct from the kindergarten of the Church. It is distinct, also, from the regular kindergarten.

In some instances the name "kindergarten" is applied to a class of children younger than in the so-called "primary." This is unfortunate, because the term describes not a grade but a method.

If this distinction is not clearly made, we shall presently have so-called "kindergartens" without a semblance of the genuine article, simply the "infant class" under another name.

Let the kindergarten of the Church be developed in all possible places. It is possible, yes, imperative, that there should be a Bible kindergarten in every Sunday school, for the kindergarten methods are the best by which Bible lessons may be presented to little children.

### Poor Little Aster!

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

I SAID this in the spring. I was in my garden. The clouds hung low and thick their drapery. The rain dripped, and it was a good day to set out my asters. One poor little plant had fallen over, and the earth was heaped upon a fraction of its stem. "Only an aster! Let it go! Let it lie there!" That was my first thought. "No," was the afterthought. "Its neighbor may be no better aster, but it has been set right, and it will have a symmetrical growth, and in the autumn will raise its shapely tower of rich blossoms. This poor little aster down on its side is just as well endowed, but it will grow with a crook and flower with a crook and stand in the autumn a misshapen thing. Set it right and it will develop right."

Justice was done to it, my poor little aster. In the autumn it now stands before me, a glorious candelabrum of blossoms, shapely and comely, my beautiful aster.

It set me thinking.

How many children are just as well endowed as other children, have just as good resources of intellect, but they are not started right. A wrong start is given them in the family, the neighborhood, the school, and God grant that it may not have been given in a church. But the result is that all through life they will show that crook, that unlucky twist. It will harm their peace of mind and damage their usefulness.

Poor little aster! The subject should beget charity. We stand before the children in our

primary department. Some of them are the poor little asters with a crook. For no fault of theirs, they have been started wrong. Have charity! Deal tenderly with their peculiarities. Don't make them responsible for every oddity. Behind it all is somebody's blunder, one of life's mishaps.

O Charity! thy mission is on the earth, but thy home is in heaven. Thy field of exercise is among men, but thy living birthplace is the bosom of God. An angel's spirit and a human breast for thy tabernacle and a human life as thy field of effort—how blessed is thy mission!

Poor little aster! Angels weep over it though men may refuse. Somebody above is sorry for the crook from which comes a cripple, and somebody above sheds tears of compassion.

Perhaps you as teachers in the primary department can do nothing for the child with a crook except to give your pity and your charity, and then perhaps you can do something else. If some one's theological perversity may have been inflicted on the child, if it have some wrong idea of God, some mutilated conception of the Saviour, it is your blessed opportunity to rectify the mistake, to lift the prostrate plant, to set it right and straight that it may grow up into the symmetry and the beauty of the heavenly gardens.

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS. THIRD QUARTER.

### LESSON 5. (August 2.)

#### DAVID'S KINDNESS. 2 Sam. 9. 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love" (Rom. 12. 10).

#### Primary Notes.

BY MRS. J. H. POLHEMUS.



[Sprinkle a handkerchief with cologne and shake it so that the perfume fills the classroom, then talk a little about the sweet odor; now put the cologne and handkerchief out of sight and speak of the fact that though the cause is gone the perfume still remains and gives pleasure. Show rose or spray of roses, and let the class tell why the rose is such a favorite flower, and how even one will make a room sweet.] Sometimes rose leaves are dried and put up in a particular way, so that the sweet smell is kept for years. I have been in a room where the moment I entered I could smell the rose leaves that had bloomed long months, perhaps years, before, but

whose sweetness had never been lost. [Pin the roses near the center of the board.]

It seems to me as if the perfume left in this room after the cologne was put away and the sweetness that comes from the rose leaves is very much like a kind act. Perhaps there comes a day when you do not feel very happy, and in the midst of your loneliness and unhappiness someone does you a kindness; perhaps a friend gives you a bunch of flowers, or maybe it is only a kind word or smile, but the kindness makes not only that day but many days bright and happy for you.

The Bible tells us of many kind acts, the memory of which has lasted all these years, coming down to us like the perfume of the rose. Good King David did such an act of kindness not very long after he was "king over all Israel," and today we are going to remember and talk about it. I am sure we shall go home with our hearts filled with the sweetness of "David's Kindness."

[Print the title at the side of the roses and tell the story found in 2 Sam. 9. 1-13, making the facts as real as possible and bringing out the point that David's kindness was shown to the son of one who had been his enemy. Print "to M—" after "kindness."]

What made David so kind? I am sure it was because his heart was full of love to God; that love made him want to show kindness to those around him, and that is always what follows from having love to God in our hearts. There are many people in the world now who, like David, are making the places where they live sweeter and better for their affectionate deeds.

I know of a man who was once a poor drunkard; one day he was going along the road so drunk that he soon found he could not walk; he lay down and went to sleep with the hot sun beating down on his face. A lady passing by saw and pitied the man, and pulling out her handkerchief spread it gently over his face. He woke sober, and finding the handkerchief his heart was touched with somebody's kindness, and from that day he became a better man; he is no longer a drunkard, but an earnest Christian man; that kindly act has never been forgotten.

But who has set us the best example of kindness? [Print "Jesus's" under "David's," and tell how he has shown kindness to us. Because we have received such kindness what ought we to be? [Repeat and print the Golden Text.] Let us each resolve "I will be kindly affectioned" to everyone, and if we really are our part of the world will be filled with a sweetness more lovely and lasting than that which comes from the rose. [Print "I will" before the Golden Text.]

[Suggest that each child draw at home a picture of the flower he thinks the sweetest.]

SUGGESTIONS FOR COLORING. Rose, if drawn, red; "Be affectioned," white outlined with red;

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"David's," "Jesus's Kindness to Me," green; "I will," white.



**Kindergarten Hints.**

BY MARY J. CHISHOLM FOSTER.

KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT. David's Kindness. 2 Sam. 9. 3-7.

GOLDEN TEXT. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6. 33).

AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER. Holy Bible, 1 Cor. 13. The books referred to in the last lesson are of use in the preparation of this lesson also.

**ATTENTION STORY.**

Our last lesson story told of David sitting in his house and thinking that he must build a church, and to-day our story is about a very good deed which he did. Perhaps he had been sitting at home thinking about his friends, and one he re-embers before with very loving thoughts, because many all the time and they loved each other dearly. The friend's name was Jonathan, and he had been a prince, the son of King Saul. When David was a young man he went to the king's palace one day, and when the prince saw him he loved him at once and put his own robe upon David and gave him some of his things. That was long ago, but David could not forget his friend, and he wondered if Jonathan had any children, and where they were. So, he sent word to the people to ask if they knew certain servant who knew all about it. This servant came and told the king that a son of Jonathan was living near there, and told him in which house, and the king said, "Bring him here!" When he came David saw that he was a young man, and that he was lame in both his feet. When he was a little boy his nurse let him fall, and both his feet were lame ever after (2 Sam. 4. 4). He bowed to the king, who said to him: "I will always be kind to you because I loved your father very dearly, and I knew your grandfather too." Then the king took the young man to the palace to live with him, and he said that as long as he lived he should sit at the table with the king. We may read about it here. [Read 2 Sam. 9. 3-7.]

Explain unusual words: "Ziba," "fetched," "reverence," "restore," "continually."

**OUTLINE.**

*Sunday.* Attention Story, Bible lesson, Golden Text, and conversation about the story.

*Monday.* When people love God and his Church as David did, they love other people besides themselves, and they try to help others in any way they may be able. They even try to find people whom they may help, just as David inquired for this young man.

*Tuesday.* Once last winter we had a lesson about friendship, and we talked of David and Jonathan. Our Golden Text was: "A friend loveth at all times." This story shows that to be true. Whether we see our friends or not, we may think of them and love them.

*Wednesday.* David had not heard of the Golden Rule, because all this happened before Jesus came here to live, and it was he who gave the Golden Rule to people; but David did just as that rule says we should do, so we think that God's voice spoke in his heart.

*Thursday.* All who love God and love other people will seek first the kingdom of God, which means the coming of peace, good-will, and joy through the life and teachings of our Saviour, and then they will serve others and have joy added in their own hearts.

*Friday.* Love is the grandest, most useful, most beautiful of all things in this world. Just as the king took care of this lame son of his dear friend we may find some one somewhere whom we may gladden and cause to have peace and joy. Let us say the Golden Text.

**NATURE WORK.** Talk of cedar, which was the material of the king's house. Cedar grew in the forests of Lebanon and the people brought it in ships to Joppa, which was a little city on the shore of a great sea. Cedar was the most beautiful tree growing there, and it stood for strength and grandeur (Psalm 104. 16; Psalm 92. 12). It was a very strong wood that lasted a long time.

**ART WORK.** Show pictures of palaces to the children, and have them find the towers and designate the vertical and horizontal lines, the slanting lines, and the pointed and circular window-tops.

**HAND WORK.** The small children may bring cedar, evergreen, and find twigs and talk of them. Let them count the five tiny leaves (or needles) on a pine twig and observe the odors of trees.

The TRANSITION CLASS may outline the words upon the lesson card, choosing the color.

**SCIENCE AT HOME WITH MOTHER.** Talk of the deep and strong thoughts which come to us while we sit alone sometimes thinking of God's goodness. David was very thankful that he had a good house which the carpenters and masons had made of cedar wood, and he wanted to show his thankfulness by doing something for others, and he thought of the church and tried to find that lame son of his friend. If we seek (or try) to find the kingdom of God, love to him, and service for others, we will be sure of peace and joy and gladness both for all in the home, and in our hearts. Little child,

are you thankful for your home? Are you glad God has given you so many people to love and so much to enjoy? Then do something for others—will you?

### LESSON VI. (August 9.)

#### DAVID'S VICTORIES. 2 Sam. 10. 8-19.

GOLDEN TEXT. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27. 1).

#### Primary Notes.



[Have drawn on the board a shield and sword; describe a soldier, and let the class guess from the description what kind of a man you are talking about.]

What are soldiers for? Why is there need of fighting? Ever since sin came into the world there have been wars and much fighting; in Bible times, before Jesus came, there was often need to fight, sometimes to punish the wicked, and sometimes to settle a right; there was one good man about whom we are learning a great deal, who often had to go to war; who knows his name? Do you suppose when David prepared for battle he was dressed like our soldiers? No; there were no guns in those days, and men fought with swords and spears and carried shields; for what was the shield? We have a sword and shield on the board to make us think how David was not only a king but a soldier, too; and now to day we are to learn of a time when he had to leave his throne to punish and conquer the enemy.

Last Sunday we had a sweet story about David that showed what? He was not only kind to Saul's son but to others, and I want to tell you now how one man received his kindness. [Tell the story found in 2 Sam. 10. 1-5.] When the Ammonites found that David despised them for their behavior, instead of saying that they were sorry, they made up their minds that they would begin a war with him, and because they were afraid they were not strong enough to conquer David alone they hired a great many soldiers from other nations to help them, till they got together a big army. [Tell how the battle was arranged, and the result of the second attempt to conquer Israel, when David himself led his people to battle and was victorious (2 Sam. 7-19).]

This was not the only time David was victorious over his enemies; in one short chapter in the Bible we read how he conquered six different people (2 Sam. 8); every time he was victorious, and because this was so our lesson is called what? Why did David have so many victories? Not because of his strength or the strength of his soldiers, but

because who was with him? [Print "The Lord" over his shield.]

In writing one of his psalms David must have been thinking of his battles; of how he had been kept safely, and of his many victories; this is the way he begins. [Repeat Psalm 27. 1-3.] What did he say the Lord was to him? [Print "Is my Light and Salvation," and explain how, because the Lord had shown him the way to meet and conquer his enemies, he was like a light; because he had kept him from harm, he was his salvation.] Because the Lord was his light and salvation David was never afraid; what did he say about fear? [Print "Whom shall I fear?" on the shield.] I think David felt the Lord was like a shield protecting him on every side.

Is there any fighting for us to do? Yes, but our enemies and weapons are different from David's. Satan and sin are our enemies, and there is need to fight every day; what kind of soldiers should we be? Brave, Christian soldiers. [Tell how there are battles to be fought in school, at home, in our own hearts; in how many ways Satan tries to conquer us; but if the Lord is our light and salvation we need not fear. Tell how missionaries here and in foreign lands are fighting against Satan, and how the Lord helps them; how God's word is our sword, and faith our shield; with these weapons, and the Lord our light and salvation, we may gain many victories.]

Close by singing, "Onward, Christian soldiers." SUGGESTIONS FOR BLACKBOARD COLORING. Sword and shield, orange; Golden Text, white.



#### Kindergarten Hints.

KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT. David's Victories, Psalm 27. 1; Psalm 23. 1.

GOLDEN TEXT. "Fear not, little flock" (Luke 12. 32).

AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER. Holy Bible, Psalm 51. *Treasury of David* (Spurgeon); *The Penitent's Prayer* (Alexander); *The Wilhelm Meister* (Goethe), vol. iii, "No religion that grounds itself on fear,"

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etc.; *Oratorio of the Elijah* (Mendelssohn), "Be not afraid, thy help is near."

## ATTENTION STORY.

David was brave. He had learned not to be afraid of people, of things, of darkness, or of animals. He was not afraid of anything. The reason all like to know what that was, for we want to be brave and without fear. That reason was, he remembered all the time that God cared for him. Now if anyone remembers just that—if we remember that God loves us and cares for us and watches to us many, many times, "fear not," and if we think of this when we begin to fear, the very thought of his words will make us strong. David said that God was the strength of his life—let us read the verse. (Read Psalm 27. 1.) When he said "of whom," that means—what people could make him afraid while God cared for him? so that he was never afraid that he would not have food or anything else he needed; and we know a verse about his Shepherd. Let us say it! "The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want" (Psalm 23. 1). He was sure that God would provide for him. Do you have bread to eat every day? It is because God is good that you have had food and clothing every day.

## OUTLINE.

*Sunday.* Attention Story, Bible lesson, Golden Text, and conversation about the story.

*Monday.* David was not afraid of people—why? Explain simply what it is to be strong in spirit. If a man or a boy knows that he is trying to do right, and he wants to do right, that very thought helps him to be strong.

*Tuesday.* David said he should not want, and many other people in all the years have said that verse which he said, and meant it, for they have had all they need given them of God.

*Wednesday.* Read of a good man being fed once by a bird which God sent (1 Kings 17. 6). God knew that the man was hungry and needed his care.

*Thursday.* Long after David lived Jesus came to this earth and told the people that God would surely care for them. He reminded them that God cares for birds, and he thinks more of them than he does of even the little birds, and he asked people not to fear. Let us read what he said. (Read Luke 12. 6, 7, and talk about it.)

*Friday.* David said that he had a Shepherd; so have we. We have the same dear loving Shepherd who will see that we do not want. He says to us the words of our Golden Text, "Fear not, little flock" (Luke 12. 32).

Explain unusual words: "Fardings," "value."

**NATURE WORK.** Talk of sparrows and of ravens. The sparrow is a small bird, and the raven is a large one which looks somewhat like a crow, but is much larger, though the shape and color are similar. The sparrow has a friendly chirp and has

less fear of people than other birds have. The raven is very large, usually two feet. He lives a long time, sometimes to be seventy or eighty years old. (See natural histories and encyclopedias.)

**ART WORK.** Show pictures of these two birds mentioned, and substitute nature for art during these days when the summer wanes and the days shorten. Have the children understand that all art is the attempt to reveal nature, and to preserve its beauties for the enjoyment and profit of mankind.

**HAND WORK.** The small children may have an invention lesson suggested by the many topics mentioned. Shepherd suggests folds, sheep, lambs, meadows, and waters. Sparrows and ravens suggest house tops and nests, also bird houses. In picturing these use sticks, blocks, rings, sand, and the blackboard.

The **TRANSITION CLASS** may outline the work upon the lesson card, using colored pencils.

**SCIENCE AT HOME WITH MOTHER.** Talk of bread, and of it being necessary for our life. Water, too, is something which all people need. God's care gave to Elijah the bread which he needed in the morning and in the evening (1 Kings 17. 6), and the same care was over David and the sparrows, and it is mindful of us also. To us he gives bread and water in the morning and in the evening, and his loving care knows all we need. Let us remember his love, and we know truly that we shall not want, for he is our Shepherd too. So we have some of the same victories which David had and each little child may remember the gentle Jesus and think of his tender words, "Fear not, little flock."

## LESSON VII. (August 16.)

## DAVID'S CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS. Psalm 32. 1-11.

**GOLDEN TEXT.** "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me (Psalm 51. 10).

## Primary Notes.



[Print "David's" at top of the board.] What have we learned about David? [Let the class give the events they remember in David's life.] What kind of a man was David? Why do you think he was a good man? Because he loved and obeyed

God; because he was forgiving and kind to those around him.

[Show a perfectly good and clean handkerchief.] You see this handkerchief is perfect; it is clean, it has no stain or soil on it; can anything happen to spoil its cleanness? What? [Dip a corner in

muddy water and show how it has been stained.] Can the handkerchief ever be clean again? [Rub the soiled place in pure water and show how the stain has been washed away.]

What we have done with the handkerchief makes me think of what is true of everyone, even a good person; can you tell me of anything that spoils goodness? Sin is like the muddy water that soiled the handkerchief, it soils the life and heart of even a good person. Can the stain be taken away? The Bible tells us the way it can be washed away; David knew the way, and we must learn it too, for all our hearts often become stained with sin, and we want to know how they can be cleansed.

I said David knew the way; why do you think this was so? Because though he was a good man and loved God, Satan tempted him one day and, listening to the tempter, he sinned. We have the story of it in the Bible. [Tell as much of the story as is best for the little children to know (2 Sam. 11).] The Bible says, "The thing that David had done displeased the Lord;" his heart, his life, had been stained with sin. [Make a heart under the word "David."] He knew he had sinned, but I don't think he felt what a dreadful thing it was till a prophet named Nathan was sent by God with a message for him. [Give an account of Nathan's interview with David.]

As David listened to Nathan he felt how wicked he had been and was truly sorry; and now he took the first step to be made clean again; he confessed his sin; instead of saying, "What have I done?" he said, "I have sinned against the Lord." It was David's confession—that is, owning his sin—that made it possible for God to put away the sin and cleanse him from the stain. [Print "Confession" around the upper part of the heart.] Nathan said (2 Sam. 12, 13); that means that David received forgiveness from the Lord. [Print "Forgiveness" around the lower side of the heart.] Forgiveness means that the sin was pardoned, the heart and life made clean again; so David's confession and forgiveness made his heart what? [Print inside the heart, "Made a clean."]

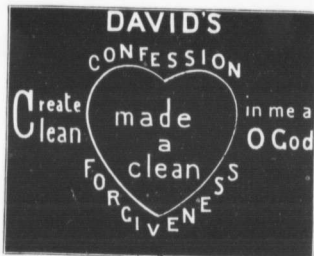
David suffered for his sin long afterward (2 Sam. 12, 10, 15-23); but even in his sorrow there was joy. Why? Because God had forgiven him. He shows his gladness for forgiveness in one of his psalms. [Repeat Psalm 32, 1, 2-5.] He says some beautiful things in that same psalm about God and what he will do for those who trust him. There is another psalm that David wrote just after Nathan brought him God's message; it is his prayer for forgiveness. See how it shows his sorrow for sin! [Repeat Psalm 51, 1-4, 7-10.] This last verse is a good one for us to pray every day. [Print and recite the Golden Text.]

Would you be sure God would forgive your sins? Listen to his promise. [Repeat 1 John 1, 9.] If

we confess and leave our sin, God will forgive us and will make our hearts clean, even as he made the heart of David.

Sing, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BLACKBOARD COLORING. Heart, white; Confession and Forgiveness, blue; part of the Golden Text, white.



### Kindergarten Hints.

KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT. "David's confession and forgiveness." Psalm 32, 1, 7, 9-11.

GOLDEN TEXT. "Create in me a clean heart, O God!" (Psalm 51, 10).

AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER. Holy Bible, Psalm 34, Psalm 51; *Treasury of David* (Spurgeon); *The Penitent's Prayer* (Alexander); *Story of the Psalms* (Dr. Henry Van Dyke); *Contralto Solo*, "With Thee There is Forgiveness." *Oratorio*, *Woman of Samaria*, "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me."

### ATTENTION STORY.

Sometimes David found it hard to be good. Even though he was a king there were some days when naughty thoughts came hurrying to him, and when naughty deeds followed. Whenever he did do any naughty thing he was sorry, just as boys and girls are to-day, and before he could be really happy again, he wanted to say that he was sorry, and to ask God to forgive him. In our lesson to-day he says that the one whose naughtiness is forgiven is happy. He thought that people could help being naughty too, for they do not have to go where they do not want to go, nor to do those things which they do not choose to do. People are not like horses having bits in their mouths for others to steer them; their thoughts and their hearts steer the hands, and their feet, and their lips. When we do good and walk in the paths where we ought to go, we will be glad enough to "short for joy." [Let us read Psalm 32, 1, 7, 9-11.]

Explain unusual words: "Transgression," "preserve," "understanding," "bridle," "trusteth," "compass," "righteous," "upright."

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## OUTLINE.

*Sunday.* Attention Story, Bible lesson, Golden Text, and conversation about the story.

*Monday.* What did David mean by "a hiding place?" Just as a little boy or girl would run into a safe place when in danger, David found that it was safe for him to have his thoughts fly to God for strength and help to be good.

*Tuesday.* Have the children think and talk about the superior intelligence of themselves over the prettiest and best horse in all this world. Explain simply that a little tiny child is greater in God's sight than the strongest animal. The child can think and can choose.

*Wednesday.* All who are naughty feel sorrows; they always do, but God forgives every naughtiness as soon as we ask him. Your father and mother always do when you ask them, do they not? and God loves us more than they do.

*Thursday.* Once Peter, that disciple who followed Jesus, and who loved him, and wanted to hear his words, came to him and said, "If my brother is naughty to me seven times, shall I forgive him all those times?" Jesus said, "Yes, indeed, more times than that; every time." (Matt. 18, 21, 22.)

*Friday.* Let us say the prayer of the Golden Text. We all want our hearts to be clean and free from everything naughty. They will be if they are full of love, and if we are ready to forgive others as we expect God to forgive us. (Matt. 6, 12.) Now, if we wish to be forgiven we must forgive others. If your little playmate does something which you do not like, and he is sorry for it and tells you so, you may forgive him and tell him to never mind, you will not think about it, and you will be little friends again.

**NATURE WORK.** The talk may be about horses. Did you know that the Bible speaks of them? It does in many places. It speaks of a red horse (Zech. 1, 8), and a white one (Rev. 6, 12), and a black one (Rev. 6, 5). (Read James 3, 3, also.) The children will be interested to talk of this favorite domestic animal, and they will tell stories of horses. You may tell stories illustrative of the speed, the strength, the beauty, the kindness, the intelligence of the horse.

**ART WORK.** Show pictures of horses, and also of horses and chariots such as kings had.

**HAND WORK.** The small children may fold paper barns with single doors, and with double doors. With different gifts and occupations they may outline pictures of roads for horses to travel in; sand bridges with roads over or under the bridges; and with sticks and rings they may picture chariots, and also carts, such as they see every day. Perhaps some one knows how to make a picture of a horse on the blackboard.

The **TRANSITION CLASS** may sew the symbol

upon the lesson card. This is a sign that through Jesus and his cross there is forgiveness for everyone who has ever been naughty.

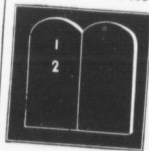
For **SCIENCE AT HOME** WITH MOTHER talk of loving gentleness in the home, and the spirit of forgiveness which overlooks the faults of each other. We have power to control our minds, and trusting God for strength, he will help us to overcome tired nerves and impatient spirits. Real patience and loving forgiveness is needed in the home. When the little girl said to her brother, "O, I am sorry I hurt you!" he replied, "I know you are, Susie; so now it doesn't hurt."

## LESSON VIII. (August 23.)

## ABSALOM'S REBELLION. 2 Sam. 15. 1-12.

**GOLDEN TEXT.** "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exod. 20, 12).

## Primary Notes.



[Hang up "Rebellion" printed in large letters at the top of the board.] This is a hard word, and perhaps very few here know what it means; let us try to find out. I heard of a school once where all the scholars made up their

minds they wouldn't have school on a certain day; they gathered in the large school-room and locked the doors so that the teachers could not come in. When they were told to open the doors no one obeyed; they sang songs about not going to school any more, and behaved very badly; that was rebellion. Those scholars rebelled, or set themselves against their teachers; they were going to do what pleased themselves; they were not going to be ruled or obey those in whose care they were placed.

Rebellion is leaving and setting ourselves against those we should obey and in whose care we ought to stay. A school may rebel against a teacher, a nation may rebel against a king or president, the men in a factory may rebel against those who engage them to do the work, a child may rebel against his parents; in all these cases the rebellion is the going against and leaving those who ought to be honored and obeyed.

We have such a sad story to-day of a son who rebelled against his father; this son's name was Absalom. [Hang up before "Rebellion."] Did you ever hear of him before? Perhaps some one can tell me who his father was? What kind of a father do you think David would be? And what kind of sons would you expect him to have? Let me tell you something about Absalom. He was very handsome (2 Sam. 14, 25, 26), and his father

loved him dearly; but I'm sorry to tell you he was not a good young man, and though he was the king's son and very dear to his father, there came a wicked wish into his heart; he was not satisfied to be only the king's son, he wanted to be king, and he began to plan how he could get rid of his father. [Tell what Absalom did (2 Sam. 15. 1-6), and while telling how the city gate was the place where people went in those days to have their wrongs righted, make a pair of gates on the board. Condense and tell the events formed in 2 Sam. 15. 7-37, and how Mephibosheth returned David's kindness (2 Sam. 16. 1-4). Tell how Absalom returned to Jerusalem and what was done (2 Sam. 15-23)].

How do you think it was possible for Absalom to have become so wicked and have done such a dreadful thing? Because he forgot and disobeyed the fifth commandment. What is it? [While it is being repeated, print "Honor" over the gates, and "Father" and "Mother" on the gate posts, and if time permits finish the Golden Text between and below the gates.]

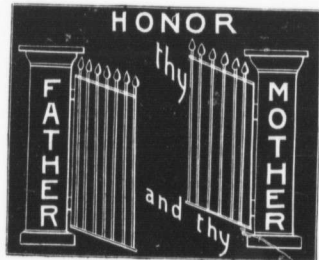
If Absalom had honored his father when a little boy, if he had always tried to please and obey him, if he had truly loved him, he never would have rebelled against him and become so wicked. It is to save us from falling into just such sinful ways that God has given us the commandments, and this fifth commandment, if obeyed, helps to keep us from becoming like Absalom; if we learn to honor our parents we will find it easier to honor the Lord.

[Explain the meaning of honor and show how men who spend many sad day sin prisons begin their downfall by rebelling against their parents.]

Why did cities use to have gates? I have put our Golden Text on these gates because, if we do what it says, it will help to keep us safe from many dangers. Close with an appeal to the children to begin, while they are little, to honor their parents.

Suggest that each child make a picture of the tables of stone and print the fifth commandment.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR COLORING.** Gates, brown; "Honor thy," white; "Father and Mother," yellow.



### Kindergarten Hints.

**KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT.** Obedience to parents. Psalm 34. 11, 13, 14 (first clause); Eph. 6. 12 (first clause).

**GOLDEN TEXT.** "Honor thy father and thy mother" (Exod. 20. 12).

**AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER.** Holy Bible, Prov. 3. 1-10; "The Integrity of the Home," *Public Opinion*, May 31, 1894; Whittier's poem, "Snow-bound," "The dear home faces where upon the firelight shone;" *Illustrative Notes* (Drs. Hurlbut and Doherty); *The Bible in the World's Education* (Bishop Warren).

### ATTENTION STORY.

At one time, when David was singing a song of praise to God, he wanted to tell everyone that God is careful of all that they may have food and all they need, and so he called, "Come, ye children," and he asked them to listen while he should tell them how they might be glad in rightdoing. He had children and grandchildren, and he was so much older than they were, that he knew more of the way through this world than they knew. I suppose that the children listened to what he told them, and it is written here—let us read it. [Read Psalm 34. 11 (first clause), 13, 14 (first clause).] How good these words sound! If we are not like horses and other animals we can guide our tongues and our lips, for they will obey us. There are two other verses here which will help us very much. [Read Eph. 6. 12, and the Golden Text.]

Explain unusual words: "Hearken," "guile," "depart," "obey," "honor."

### OUTLINE.

**Sunday.** Attention Story, Bible lesson, Golden Text, and conversation about the story.

**Monday.** Talk of the power of the tongue. The large and strong animals as well as the small ones have tongues, but they cannot use them as people can. They cannot speak. The largest tongue of an animal has not speech, but the little child can talk. Our lips are necessary for our speech, which is a great gift of God.

**Tuesday.** We must use this gift well and for the good of others. If it is such a precious gift we must be careful how we use it. Let us say good and kind and loving words, words good and true.

**Wednesday.** David said that it was right to keep far away from naughty ways and places and to do good.

**Thursday.** What is it to obey our parents? It is to do just what they tell us we should do. They have been in this world longer than we have, and they can tell us just what it is right to do. Just as anyone who has walked over a path for a long time knows all about it, so they know the right ways, and they tell the little children how to walk and where to walk and what to do.

**Friday.** Our Golden Text is a part of God's word which was kept in that beautiful gold box we talked about a little while ago. It is right, therefore, to love and to obey our parents because our

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heavenly Father says so. [Make practical the everyday ways of showing love and being obedient, and get the ideas of the children about it.]

**NATURE WORK.** Talk of the gift of song which children have. They notice song, and imitate it before they do speech. Birds can sing, but they cannot speak words as little children can. Talk of the habits of some birds, and choose one variety to talk about. The robin is one of the most familiar to all. He comes to us early in the spring and stays until the cold days come. Do you see any robins these August days? You will hear their sweet songs if you listen.

**ART WORK.** Show bird pictures, and have the children designate points of difference in the length of bills, tails, and other points.

**HAND WORK.** The small children may make bird-house pictures of sticks and in the sand table. They may build houses such as little children live in with their parents. In clay they may model robin-nests, but no eggs in them, for the little robin-wings grew strong for flight and the birds are away, away looking at this beautiful world. The nests of last spring are empty now.

**THE TRANSMISSION CLASS** may color the bird-picture upon the lesson card.

**SCIENCE AT HOME WITH MOTHER.** When did the baby begin to talk? What were his first words? They were some which he had heard others speak. Perhaps his little brothers and sisters had said, "Papa," or "Mamma," and he tried to say these dear names. The little children who can talk gentle and loving words only, because if the baby repeats their words they will want all their words to be good and true and loving words.

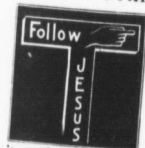
The baby will try by and by to say the same morning and evening prayers that you say, so say the words slowly and carefully until he learns them and prays to Our Father. You can then say the prayers together, as you sing your hymns and songs together.

**LESSON IX. (August 30.)**

**ABSALOM'S DEATH. 2 Sam. 18. 9-33.**

**GOLDEN TEXT.** "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish [Psalm 1. 6]."

**Primary Notes.**



is another difference, and that difference is what

When you are walking in the street the people you meet seem very different from one another, and they are; in what ways are they different? [In dress, looks, speech, etc.] In all these ways people differ, but there

we are to talk about to-day. The Bible tells us that some are [print "righteous," and explain its meaning; it tells us, too, that others are [print "ungodly," and explain].

As you watch people you think that, besides looking differently, they seem to be going different ways; that is true, too, for each has his own work and pleasures and home, and the ways to these are different; but it is just as true that there are two paths in which you can find all the world; one path leads to the heavenly city, the other to a world of misery.

[Show how all begin life with the same opportunity of choosing the path to heaven, but ever since sin entered into the world the ways divide and some go one way and some the other; begin a path at the extreme left of the board and separate it into two, leaving the words "righteous" and "ungodly" at the two endings.] Who take the way leading to heaven? Who the other? Can you always tell which way people are going? Is there any one who knows? [Print "The Lord knoweth" on the first path before it divides.]

Sometimes it is very plain which way people are going. In which path do you think Noah walked? Abraham? Moses? David? We learned last Sunday of one of David's sons; what was his name? [Recall Absalom.] Tell me what you can remember about him; in which path do you think he was? We left Absalom last Sunday in Jerusalem, and poor David a wanderer from his home. [Make a story of the incidents in 2 Sam., chapters 17 and 18, putting it in language easy to be understood.]

[Call out the story of Absalom's death, and then read verse 18.] Talk about Absalom's grave; perhaps he had expected to be buried by the big pillar he had raised; but where was he buried? [Verse 17.] While reading make a pile of stones at end of "ungodly." Absalom's life ended so differently from what he had expected. [Contrast what he had hoped to be with his end.]

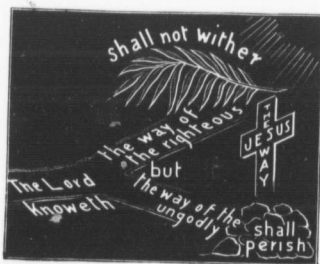
David in one of his psalms tells the story of the ungodly. [Recite Psalm 1. 4-6, and print "shall perish" on the stones. If possible have some chaff and show how easily it is blown away and lost.] What a sad ending was Absalom's! He might have been among the righteous; how different then his life would have been here and hereafter!

Hear what David said about the way of the righteous. [Rep at Psalm 1. 1-3; show a branch of evergreen and tell how it stays green throughout the year; tell of the palm tree of David's country, and draw a leaf at the end of the "righteous" way, printing over it "Shall not wither."]

In which of these ways are you? I hope in the way of the righteous. But suppose Satan has

tempted you into the way of the ungodly, is there any help for you? Must you go on and perish? I'm so glad there has been a way provided by which anyone may leave the one and reach the other. [Make a cross connecting the two paths and print on it "Jesus the way."] Jesus said (John 14. 6). If we turn from our evil ways and bring Jesus our sin-stained hearts to cleanse he will forgive us and set us in the way that the Bible says grows brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. [Make rays from above shine on the way of the righteous.]

**SUGGESTIONS FOR COLORING.** Paths, brown; stones, brown; leaf, green; cross, white; "Jesus the way," white; Golden Text, white; "Shall not wither" and rays, yellow.



### Kindergarten Hints.

**KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT.** Obedience to God. Psalm 40. 3, 8; Psalm 103. 2-5; Psalm 4. 7.

**GOLDEN TEXT.** "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey" (Josh. 24. 24).

**AIDS TO THE KINDERGARTNER.** Holy Bible, Psalm 103; *Old Testament History*, pp. 455-460; *Commentary* (Clarke), Psalm 103; *Commentary* (Whedon), Psalm 103; *Illustrative Notes* (Drs. Hurlbut and Doherty).

### ATTENTION STORY.

Our lesson of last week was about obedience to parents, and to-day we have one that goes with it, and that one leads to this one—obedience to God. The children who are obedient to their parents, and who are glad to do what the father and mother tell them it is right to do are obeying God's word. David knew that though he was a king, yet a greater King than he watched over him, and cared for him. Who is the King of all the earth? He is God over all. David knew that if he loved and served God his life would be happy and useful. He tried to be good, and we have found that when he was naughty at any time he asked God to forgive him, and he knew that obeying God's voice gave joy to his heart. Just as little children sing when they are glad, so he said that God put a song of gladness in his mouth. He said, too, that he delighted to do

what God wanted him to do, and that God's word was hidden in his heart. He remembered that it was God's love that gave him all his blessings, and made him well when he was sick, and gave him good things to eat, so that he felt strong like an eagle. We may read about it here. [Read Psalm 40. 3, 8; Psalm 103. 2-5; Psalm 4. 7.]

**Explain unusual words:** "Delight," "benefits," "iniquities," "heathen," "redeemeth," "loving-kindness," "satisfieth."

### OUTLINE.

**Sunday.** Attention Story, Bible lesson, Golden Text, and conversation about the story.

**Monday.** What do you think a "new song" was? It may have been that David felt as a little boy or girl does when a warm true love for our Father is in his heart. How much happier we are when we are good, than when we forget to be good.

**Tuesday.** David would rather be good than not. Would you? (Explain verse 8.) A little girl said that she heard the voice often "when the peach trees were loaded with half-ripe peaches" which she had been forbidden to touch. She would smell of the little hard balls with their velvet skins and think she would take one bite, but the voice said "No, no, mamma told you not to." Her mamma told her that Conscience was another name for God's way of talking to her, and that if she wanted to grow up to be a good woman she must listen to the voice and obey it. "Grown-up people hear the voice too."

**Wednesday.** "Bless the Lord" means thank him for all these things. You have these very same things, have you not? Were you ever sick? God made you well; and his goodness is like a crown, David said, and he thought that a crown is something very precious. So God's great goodness is very dear and precious to us.

**Thursday.** The good things for our mouths are God's gifts. How we should love him and be glad to obey him when he loves us so dearly and gives us so much in our life! When Jesus was upon the earth he gave food of bread, water, fish, to those who were hungry, and he always "cared" whether people had food or not.

**Friday.** Let us say that verse which tells where gladness comes from. Repeat together, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart." It is from God all gladness comes, and this will surely come if we obey God's voice in our hearts and his words written in this Book. All who are obedient to parents and obedient to God have this gladness put in their hearts.

**NATURE WORK.** Talk of eagles. An eagle is the emblem of strength and courage. Eagles live in the mountains and forests, and build their nests high up in the rocks. The sparrows and robins like to live near to man, but the eagle tries to get far away from people, and he lives high up far away from

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houses and barns. When the eagle flies his wings seem hardly to move. He never flutters as small birds do, but he soars. There are upward of seventy varieties of eagles.

**HAND WORK.** The small children may picture mountains in the sand table, putting rocks and twigs (for trees) among them. If possible have real nests which have been made by birds to show to them, and let them handle these and examine them. A robin's nest is larger than a small bird's nest and different in structure from it. The nests are deserted now and you can get them easily.

The **TRANSITION CLASS** may outline the verse upon the card. It is a good resolution, and if kept, its members will find that God will put gladness in their hearts as he did in David's.

**SCIENCE AT HOME WITH MOTHER.** Talk of song. Human families and bird families enjoy singing together. Be glad as a family, and by obeying God's voice have gladness in all the hearts. Be sure that the "good things" to eat are wholesome and cooked thoroughly.

Whisper Songs for August.

FIFTH LESSON.

Our King now is calling,  
And who will obey?  
O come to his table—  
Let no one delay.

SIXTH LESSON.

The Lord is our light,  
And whom shall we fear?  
To all who will trust him  
He ever is near.

SEVENTH LESSON.

O who can deliver  
From Satan and sin?  
Look ever to Jesus  
The victory to win.

EIGHTH LESSON.

From the sin of self-love,  
Dear Lord, make us free,  
And keep us forever  
In pure love of thee.

NINTH LESSON.

I have a dear Father  
Who knoweth my way;  
Ask him to lead me,  
Then trust and obey.

LIVE to be useful; live to give light; for those who are enabled through grace to shine as lights here shall, in the world to come, shine as suns and stars forever and ever.

Order of Service

FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

Third Quarter.

**PRaise SERVICE.** [All standing.]

*Teacher.* O, give thanks unto the Lord,  
*Class.* For he is good.

*Teacher.* Thou art my God,  
*Class.* And I will praise thee.

*Teacher.* Thou art my God,  
*Class.* I will exalt thee.

*Teacher.* I will praise thee,  
*Class.* For thou hast heard me.

**SINGING.** "Praise him, praise him, all ye little children."

WHISPER PRAYER.

JESUS, how we thank thee

For thy love to-day!

O, be near to hear us

As we praise and pray.

[Prayer by teacher, all joining in the Lord's Prayer.]

**SINGING.** [Church hymn appropriate to the lesson.]

*Teacher.* What has Jesus said about giving?  
*Class.* Freely ye have received; freely give.

SING GIVING SONG.

**OFFERING,** followed by birthday offerings.

CONCERT RECITATION.

The silver and the gold are thine,  
And we belong to thee;

O may we always love and give  
With hearts both glad and free.

REVIEW FROM BOARD.

SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.

**REST EXERCISE,** "We will all rise up together."

CLASS TEACHING.

ECHO PRAYER.

CLOSING EXERCISES.

*Teacher.* The Lord shall preserve thy going out,

*Class.* And thy coming in.

*Teacher.* From this time forth, and even forever more.

CLASS AND TEACHER.

Now the hour is over,

And ere we go away,

All standing thus together

This little prayer we'll say—

[All fold hands.]

Help us, heavenly Father

Thy loving face to seek;

And guide and keep us safely

All through the coming week.



## Book Notices.

*A Knotty Point.* And other stories. By WM. FORSTER. London: Wesleyan Sunday-school Union. Toronto: Wm. Briggs.

This is another handsome square octavo of short sketches by Mr. Forster. One of them will have special interest to Canadian readers as giving an account of Dr. Bowman Stevenson's Children's Home, whereby the city arabs of London are transferred from the Arabia petra of London's stony streets to the Arabia felix of happy Canadian homes.

*A Standard Hymnal.* A New Hymnal for general use. Compiled and arranged by C. C. CONVERSE. 12mo, cloth, 112 pp., 35 cents. New York, London and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

No one could be better fitted to prepare a hymnal that would meet the devotional needs of the people in all services of the Church, Sunday-school and family circle, than is the well-known composer, C. C. Converse, of whose hymn "What a Friend we Have in Jesus," fifty million copies have been printed. "Standard Hymnal" contains 150 of the choicest hymns selected from a whole library of psalmody. Its tunes are among the choicest written by the world's great composers.

*Talks to the King's Children.* Second series of "Five Minute Object Sermons." By SYLVANUS STALL, D.D. Cloth, 12mo, 256 pp., \$1.00. New York, London and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

This book belongs to a class of which there are but few in any language. The author has done for children what Schriver in Germany, and Dean Stanley in England, have done for grown people. There are many religious books for children, but these Sermonettes are unique. With some object of every-day life presented to the eye, the author after the manner of the parables, presents the important truths of the Gospel to the easy comprehension of both old and young. The large sale of the first series of "Five Minute Object Sermons to Children" proves the author's fitness for this work. Every page is animate with thoughts that both captivate and edify. Some of the sermons are little classics. The book is a model for children's sermons, and it is not surprising that the first series has been welcomed by mothers in the nursery, teachers in the school-room and missionaries in foreign lands; has afforded the best of instruction to the young, and has been appreciatively used by grown people for devotional reading and welcomed particularly by pastors in preparing to preach to children. It will be especially helpful and suggestive to primary class Sunday-school teachers.

*Lamps and Pitchers and Other Addresses to Children.* By GEORGE MILLIGAN, B.D. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier. Toronto: William Briggs. Price 50 cents.

To address children so as to catch and keep their attention, and to interest and instruct the mind, is a very difficult task. Mr. Milligan seems to have a genius for this. His previous volume of "Golden Nails" has reached its sixth thousand, and other volumes the fourth thousand. They are models of simple, direct teaching, and may be well studied by preachers and teachers among us.

*Chrissie's Faults; or, Fettered by Custom.* By JEANIE FERRY. London: Wesleyan Sunday-school Union. Toronto: William Briggs.

This is another story illustrating the evils of intemperance and its frightful consequences. A young wife, fettered by the customs of the times, refused to sign the temperance pledge, yields to the fatal fascinations of the drink habit, loses her babe through the drunkenness of a nurse, and only through late repentance wins pardon and peace. Her experience is beautifully expressed in the following lines:

"The mistakes of my life have been many,  
The sins of my heart have been more,  
And I scarce can see for weeping,  
But I'll knock at the open door.

"I am lowest of them that love Him,  
I am weakest to those who pray;  
But I come as He has bidden,  
And He will not say me nay.

"I know I am weak and sinful,  
It comes to me more and more;  
But when the dear Saviour shall bid me  
come in  
I'll enter the open door.

"The mistakes of my life have been many,  
And my spirit is sick with sin,  
And I scarce can see for weeping,  
But the Saviour will let me in.

"My mistakes His free grace will cover,  
My sins He will wash away;  
And the feet that shrink and falter  
Shall walk through the gates of day."

LEARN TO DO WELL.—Learning to do well is like learning to swim. You wade into the water, but not far, for fear you will drown. You try to swim, but sink. You try again, and do a little better. You swallow a good deal of water. It gets into your ears and eyes and nose, but you keep on splashing, and finally can swim. So you must keep on doing well until you learn how, and it has become a habit. A habit is something which we have. That is what the word means. It often becomes something which has us.—*Christian Leader.*

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