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HANDBOOK TO
THE HISTORY OF THE
HEBREW MONARCHY

VOL. I
FROM THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL
TO THE ACCESSION OF SOLOMON

FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

BY
THE REV. A. R. WHITHAM, M.A.
PRINCIPAL OF CULHAM TRAINING COLLEGE
AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF OXFORD

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INTRODUCTION

THE HISTORY OF THE HEBREW MONARCHY

THIS volume contains a series of thirty-one lessons, which are intended to illustrate the rise of the Hebrew monarchy from the birth of Samuel to the accession of Solomon, a period of more than a century and a half (1170-1015 B.C.). The lessons are based chiefly on the two books of Samuel, with selections from 1 Chronicles and the beginning of 1 Kings. As far as possible the text is printed continuously, the exceptions consisting (1) of some rearrangements of verses or chapters in order to illustrate a particular subject; (2) of omissions of matter which was not thought suitable for the teacher's purpose. Where such omissions have been made, a short summary of the subject-matter has been given.

The books of Samuel and Kings are evidently compiled from materials left by Samuel himself and other eminent prophets of Israel. The prophets were the national historians, and the Jews counted these books as belonging to the prophetic writings. The larger portion of them must have been compiled before the Captivity (see note on 1 Sam. xxvii. 6), though it is, of course, unknown at what exact date, or under whose hand, they assumed their present shape.

The books of Chronicles belong to a later time, and have a special purpose and value. They were compiled after the return from Captivity, probably by Ezra. They belong to a period of national restoration; and they aim (1) at quickening the national feeling and the sense of continuity with the past;

for which purpose great attention is paid to genealogies; (2) at showing how the national life depends upon the unity of worship, and how the Temple is the true centre of Israel. Consequently, while many personal details of the career of the kings of Israel are omitted, much new information is given respecting the religious services and the history of the Temple. The contrast between Chronicles and the earlier historical books is often expressed by saying that the latter were compiled under *prophetical*, the former under *priestly* influence. Each compiler made a true selection from the materials before him, but with a slightly different aim. The same truths are looked at from different points of view, just as in the Four Gospels.

These historical books present special difficulties and dangers for teachers. There is a temptation to be content with treating them merely as narratives of events, which are to be made interesting to children. This is easy enough with such fascinating materials as the history of Samuel, Saul, and David present, with their lifelike pictures of character and adventure, of failure and triumph. But to treat Holy Scripture *merely* in this way is to put it on the level of ordinary history. Neither must the teacher be content with enforcing general moral lessons, still less with enunciating religious commonplaces. If he is at all to do justice to so great a theme, he must ever have in his mind the following considerations. He is dealing not with ordinary history, nor even history 'with a moral,' but with the supreme facts of *Revelation, Inspiration, Divine Purpose, Divine Providence*. He is dealing with *Revelation*: God has spoken to mankind through His prophets in an altogether different and higher manner than He has spoken in ordinary history. The historical books are part of the 'Word of God.' They claim, by an indisputable authority, our *reverence* and our intellectual and moral *submission*. We have to interpret, not to criticise. The teacher is dealing with *Inspiration*, with books inspired by the Holy Ghost, 'Who spake by the prophets.' The writers or compilers of these books received something more than that general assistance of the Holy Spirit which is given

to all sincere seekers after truth. They were taught by God without losing their own individuality, or the necessity for their own labour—taught the Truth, as they were able to hear it. Moreover, they were taught to deliver this truth in the words best suited for the Divine purpose; and they were kept from all serious error in understanding or expressing the truth. The teacher is dealing with *Divine Purpose*. Running through all human history, Revelation shows us the purpose of God for the world: redemption and perfection through the Incarnation of His Son. 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy' (Rev. xix. 10). And lastly, the teacher is dealing with the *Divine Providence*. All the events of sacred history, as recorded in the Bible, are ordered by God for the furtherance of His purpose. God never forces man's free-will; He does not prevent sin and evil; but by a mystery of Divine wisdom, He is ever bringing good out of evil, and shaping even the self-will and the blindness of sinful men to the ultimate end He has in view;

'The one far-off Divine event
To which the whole creation moves.'

And applying these considerations to the present subject, the teacher will grasp the main idea which underlies the historical books of the Old Testament. He will see that everything really subserves one end. Christ, 'the root and the offspring of David,' is the true King of humanity, for Whom all the vicissitudes of Hebrew history were preparing under Divine guidance. Whether it is a story of human failure, like that of Eli and his sons, or of national worldliness and self-will which asked for a king, or of the Divine election which marked out David from his brethren, or of the devout and generous impulses which led to the building of the Temple; all these under the supreme guiding Hand of God prepare for the revealing of Christ, Prophet, Priest, and King, God and Man in One Person, the head and consummation and glory of humanity, and for His kingdom the Catholic Church. It is this truth which the writer has endeavoured to keep in view throughout the preparation of

the lessons in this volume, and would earnestly commend to every teacher as the one and only key to the meaning of Holy Scripture.

There is one thing more for the teacher to remember always. We ourselves, those who teach, and those who are taught, are living under the present rule of Him Whom the prophets foretold, and for Whom the kings prepared the way. We are members of His kingdom, the Church; pledged to allegiance by our baptism. Every generation needs to grasp this truth afresh, with adaptation to its own particular needs. And it is the privilege of the Christian teacher so to apply the lessons of Holy Scripture, so to instruct and impress those whom he teaches, that he may help to make the kingdom and sovereignty of Christ a living reality; obedience to Christ the real practical guide of life; membership in Christ's Church the ever-deepening joy of life. Every lesson on Scripture which he gives should begin and end with Christ and His Church. This will make all the difference between a mere lesson in Jewish history and a lesson in Divine Truth.

The extracts from the Revised Version contained in this volume are printed by permission of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

THE HISTORY OF
THE HEBREW MONARCHY

CHAPTERS I. ; II. 1-11

NOW there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was ^a Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite : 2. and he had two wives ; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah : and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. 3. And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in ^b Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.

^a 1 Chron. vi. 27. 34.

^b Josh. xviii. 1.

NOTE.—Marginal readings *not in italics* are from the Revised Version.

1. **Ramathaim-zophim.** This place, the name of which literally means 'the two Ramahs (or heights) of the family of Zuph,' has been identified from ancient times with Arimathæa, but its exact site is unknown. 'Mount Ephraim' is the oldest name in the Bible for Samaria. The whole district is practically a 'mount,' being a tableland averaging between 2000 and 3000 feet in height, and descending to the plains on the west by gradual stages, and to the valley of the Jordan on the east by more rapid declivities. Elkanah was a Levite, of the family of Kohath.

2. **He had two wives.** Both polygamy and divorce are contrary to the primeval law of marriage instituted by God Himself (Gen. ii. 18-24). But just as divorce was permitted to the Jews 'because of the hardness of men's hearts' (S. Matt. xix. 8), so in the early ages polygamy was allowed. But both these concessions belonged only to the preparatory stage of revelation ; and were absolutely abolished by the Christian Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. No human law can ever make either polygamy or divorce lawful for a Christian.

3. **Yearly.** The Law of Moses ordered attendance of every male three times a year at the central sanctuary (Exod. xxiii. 14-17). But in practice this rule seems to have been relaxed ; and one attendance in the year was all that was required—at any rate, from those who lived at a distance. Cf. S. Luke ii. 41.

3. **Shiloh.** We learn from Josh. xviii. 1 that the tabernacle built by Moses in the wilderness was pitched at Shiloh, after the entrance into Canaan. The position of the place is described in Judg. xxi. 19. The name means 'rest.' Shiloh has been identified with the modern Seilun, ten miles north of Bethel. The ruins of this place show an excavation in the rock, in the shape of a quadrangle, and large enough

4. And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions : 5. but unto Hannah he gave ¹a worthy portion ; ¹a double portion. for he loved Hannah : but the LORD had shut up her womb. 6. And her ²adversary also provoked her sore, for ²rival. to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. 7. And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her ; therefore she wept, and did not eat. 8. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou ? and why eatest thou not ? and why is thy heart grieved ? am not I better to thee than ten sons ? 9. So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. 10. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. 11. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine

for the court of the Tabernacle. There is no record of the circumstances of the destruction of the Tabernacle, nor why Shiloh became desolate. But the fact of its desolation is referred to by Jeremiah (vii. 12) as an example of the judgments of God. There is a good description of the site and ruins of Shiloh in Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 231-233.

Eli was descended from Ithamar, the younger son of Aaron. The high-priesthood did not return to the elder branch until Zadok (1 Kings ii. 27). Eli seems to have performed the double functions of high priest and judge.

4. **Portions**, i.e. of the sacrificial feast. Elkanah's sacrifice was a thank-offering (Lev. vii. 11-18), the most prominent feature of which was the joyful feast of the worshippers upon the sacrifice. Thus the 'thank-offering' was a type of the Holy Communion or 'Eucharist' ('thanksgiving').

9. **A seat by a post**. The regular and official seat of a ruler was in the gateway. Cf. 2 Sam. xix. 8.

Temple. The Temple was not yet built, and the erection at Shiloh was, of course, the tabernacle made by Moses in the wilderness ; but the Hebrew word for 'temple' simply means any *stately* dwelling, and is also used for a king's palace.

11. **She vowed a vow**. The 'vow' was a frequent accompaniment of prayers made in times of special need. It was a promise to make some offering to God if the prayer was granted. This offering would be

handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. 12. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. 13. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. 14. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. 15. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. 17. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the

an act of gratitude, and its due performance a test of the reality of the prayer. Some vows indeed were evil, like Jephthah's (Judg. xi.), but the general principle is good and quite permissible to a Christian.

There shall no razor come upon his head. This was a mark of special dedication to God.

Hannah's vow for her son was of a twofold character.

(a) She promised his lifelong dedication to the service of the tabernacle. The Levites ordinarily served the sanctuary between the ages of twenty-five and fifty only.

(b) She also promised that he should be a lifelong Nazarite. In Num. vi. we find Moses by God's command legislating for the Nazarites, as an already existing religious institution. Its actual origin is unknown; the vow, as a rule, was only temporary. Samson, Samuel, and S. John Baptist were lifelong Nazarites. The vow involved (1) abstinence from wine, (2) free growth of the hair, (3) refraining from the touch of a dead body.

The existence of this primeval institution points to a universal human instinct that some men are called by God to a life of special separation and consecration. This call was recognised by the Christian Church, and set on a higher level, as the 'religious' or 'monastic' life, with its threefold vow of obedience, poverty, and chastity.

13. **She spake in her heart.** This is a striking illustration of the religious customs of primitive and uncultured people. Prayer was evidently always spoken *aloud*. Hannah's prayer from its very earnestness was silent, and seems to belong to a higher order, and to be more akin to that commanded by our Lord (S. Matt. vi. 5, etc.).

16. **A daughter of Belial.** Belial is not really a proper name, but simply means 'worthlessness.' See notes on chap. ii. 12 and 22.

God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him. 18. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*. 19. And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. 20. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name ³Samuel, *saying*, Because I have ³ = *heard of God*. 21. And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. 22. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and *then* I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. 23. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. 24. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child *was* young. 25. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. 26. And she said, Oh my lord, *as* thy soul liveth, my lord, *I am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. 27. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: 28. therefore also I have ⁴lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he ⁴granted. shall be ⁴lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

21. **His vow.** Elkanah had joined in his wife's vow; indeed, it would not have been lawful had he not done so, at least by silence (Num. xxx. 6-15).

24. **One ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine.** An ephah was $4\frac{1}{2}$ gallons. The flour was for the 'meat-offering' or *minchah*; the wine for the 'drink-offering'; both of which always accompanied the burnt-offering.

d S. Luke i. 46,
etc.

II. 1. And Hannah prayed, and said, ^dMy heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. 2. *There is* none holy as the LORD: for *there is* none beside thee: neither *is there* any rock like our God. 3. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let *not* arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD *is* a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. 4. The bows of the mighty men *are* broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. 5. *They that were* full have hired out themselves for bread; and *they that were* hungry ceased: so that the ^ebarren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. 6. The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. 7. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. 8. ^fHe raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth *are*

e Isa. liv. 1.

f Ps. cxiii. 7-8.

II. Hannah's song has been well called 'The Magnificat of the Old Testament'; the two songs run parallel both in language and thought. There are also some striking similarities to the language of the Psalms. The leading idea in both the songs is the same. A great mercy from God, which transcends the ordinary course of nature, opens, as it were, the mind of the receiver to understand (1) the nature, (2) the ways of God. God is Almighty, and His loving purpose must triumph over all obstacles. God works out His purpose by reversing all the ordinary human standards. Weakness triumphs over strength, poverty over riches, holiness over this world's greatness.

1. **My horn.** A common image in Scripture for 'strength,' natural in a pastoral people.

My mouth is enlarged, *i.e.* 'I am able to give an answer to my enemies.'

6. Cf. the examples of Hezekiah and Jonah.

7. Cf. Mordecai and Haman in the book of Esther, and Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. iv.

8. **The pillars of the earth are the Lord's,** etc. This is the language of poetry, and not of science. The underlying thought is perfectly correct. The meaning is that the earth and mankind owe their existence and their continuance to the will and power of the living God, and not to chance or fate.

the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. 9. He will keep the feet of his ⁶ saints, and the wicked shall be ⁵ holy ones. silent in darkness ; for by strength shall no man prevail. 10. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces ; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them : the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth ; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed. 11. And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

9, 10. Cf. the destruction of Sennacherib's army as described in Isa. xxxvii.

10. He shall give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed (cf. ii. 35). This is a remarkable prophecy : (1) of the institution of kingship, (2) of the royalty of Christ. 'Anointed' is, of course, the same word as *Messiah* or *Christ*. The birth of Samuel is one of the great landmarks in the history of Israel which pointed towards the Incarnation. For Samuel is a remarkable type of Christ in his threefold office. He was a *Prophet*, and the founder of the Order of Prophets (cf. Acts iii. 24) ; he was practically *High Priest*, though not of the family of Aaron ; he was practically *King* of Israel.

LESSON I

Prayer and its Answers

MATTER.

1. The uses of adversity.

The existence of sorrow in the world is a great mystery. We feel this to be so especially when the sorrow falls undeservedly upon *good* people. But in their case sorrow is part of the love of God; and it is intended to lead them (1) to make more use of prayer, and so (2) to know more of God.

Cf. Heb. xii. 5-11.

2. Prayer.

Hannah had doubtless always been a woman of prayer. Those who have never learned to pray do not, as a rule, turn to it when great sorrow comes upon them. Her prayer is marked by its unselfish character. If her request is granted, she is ready to surrender her boy to God's service. And this unselfishness is the key to its intense *reality*. She had grace to keep her vow, as well as to make it (which is not always easy).

Her prayer's reality is also shown by its *secret* character; which was evidently beyond the level of devotion to which Eli was accustomed.

She offered it before the tabernacle: eager to get as near to God as possible. It was the prayer of *love*. Cf. 'I have poured out my soul before the Lord' (i. 15).

METHOD.

1. Describe Hannah's sorrow; its causes.

(a) Disappointment of her husband, although he was too good to show it.

(b) Her own disappointment, for every Jewish wife hoped to be a mother, and had also the hope of being the mother of Christ.

(c) Persecution by her rival. Cruel words and mockery are particularly hard to bear.

This sorrow of Hannah's was *not a punishment*, for both she and her husband were good people. We cannot always understand why sorrow comes. But one of its reasons is, to make people pray more earnestly to God their Father.

Illustrate by showing how some illness or accident to a child leads it to know more of its parents' love and to trust them more.

2. Describe Hannah slipping away from the family feast (i. 9) to pray secretly before the tabernacle.

She had learned to love God before this time. Now in her trouble she seeks to be as near Him as she can.

It is often a help to our own prayers to make them in the church. Churches should always be kept open all day for this purpose.

Show how *real* and unselfish Hannah's prayer was. What she promised to do would be a hard thing for a mother.

Prayer without action is often only lip-service—mere words without heart.

So people sometimes pray God to help them against ill-temper, etc., but never *try* themselves to curb it; and their prayers, being unreal, are not answered.

LESSON I—continued. PRAYER AND ITS ANSWERS

MATTER.

3. The results of prayer.

Faithful earnest prayer is *never* without result. The promises of Scripture concerning prayer are absolute (S. John xiv. 13; xvi. 23). But these results are of different kinds. Sometimes it pleases God to give us for our good the exact thing prayed for, as in the case of Hannah. This is not always so; but we can be sure that God always *hears* our prayer, that He always *answers* it, and He always gives us the *best* answer. Prayer is the way to our Father's heart.

We see in Hannah's case that God, besides giving her the desired answer, gave her several other gifts, e.g. the blessing of the high priest, the comfort of a mind at peace (i. 18), a deeper knowledge of God and His ways, as seen in her thanksgiving, and the blessing of co-operation in God's more remote purposes (ii. 10). Hannah's prayer is a link in the great chain of God's age-long plan of salvation for mankind.

4. Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is as necessary a part of religion as prayer.

Hannah showed hers by—

- (1) Giving the name Samuel.
- (2) Performing her vow cheerfully.
- (3) Uttering her inspired thanksgiving, which showed that God's mercies had taught her more of God and His ways.

METHOD.

3. Ask what the narrative shows that Hannah gained by her prayer (a) at once; (b) afterwards.

(a) The high priest spoke in God's place, and gave her his blessing (i. 17).

So the ministers of Christ have power to bless and to absolve in Christ's name. These things are in themselves direct answers from God to ourselves, to our prayers for grace and for pardon.

Picture Hannah going home with her tears dried and her soul comforted. Joy is always one of the results of faithful prayer; and is one of God's answers to it.

(b) In due time God gave the exact thing which Hannah had prayed for.

He also filled Hannah's soul with joy, although she was going to give up her son, to live no more with him.

God does not always give us exactly what we ask for; but He always gives us just what is best for us, if we ask Him.

4. Why does every one dislike the ungrateful boy or girl? Because ingratitude shows *selfishness*; the ungrateful care only for themselves, and nothing for the love of those who do them good.

God desires our *love*; and when we give Him thanks, it shows that we do love Him.

Describe Hannah's gratitude—

- (1) The *name*.
- (2) The surrender of her boy to God. (Describe if time allow.)
- (3) The song of gladness, which God taught her, as He taught the Blessed Virgin Mary.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Prayer and its Answers.

'Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full'

(S. John xvi. 24).

1. *The uses of adversity.*

Sorrow ought to lead us to more earnest prayer.

This is often God's purpose in sending us sorrow.

2. *Prayer.*

Prayer must be *real*; we must not think merely of our own need, but of God's love to us.

3. *The answer to prayer.*

God always answers true prayer, but in different ways.

(1) Through His priests, *e.g.* absolution.

(2) By giving peace of mind.

(3) By giving exactly what we ask for, if it is good for us.

4. *Thanksgiving* is as important as prayer.

It must be

(1) With our lips, *e.g.* in church.

(2) In our lives, trying to do God's will, because He loves us.

CHAPTER II. 12-17; 22-25; 27-36

NOW the sons of Eli *were* sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. 13. And the priest's custom with the people *was, that*, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; 14. and he struck *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. 15. Also before they ^a burnt the fat, the priest's servant ^{a Lev. iii. 3-5, 16.} came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. 16. And *if* any man said unto him, ¹ Let ¹ They will surely burn. them not fail to burn the fat presently, and *then* take *as much* as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay*; but thou shalt give *it me* now: and if not, I will take *it* by force. 17. Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

22. Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the ² that did service (Exod. xxviii. 81). ²that assembled at the door of the tabernacle

12. **Sons of Belial**, as in chap. i. 16, 'worthless men.' See note on ver. 22.

13. **in seething**—from the old verb 'seethe,' to boil, of which 'sodden,' ver. 16, is the past participle.

15, 16. By this conduct the priests were (1) robbing God of the offering of the fat, which ought to be solemnly burnt; (2) robbing the worshippers of part of their sacrificial feast. For similar conduct on the part of the priests of a later time, cf. Malachi ii.

17. Irreverence and self-seeking on the part of those who minister in the sanctuary (not the clergy merely, but singers and helpers of every sort), is certain to react on the worshippers generally, and produce a feeling of contempt for religion.

22. To their profaning of God's name, the sons of Eli added the sin of impurity. Self-seeking is seldom satisfied with one form of self-

of the congregation. 23. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. 24. Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD's people to transgress. 25. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.

indulgence. Milton (who erroneously assumes Belial to be the proper name of an evil spirit), writes—

'Belial came last; than whom a Spirit more lewd
Fell not from heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself. To him no temple stood,
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who fill'd
With lust and violence the house of God?'

Paradise Lost, i. 490, etc.

25. **The judge shall judge him.** It is uncertain whether the word 'judge' should not be rendered 'God' (as in R.V.). The same word 'Elohim' is used in both meanings, for judges in Scripture are regarded as peculiarly sacred, being the representatives of God's justice upon earth. The whole passage implies that sins against God alone, like profanity, irreverence, etc., are more dreadful than those committed against man, because there is no possibility of the merciful intervention of a third party, like a judge or other divine representative. The sinner has to stand, as it were, face to face with God, and answer to Him alone. Cf. Job ix. 33: 'There is no daysman (umpire) betwixt us to lay his hand upon us both.'

On the other hand, we must remember (1) all sins are really sins against God, as the spiritual insight of David perceived (Ps. li. 4); (2) we Christians have that which Job desired, the Mediator Jesus Christ, Who intervenes between God and man.

The general tenor of Eli's rebuke suggests both personal goodness and grief at sin, but without the courage to *act* on his convictions as he ought to have done, being not only high priest, but judge of Israel.

Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them. This mysterious statement can be paralleled from other places in Scripture. God is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exod. iv. 21, etc.). Similarly He is said to have hardened the heart of the Canaanites (Josh. xi. 20). Again, in a passage which is quoted both by our Lord and His Apostles, Isaiah is bidden to pronounce a similar sentence upon unfaithful Israel (Isa. vi. 9, 10, *reff.*). At first sight it seems as if this were injustice on the part of God, and as if He had decided to condemn, and therefore prevented men from repenting. But on looking more

27. And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, ^b Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the ^b Exod house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's ^{27.} house? 28. And did I ^c choose him out of all the tribes of ^c Exod. xxviii. Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn ^{1, 4.} incense, to wear an ephod before me? and ^d did I give unto ^d Lev. x. 14, 15. the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? 29. Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? 30. Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 31. Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be

closely into the different instances, we shall see that in every case the sinner had obstinately resisted grace, had hardened his own heart. Hence, just as in the physical world transgression of law brings its own punishment, in its own kind, so in the moral world those who *will not* obey conscience and the voice of God, in the end *cannot*. Their sin, as it were, reacts upon itself and becomes its own punishment. And Holy Scripture usually speaks of God as doing that which He *permits* to be done. Hence, when we read that the sons of Eli did not repent 'because the Lord would slay them,' we are to understand that they had already by their own act destroyed their power of repentance, and had called down upon themselves the sentence of death from God. God never destroys free-will in His creature, and so, because they would not *hearken*, He suffered them to go on to the end of their evil-doing, and die. This will throw light on the difficult question of the sin against the Holy Ghost. Cf. also Rev. xxii. 11.

30. *Be it far from me*, etc. These words convey the very important truth, which can be illustrated from many other parts of Scripture, that God's promises (as well as His threats) are strictly *conditional* on human conduct. Promises, though they are 'for ever,' may be forfeited by man's sin, as in this case. Threats like that of the destruction of Nineveh within forty days (Jonah) may be averted by repentance.

31. *Arm*—a metaphor for 'strength.' This was fulfilled in the destruction of the priests at Nob by Saul's orders (xxii. 18, 19). Evil men may be used as the executors of Divine justice.

³ the affliction of my habitation.

an old man in thine house. 32. And thou shalt see ³ an enemy *in my habitation* in all *the wealth* which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. 33. And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. 34. And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; ⁶ in one day they shall die both of them. 35. And I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that shall do according to that which is* in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. 36. And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left in thine house shall come *and* crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

e chap. iv. 11.

32. **Thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation.** The reading of the R. V., 'affliction' for 'enemy,' may refer to the loss of the ark from the tabernacle at Shiloh. Or if 'enemy' is retained, it may be a prediction of the deposition of Abiathar (1 Kings ii. 27), and so 'rival' would be a better rendering.

35. **I will raise me up a faithful priest.** This is a difficult prophecy, and several meanings may be given to it. It may be regarded as fulfilled in Samuel, who, though not of the family of Aaron, filled the office of high priest for some fifty years, during which time the Aaronic high priesthood seems to have been in abeyance. Or it may be understood as a prophecy of the exaltation of Zadok by Solomon (1 Kings ii. 35). Or again, it may have a Messianic reference. The difficulty in this is, how could Christ as 'the faithful High Priest' (Heb. ii. 17) be said 'to walk before God's anointed for ever'? Perhaps the explanation is that 'God's anointed' is Christ; and 'the faithful priest' spoken of is the personification of the Christian priesthood. The Christian priesthood, which was afterwards to be revealed, is more than once directly predicted in the Old Testament, e.g. Isa. lxi. 21, where the 'priests and Levites' of the New Covenant are evidently quite distinct from the general body of the faithful (ver. 20). Cf. also Jer. xxxiii. 17-22.

This Messianic interpretation of the verse would not exclude the more immediate reference to Samuel or Zadok, which seems required by ver. 36.

LESSON II

The Punishment of Irreverence

MATTER.

1. God's Name is holy.

His Name includes all that pertains to His self-revelation, *e.g.* His written Word, the Bible; His sanctuary and its services; His Sacraments, and all that comes under their influence, *e.g.* the body which has been baptized.

Irreverence, the treating of holy things as if they were common, is a great sin, and sure to lead to other sins.

2. Hophni and Phinehas 'knew not the Lord.'

They put no difference between holy things and common things (Ezek. xxii. 26). They took advantage of their position to gratify their gluttony and their lusts. They went from sin to sin; and they brought the Name of God and His worship into contempt: 'men abhorred the offering of the Lord.'

3. The sin of Eli.

Eli saw what was evil in the conduct of his sons. He was himself a good man; but he failed to honour God's Name in another way. God had committed to him not only the high priesthood but also the office of judge. It was not only in his power, but it was his duty, to punish his sons, or restrain them from their evil courses. By not doing this, he was really himself dishonouring God's Name. It was a sin of omission. He is said

METHOD.

1. Repeat third commandment, with explanation in Catechism; also the clause in Lord's Prayer, 'Hallowed be Thy Name.'

All irreverence towards holy things is a great sin, whether in the clergy, the choir, or the worshippers.

Irreverence is also shown by quoting God's word profanely; profaning Sunday; misusing our own bodies, which are made 'members of Christ' in Baptism.

2. Hophni and Phinehas 'knew not the Lord,' *i.e.* they cared nothing about God and what He had hallowed, only for their own gluttony and pleasures.

Illustrate by the buyers and sellers in the Temple; by Judas who had the bag; by the case of those who go to church merely to get the good opinion of the clergy or of others.

3. Quote the words of the Baptismal Service: 'Manfully to fight under His banner,' etc.

Show how Eli was a good man, and was sorry that his sons were wicked, but did little or nothing to prevent them. God had given him power, but he did not use it.

Illustrate by the slothful servant who hid his talent.

It is not cruel to punish those who do wrong. It is a duty to God and to man to do so.

LESSON II—*continued.* THE PUNISHMENT OF IRREVERENCE

MATTER.

to have honoured his sons above God (ver. 29). It is not enough for us to know the right and bewail the wrong. We must *use* whatever power God has given us as champions of the right.

4. God's judgments.

God punished Eli and his sons by depriving them of His *promises*. He had promised that the priesthood should belong to their family ; but they showed themselves unworthy of it, and it was taken away.

But man cannot prevent God's purposes being accomplished. When one fails, God raises up another. Instead of Eli and his sons, he was calling Samuel.

METHOD.

4. Show how God did not merely punish Eli and his sons, but raised up Samuel to take their place.

Illustrate by S. Matthias taking the place of Judas ; by the Christian Church and priesthood superseding the Jewish.

Learn ver. 30: 'Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.'

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Punishment of Irreverence.

'Hallowed be Thy Name.'

1. *God's Name is holy.*

All holy things must be treated with reverence.

The Church, the Bible, Sunday, our body, because it has been baptized: all gifts of God.

2. *Hophni and Phinehas 'knew not the Lord,' i.e. they behaved irreverently about holy things; their 'god was their belly.'*3. *The sin of Eli.*

Eli a good man, but he did not hallow God's Name by using the power that God had given him to punish his sons. He honoured his sons above God (ver. 29).

He was slothful, or cowardly.

We have to 'fight manfully.'

4. *God punished them—*

(1) By taking His promises away from them.

(2) By putting Samuel in their place.

Learn: 'Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.'

CHAPTERS II. 18-21 ; 26 ; III. ; IV. 1a

BUT Samuel ministered before the LORD, *being* a child, girded with a linen ^aephod. 19. Moreover his mother made him a little ¹coat, and brought *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 20. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home. 21. And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

^b S. Luke ii. 52. 26. And the child Samuel grew on, and was ^b in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

III. 1. And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days ; ^c *there was* no open vision. 2. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see ;

18. **Girded with a linen ephod.** The ephod was the characteristic garment of the Jewish priesthood, though some species of ephod was worn by other than priests at times, as by Samuel here, and by David (2 Sam. vi. 14). It consisted of two parts, of which one covered the back, and the other the front, of the wearer, and was girded round the waist ; with the exception of the girdle it must have resembled somewhat the chasuble of the Christian priesthood.

19. **A little coat.** This was probably the 'robe of the ephod' (Ex. xxviii. 31), as the same Hebrew word is used for both. It was worn under the ephod, and was a long garment without sleeves, and with an opening for the head to pass through. The seamless garment of which our Lord was stripped before His crucifixion seems also to have been of this nature, and is therefore significant of His priesthood 'after the order of Melchizedek.'

III. 1. **The word of the Lord was precious, etc.** Owing to the weakness and wickedness of those who ministered about holy things, God had ceased to hold communication with His people : His word was 'precious,' i.e. 'rare.' Neither did God show 'visions' to His prophets. Cf. what is said of Saul (xxix. 6).

3. ²and ere the ^dlamp of God went out in the temple ²and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*; 4. that the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am I*. 5. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am I*; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. 6. And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am I*; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. 7. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. 8. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he rose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am I*; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. 9. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 11. And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12. In that day I will perform against Eli all *things* which I have spoken concerning his house: ³when I begin, I will also make an end. 13. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons ⁴made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. 14. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. 15. And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. 16. Then Eli called Samuel,

³ from the beginning even unto the end.
⁴ did bring a curse upon themselves.

3. Ere the lamp of God went out. This simply means 'before day-break.' The seven-branched candlestick was trimmed afresh every morning, and lighted every evening, so as to burn all night.

e Job i. 21;
ii. 10.

and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here *am* I. 17. And he said, What *is* the thing that *the* LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide *any* thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. 18. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, *It is* the LORD: *e* let him do what seemeth him good. 19. And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. 20. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel *was* established to be a prophet of the LORD. 21. And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

iv. 1a. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

19. The Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. The meaning of this seems to be that God accomplished all the prophetic utterances of Samuel. Samuel's words as a prophet did not 'fall to the ground,' i.e. prove without value: they stood the test laid down in Dent. xviii.

20. A prophet of the Lord. See Supplementary Note, p. 23.

LESSON III

The Child's Service of God

INTRODUCTION.—Recapitulate leading points of last lesson. Point out that God never leaves Himself without some witness. The Jewish priests were profane, and men abhorred the offering of the Lord. But God meanwhile was causing Samuel to grow up in the tabernacle to serve Him faithfully, and be a type of Christ.

MATTER.

1. The child's love of God's house.

Samuel's early history shows the beauty of reverence in a child, and how acceptable it is to God. From his infancy he had been brought up in God's house, knowing little of his parents, obeying Eli, and doing what a child might do in the service of the sanctuary. He does his little work faithfully, e.g. opening and shutting the tabernacle doors. Familiarity with holy things does not breed contempt nor carelessness; neither is he corrupted by

METHOD.

1. Describe Samuel's childhood and service.

The services of the Church, and our daily prayers, bring the life of the ordinary Christian child into touch with Samuel's.

Illustrate by our Lord's home-life at Nazareth, and His love of the Father's house.

The reverence of children is particularly pleasing to God. Not necessary that they should *understand* all that is said in Church, so long as they serve God reverently.

LESSON III—*continued*. THE CHILD'S SERVICE OF GOD

MATTER.

the evil examples around him. He lives a life of prayer and obedience; so, like our Blessed Lord Himself, he grows in favour with God and man.

2. The call of God to the child.

God draws near to them who draw near to Him. Especially is this the case with the pure and simple devotion of children. In the midst of unfaithfulness God chooses the child who tries to serve Him, to hear His Word.

The irreverence of the priesthood had blinded their minds to the knowledge of God. There was no 'open vision' because of the general unfaithfulness. But just as the faith and prayer of Hannah had led her to a deeper knowledge of God, as we see in her song, so the child Samuel is chosen to 'know the Lord,' to hear His voice, and to interpret it to men.

3. The child's obedience.

We see in the conduct of Samuel throughout the spirit of obedience: the same which characterised our Blessed Lord at Nazareth (S. Luke ii.). He rises again and again at what he thinks the call of Eli; he gives the answer to the Divine call which he had been told.

And along with obedience came the companion virtues of humility and faithfulness. He is not in a hurry to talk about the great things he has heard. But when asked, he answers faithfully and truly.

4. The child's power.

Though but a child, and apparently of no importance, Samuel has with him the source of all power, the Lord Himself (iii. 19); and already in his early years he is seen to be God's prophet, and powerful on God's side. His words are found true, and have influence with all Israel.

METHOD.

Cf. the children singing 'Hosanna' in the Temple.

Some children have opportunity of a special service, as choristers, servers, etc. Samuel is again an example.

2. Describe the scene.

There is no darkness with God. He is as near by night as by day.

We may feel that we do not know much about God, but God has a *call* for every one. The best way to hear God's call is to do our duty obediently, and be always *ready* to hear what God may have to say to us.

Quote Hymn 574 (*A. and M.*), ver. 3:

'Oh! give me Samuel's ear,
The open ear, O Lord,
Alive and quick to hear
Each whisper of Thy Word.
Like him to answer at Thy call,
And to obey Thee first of all.'

3. Draw out the *obedience* of Samuel to Eli, and then to God; the one prepared him for the other.

The obedience of our Lord to S. Mary and S. Joseph was His preparation for the Blessing of the Father at His Baptism.

Be brave to *do* and *say* whatever God bids you.

4. Show how much power for good one child exercised.

There have been child-saints and child-martyrs in the Christian Church.

The secret of Samuel's power was that the Lord was with him. He is willing to be with every one of us, for we were all made His children in Baptism.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Child's Service of God.1. *The child's love of God's house.*

God loves the service of children. All children may serve Him in His house in some way: by reverence, silence, kneeling, attention.

2. *The call of God to the child.*

God has a call for every one. Those are most happy who hear God's call and obey it when they are young.

3. *The child's obedience.*

Obedience to all whom we ought to obey, e.g. to our parents, is the only way to hear God's call when it comes. God ceases to call the disobedient and wilful.

4. *The child's influence.*

Children may do much both for God and for men.

'The Lord was with Samuel.'

The Lord is with us if we obey Him, for we were made His children in Holy Baptism.

Learn: 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.'

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

III. 20. **A prophet of the Lord.** The phraseology implies that the office of prophet was no new thing, but something well known to the people at large, and when absent much missed by them. The Hebrew word for prophet seems to be derived from a verb meaning 'to bubble over,' and hence to utter Divine oracles in an ecstatic manner. The English word is derived from the Greek, and means 'one who speaks or proclaims on behalf of another.' The word is used in the Bible in many varieties of meaning, but the simple and fundamental idea seems to be 'one who speaks authoritatively on behalf of God,' 'one who hears truth from God, and speaks it to men.' So the title is applied to Abraham (Gen. xx. 7). From the beginning of the world there had been a succession of such interpreters of God to men (S. Luke i. 70). Their existence gave rise even to a professional class of 'prophets' who were generally associated with the sanctuary, and existed side by side with the priesthood (cf. chap. x. 5). Samuel himself is generally regarded as the organiser and developer of this prophetic class, so that it took a new beginning with him (Acts iii. 24). But it existed before his time (Deut. xiii., xviii.). The characteristics of the prophets were the 'vision,' by which God revealed Himself to them whether sleeping or waking (cf. Num. xxiv. 3, 4 and Jer. xxxi. 26), as He began to do to Samuel in this chapter; and the 'Word of the Lord,' which is the name given always to the prophetic message, and which the prophet himself ratified by the characteristic utterance, 'Thus saith the Lord.'

Among the members of this prophetic order were many who had no real inspiration from God, or were even false and lying prophets. But, on the other hand, some of them were *especially* chosen by God as mouth-pieces of his will. The words and works of these are recorded in the Old Testament books, and the writings of some of them form an actual part of the Old Testament. God also sometimes called those who were not members of the prophetic order, and had no special training for the work, like Amos (vii. 14, 15), to declare His judgments and His promises.

To turn from the prophets themselves to their message, we must not imagine that the whole duty of a prophet was to predict future events. This many of them did indeed in a most remarkable manner; but they were historians and statesmen and practical reformers as well as fore-tellers. They interpreted, each according to his gift, the ways and will of God both in the past, the present, and the future. They were privileged, while their 'vision' lasted, to catch glimpses of the world as it is in God's sight, with Whom is no 'before' and no 'after.'

Lastly, that which gave unity and purpose to all the inspired utterances of the prophets was the preparation for the coming of Christ. 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy' (Rev. xix. 12). The prophets themselves were types of Him Who is the true and perfect prophet (Deut. xviii. 15), Who knows the Father perfectly, and reveals Him to men (S. Matt. xi. 27). And the words of the prophets prepared the way for Christ, sometimes indirectly by the guidance they gave to the chosen people, sometimes directly by their predictions of Christ's sufferings and glory. See especially 1 S. Peter i. 10-12 and Heb. i. 1.

N.B.—To those who wish to pursue this exceedingly interesting subject, Kirkpatrick's *Doctrine of the Prophets* and Joyce's *Inspiration of Prophecy* can be warmly recommended.

CHAPTERS IV. 16-22 ; V. ; VI. ; VII. 1, 2

NOW Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer : and the Philistines pitched in Apeh. 2. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel : and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines : and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men. 3. And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. 4. So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might

1. **Philistines.** See Supplementary Note, page 35.

Eben-ezer, Apeh. These places have not been identified with any certainty. They may be (1) in the valley of Ajalon, or (2) some miles farther to the south in the valley of Sorek. The name of Eben-ezer is evidently used here by anticipation, as the name was not given apparently until chap. vii. 12.

This battle between the Philistines and Israel probably took place during the forty years' oppression by the Philistines mentioned in Judg. xiii. 1. It has been suggested that Samson and Eli were contemporary, and their deaths occurred about the same time. Samson judged Israel for twenty years; and there are twenty years more (vii. 2) between this battle and the crushing of the Philistines by Samuel—thus making up the forty years.

3. **Let us fetch the ark . . . that it may save us.** The religious reverence due to the ark and the sanctuary has here degenerated into superstition. A special presence of God was indeed promised above the mercy-seat (Exod. xxv. 22), but this presence could not be expected to profit those who had sinned like Hophni and Phinehas. So it is also with the Sacraments of the New Covenant. There is indeed a spiritual gift in Holy Baptism, and a true presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion; but these cannot profit, but rather bring condemnation upon, those who misuse and profane them. It was a standing fault in the Jewish people to trust in the possession of outward marks of God's favour, and to neglect the 'weightier matters.' It was this fault against which the prophets perpetually raised their voices. See Jer. vii. 4-15, a passage remarkable for its allusion to Shiloh and the loss of the ark.

4. **The Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims.** The Divine presence was manifested to the high priest on the mercy-seat

bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which ¹dwelleth *between* the cherubims: ^aand the ¹sitteth upon. ^aPs. lxxx. 1.
 two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God. 5. And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. 6. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What *meaneth* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. 7. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. 8. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these *are* the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. 9. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. 10. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. 11. And the ark of God was taken;

between the golden cherubim which overshadowed it. God is represented in Scripture as enthroned upon, or riding upon, the cherubim. See Ps. xviii. 10 and Ezekiel i. The cherubim probably are to be identified with the angels who preside over the great powers and terrors of nature, *e.g.* the thunderstorm and the whirlwind. The 'four beasts' or 'living ones' of Rev. iv., etc., are no doubt the same as the cherubim.

8. **Who shall deliver us, etc.** This cry of the Philistines is remarkable evidence of the truthfulness of the narrative. Its very incorrectness (for, of course, the Egyptians were not smitten with plagues in the wilderness, but in Egypt) is just what would be expected from those who, like the Philistines, had only heard vague popular rumours about the previous history of Israel before entering Canaan.

10. **For there fell of Israel, etc.** The number thirty thousand may seem enormous, but it is exactly the same as that of the slain in the battle of Towton, in the wars of the Roses, 1461. Ancient hand-to-hand fighting among desperate men was far more destructive to life than modern warfare with all its appliances.

^b chap. ii. 34;
Ps. lxxviii. 61.

and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were ^b slain. 12. And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. 13. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told *it*, all the city cried out. 14. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. 15. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. 16. And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? 17. And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. 18. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. 19. And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near* to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her. 20. And about the time of her death the women that stood

18. **When he made mention of the ark of God.** It has often been noted how Eli, with all his moral weakness, retained the true priestly reverence for holy things. The loss of the ark, the precious symbol of God's covenanted presence with His people, was more terrible to him than the defeat of Israel, or even the loss of his sons. He was a true son of Levi. See the blessing of Moses upon that tribe, Dent. xxxiii. 8-11.

And he had judged Israel forty years. The margin of our reference Bibles reads, 'He seems to have been a judge to do justice only, and that in south-west Israel.' 'The judges were dictators raised up to meet some great emergency in a particular district, and their influence was confined to this locality' (Deane, *Samuel and Saul*, p. 35). There is no record of Eli's having performed any great deed of arms like the other 'judges.'

by her said unto her, Fear not ; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. 21. And she named the child I-chabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel : because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. 22. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel : for the ark of God is taken.

v. 1. And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod. 2. When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. 3. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. 4. And when they arose early on the morrow morning,

21. **The glory is departed from Israel.** The word 'Ichabod' means literally 'where is the glory?' or 'no glory.' 'Glory' had a specific meaning : it referred particularly to the Shechinah or visible brightness of God's presence which shone forth above the mercy-seat ; this departed with the ark. The wife of Phinehas seems to have had a truer sense of what God's covenant and His presence meant to Israel than her priestly husband had.

v. 1. **Ashdod.** The same place as Azotus in Acts viii. 40, where Philip was conveyed by the Spirit after his baptism of the eunuch. It was one of the five cities of the Philistines, and the half-way station on the highroad between Gaza and Joppa.

2. **Dagon**—literally, 'little fish.' Dagon was the chief deity of the Philistines, and was worshipped by them along with the goddess Atergatis or Astarte. He is represented as having the head and arms of a man with the tail of a fish. The worship seems to have come originally from Babylon.

3. **Dagon was fallen upon his face.** Tradition tells of the idols of Egypt falling from their pedestals as the infant Jesus was carried thither by His Mother and S. Joseph. With Dagon's fate, cf. Milton's lines, *Paradise Lost*, i. 457-466 :—

' Next came one
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive ark
Maim'd his brute image, head and hands lopt off
In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge,
Where he fell flat, and shamed his worshippers :
Dagon his name, sea-monster ; upward man
And downward fish ; yet had his temple high
Rear'd in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath, and Ascalon,
And Accaron, and Gaza's frontier bounds.'

behold. Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump of* Dagon was left to him. 5. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day. 6. But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with ²emerods, *even* Ashdod and the ³coasts thereof. 7. And when the men of Ashdod saw that *it was* so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. 8. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about *thither*. 9. And it was *so*, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and ⁴they had emerods in their secret parts. 10. Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people. 11. So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. 12. And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

² tumours.
³ borders.

⁴ and tumours
broke out upon
them.

6. Emerods. This word represents only a Jewish tradition; for the Hebrew word simply means 'tumours,' as in R.V. The eruption was probably one of the skin diseases common in the East, and especially in Egypt. Cf. Deut. xxviii. 27.

VI. 1. And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. 2. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. 3. And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. 4. Then said they, What *shall be* the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords. 5. Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall 'give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand

c Josh. vii. 19;
S. John ix. 24.

VI. 1. **Diviners.** The practice of divination, or attempting to forecast the future by an appeal to 'chance,' was common to all ancient peoples, and seems indeed one of the fundamental instincts of human nature. It was sanctioned by God among the Israelites in the form of the sacred 'lot' (Josh. vii.). The followers of our Lord, before the descent of the Holy Spirit, adopted this method in the election of Matthias. It is doubtful whether after the Day of Pentecost its use has ever been lawful among Christians, though many methods of divination have been practised even by the devout, *e.g.* the opening of the Bible at a venture, and sometimes with remarkable results.

The divination of the heathen was of many kinds. See especially Ezek. xxi. 21, 22, where three favourite methods are alluded to: (1) writing names on arrows, and then drawing one after they had been shaken in the quiver; (2) consulting the teraphim or images of household gods, which were supposed to give answers, in what manner is not known; (3) examining the liver and other parts of animals offered in sacrifice. This last was a favourite method of the ancient Romans.

The Philistines were famous for their practice of divination and magic in various forms (cf. Isa. ii. 6). See on this subject the article on 'Divination' in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*.

5. **Your mice that mar the land.** This additional plague has not previously been mentioned, and comes in rather abruptly. In the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) there is an addition in ver. 6 describing this plague of mice, which, perhaps, has dropped out in the Hebrew text.

Ye shall give glory to the God of Israel. As will be seen from the marginal references, this was a current phrase for making a solemn confession of sin before God.

from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. 6. Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? 7. Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: 8. and take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him *for* a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. 9. And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh, *then* he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that *it is* not his hand *that* smote us; *it was* a chance *that* happened to us. 10. And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: 11. and they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. 12. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh. 13. And *they of* Beth-shemesh *were* reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*. 14. And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-

7. **Bring their calves home from them.** The natural tendency of the kine, especially in those unaccustomed to the yoke, would be to go back at once to their calves. If they took another direction, it would be a clear sign of supernatural guidance.

12. **Beth-shemesh.** The name means 'house of the sun,' evidently retained from the heathen worship of the Canaanites, who must have had a sanctuary in this place where the sun was worshipped. It was the nearest Israelite town to Ekron, a journey of about fifteen miles, and was a priestly city, which accounts for the readiness of the inhabitants to offer a sacrifice (ver. 14), and for the severity of their punishment (ver. 19). Priests and Levites had less excuse for irreverence than the common people.

shemite, and stood there, where *there was* a great stone : and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD. 15. And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great stone : and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD. 16. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day. 17. And these *are* the golden emerods which the Philistines returned *for* a trespass offering unto the LORD ; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one ; 18. and the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging to* the five lords, *both of* fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto ⁵ the great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD : *which* ^{the great stone, whereon etc.} *remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite. 19. And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, ^d because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he ^d Num. iv. 20. smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men : and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter. 20. And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God ? and to whom shall he go up ^e from us ? 21. And they sent messengers to the ^e S. Matt. viii. 34. inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD ; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.

17. The five cities of the Philistines are well described in Dr. G. A. Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, chap. ix.

19. **Fifty thousand and threescore and ten men.** There is apparently some error here in the Hebrew text. Beth-shemesh could hardly have had so large a population altogether. Josephus, the Jewish historian, gives the number killed as seventy only, which is probably right. Mistakes in numbers are common in the Hebrew text, through the carelessness or ignorance of copyists.

21. **Kirjath-jearim**, *i.e.* 'city of forests,' which explains the difficult verse in Ps. cxxxii. 6, 'We found it (the ark) in the fields of the wood.' The verse alludes to David bringing the ark from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem.

VII. 1. And the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD. 2. And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

VII. 2. Twenty years, i.e. till Samuel's reformation: the Ark actually remained at Kirjath-jearim until the days of David, see p. 191. This must have been a sad period in the history of Israel. There is no record of its events. The Philistines were lords of the land. There could have been no central worship, for the ark was simply kept by Eleazar. The people worshipped false gods at the different 'holy places' which superstition had sanctified (verses 3, 4). Samuel's time for assuming the headship of the nation had not yet come. It was the darkest hour before the dawn.

LESSON IV

God's Judgments upon False Religion

MATTER.

1. Insincerity.

'Their heart was not right with Him: neither were they steadfast in His covenant' (Ps. lxxviii. 37). Israel in distress think that the ark will save them. But God's Covenant both with Israel and with Christians rests upon *obedience* and *love*. Those who neither obey God nor love Him have no right to appeal to His promises until they repent. Had the priests and the people been true to God, the act of bringing the ark might have been a sign of their faith; but as it was, to do so was mere superstition. The ark itself could not save them: only the God of holiness and love Who had given them the ark.

So the bringing of the ark was the occasion of a worse defeat than before; and of visiting upon Hophni and Phinehas the threatened punishment. Eli suffered also, and the wife of Phinehas, though apparently a pious woman; for no one can sin without hurting others at the same time.

METHOD.

1. Begin by questioning on the ark. What was it like? What did it mean? Show that, like the Holy Table in a Christian church, it was the sign of God's presence with His people.

But God's presence only helps those who try to obey and love Him.

Both priests and people were untrue to God, and so God's presence only brought worse evils upon them.

LESSON IV—*continued.* GOD'S JUDGMENTS UPON FALSE RELIGION
MATTER. METHOD.

2. Idolatry.

The Philistines were allowed to win their victory as executors of God's judgment upon Israel. But they too received a sharp lesson, intended to teach them (1) the powerlessness of their idol, to whose assistance they attributed their victory; (2) the holiness of the one true God, the God of Israel.

Idolatry is not without blame even in the heathen, who have never been taught differently. It is, according to S. Paul's teaching, a proof of moral degradation (Rom. i.). The beginnings of idolatry imply disobedience to conscience, and the moral law implanted by nature in man's heart. This leads to a lowering of the idea of God, until men 'worship and serve the creature more than the Creator' (Rom. i. 25).

It is noticeable how, taught by adversity, the conscience of the Philistines is awakened. They make reparation, and their offering is accepted.

3. Irreverence.

The men of Beth-shemesh were glad when the ark returned, and being priests and Levites were ready to offer sacrifice; but they forgot the holiness of God as symbolised in the ark. They treated it as a curiosity and a show. The results were (1) a grievous punishment; and (2) by their own will, the loss of the blessing and privilege of being the keepers of the ark.

It is just as great a sin to treat the material symbols of God with irreverence, as if they were common things, as it is to ascribe to them magical and supernatural powers in themselves. If the latter is superstition, the former tends to unbelief and materialism.

2. Describe the scene in the temple of Dagon. What did it mean?

Describe the subsequent plagues. Show that suffering is often sent by God to teach men the truth.

Why was it wrong for the Philistines to worship an idol? The answer will probably be a reference to the second commandment. But *that* was probably not known by the Philistines.

The true answer is that our conscience tells us that God is more beautiful, and better in every way, than we are; and to make an ugly image and call it God is to insult God our Father.

Is there idolatry now?

(a) Among heathen. We should pray for them.

(b) Among Christians, especially the worship of *money*. God sometimes teaches men by sharp lessons—disease, death—that money is not almighty.

Is it idolatry to bow one's head before an image of our Saviour, or to kneel before the altar? No, because we are thereby worshipping Jesus, Who is *truly* God.

3. The ark was a holy thing, and those who treated it as if it were a common curiosity were punished.

Are there 'holy things' now?

Illustrate as time permits.

Never treat a church or cathedral as a mere show to stare at. Always on entering or leaving say a short prayer, and remember it is God's house.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

God's Judgments upon False Religion.**1. *The punishment of insincerity.***

The Israelites wanted the ark of God to help them against their enemies, but they did not want to obey and love God Himself. So the ark did them no good.

Israel defeated, and the ark lost.

Hophni	} slain in battle.
Phinehas	

Eli	} dying of grief.
Phinehas's wife	

2. *The punishment of idolatry.*

The Philistines plagued.

Purpose—to teach men that there is only one true God, Who *loves* them, and desires their love.

Christian idolatry = love of money.

3. *The punishment of irreverence.*

The men of Beth-shemesh slain.

Holy things must be treated with reverence,
e.g. the Church, the altar, the cross.

'*If ye love Me, keep my commandments.*'

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

rv. 1. **Philistines.** The Philistines appear during the period of the latter judges as the chief rivals and enemies of Israel. They are remarkable as being like the Israelites—not original inhabitants of Canaan, but invaders. We learn from Amos (ix. 7) that their original home was Kapthor, which is generally identified with Crete. Leaving here, they must have landed first in Egypt, and then moved up the coast, probably about the very time that Israel under Joshua was invading the Land of Promise from the East.¹ In the time of their war with Israel, we find the Philistines settled in the maritime plains of Palestine, on the great highway of commerce between Egypt and Assyria. They had five principal cities, which are mentioned in chap. vi. The five 'lords of the Philistines' would be the rulers of these cities, with equal rights and independence, but united in a confederacy for common action, something like the ancient Greek leagues or confederacies, or those of the cities of Northern Italy in the Middle Ages. The rivalry between Philistia and Israel continues with varying fortunes all through the Old Testament down to the actual destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

The aspirations of David, 'Over Philistia will I triumph' (Ps. cviii. 9), are in harmony with the burdens of the prophets down to one of the very last, Zechariah (ix. 5, 6). In his time Gath had already disappeared. He pronounces the doom of the other four cities: 'I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.'

The student may be recommended to read the interesting chapters on 'The Philistines and their Cities,' in Dr. G. Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, from which we quote the following striking summary: 'We cannot have followed this history without being struck by the strange parallel which it affords to the history of Israel—the strange parallel and the stranger difference. Both Philistines and Hebrews were immigrants into the land for whose possession they fought through centuries. Both came up to it from Egypt. Both absorbed the populations they found upon it. Both succeeded to the Canaanite civilisation, and came under the fascination of the Canaanite religion. Each people had a distinctive character of its own, and both were at different periods so victorious that either, humanly speaking, might have swallowed up the other. Indeed, so fully was the Philistine identified with the

¹ The allusions to the Philistines in Genesis and Exodus seem to make them dwelling at that time close to Egypt and south of their later settlements. Cf. Exod. xiii. 17.

land, that his name has for ever become its name²—a distinction which Israel never reached. Yet Israel survived, and the Philistine disappeared. Israel attained to a destiny, equalled in the history of mankind only by Greece and Rome, whereas all the fame of the Philistine lies in having served as a foil to the genius of the Hebrews, and to-day his name against theirs is the symbol of impenetrableness and obscurantism.' The writer proceeds to discuss the reasons of this strange difference, and rightly finds the chief one in this: 'From the first Israel had within her a spirit, and before her an ideal, of which the Philistines knew nothing, and always her prophets identified the purpose—which they plainly recognised—of her establishment on so isolated and secure a position with the highest ends of righteousness, wisdom, and service to all mankind' (pp. 175, 176).

² The name 'Palestine' is really the same word as 'Philistia' or 'Philistina.'

CHAPTERS VII. 3-17; VIII.

AND Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying,
 If ye do ^areturn unto the LORD with all your hearts, ^{a Deut. xxx.}
then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth ^{1-10; Joel ii. 12.}
 from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD,
 and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the
 hand of the Philistines. 4. Then the children of Israel did
 put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD
 only. 5. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh,

3. After the stormy unsettled period of the Judges, ending in these twenty years of darkness, when Israel had not even the central worship as a focus for the national life, the Divine purpose for them begins to be seen. Samuel, the one hope of Israel, comes forward as a great reformer, organiser, and champion. The national unity, which had fallen to pieces after the death of Joshua and his contemporaries, is again asserted.

Ashtaroth. A plural from Ashtoreth, a female divinity imported from Babylonia, worshipped by Phœnicians and Canaanites, also among the Philistines (chap. xxxi. 10). Her symbol was a wooden column called Asherah, which is wrongly translated 'groves' in A.V., e.g. 1 Kings xviii. 19.

4. **Baalim.** This word is also a plural. Baal was the general name given to the male deity of the Phœnicians and Canaanites. He was probably the sun-god, and was worshipped at many local sanctuaries under different forms. Hence the name commonly appears with some addition, either signifying *place*, like Baal-peor, or *association*, like Baal-berith, i.e. Baal of the covenant, or supposed *powers*, like Baalzebub, Baal of *flies*. The name Baal simply means 'Lord,' and in itself is innocent enough. Indeed, it seems to have been at one time applied even to Jehovah, until its associations with heathenism rendered that impossible. See Hosea ii. 17. As sun-worship is one of the most widely spread of ancient heathen cults, so the name Baal is found very widely, e.g. Baildon, a moorland village in Yorkshire, is generally explained as being 'the hill of Baal.'

5. **Mizpeh**, literally 'the watchtower,' in the territory of Benjamin, and perhaps to be identified with the hill Scopus on the north of Jerusalem.

I will pray for you unto the Lord. Samuel appears in Scripture along with Moses as one of the great types of our Lord in his priestly office of *intercession*. See Jer. xv. 1, where the wrath of God against His people is strikingly expressed in the refusal to hear even Moses and Samuel on their behalf.

and I will pray for you unto the LORD. 6. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh. 7. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. 9. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered *it for a burnt offering wholly* unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and ^b the LORD heard him. 10. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. 11. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them,

^b Ps. xcix. 6.

6. They drew water, and poured it out before the Lord. There is no parallel to this action in the Old Testament except perhaps 2 Sam. xxiii. 16, though there the motive was altogether different. It may have been a symbol of human helplessness without God. Cf. 2 Sam. xiv. 14.

See Supplementary Note, page 45.

They fasted on that day. Only one solemn fast was ordered by the Law, that of the Day of Atonement. But after the general disintegration of national life and religion, a similar fast was felt to be a fitting expression of repentance. Fasting in Scripture means primarily abstinence from food, and though the word is used symbolically to mean many other kinds of self-denial, yet we must not forget the first and literal meaning, nor the duty imposed upon Churchmen of keeping the fast-days of the Church as well as the festivals.

10. The Lord thundered with a great thunder. More than one decisive battle has been won through a Divine intervention of this kind, which, though 'natural' in itself, is certainly miraculous in its time and circumstances. Cf. Josh. x. 11; Judg. v. 20, 21. And Scripture represents the issue of the final and mysterious battle which is yet to come, between the forces of this world and the army of God, as won by the intervention of God and not by the arm of man. See Ezek. xxxviii. 21-23, the fate of the armies of Gog; and Rev. xvi. 16-21, and xx. 7-10, the battle of Armageddon.

until *they came* under Beth-car. 12. Then Samuel took a 'stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us. 13. So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. 15. And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 16. And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. 17. And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

VIII. 1. And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: *they were* judges in Beer-sheba. 3. And his sons

12. **Eben-ezer**, i.e. 'the stone of help.' This memorial of a decisive victory was set up in the same spot where, twenty years before, the Philistines had defeated Israel and captured the ark.

14. **From Ekron even unto Gath.** This does not mean that the actual cities of the Philistines fell into the hands of Israel, but the territory between Ekron and Gath on the rising ground between the Philistine plain and the hills of Dan.

The Amorites, the original inhabitants of the hilly ground of Palestine.

17. **There he built an altar unto the Lord.** In spite of the requirements of the Law of Moses (Deut. xii. 13, 14), it was not till the time of Hezekiah that any great attempt was made to restrict the offering of sacrifice to one centre only, at Jerusalem. The patriarchal custom of erecting altars in various places seems to have gone on without blame until the establishment of the ark at Jerusalem; and after that time, in spite both of the Law and the prophets and the efforts of reforming kings, the local sanctuaries continued more or less until the Captivity. See 2 Kings xii. 3; xviii. 4, 22.

VIII. 2. **Joel.** 1 Chron. vi. 28 gives this name as Vashni, but incorrectly. The mistake of the copyist is due to a misunderstanding of the Hebrew words 'and the second.'

d Exod. xviii. 21. walked not in his ways, but ^d turned aside after lucre, ^e and took bribes, and perverted judgment. 4. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 5. and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us *f* Deut. xvii. 14. a king to judge us ^f like all the nations. 6. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 7. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the *g* Exod. xvi. 8; Hos. xiii. 10, 11. people in all that they say unto thee: ^g for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not

4. **The elders of Israel.** This expression occurs frequently in the Old Testament (cf. Exod. iii. 16). The elders were the heads of the tribes and of the families which composed the tribes. This is a natural system of government in the early or 'patriarchal' stage of a nation's history. Cf. the influence of the heads of the clans in Scottish history. In Jewish history, the importance of the elders lasted on, existing side by side with royal and priestly government, forming one of the elements in the Sanhedrin, and so surviving into New Testament times. See S. Luke xxii. 66.

5. **Now make us a king.** The desire for a king was natural enough. Israel had reached the point in her history when, as in other nations, the need of national unity and a centralised government was felt. And the contrast between Samuel's good government and that of his sons brought to utterance what was no doubt already stirring in the thoughts of many.

What Israel asked for was not wrong in itself, but the sin lay in the spirit in which the request was made (see note on ver. 7). God had indeed foretold that Israel would be governed by a king (Deut. xvii. 14), and the kingdom itself when established became a type of the everlasting kingdom of Christ, and a preparation for it. But we do not know in what way God's purpose would have been fulfilled, if the request for a king had not been made. Perhaps the high priesthood and the royal office would have been combined.

6. **And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.** The secret of Samuel's power was holiness; and this holiness was sustained and developed by a life of *prayer*. So, like Nehemiah at a later time (Neh. ii. 5), his first and right impulse in a crisis is to turn to prayer.

7. **They have rejected Me.** It is important to understand why this desire for a king is condemned as sinful, as the question has wider and deeper issues than those of the historical moment. Israel had a divine calling, different from all other nations in the world's history (Exod. xix. 5; Amos iii. 2). God Himself was their king, though doubtless He intended to exercise His Kingship through human instruments like Moses, Samuel,

reign over them. 8. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. 9. Now therefore hearken unto their voice : howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. 10. And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. 11. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you : He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and to *be* his horsemen ; and *some* shall run before his chariots. 12. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties ; and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. 13. And he will take your daughters to *be* confectionaries, and to *be* cooks, and to *be* bakers. 14. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, *even* the best of *them*, and give *them* to his servants. 15. And he will take the tenth of your seed,

and David. But the desire for a king here expressed rose from a worldly spirit (ver. 20). Israel, as a whole, did not desire to be separate and holy to the Lord. They desired no higher vocation nor government than that of the heathen nations around them ; whereas the kingdom of God upon earth, then as now (in the Catholic Church), is essentially 'not of this world' (S. John xviii. 36). The occasion of the request also shows an impatient and unfaithful spirit. Samuel's sons might not be as he was ; but if Israel was the Lord's people, they might reasonably expect that He would raise them up a ruler. The desire for a king, as the embodiment of national unity, in other nations would have been a rise, but with Israel it was a fall, and its consequences pursued them throughout history, until the cry 'We have no king but Cæsar' sealed their condemnation.

11. **This will be the manner of the king.** This striking picture of the manners of an Eastern king was abundantly fulfilled even in the glorious days of Solomon, as we see plainly in the protests to Rehoboam, which resulted in the schism of Judah and Israel (1 Kings xii.).

12. **Ear**—from the Anglo-Saxon *erian*, 'to plough.' Hence also the word 'earring,' for 'ploughing-time' (Gen. xlv. 6).

13. **Confectionaries**, *i.e.* makers of perfumes or medicines. Cf. Eccles. xxxviii. 8 : 'Of such doth the apothecary make a confection.'

and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. 16. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work. 17. He will take the tenth of your sheep; and ye shall be his servants.

¶ 1 Kings xii.

18. ^hAnd ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day. 19. Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; 20. that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. 21. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. 22. And the LORD said to Samuel, Harken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

LESSON V

Samuel a type of Christ

INTRODUCTION.—Describe briefly the condition of Israel at the end of the last lesson, without ruler, without judges, without central worship, oppressed by the victorious Philistines. ‘Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.’ Let us see how the mercy of God helped His people.

MATTER.

1. God raised up Samuel to be a prophet.

This part of his office was the first to be revealed (iii. 20), and was the foundation of the rest. Man without a prophet is in a state of *darkness*, separated from the Truth. So in the case of our Lord, the first revelation of Himself to men was as the Divine Wisdom in the Temple (S. Luke ii. 47). And Christ is called the Word—*i.e.* the Revelation of the Father to men. One of the earliest prophecies of Christ speaks of Him as a Prophet (Deut. xviii. 18).

METHOD.

1. Begin by showing that men cannot know God by themselves, unless God sends some one to teach them.

Why? Because man for his sin was driven out from Paradise and the presence of God.

Man without knowing God is in darkness and sorrow.

Hence (vii. 2) Israel ‘lamented after the Lord.’

So God sent Samuel to teach them again about Himself, and what they needed to do to please Him.

What was it? Repentance, sincere, *i.e.* putting away their idols.

LESSON V—*continued.* SAMUEL A TYPE OF CHRIST

MATTER.

The prophet speaks from God and for God, teaching men in the present, and foretelling the future. So we find Samuel doing (vii. 3; viii. 11, etc; cf. xii. 23).

2. Samuel was raised up to be a priest.

Man without priesthood is in a state of estrangement from God, he is unforgiven and unreconciled. Samuel presents the type of true priesthood, which was—

(1) Fulfilled in Jesus Christ, 'the high priest for ever' (Heb. vi. 20).

(2) Continued in the Catholic Church in the apostolic ministry. Samuel was faithful to God and to man, and his intercession was heard and his sacrifice accepted.

3. Samuel was raised up to be a ruler.

Although not called king, he ruled under God, gathering the scattered nation into one, administering justice, and also championing the cause of his people against their enemies.

This office, too, is necessary, for men without a ruler can neither live at peace with one another nor attain true liberty.

Hence it is part of the office of Christ Himself, Who is God's perfect answer to human need, to be King. His laws are supreme for a Christian; and He is the Captain in our battles.

4. Samuel was rejected by men, i.e. God's design in raising him up was rejected (viii. 7). Men wanted something grander to the outward eye, more akin to the kingdoms of this world. So the mystery of the Passion runs through all God's dealings with men.

METHOD.

And afterwards God sent Jesus Christ as the Prophet above all others to teach and warn His people for all time.

2. Those who have done wrong not only need a teacher, but something else—*forgiveness.* Samuel prayed for the people, and he offered sacrifice for them.

We have a Priest, Jesus Christ, Who has won our forgiveness by His intercession—*e.g.* in Gethsemane, by His sacrifice—on the Cross.

We have also those whom Christ has sent in His Church, His ministers, whose duty it is to pray for us, *e.g.* the daily services, the Litany; and to offer the Holy Eucharist.

3. To be happy, men need not only to be *taught* what is right, and *forgiven* what they have done wrong: they need *help*, some one stronger than themselves to rule them, they need a king.

A king keeps his people at peace with each other, and he leads them to victory over their enemies.

Illustrate from Samuel.

So we are signed with the Cross to fight under Christ's banner, and to continue His faithful soldiers and servants.

4. Cf. the chief priests persuading the people to crucify Christ, and to say, 'We have no king but Cæsar.'

'His citizens hated him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us' (S. Luke xix. 14).

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Samuel a type of Christ.

1. Raised up by God to be a *prophet*—to tell men the truth about God, and about themselves. So our Lord is called 'the Word.' He is *our* prophet, tells us the Truth.
2. Raised up by God to be a *priest*—
 - (1) To pray for the people,
 - (2) To offer sacrifice for them,that God might forgive them.

So our Lord offered Himself on the Cross for our forgiveness. He is *our* Priest. He has sent His priests to pray for us, in the services of the Church and the Holy Communion.

3. Raised up by God to be a *ruler*—
 1. To lead the people to victory.
 2. To judge them, and make them live at peace with each other.Christ is *our* King; we must obey Him.
4. Men refused Samuel.
They wanted a grander king, with more outward glory.
So our Lord was rejected and crucified: the Jews preferred Barabbas and Cæsar.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

The following interesting explanation of the ceremony of pouring water on the ground is taken from Deane's *Samuel and Saul*, in the 'Men of the Bible' series, pp. 63, 64: 'This general fast was accompanied by another rite, not mentioned heretofore, but practised by immemorial usage at the Feast of Tabernacles. "They drew water," it is said, "and poured it out before the Lord." In later times it was the custom on each of the seven days that the feast lasted for the priests to go forth from the Temple, accompanied by the Levite choir, unto the spring of Siloah, and to bring thence water in a golden vessel to be poured out at the altar as a libation at the time of the morning sacrifice.¹ Was this ceremony, so long maintained and so often mentioned by Rabbinical writers, in memory of this great national conversion, a commemoration of the reconciliation of the estranged people? It is probable that it was at this feast, and the fast which preceded it, that Samuel assembled the people. It is noteworthy that, after the return from Babylon, this Feast of Tabernacles was solemnly kept by the whole congregation (Ezra iii. 4-6); and again in Nehemiah's time, when the people assembled to hear the Law read, it was at the same feast; so that it seems that this festival was regarded as the fittest occasion for making a great national demonstration or inaugurating a national movement. The pouring out of water has been variously interpreted. As used in the Temple service, it was a memorial of the water from the smitten rock, and a type of the effusion of the Holy Spirit. On the particular occasion here referred to, it has been explained in connection with the accompanying fast as denoting self-denial, as David refused to drink the water from the well of Bethlehem, but poured it out before the Lord (2 Sam. xxii. 16); others see in it a token of repentance, a total renunciation of sin, the water being, as it were, a symbol of tears; or being poured on the earth, it figuratively washed the land from the stain of idolatry; or it represented their abject condition and helplessness, that they were as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.'

¹ Cf. Isa. xii. 3; S. John vii. 37, 38.

CHAPTERS IX. ; X. ; XI.

NOW there was a man of Benjamin, whose name *was* Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. 2. And he had a son, whose name *was* Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly : and *there was* not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he : from his shoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people. 3. And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. 4. And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found *them* not : then they passed through the land of Shalim, and *there they were* not : and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not. 5. *And* when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return ; lest my father leave *caring* for the asses, and take thought for us. 6. And he said unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* ¹an honourable man ; all that he saith ^acometh surely to pass : now let us go thither ; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go. 7. Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold,

¹ a man that is held in honour.
^a Deut. xviii. 21, 22.

2. **From his shoulders and upward, etc.** In primitive times, physical characteristics were much valued in the election of a king. In days of purely personal monarchy, the tallest, strongest, and most handsome man of a tribe would seem specially qualified for rule. These attributes of Saul would be pleasing in the eyes of those who desired a king that 'they might be like all the nations' (viii. 20). But cf. xvi. 7.

3. **Asses were an important part of a great man's wealth, when horses were little used.** See Job i. 3. Horses were a foreign importation into Israel (Deut. xvii. 16).

7. **What shall we bring the man?** It was an invariable Eastern custom to approach a great man with a *gift*. See Gen. xliii. 11 ; 1 Kings xiv. 3, etc. ; Prov. xvii. 8. The transition from this custom to that of bribery is very easy, and accounts for the prevalence of this corruption among Eastern judges and rulers.

if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and *there is* not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we? 8. And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: *that* will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way. 9. (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *he that is* now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.) 10. Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God *was*. 11. And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? 12. And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, *he is* before you: make haste now, for he came to-day to the city; for *there is* a sacrifice of the people to-day in the high place: 13. as soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him. 14. And

8. A shekel of silver. 'What the exact sum was, according to modern calculation, it is not possible to determine. Van Lennet considers the shekel to have been worth seventy-five cents, or 2s. 7½d. But silver was scarce in those days, and the value of money was considerably higher, nor was the weight arranged upon any settled system. Commentators, reasoning rather upon the statement in the text than upon any satisfactory grounds, have supposed that the coined shekel was divided into four quarters by a cross, and actually broken when needed. The piece thus separated would be somewhat larger than our sixpence, and would have been deemed a considerable fee at that time.'—Deane, *Samuel and Saul*, p. 83.

9. He that is now called a Prophet, etc. The two words illustrate the two types of inspiration: 'prophet' implies the utterance of *words* from God, 'seer' the beholding of *visions* from God. See Supplementary Note to Lesson iii., page 23.

12. See notes on Elkanah's sacrifice, chap. i. There was a close connection between a sacrifice and a feast. The one naturally followed the other as part of the same religious rite.

they went up into the city: *and* when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place. 15. Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, 16. To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him *to be* captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. 17. And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people. 18. Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house *is*. 19. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I *am* the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to-day, and to-morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart. 20. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. ² And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on thee, and on all thy father's house? 21. And Saul answered and said, *Am* not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me? 22. And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into ³ the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden,

² And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, etc.

³ the guest-chamber.

16. I have looked upon My people, etc. This verse might at first sight seem inconsistent with the Divine displeasure already expressed at the worldly desire for a king. But it is really an illustration of the Divine *patience*, which is so prominent in all God's dealings with men. Even where men have rejected God's will and plan, God is willing to turn even their own self-willed action into a means of blessing them if they repent.

'Manifest in gracious will,
Ever bringing good from ill.'

19. All that is in thine heart. It seems to be suggested by this that Saul himself had been deeply pondering the needs of his distressed nation. Perhaps his soul already had been stirred with vague desires and ambitions to do some deed of prowess against the Philistines.

which *were* about thirty persons. 23. And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. 24. And the cook took up the shoulder, and *that* which *was* upon it, and set *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, Behold ⁴ that which is ⁴ that which hath been reserved. left! set *it* before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day. 25. And when they were come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* communed with Saul upon the top of the house. 26. And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. 27. *And* as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

x. 1. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and kissed him, and said, *Is it* not because the LORD hath anointed thee *to be* captain over his inheritance? 2. When thou art departed from me to-day, then thou shalt find two men by ^b Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for ^{b Gen. xxxv. 19, 20.}

24. The shoulder, or 'thigh,' i.e. the priest's portion (Lev. vii. 32), a mark of the greatest distinction. Probably the words 'Behold,' etc., are not to be assigned to Samuel, but were a confidential remark of the cook's, implying the great honour which is thus being paid to Saul.

x. 1. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, etc. Oil in Holy Scripture and in the ritual of religion is symbolical of the Holy Spirit, and in special cases was the sacramental means of conveying a spiritual gift. This was the case here, as we see from verses 6 and 9.

Before this anointing of Saul to the kingly office only *priests* had been anointed (Exod. xl. 13-15). Prophets, too, were sometimes anointed, as Elisha by Elijah (1 Kings xix.). Our Lord is pre-eminently 'the Christ,' i.e. the Messiah, the Anointed One, as combining in Himself all titles and offices, and as endowed in His human nature with all the fulness of

you, saying, What shall I do for my son? 3. Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the ^b plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: 4. and they will salute thee, and give thee two *loaves* of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands. 5. After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where *is* the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: 6. and the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt ^c prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. 7. And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, *that* thou do as occasion serve thee; for God *is* with

the Holy Spirit. Cf. Ps. xlv. 7; S. Matt. iii. 16. Christians, too, are anointed by the Holy Spirit; and oil was anciently used as a symbol of this both in Baptism and in Confirmation, as well as in the anointing of the sick. See 1 S. John ii. 20; S. James v. 14. A specially prepared oil is used in the anointing of the sovereigns of England at their coronation. This anointing confers on the sovereign a sacred character, over and above the title which he has by heredity and the consent of his people.

3. **The plain of Tabor.** See R.V. It has nothing to do with Mount Tabor. The oak referred to is perhaps that under which Deborah was buried (Gen. xxxv. 8).

Three men going up to God to Bethel. Bethel had been recognised as a holy place since Jacob's vision (Gen. xxviii.). The worshippers in this case were apparently to present part of the offering which they were carrying with them to Saul, recognising in him (by supernatural guidance) 'the Lord's anointed,' the vicegerent of God.

5. **The hill of God**—probably Gibeah of Benjamin, called also 'Gibeah of Saul.' It is called 'of God,' because it was a well-known 'high place' where worship was offered.

A company of prophets. These would belong to the order of professional prophets. See Supplementary Note on Lesson iii. Music was much cultivated in the schools of the prophets, and seems at times to have been an accompaniment to their inspiration. See 2 Kings iii. 15.

A 'psaltery' was a harp of ten strings played by the hand; a 'harp' had fewer strings, and was played with a plectrum, like a modern zither.

thee. 8. And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, *and* to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do. 9. And it was *so*, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. 10. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. 11. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What *is* this *that* is come unto the son of Kish? *“Is Saul also among the prophets?”* *d* chap. xix. 24. 12. And one of the same place answered and said, But who *is* their father? Therefore it became a proverb, *Is Saul also among the prophets?* 13. And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place. 14. And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that *they were* nowhere, we came to Samuel. 15. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you. 16. And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of

8. **And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal.** This remarkable verse seems to be a prophecy of the events in chap. xiii., intended by God as a solemn warning to Saul, though uttered long before the event. It does not refer to chap. xi. 14, for on that occasion Samuel went with the people, and there was no need to ‘tarry’ for him.

12. **But who is their father?** The meaning of this simply is that the prophetic gift is not hereditary: it may be given to the son of Kish, if God so will, as much as to any of the trained and professional prophets. Cf. Amos vii. 14, 15.

Saul's ‘prophesying’ here seems to have been some form of ecstatic utterance, probably of the praises of God, an outward sign of the new gift of the Holy Spirit which he had received. Cf. Num. xi. 25, 26. The Apostles on the Day of Pentecost in this sense ‘prophesied,’ declaring ‘the wonderful works of God’ in all the languages of the world (Acts ii. 11).

the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not. 17. And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh; 18. and said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppressed you: 19. and ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands. 20. And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. 21. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found. 22. Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, ⁶ if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. 23. And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. 24. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king. 25. Then Samuel told the people the manner of the king-

⁶ Is there yet a man to come hither?

17. **Unto the Lord.** Probably this phrase implies the presence of the Urim and Thummim, which were consulted, no doubt, in ver. 22, when 'they inquired of the Lord further.'

20. **Taken, i.e. by the sacred lot.** See note on chap. vi. 2. The names of the tribes, etc., were written on tablets, which were shaken in a vessel until all had fallen out except one.

22. **Stuff, i.e. the baggage-waggons** which would naturally accompany a great gathering of the people.

23. **God save the king, lit. 'let the king live.'** Cf. 'Vive le roi.'

25. **The manner of the kingdom.** With this cf. Deut. xvii.

Before the Lord, i.e. probably in the tabernacle, with the Urim and Thummim. Before the ark would have been the natural place (Deut. xxxi. 26), but the ark was at Kirjath-jearim.

dom, and wrote *it* in a 'book, and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. 26. And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him ⁷a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. 27. But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

e Deut. xvii.
18-20.

⁷ the host
(*margin*. men
of valour).

XI. 1. Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. 2. And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make a *covenant* with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* a reproach upon all Israel. 3. And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee. 4. Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up

26. **A band of men.** The R. V. rendering of this phrase implies that the best and bravest of Israel accepted Saul as a Divinely appointed king, and worthy of his office. Only 'the sons of worthlessness' mock at his sudden exaltation out of obscurity.

XI. 1. **Nahash the Ammonite.** The Ammonites were a savage tribe inhabiting territory on the east of Jordan, north of the Arnon, and adjoining the settlements of Reuben and Gad. Like the Moabites, they were the descendants of Lot, and their territory was therefore commanded to be held sacred by Israel on their entrance into Palestine (Deut. ii. 19). But they frequently made inroads into Israelite territory, notably on the occasion when they were defeated by Jephthah (Judg. xi.). David afterwards captured their capital, Rabbah (2 Sam. xii. 26).

Jabesh-gilead, i.e. Jabesh in the land of Gilead. Gilead was the upland district east of the Jordan, between Bashan and the territory of the Ammonites. It is a region of beauty and fertility, abounding in pastures and woodlands. Cf. Gen. xxxvii. 25. There is an interesting description of Gilead and the country east of Jordan in Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*.

2. **That I may thrust out all your right eyes.** The object of this was to render them unfit for military service, as the left eye would be covered by the shield in battle, and so a man with no right eye was useless.

their voices, and wept. 5. And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field ; and Saul said, What *aieth* the people that they weep ? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh. 6. And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. 7. And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent. 8. And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. 9. And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by *that time* the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed *it* to the men of Jabesh ; and they were glad. 10. Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you. 11. And it was *so* on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies ; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day : and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together. 12. And the people said unto Samuel, Who *is* he that said, *'*Shall Saul reign over us ? bring the men, that we may put them to death. 13. And Saul said,

f chap. x. 27.

7. And he took a yoke of oxen and hewed them in pieces. A symbolic call to battle in one form or another was common among primitive nations. The Scandinavians sent a war-arrow round ; the Highlanders 'the fiery cross,' *i.e.* a cross of wood charred in the fire and then extinguished in blood.

11. The morning watch, between 2 A.M. and sunrise. The Jews divided the night into three watches, the Romans into four.

13. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day. This throws light upon the character of Saul in his earlier years. He is impulsive, brave, and generous, as well as modest (chap. x.). And to the end we see flashes of the same nobility of character alternating with his darker moods of passion and self-will.

There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to-day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel. 14. Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. 15. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

LESSON VI

The First King

INTRODUCTION.—The main point to emphasise is the work of God in all the events connected with the elevation of Saul to be king. The hand of God guided all the circumstances. Although Israel's self-will prevented them from having God's best, yet even the second best was God's gift, and full of mercy.

MATTER.

1. The choice of Saul for king.

Saul was chosen by the call of God, spoken through the prophet Samuel. Events which apparently were mere chance—the loss of the asses, the search, and the consulting of the seer—were really Divinely guided.

So it is ever with the call of God. No office or work which is for God (and a king is 'God's minister') can be rightly undertaken without that call. But the call is usually the result of the circumstances of life. For example, George V. is really called by God to the throne, although he is heir to it by birth. God has ordered the course of events, preserved his life, and placed him on the throne.

Birth, circumstances, wealth, education are all ordered by God, and He guides us by these things to the calling which he has for us.

METHOD.

1. Ask who chose Saul to be king of Israel.

Himself? No; he shrank from it at first, but undertook it, seeing it to be his duty.

The people? No; for they only accepted him when he was already chosen.

Samuel? No; for he did not know Saul until he came to him.

It was God alone, He guided Saul to come to Samuel, and revealed it to Samuel that this was the future king.

LESSON VI—continued. THE FIRST KING

METHOD.

2. God's gifts to Saul.

(1) The anointing was of a sacramental character, and conferred grace (cf. chap. x. 6, 9). Saul received a special gift of the Holy Spirit to change and elevate his character. This grace, if used, would certainly have been sufficient to enable Saul to fulfil his office (see x. 7). He had the promise that God was with him; and the promise was attested by *signs*. In every circumstance, had he trusted in God rather than in himself, he would have proved this Divine presence.

(2) Warnings were given him, directly in x. 8, and indirectly in x. 18, 19, against disobedience to God's word and will.

(3) He had a permanent record to look to for guidance, the *book* written by Samuel; a perpetual sign to him, as it reposed in the tabernacle, that his office was not his own, but God's.

3. God's presence with Saul.

Saul had everything on his side to start with. The victory over the Ammonites, and the burst of *popularity* which followed, were the attestation of the presence and power of God working with him.

MATTER.

2. Point out the three gifts; and show that God never calls us to any *work* without giving us the strength of His Holy Spirit to accomplish it; nor places us in any *danger* without help to avoid it.

1 Cor. x. 13.

Illustrate by the gifts that God gives—

(1) To all Christians: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion.

The instruction and warnings received in church from His ministers.

The Bible.

(2) To those who are called to any great and difficult office: *e.g.* to His ministers, Holy Orders; to kings, Coronation and the Anointing.

3. God encourages us by allowing us to win victories over Satan; or to gain the favour of others by work well done.

These successes should turn us more to God, Who is the *Giver*.

'In all time of our wealth, Good Lord, deliver us.'

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The First King.

1. Saul was chosen by *God*, and called to be king. There is no 'chance' in life. Everything is ordered by God. Every man's calling is really given him by God.
2. Saul received *gifts* from God to help him—
 - (1) Anointing by the Holy Spirit.
 - (2) Warnings against danger.
 - (3) A book to guide him.

Every one who is called by God to any work receives help from God if he will use it. Christians have—

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| (1) Sacraments | } to help them. |
| (2) The Clergy | |
| (3) The Bible | |
3. Saul was successful while God was with him. God gave him—
 - (1) Victory.
 - (2) The favour of the people.

Learn, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

CHAPTER XII.

AND Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. 2. And now, behold, the king walketh before you : and I am old and gray-headed ; and, behold, my sons *are* with you : and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. 3. Behold, here I *am* : witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed : whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? or whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of whose hand have I received *any* bribe.

^a Deut. xvi. 19. to ^a blind mine eyes therewith ? and I will restore it you.

4. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. 5. And he said unto them, The LORD *is* witness against you, and his anointed *is* witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness. 6. And Samuel said unto the people, *It is* the LORD that ¹ advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. 7. Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers. 8. When ^b Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent ^c Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. 9. And when they forgot the LORD their God, he sold them

3. *Whose ox have I taken ? etc.* The ox and the ass constitute the chief riches of a primitive agricultural and pastoral people. The Septuagint adds after the mention of a bribe, 'even a pair of shoes.' See Supplementary Note, p. 64.

To blind mine eyes therewith. This is a very expressive metaphor, especially as it appears in the margin of the Bible, 'that I should hide mine eyes at him.' The bribe would influence the judge or ruler to avoid seeing the evildoer. He would 'look the other way.'

into the hand of ^dSisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and ^dJudg. iv. into the hand of the ^ePhilistines, and into the hand of the ^eJudg. x, xiii. king of ^fMoab, and they fought against them. 10. And ^fJudg. iii. they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. 11. And the LORD sent ^gJerubbaal, and Bedan, and ^hJephthah, and ^gJudg. vi. Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies ^hJudg. xi. on every side, and ye dwelled safe. 12. And when ye saw that ⁱNahash the king of the children of Ammon came ⁱchap. xi. against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God *was* your king. 13. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you. 14. If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: 15. but if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* against your fathers. 16. Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. 17. *Is it* not wheat harvest to-day? *I* will call unto the ^jProv. xxvi. 1.

11. Bedan was either some unknown hero, or the word is a copyist's mistake for Barak, which is the reading of the Septuagint.

12. This verse seems at first a little inconsistent with chaps. viii. and xi., but it throws a sidelight really upon the request for a king. Though Nahash does not appear in the history till chap. xi., he was no doubt threatening the frontier of Israel for some time before; and this fear was one of the real reasons why a king was demanded.

17. **Wheat harvest** took place in May and June, and thunder at this time was evidently most unusual (see the reference to Proverbs). This miracle, like the greater one of Elijah on Carmel, was of the class that the Jews referred to when they demanded of our Lord 'a sign from heaven.' Such signs He only gave to those who believed on Him or were in the way of belief, e.g. the stilling of the storm; the voice from heaven in the Temple (S. John xii.).

LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. 18. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. 19. And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king. 20. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; 21. and turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go* after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain. 22. For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people. 23. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to ^kpray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: 24. ^lonly fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great *things* he hath done for you. 25. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

^k Rom. i. 9; Col. i. 9; S. James v. 16.
^l Eccles. xii. 18.

21. **Vain things.** The regular phrase in the Old Testament for *idols*. The vanity or emptiness of idols is well expressed in Ps. cxv. Cf. 1 Cor. viii. 4.

22. **For His great Name's sake.** The use of the word 'Name' as applied to God in Holy Scripture requires and repays careful study. Very briefly, the 'Name of God' is that which God has revealed Himself to man as being. It is the unfolding of God's nature and character as far as man is able to bear it. God had already revealed Himself to Israel as Almighty (Gen. xvii. 1), Eternal (Exod. iii. 14), Holy (Lev. xix. 2), Just (Gen. xviii. 25), Loving to His people (Exod. xix. 5; xxxiv. 5-7). Samuel means that God will not go back from this; nor will He suffer men to think that He has done so. Cf. Ezek. xx. 9, 14, 22, 44.

23. **Moreover as for me, etc.** Samuel, though resigning the office of judge or ruler, retains the prophetic and priestly offices. He is still the teacher of Israel: 'I will teach you the good and right way.' He is still their intercessor. His words in answer to their request for his prayers (ver. 19) are significant. Failure in intercessory prayer is a sin, and a sin primarily against God. God requires us to pray for others: (1) as an act of faith in His promises which He has attached to such prayers; (2) as part of that love to our neighbour which is bound up with our love to Him.

LESSON VII

The Record of a Life well spent

INTRODUCTION.—Recapitulate briefly the life of Samuel. He is now an old man, and about to retire from the work of judging Israel. He says farewell to Israel, and looks back over his life. Point out that each of us has only *one* life, be it long or short, and it is of supreme importance to spend it well. Look in Samuel's farewell for the secrets of his own good life.

MATTER.

1. Samuel had lived uprightly towards his fellow-men.

His conscience is clear; he can appeal in public before God and the king, and does not fear the answer.

There are no dark corners in Samuel's life, no 'sowing of wild oats,' no secret sins.

The dangers of a public position are very great. The temptations which it presents to advance and enrich oneself can hardly be estimated by those who have never been in such a position.

2. Samuel had lived in 'the fear of the Lord.'

The leading characteristic, perhaps, in Samuel's life is his *reverence*. A spirit of holy fear, bred in him from his first years, and deepening with the experience of life, is the key to his uprightness, his courage, his moral influence. And this fear of the Lord, 'which is the beginning of wisdom,' made him truly wise. It opened his eyes to see the hand of God behind all the events of his time, to recognise God's work in the past, to foretell it in the future. With equal

METHOD.

1. Repeat the duty towards our neighbour from the Catechism.

Speak of *conscience*, and the importance of never committing any act of injustice or unfairness in *play* or in *work* which conscience tells one is wrong.

Illustrate by S. Paul's similar appeal (Acts xx. 18-27); by Queen Victoria's girlish vow to do what was right, and her conscientiousness in keeping it. The greatest happiness that any one can have in life is a *good conscience*, the greatest misery a bad one.

2. Ask *why* Samuel was able to live so pure and upright a life from his childhood to old age.

Probably the answer will be given, 'Because God helped him.' Point out that this is right, only that to profit by God's help we must always remember God's presence.

Samuel remembered it, and thought of it in the tabernacle, on the judgment-seat, when speaking to the people, when fighting their battles, when living quietly at home.

So he feared ever to displease God, and God helped him, and

LESSON VII—continued. THE RECORD OF A LIFE WELL SPENT

MATTER.

certainty and power he can speak both of God's judgments and of God's mercy.

METHOD

taught him wisdom, and made him true, and just, and brave.

'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Ps. cxl. 10).
Hymn 3 (*A. and M.*)—

'Let all thy converse be sincere,
Thy conscience as the noonday clear,
Think how all-seeing God thy ways
And all thy secret thoughts surveys.'

3. Samuel lived in the love of man.

This comes out in more ways than one. While severe in rebuking Israel for ingratitude, he shows tenderness in encouraging and comforting their repentance. He is glad to be able to convey to them messages from God of forgiveness and hope (verses 20-25). While he is retiring from the active life, he regards *intercession* for the people as his great work in his old age. He will still be their priest and their prophet, though they have refused to have him as ruler.

The whole of Samuel's farewell breathes tenderness and forgiveness, the more remarkable as his character is fiery and inclined to severity.

These three points of the lesson might also be illustrated by reference to the three vows of Baptism: the vow of Renunciation corresponds to Samuel's hatred of sin and injustice; the vow of Faith to his reverence and holy fear of God, Who had revealed Himself to him; the vow of Obedience to his readiness to forgive and to show *love* to Israel. Cf. Micah vi. 8.

Cf. the saying of S. Irenæus, that the precepts of the perfect life are the same under both the Old and New Testaments: the love of God and the love of one's neighbour.

3. Point out that it is not enough to refrain from injustice to man, nor to live in the fear of God. God requires of us *love*.

1 S. John iv. 20, 21.

Samuel showed his love of his people, even when they had been ungrateful to him and to God—

(1) By encouraging them when they were sorry (ver. 20).

(2) By continually praying for them.

Illustrate by our Lord's prayer on the Cross.

(3) By teaching them.

Enlarge on the duty of intercessory prayer.

Speak of the Litany and intercessory aspect of Holy Communion.

Ask about private prayers.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

A Well-spent Life.

1. *A life of uprightness and justice* ; no stealing nor unfair dealing.

Conscience obeyed always.

The happiness of a clear conscience.

2. *A life full of the fear of God.*

Samuel always remembered God was with him, and saw all his actions and knew his thoughts.

So he learned to be true and wise, for 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'

3. *A life of love towards men.*

Shown by (1) forgiveness,

(2) *constant prayer*,

(3) teaching them 'the good and right way.'

Learn Micah vi. 8 : 'What doth the Lord require of thee, but (1) to do justly, and (3) to love mercy, and (2) to walk humbly with thy God.'

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

The summary of Samuel's life given in the book of Ecclesiasticus, one of the books of the Apocrypha, which our Church reads 'for example of life and instruction of manners' (Article vi.), is very suggestive—

ECCLESIASTICUS XLVI. 13-21.

13. Samuel, the prophet of the Lord,
Beloved of his Lord, established a kingdom,
And anointed princes over his people.
14. By the law of the Lord he judged the congregation,
And the Lord had respect unto Jacob.
15. By his faithfulness he was found a true prophet,
And by his word he was known to be faithful in vision.
16. He called upon the mighty Lord,
When his enemies pressed upon him on every side,
When he offered the sucking lamb.
17. And the Lord thundered from heaven,
And with a great noise made his voice to be heard.
18. And he destroyed the rulers of the Syrians,
And all the princes of the Philistines.
19. And before his long sleep
He made protestations in the sight of the Lord and his anointed,
20. I have not taken any man's goods, so much as a shoe;¹
And no man did accuse him.
21. And after his death he prophesied,²
And shewed the king his end,
And lifted up his voice from the earth in prophecy,
To blot out the wickedness of the people.

See also R. J. Wilberforce's poem on Samuel in the *Lyra Apostolica*, of which the first three verses are as follow—

'Thou chosen Judge of Israel's race,
Grown grey in holy toil,
Whose lips are truth's own dwelling-place,
Whose hands no bribe can soil,
And is it thus the tribes of God
Spurn thy meek rule and gifted rod?

'Yet where are Dathan's cursed crew?
And where Abiram's seed?
Must Heaven its fires of wrath renew?
Must earth repeat her deed,
And from the nations sweep away,
Who scorn the Prophet's gentle sway?

'But no, the flames of holy zeal
Sad pity's tears assuage;
Over his kindling eyes there steal
Tears for God's heritage.
While for the rebel tribes flows forth
The prayer that stems Jehovah's wrath.'

¹ See note on ver. 3.

² Referring to the events of chap. xxviii.

CHAPTERS XIII. ; XIV. 1-46

¹ SAUL reigned one year ; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, 2. Saul chose him three thousand ^{1 Saul was [thirty] years old when he began to reign ; and he reigned two years over Israel. And Saul chose.} men of Israel ; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin : and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. 3. And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. 4. And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal. 5. And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horse-

1. **Saul reigned one year.** The text as it stands is obviously incorrect, almost meaningless. Some words or numbers must have been omitted by the Hebrew copyist. The 'thirty' inserted in brackets in the R.V. is derived from some copies of the Septuagint. Probably the original text gave both the age of Saul when he began to reign, and the length of his reign, as is usual in the histories of the kings. The whole length of Saul's reign appears from Acts xiii. 21 to have been forty years.

2. **Saul chose him three thousand men.** Thus the prophecy of Samuel alone to be fulfilled (viii. 11, 12). This was the beginning of a standing army, which in most nations has developed out of the bodyguard or personal followers of the king.

3. **Michmash.** The scene of the war which is now about to be described is laid in the mountainous country of Benjamin, a few miles north of Jerusalem. The hills, which ascend gradually from the plain of the Philistines, have here reached their highest point, whence they descend very rapidly into the ravine of the Jordan. It was among the passes of these mountains that the Israelites entered Palestine and won their first victories over the Canaanites. It is here on these heights the Philistines have established themselves, and along these passes that their marauding parties force their way. Michmash and Ai are on opposite sides of a deep gorge which runs down towards Jericho.

5. **Thirty thousand chariots.** This is probably a mistake of the copyist for one thousand, the difference between the two numbers in Hebrew being very slight, a dot on a letter being sufficient to cause it.

men, and people as the sand which *is* on the sea-shore in multitude : and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven. 6. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. 7. And *some of* the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. 8. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed* : but Samuel came not to ^a Gilgal ; and the people were scattered from him. 9. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. 10. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came ; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. 11. And Samuel said, What hast thou done ? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash ; 12. therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD : I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. 13. And Samuel said to Saul, ^b Thou hast done foolishly : thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which

^a chap. x. 8.

^b 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

9. **And he offered the burnt offering.** This act marks the beginning of Saul's downward course. It was not only an act of disobedience to a warning of the prophet Samuel, it was a usurping of priestly functions which did not belong to him. Cf. the more flagrant case of Uzziah in later times (2 Chron. xxvi.). And in its deeper significance it showed that Saul failed to understand the difference between Israel and the kingdoms of this world. Israel stood in a covenant relation to the God of the whole earth, and her battles were His. The worldly desire of the people for a king like the kings of 'all the nations' is echoed in the worldliness of the king himself when the crisis comes.

13. **Thou hast done foolishly.** 'Folly' in Scripture always implies something more serious than lack of intelligence. The 'fool,' both in

he commanded thee : for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. 14. But now thy kingdom shall not continue : the LORD hath sought him a ^c man after his own heart, and the LORD hath com- ^{c Acts xiii. 22.} manded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee. 15. And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people *that were* present with him, about six hundred men. 16. And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people *that were* present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin : but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. 17. And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies : one company turned unto the way *that leadeth* to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual : 18. and another company turned the way *to* Beth-horon : and another company turned *to* the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. 19. Now there was no ^d smith ^{d 2 Kings xxiv. 14.} found throughout all the land of Israel : for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make *them* swords or spears : 20. but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to

Solomon's Proverbs and in other parts of the Bible, means one whose character is *morally* perverted, either by pride or self-indulgence, or some other form of sin. His outward acts and words of 'foolishness' spring from a bad heart rather than a weak intellect. Here Saul's action is 'foolish,' because it springs from a heart which is not true to God. So, on the other hand, 'wisdom' in the Bible has a *moral* foundation : 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning' of it.

17. **The spoilers.** These bands turned, according to the description given, northward, westward, and eastward.

19. **Now there was no smith found.** This was a common expedient for breaking the resistance of a conquered nation, as we see in the conduct of the Babylonians when they conquered the kingdom of Judah immediately before the Captivity. Cf. Jer. xxiv. 1.

This verse illustrates the fact that the sacred history is not a complete history of events. The Philistines must have subjugated the country to a large extent again during the latter years of Samuel. See chap. ix. 16, and the mention of the garrison of the Philistines in chap. x. 5, as well as in the present chapter.

sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his ax, and his mattock. 21. Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. 22. So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that *were* with Saul and Jonathan : but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found. 23. And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

XIV. 1. Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that *is* on the other side. But he told not his father. 2. And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron : and the people that *were* with him *were* about six hundred men ; 3. and Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, I-chabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. 4. And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side : and the name of the one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. 5. ²The forefront

² The one crag rose up on the north in front of Michmash.

20. **Coulter**, a ploughshare. The *share* and the mattock seem to have been almost identical.

21. **Yet they had a file**. It is impossible to arrive at the exact meaning of this difficult verse. The margin of the R.V. reads, 'when the edges of the mattocks, etc., were blunt,' placing only a comma at the end of ver. 20.

XIV. 3. **The Lord's priest in Shiloh**. These words refer to Eli, and not to Ahiah, as Shiloh had ceased to be the centre of worship. Ahiah is thought to be the same person as Ahimelech (xxii.).

4. **Bozez, Seneh**. These two crags have been identified by explorers of Palestine. The ravine where they are situated runs east and west, and Bozez (the name means 'shining') is the northern cliff, which catches the sunlight all day long. Seneh ('acacias') is on the southern side, and lies in shade.

of the one *was* situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah. 6. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised : it may be that the LORD will work for us : for *there is* no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few. 7. And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that *is* in thine heart : turn thee ; behold, I *am* with thee according to thy heart. 8. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto *these* men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. 9. If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you ; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. 10. But if they say thus, Come up unto us ; then we will go up : for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand : and this *shall be* a sign unto us. 11. And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines : and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. 12. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me : for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. 13. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him : and they fell

6. **There is no restraint to the Lord, etc.** Jonathan had grasped the truth which his father missed, the truth that underlies all the history of the kingdom of God in every age. It had been already illustrated in the deeds of Gideon and Barak. It was to receive a fresh confirmation in the days of Asa (2 Chron. xv.) and Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx.). It shines out continually in all the history of the Christian Church. 'God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty' (1 Cor. i. 27).

10. **This shall be a sign unto us.** The choice of signs or omens by which to guide action in uncertainties, like the use of lots, is found frequently in Scripture, and seems to have been sanctioned by God in primitive times. It must not be confounded with mere superstition, for in the cases where God allowed this method, those who used it did so with reverence and with prayer. Cf. Gen. xxiv. 14.

before Jonathan ; and his armourbearer slew after him.

³ within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land.

14. And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, ³ within as it were an half acre of land, *which a yoke of oxen might plow*. 15. And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people : the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked : so it was a very great trembling. 16. And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked ; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and ⁴ they went on beating down *one another*. 17. Then said Saul unto the people that *were* with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armourbearer *were* not *there*. 18. And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel. 19. And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that *was* in the host of the Philistines went on and increased : and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine

⁴ they went *hither* and *thither*.

15. **And there was trembling in the host.** The army of the Philistines were seized with one of those mysterious terrors, which the ancient Greeks called 'panics,' and which constitute an incalculable element in all warfare. There are plenty of parallels in history to this flight of an army before the attack of one or two men. Here it was evidently a Divine interposition, on behalf of God's people and their champion, Jonathan, and was accompanied by an earthquake, which added to the confusion of the Philistines. It was also a fulfilment of the promise of Lev. xxvi. 8 : 'Five of you shall chase an hundred,' etc.

18. **Bring hither the ark of God.** This must be an error in the Hebrew text, for the ark was at Kirjath-jearim, and, moreover, was never used for the purpose of divination. The Septuagint has 'ephod,' which is probably right, and implies the presence of the Urim and Thummim, which were the recognised instruments of discovering the Divine will.

19. **Withdraw thine hand.** We have here another example of Saul's impatience. He thinks there is no time now for asking God's will. And we see the result in the sins which followed and marred the victory: (1) Saul's harsh command ; (2) Jonathan's involuntary trespass ; (3) the weakening of authority by Saul's compulsory retraction of his word ; (4) the sin which the people committed in their hunger (ver. 32, etc.).

hand. 20. And Saul and all the people that *were* with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, *and there was* a very great discomfiture. 21. Moreover the Hebrews *that were* with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp *from the country* round about, even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites that *were* with Saul and Jonathan. 22. Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle. 23. So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven. 24. And the men of Israel were distressed that day: ⁶ for ⁵ but Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted *any* food. 25. And ⁶ all *they of* the land came to a wood; and there ⁶ all the people was honey upon the ground. 26. And when the people ^{came.} were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but

Contrast the prayerful spirit in which the Christian hero, King Oswald, entered into battle.

'Oswald, baptized and educated as a Christian, comes to claim his inheritance, comes as the champion of the Church of Christ. He is met by the forces of the British warrior Cadwalla, the ally of the heathen Penda, the Mercian king. The battle is imminent. A wooden cross is hastily constructed; a hole is dug in the ground; the king seizes the cross and plants it in the earth, holds it with either hand while the soldiers fill in the soil. Then he cries aloud to his assembled troops, "Let us all fall on our knees and together supplicate the Lord Omnipotent, the living and the true, that of His mercy He will defend us from a proud and fierce enemy; for He knoweth that we have undertaken a righteous war for the salvation of our race." He was obeyed. This done, at dawn of day the soldiers advanced against the enemy. Their arms were crowned with victory, and Cadwalla, the hero of forty battles and sixty skirmishes, was slain. The name of the place, Heavenfield, seemed after the event to have had a prophetic import. Once again the visible cross had been the standard of victory.'—From Lightfoot's *Leaders in the Northern Church*, pp. 27, 28.

25. There was honey upon the ground. This honey would be dropping from the nests of the wild bees among the trees of the wood. The description of Palestine as 'a land flowing with milk and honey' was in this respect literally true.

no man put his hand to his mouth : for the people feared the oath. 27. But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath ; wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that *was* in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth ; and his eyes were enlightened. 28. Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food this day. And the people were faint. 29. Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land : see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. 30. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found ? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines ? 31. And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon : and the people were very faint. 32. And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew *them* on the ground : and the people ^edid eat *them* with the blood. 33. Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, ^fYe have transgressed ; roll a great stone unto me this day. 34. And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay

^e Gen. ix. 4 ;
Lev. xvii. 10-12.

^f Ye have dealt
treacherously.

27. His eyes were enlightened. A common Biblical metaphor for being physically refreshed.

32. The people did eat them with the blood. This primeval law (see *reff.*) pointed to the sacred nature of *life*, of which blood was the symbol.

This law throws into startling significance our Lord's words about drinking His Blood, and explains the astonishment of the Jews at hearing them (S. John vi. 53-57). We may with certainty conjecture that one of the reasons for giving this law was to prepare men for the truth that only the life of the Incarnate can really give life to others, and that this life is 'verily and indeed' communicated to us in the Holy Communion.

34. Slay them here. When the animals were slain on the ground, as in *ver.* 32, the flesh became soaked with the blood, which would run away when the animals were slain on the stone.

them here, and eat ; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew *them* there. 35. And Saul built an altar unto the LORD : the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD. 36. And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God. 37. And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day. 38. And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people ; and know and see wherein this sin hath been ^{f Josh. vii. 14.} this day. 39. For, *as* the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But *there was* not a man among all the people *that* answered him. 40. Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee. 41. Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, ⁸ Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken : but the people escaped. 42. And Saul said, Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. 43. Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in mine hand, *and*, lo, I must die. 44. And Saul answered, God do so and more also : for thou

⁸ Shew the right.

37. But he answered him not that day. The silence of God pointed to some sin, as in the case of Achan. But here the trespass was involuntary: Jonathan had sinned against the third commandment, but was forgiven. God suffered the people to rescue him.

The sin of Saul was much greater than that of Jonathan, for he 'took God's name in vain' by rashly invoking a curse; and then (ver. 44) swearing on oath to do something which a less headstrong and conceited ruler would have known could not be carried out.

shalt surely die, Jonathan. 45. And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. 46. Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

LESSON VIII

Saul's Temptation

INTRODUCTION.—Recapitulate Saul's election by God to the kingship; his early promise; opportunities before him; how will he turn out? what use will he make of his life and his great office?

MATTER.

1. Saul's danger lay in the temptation to forget that God was the real king of Israel, and to act as if all depended upon his own courage, quickness, and wisdom; and in the particular case before us he had to contend with—

(1) His own natural eagerness of temperament; the heat for battle which, under God's guidance, had made him victorious over Nahash, needed to be disciplined by the fear of God.

(2) The natural human fear of losing his army if he waited any longer (xiii. 8).

Yet he had to help him, not only the book which Samuel had written, but the specific warning of chap. x. 8, *which he remembered* (xiii. 8).

METHOD.

1. Describe the attack of the Philistines, their strength, and the weakness of Israel.

Describe the temptation of Saul to attack them at once.

What hindered? The command of God.

Show that God had given this command to remind Saul and his people that He was their real king, and that without obedience to Him they could not hope for a final victory.

LESSON VIII—continued. SAUL'S TEMPTATION

MATTER.

METHOD.

2. Saul's sins were a proof of his real character; he had never learned the fear of God.

He disobeys a plain command, making a pretext of religion to excuse himself. And then, in chap. xiv., we see him forbidding the priest to go on with the prayer which was to ascertain God's will. He went to war really in his own strength, and not in God's.

2. How did Saul fail under temptation?

(a) He disobeyed and offered sacrifice, although he was not a priest.

(b) He made weak excuses (xiii. 12).

(c) A few days later he rushed into battle without prayer at all, thinking there was no time for it (xiv. 19).

Illustrate by the startling results which have often followed a *prayerful* entrance into battle.

The Normans at Hastings.

The English at Agincourt.

The turn of the war against the Boers in the very week which followed the day of united prayer (made at the request of Lord Roberts). Battles are recorded to have been lost by generals who did not believe in prayer.

3. The results of Saul's sins.

Saul's disobedience led naturally:

(1) To the prophet's foretelling the loss of his kingdom. The kingdom was essentially a religious one, and could not be held by the disobedient.

(2) To the errors which spoiled the victory of chap. xiv.:

(a) The rash and cruel command to abstain from food in the pursuit, which laid an unnecessary burden on the conscience as well as on the body.

(b) The danger of Jonathan, which weakened Saul's authority.

(c) The sin against the Law committed by the people in their faintness and hunger.

3. Describe the battle; and suggest that it might have been a more complete victory, and one unspoiled by strife and sin, had Saul entered upon it with prayer.

Illustrate by S. Oswald's victory at Heavenfield, precluded by the setting up of the cross and the king's prayer.

True and lasting victories, whether over the enemies of God or over oneself, are won by *obedience* and *prayer*.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Saul's Temptation.1. *What was Saul's temptation?*

To forget that God was the real King of Israel.

2. *How did Saul fail in the hour of temptation?*

(1) By disobedience to God's command, not waiting till Samuel came.

(2) By carelessness about *prayer* before the battle; thought there was no time for it.

3. *What were the results of Saul's failure?*

(1) He was told his kingdom should not continue; he had shown himself unworthy of it.

(2) He spoiled the victory by his conduct—

(a) Making his soldiers faint for want of food.

(b) Bringing Jonathan into danger.

(c) Causing the people in their hunger to sin against God's Law.

True victories for God can only be won by *obedience* and *prayer*.

CHAPTER XIV. 47-52; XV.

SO Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed *them*. 48. And he ¹gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of ~~them~~ that spoiled them. ¹ did valiantly, and smote.

49. Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchi-shua: and the names of his two daughters were *these*; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: 50. and the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. 51. And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel. 52. And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul. and when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he ^atook him unto him.

a chap. viii. 11.

xv. 1. Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. 2. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in

47. Zobah, probably between Damascus and Euphrates; a Syrian kingdom. See 2 Sam. x. 6.

49. Ishui, apparently the same as Abinadab, mentioned in chap. xxxi. 2.

xv. 2. Amalek. The Amalekites were hordes of wandering Arabs who inhabited the desert regions south of Palestine between Philistia and the Red Sea. Perhaps they were the descendants of the grandson of Esau (Gen. xxxvi. 12). They stand out in peculiar prominence as being the first of the nations who opposed the march of God's chosen people from Egypt to Palestine (Exod. xvii.). So again in Num. xiv. we find them chosen as the instruments of God's wrath to drive back the rebellious Israelites from entering Canaan. Their destruction had been prophesied by Balaam (Num. xxiv. 20).

^b Exod. xvii. the way, when ^b he came up from Egypt. 3. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly ^c destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. 4. And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. 5. And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. 6. And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. 7. And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah ² *until* thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. 8. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly. 10. Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, 11. It repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be* king: for he is turned

² as thou goest to Shur, that is before Egypt.

3. Now go and smite Amalek. See Supplementary Note, page 84.

6. The Kenites. The Kenites were a tribe of the Midianites; Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was one of them (Judges i. 16). The allusion in the text is to the services rendered to Moses in the wilderness by Jethro and his family (Exod. xviii.; Num. x.). The Kenites accompanied Israel as far as Jericho, and then settled in the south of Palestine.

7. From Havilah until thou comest to Shur. These places cannot be identified. The same phrase is used of the Ishmaelites (Gen. xxv. 18). They evidently represent the extreme eastern and extreme western points respectively of Saul's conquest.

11. It repenteth me, etc. This and also ver. 35 seem to be in direct contradiction with ver. 29. But this apparent inconsistency really illustrates the depth of Holy Scripture. The mysteries of God's dealing with man, the Creator with His creature, the Infinite with the finite, can sometimes *only* be expressed by two apparent contradictions. Faith must hold both as true, until a higher world and other powers than our

back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And ³it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. 12. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a ⁴place, and ³Samuel was wroth. ⁴monument. is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. 13. And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. 14. And Samuel said, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 15. And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. 16. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. 17. And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? 18. And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. 19. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? 20. And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21. But the people took of

present ones reconcile them. Cf. Phil. ii. 12, 13, where in the same breath S. Paul tells his converts to work out *their own* salvation, and that it is *God* that worketh in them. See the note on ver. 29.

12. He set him up a place, *i.e.* a monument of his victory, such as was commonly done by Eastern kings. Such a monument is the famous 'Moabite stone' of King Mesha, set up by him in 890 B.C. as a memorial of his victory over Ahab. This stone is now in the Louvre at Paris. A photograph of it is given in the Oxford *Helps to the Study of the Bible*.

^e the devoted things, to sacrifice.

^d Ps. 1. 7-15; Isa. i.; Micah vi. 6-8.

^f idolatry and teraphim.

^e Exod. xxiii. 2.

the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of ^e the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. 22. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, ^d to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as ^f iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. 24. And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and ^e obeyed their voice. 25. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. 26. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. 27. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.

22. Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings, etc. Samuel here enunciates the great truth which it was the special mission of the prophets to bring home to the conscience of Israel. It is *not* meant that sacrifices, etc., are not accepted by God, but that they are *only* accepted by Him when they are the expression of love and obedience. Cf. our Lord's treatment of the Pharisees (S. Matt. xxiii. 23, 24). He does *not* condemn them for their careful observance of the external matters of the Law, but rather approves of this. He *does* condemn them for omitting the 'weightier matters,' the inward side of religion, 'judgment, mercy, and faith.'

23. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. 'Witchcraft' or 'divination' is an attempt to have intercourse with or consult other supposed unseen powers than God, and is therefore apostasy from, or rebellion against, God. 'Spiritualism,' revived in modern times, but really one of the most ancient of superstitions, comes under this head. The key to Samuel's allusion is evidently to be found in chap. xxviii. 3. Saul had been zealous in carrying out the commandments of the Law of Moses (see note on that verse), but he was really guilty of the same sin himself by setting up his own self-will and the love of popularity as idols in the place of God. *Teraphim*, see note on chap. vi. 2, p. 29.

24. I feared the people. Perhaps the events of chap. xiv., when the people rescued Jonathan, were now bearing fruit. Saul is afraid to take a firm stand against the popular will. Probably, however, the reason he gives is only an excuse.

28. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou. 29. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he ^{f Num. xxiii. 19; 2 Tim. ii. 13.} is not a man, that he should repent. 30. Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God. 31. So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD. 32. Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. 33. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. 34. Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. 35. And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

29. **The Strength of Israel.** R.V. margin, 'Victory,' another name for Jehovah the covenant-God of Israel. So elsewhere He is called the 'Glory' of Israel (Ps. cvi. 20).

He is not a man, that he should repent. Although God is elsewhere spoken of (v. 35) as repenting, this verse shows that such 'repentance' must not be understood in the ordinary human sense. The word applied to God implies neither 'regret' nor 'change of mind.' God 'repents' when the change of man's conduct towards Him necessitates a change in God's dealings with men. When men turn to God, God welcomes them, though wroth with them before; when men forsake God, His grace is taken away from them. His 'repentance' does not mean any change in His purpose.

31. **So Samuel turned again after Saul.** Samuel's concession teaches us that outward reverence may and ought to be paid even to evil rulers, not for their own sakes, but because they are the representatives of God. Cf. S. Matt. xxiii. 2, and the apostolic injunction to 'honour the king,' even when that king was Nero.

32. **Delicately.** The meaning of this is obscure. Perhaps it means 'cheerfully' or 'in a conceited manner,' thinking that as Saul had spared his life no further harm could happen to him.

LESSON IX

The End of Opportunity

INTRODUCTION.—Remind children of Saul's great failure (chaps. xiii., xiv.). Perhaps *he* did not think very much of it, and soon forgot; and in the eyes of the world he was a great warrior and a successful king (xiv. 47-52); but he was not right in the sight of God. God was waiting to give him another opportunity, and Samuel was praying for him.

MATTER.

1. Saul's second opportunity.

God in His mercy and long-suffering gives Saul another opportunity of obedience. This command to destroy Amalek was not only God's punishment of the Amalekites, but God's proving of Saul. Would he this time remember that he was after all only God's representative; that his kingdom belonged to God, and not to himself? Was Saul's warring really for God's sacred cause, or was it only like the wars of this world, for self and personal glory and popularity and gain?

2. Saul's failure.

The result of the second trial is as that of the first, but in a worse degree. This time it is the *love of popularity* apparently which leads him away from the plain path of obedience. This is one of the greatest snares of a ruler or teacher, and is really a subtle form of self-love. And this self-love leads to *self-deceit*, as is plainly visible in Saul's excuses. He even urges a religious reason, sacrifice, for breaking God's commands, and so falls into *hypocrisy*.

METHOD.

1. Why did God tell Saul to destroy the Amalekites?

(a) As a punishment for their sins and their hatred of God's people.

(b) To prove Saul *himself*, to show whether he had repented of his first failure.

Illustrate by the history of Jonah—

His first disobedience.

His repentance.

His obedience when again bidden to preach to Nineveh.

[In questioning on (b) the teacher must be careful to explain that God, in testing Saul, is not seeking for knowledge which He already possesses. In His mercy He gives Saul another opportunity, although knowing how bad a use would be made of it.]

2. The snare of *popularity* is one to which children and the young are peculiarly liable, and this may be made a very practical lesson.

Show that nothing can keep us from falling into it, but a resolve to put God and God's commandment *first* always.

Beware of *excuses*: cf. S. Luke xvi. 15.

Illustrate by Pontius Pilate crucifying Christ, for the very reasons that Saul gives here, fear of the people, and a weak desire of pleasing them.

LESSON IX—*continued.* THE END OF OPPORTUNITY

MATTER.

3. Final rejection of Saul.

There does come a time when God's patience ends, and His grace is taken away. God is merciful, but His mercy is not mere amiable weakness. The very love of God is a *fire*—a fire to burn, as well as to comfort.

METHOD.

3. Show that the rejection of Saul is a type of the Day of Judgment, when all opportunities are over and done with.

Draw out the simile of *fire*.

The wrath of God is a subject which, while it should certainly not occupy the first place in our teaching about God to children, ought certainly not to be neglected, for it is written plainly in every part of Scripture.

If in past years the tendency was to frighten children with this truth, we must beware of the reaction, and not teach *merely* that God is merciful and long-suffering.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The End of Opportunity.

1. *Saul is given a second trial.*

God gives him a plain commandment.

Will he obey it?

2. *Saul fails under the trial.*

Why? Because he did not put God's commandment *first*.

He wanted to be liked by the people, to be *popular*.

Other sins followed—

(1) Lying excuses.

(2) Hypocrisy.

3. *Saul is rejected by God.*

God does not give us fresh opportunities for ever.

Remember the Day of Judgment.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

The command to exterminate the Amalekites. It has seemed to many a strange and difficult thing that God should have given a commandment of this sort, 'slay both man and woman, ox and sheep, camel and ass.' It has seemed to them inconsistent with what the New Testament and many parts of the Old Testament teach us of the love of God, and His care for the weakest of His creatures. But we have no right to ignore any part of God's word. Perhaps the following considerations may help us to understand this apparent difficulty.

1. God, Who is the true and perfect Teacher, all through the history of Revelation, deals with men as they are, and not as they will be at a more advanced stage of religion or civilisation. Exterminating wars, and even human sacrifices, did not shock the conscience of that rude and barbaric time. So God employed the ideas and habits of that time to teach men His fundamental lessons, e.g. the sin of idolatry; the need of holiness in God's people. So He tested Abraham's self-sacrifice by giving him a commandment (to sacrifice Isaac) which we may reverently conjecture He would not give to any one now.

2. God does not rule this world on 'sentimental' principles. His mercy is indeed 'over all His works,' but this mercy is quite consistent with severe and awful punishments and chastisements, punishments which may deter others from sinning, chastisements which may reform the sinner himself. 'Nature' is full of mysteries of suffering and disease and death; but God is the Author and Ruler of Nature. Laws of Nature when outraged bring their own punishment. Can we expect it to be otherwise with the laws of morality and conscience?

A remarkable piece of evidence to the truth that God's judgments are visibly exercised upon guilty nations even in this world is to be seen in the recent (1898) overthrow of the Kalipha, and the extermination of his followers, by the English and the Egyptians under Lord Kitchener. We need not be afraid to say of that monstrous Dervish tyranny that, like the heathen kingdoms of the Old Testament who sinned against conscience and natural reason, God has 'judged' them.

The case of the Amalekites, it should be remembered, is more an instance of God's mercy than of His wrath: He had waited more than four hundred years before He fulfilled the judgment which He had pronounced, and which they deserved (Exod. xvii. 14). Even now they were not all destroyed.

3. God sees to the end, and we do not. This life is not everything, nor indeed the larger part of everything. The slaughtered Amalekites had eternity before them; and the innocent children who suffered with their guilty parents have futures which the wisdom and love of God direct in ways unknown to us at present. We have no right to accuse any one of our fellow-men of injustice, unless we know all the facts of the case. How much less can we dare to accuse God! It is the work of faith in this world's twilight to hold fast to the truth that God's purpose is ever advancing towards the end which He sees of perfect justice and wisdom and love. In the full light of the vision of God we shall declare with all the redeemed, 'True and just are Thy ways, Thou King of the ages' (Rev. xv. 3, R. V.).

CHAPTERS XVI. ; XVII. 1-54

AND the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king ^a among his sons. 2. And Samuel said, ^a How can I go? if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. 3. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee. 4. And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? 5. And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. 6. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before him. 7. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* ^b not as man seeth; for man ^c looketh on the outward appearance, but ^d the LORD looketh on the heart. 8. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. ^e 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

4. **Bethlehem**, about four miles south of Jerusalem. Called anciently Ephrath (Gen. xlviii. 7). The name Bethlehem means 'house of bread,' probably given in allusion to its fertility. It was the burial-place of Rachel; the scene of the marriage of Ruth and Boaz, from whose descendants came Jesse and David; it was foretold by Micah as destined to a still greater honour (Micah v. 2). Here the Lord Jesus was born (S. Luke ii.); and here, in the same cave which formed the stable of the inn, lived for many years S. Jerome, the translator of the Holy Scriptures into Latin.

5. **Sanctify yourselves**, *i.e.* by ceremonial washing of the person and the clothes. Cf. Exod. xix. 10.

And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. 9. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. 10. ¹Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. 11. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. 12. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he. 13. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. 14. But the Spirit of the LORD ^e departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. 15. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

¹ And Jesse.

^e Ps. li. 11.

10. **Again, Jesse, etc.** The simple alteration in the R.V. brings out the meaning, viz. that the seven includes the three first mentioned by name.

12. **Ruddy.** The word probably means 'auburn-haired,' which was esteemed a great beauty among dark-haired and dark-complexioned nations, as we know it was, for example, among the ancient Greeks and Romans.

13. **Anointed him in the midst of his brethren.** The meaning of the prophet's action could not have been understood by David's family. Probably they thought that Samuel had chosen him to be a member of a prophetic school, and was anointing him to this office, as, long afterwards, Elijah anointed Elisha.

14-23. On the connection of this passage with the next chapter see Supplementary Note, p. 96.

14. **An evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.** This evil spirit was sent by the Lord's *permission*, as an instrument of chastisement. Cf. 1 Kings xxii. 21-23. It may have been a personal evil spirit, like those in the Gospels who were cast out by Christ, only in Saul's case the possession seems to have been intermittent. At any rate, the effect on Saul seems to have been melancholy or despair. For an illustration of the passage see Browning's remarkable poem, 'Saul.'

16. Let our lord now command thy servants, *which are* before thee, to seek out a man, *who is* a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. 17. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me. 18. Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD *is* with him. 19. Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which *is* with the sheep. 20. And Jesse took an ass ~~laden with bread~~, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and ~~went them~~ by David his son unto Saul. 21. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer. 22. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. 23. And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

XVII. 1. Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. 2. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched ² by the valley ² in of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

XVII. 2. *The valley of Elah.* The scene of this battle is the modern Wady Sunt, which runs up in a north-west direction from the hills south of Jerusalem to the sea at Ashdod. The name Ephes-dammim means 'boundary of blood,' and suggests a place of frequent encounters between Israel and the Philistines.

The following picturesque description is taken from Deane's *Saul and Samuel*, p. 164: 'Saul took up his position on the side of the valley of Elah, the Wady Sunt, on one of the low rocky hills, covered with lentisk bushes, which there abound. Between the two hosts lay the broad, open

3. And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side : and *there was* a valley between them. 4. And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span. 5. And *he had* an helmet of brass upon his head, and *he was* armed with a coat of mail ; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass. 6. And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a ³target of brass between his shoulders. 7. And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam ; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron : and one bearing a shield went before him. 8. And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set *your* battle in array ? *am* not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul ? choose ye a man for you, and let him come down to me. 9. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants : but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. 10. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day ; give me a man, that we may fight together. 11. When Saul

³ javelin.

valley, rich and fertile, but divided lengthwise by a remarkable ravine, the presence of which sufficiently accounts for the opposing armies being unable to bring matters to a decisive issue by engaging in a pitched battle. Captain Conder describes it as a deep trench, formed by a mountain torrent, which runs with great violence in the winter, though dry in summer. This *gai*, or channel, is some twenty feet wide, with steep vertical sides ten or twelve feet deep, and quite impassable except in certain places. The sides of this trench are strewn with rounded, water-worn pebbles, each fitted for use in the sling.'

4. **Goliath of Gath.** Goliath must have been one of the descendants of the Anakim who were exterminated by Joshua, except some who remained in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod (Josh. xi. 22). Cf. Num. xiii. 33, and 2 Sam. xxi. 15-22.

The cubit is variously estimated ; the lowest computation would make Goliath 9 ft. 9 in. in height. The cubit is the measurement from the tip of the middle finger to the elbow ; the span from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger in the outstretched hand.

5. **Five thousand shekels.** It is uncertain what the exact weight of the shekel was at this time. At a later date it was about half an ounce, which would make Goliath's corselet about 156 lbs.

and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. 12. Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name *was* ^fJesse; and he had eight sons: ⁴and the man went among men *for* an old man in the days of Saul. 13. And the three eldest sons of Jesse went *and* followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. 14. And David *was* the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul. 15. But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem. 16. And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. 17. And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched *corn*, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren; 18. and carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of *their* thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge. 19. Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. 20. And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to ⁵the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle. 21. For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army. 22. And David left his ⁶carriage in the hand of the keeper of the ⁶carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren. 23. And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard *them*. 24. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. 25. And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man

^fRuth iv. 22.
⁴and the man
 was an old man
 in the days of
 Saul, stricken
 in years among
 men.

⁵the place of
 the wagons.

⁶baggage.

18. Take their pledge, *i. e.* bring back some word or token from them to show that they are well.

that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

26. And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the ^g living God? 27. And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him. 28. And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. 29. And David said, What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause? 30. And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner. 31. And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed *them* before Saul: and he sent for him. 32. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. 33. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. 34. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and ⁷ there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: 35. and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote

^g Deut. v. 26.

⁷ when there came a lion, or a bear.

34. **A lion and a bear.** These wild beasts were evidently once very common in Palestine, from the frequent allusions to them in the Old Testament, though now they are no longer found there. These that attacked David's flocks would be such as had made their way from the heights of Lebanon, or the thickets of Jordan, into the pastures of Judæa. See Stanley, *Lectures*, ii. 43.

him, and slew him. 36. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear : and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. 37. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will ^h deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. ^{A 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18.} And Saul said unto David, Go, and 'the LORD be with thee. 38. And Saul armed David with his armour, and ^{† 1 Chron. xxii. 11, 16.} he put an helmet of brass upon his head ; also he armed him with a coat of mail. 39. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go ; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these ; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him. 40. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip ; and his sling *was* in his hand : and he drew near to the Philistine. 41. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David ; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him. 42. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him : for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. 43. And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves ? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. 45. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield : but I

40. **His sling.** The sling was the favourite weapon of the shepherds of Syria and Palestine. See Judg. xx. 16 of the 700 Benjamites, 'every one could sling stones at an hair-breadth and not miss.'

45. **I come to thee in the Name of the Lord of hosts.** The defiance of David to Goliath marks the essential religiousness of David's character in contrast with that of Saul, and helps us to understand why he was chosen by God, and also how it was that he was able to repent after his great sin (2 Sam. xii.). Saul was a hero after ordinary human standards, but David was more, he was a hero of *faith* ; his warlike deeds belong to a supernatural order ; the weapons of his warfare were not carnal (2 Cor. x. 4).

j Heb. xi. 33, 34. come to thee *j* in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. 46. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand ; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee ; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth ; *k* that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear : for *l* the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands. 48. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead ; and he fell upon his face to the earth. 50. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him ; but *m* there was no sword in the hand of David. 51. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. 52. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to *n* the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. 53. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. 54. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem ; but he put his armour in his tent.

n 52. The valley. This must be a mistranslation, as the armies were already in the valley. It should either be *Gai*, some unknown place, or *Gath*.

n 54. Jerusalem. Jerusalem was not yet a city of Israel, but was still in the hands of the Jebusites. Perhaps this statement is made by anticipation, for at a later date David captured Jerusalem, and may have taken the sword there. In chap. xxi. 9 we find the sword at Nob.

LESSON X

David—His Call and Testing

INTRODUCTION.—This will be largely a descriptive lesson, as the events tell their own tale; the lessons flow naturally out of the narrative. The main point to be emphasised is the *religious* character of David's victory.

MATTER.

1. God's choice of David.

David is called the man after God's heart (Acts xiii. 22); and God's choice of him rested not upon externals, but upon the heart (xvi. 7). David's heart was right with God. Though the youngest and least esteemed in Jesse's family, he is chosen in preference to the other sons, not for his natural qualifications, though he had these in abundance (xvi. 18), but for *his love of God*. In the loneliness of pastures and sheepfolds he had felt God's presence and power, and had learnt to trust and love Him.

2. David's battle with Goliath.

The essential beauty, strength, and simplicity of David's character shine out in this story. He has lived in the presence of God and by the power of God, and he enters upon this conflict without boasting or self-consciousness, simply in answer to God's inward call, and out of zeal for God's honour. He is indignant that God's Name should be dishonoured by the reproaches of a heathen. David is an idealist in the true sense. He has grasped by faith the inner meaning of Israel's calling as Saul never did. He knows that Israel's armies are the 'armies of the living God' (xvii. 26), and that their battle is the Lord's (xvii. 47).

METHOD.

1. Describe the choice and anointing of David.

Suggest reasons for God's choice.

David, a lonely boy keeping sheep, learns to think often of God, and to pray to Him. His early dangers (xvii. 34, 35, 37) and successes led him, *not to self-confidence, but to trust in God and to be brave*.

2. Point out—

(a) The *reason* why David entered upon the fight with Goliath.

See xvii. 26. David was indignant that the honour of God should be profaned—

(1) By the revilings of the Philistines.

(2) By the fears of Israel.

(b) The *spirit* in which David fought.

(1) His *humility*. Although he had already been sent for to the king's court to play the harp (which apparently had excited the jealousy of his brothers, xvii. 28), he went back to his sheep (xvii. 15), and he returns a soft answer to Eliab's scorn.

LESSON X—*continued.* DAVID—HIS CALL AND TESTING

MATTER.

3. David's victory is notable, not only from the natural disparity between the two combatants and their weapons, but because—

(1) It was a supernatural victory, won in the power of God's might.

(2) It turned the whole course of the war. There is no limit to the influence of even *one* man if God is with him.

METHOD.

(2) His *simplicity*. He does not aim at figuring as a warrior, attired in armour, but chooses to go with the simple weapons that he understands.

(3) His *faith*. He stands before the face of the brutal giant without quailing; God is on his side (xvii. 45-47).

3. Show that David's victory is a type of the warfare of the Christian, to which he is pledged in his Baptism.

The difference between David and Goliath was not so great as there seems to be between the strength of Satan or the world and that of the Christian child; but, nevertheless, the real strength is on the side of the latter.

Moreover, the victory of *one* over temptation often leads to the encouragement and victory of many.

'If God be for us, who can be against us?' (Rom. viii. 31).

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

David—His Call and Testing.

'I have found David my servant, with my holy oil
have I anointed him' (Ps. lxxxix. 21).

1. *David is chosen by God to be king*, though young, despised by his brothers, a shepherd boy,

Because his heart was right in God's sight.
He loved God and trusted Him.

2. *David fights with Goliath*

Because Goliath's words and Israel's fear
were a dishonour to God.

David enters into the battle—

- (1) With humility — does not answer Eliab back.
- (2) With simplicity—only his sling.
- (3) With trust in 'the living God.'

3. *David wins the victory*

Because God is his strength before the face
of the giant.

We too may win our battle against Satan
by the strength of God, and help others to
win by our example.

Learn : 'The Lord is the strength of my life,
of whom shall I be afraid?' (Ps. xxvii. 1).

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

xvi. 14-23. This account of David going to Saul's court as a musician and becoming the king's armour-bearer seems at first sight inconsistent with the account of his visiting the host in chap. xvii. 12-31, and still more with Saul's ignorance of him in chap. xvii. 55-58. Moreover, both these passages are entirely omitted in the oldest ms. of the Septuagint, as well as parts of chap. xviii.

Two points are to be borne in mind with regard to this difficulty—

1. The compiler of the present Hebrew text of 1 Samuel may have had before him *two* accounts of David's early life, both of them true as far as they went, and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost have been led to interweave them into *one* narrative. Such seems often to have been the practice of the writers of the sacred books. They found materials for history already existing, and inspiration helped them to select from these and to combine them, so as to form the books as we have them now.

2. The inconsistency may be on the surface rather than real. David was evidently not in continuous attendance upon Saul, as we see from chap. xvii. 15. Although he was made 'armour-bearer' (xvi. 21), this would not necessitate any close connection with the king, as there would be many 'armour-bearers' at one time; even Joab had *ten* (2 Sam. xviii. 15). Moreover, it is quite likely that a person loved by Saul in his fits of madness might not be recognised easily under quite different circumstances when Saul was in his right mind. Again, David could hardly have been more than twenty when he fought Goliath, and we are not told how long it was before this that he came first to Saul's court. But even in a short time he might at that age have grown almost out of recognition.

The following singularly profound and beautiful verses on the 'Call of David,' written by Newman in the *Lyra Apostolica*, are well worth studying in detail—

'Latest born of Jesse's race,
 Wonder lights thy bashful face,
 While the prophet's gifted oil
 Seals thee for a path of toil.
 We, thy Angels, circling round thee,
 Ne'er shall find thee as we found thee,
 When thy faith first brought us near
 To quell the lion and the bear.

'Go ! and 'mid thy flocks a while,
At thy doom of greatness smile ;
Bold to bear God's heaviest load,
Dimly guessing of the road,—
Rocky road, and scarce ascended,
Though thy foot be angel-tended ;
Twofold praise thou shalt attain,
In royal court and battle-plain ;

'Then comes heart-ache, care, distress,
Blighted hope, and loneliness ;
Wounds from friend and gifts from foe,
Dizzied faith, and guilt, and woe ;
Loftiest aims by earth defiled,
Gleams of wisdom sin-beguiled,
Sated power's tyrannic mood,
Counsels shared with men of blood ;
Sad success, parental tears,
And a dreary gift of years.

'Strange, that guileless face and form
To lavish on the scarring storm !
Yet we take thee in thy blindness,
And we buffet thee in kindness ;
Little chary of thy fame,—
Dust unborn may bless or blame—
But we mould thee for the root
Of man's promised healing Fruit,
And we mould thee hence to rise,
As our brother, to the skies.'

CHAPTERS XVII. 55-58; XVIII. 1-21; 28-30; XIX.

AND when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son *is* this youth? And Abner said, *As* thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. 56. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling *is*. 57. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. 58. And Saul said to him, Whose son *art* thou, *thou* young man? And David answered, *I am* the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.

XVIII. 1. And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. 3. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that *was* upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. 5. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants. 6. And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul.

XVIII. 1. **Jonathan loved him as his own soul.** The word 'soul' in Hebrew is equivalent to 'life,' and implies the individual's personal existence in this world. It does not contain the added meaning which the word has received by the revelation of immortality. What is meant here is simply that Jonathan loved David as himself, according to the great commandment which is common both to the Law and the Gospel (Lev. xix. 34).

with ¹ tabrets, with joy, and with ^a instruments of musick. ¹ timbrels.
 7. And the women answered *one another* as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. 8. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom? 9. And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. 10. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God ² came upon Saul, and he ³ prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand. ² came mightily. ³ Marg. raved.
 11. And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it*. And David avoided out of his presence twice. 12. And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul. 13. Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. 14. And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and ^b the LORD *was* with him. ^b Josh. vi. 27.
 15. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. 16. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and

7. *Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.* This is evidently the refrain of some popular ballad composed at this time to celebrate the victory over the Philistines. It must have had a wide circulation, for the Philistines themselves knew of it, and remembered it some time afterwards (see chap. xxi. 11). One of the earliest forms of poetry is the ballad, in which primitive nations sung the praises of heroes and warriors. In early times poetry is a more natural expression of feeling than prose. We also notice in these words, few as they are, the *parallelism* which is one of the characteristics of Hebrew poetry, and on which it depended largely for poetic effect, having no rhyme and no regular metre.

9. *And Saul eyed David.* The phrase helps to explain the expression 'an evil eye' (S. Mark vii. 22), which means, as here, jealousy, envy.

10. *There was a javelin in Saul's hand.* The spear (R.V.) was a regular mark of royalty, like the sceptre in more recent times. The custom still obtains among the Arabs of marking the tent of the sheik or chief by planting a spear in the ground beside it.

came in before them. 17. And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife : only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him. 18. And David said unto Saul, Who *am* I? and what *is* my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king? 19. But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife. 20. And Michal Saul's daughter loved David : and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. 21. And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.

28. And Saul saw and knew that the LORD *was* with David, and *that* Michal Saul's daughter loved him. 29. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David ; and Saul became David's enemy continually. 30. Then the princes of the Philistines went forth : and it came to pass, ⁴ after they went forth, *that* David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul ; so that his name was much set by.

⁴ as often as.

XIX. 1. And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. 2. But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David : and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee : now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself ⁵ until the morning, and abide in a secret *place*, and hide thyself : 3. and I will go out and stand beside my father

⁵ in.

17. **Let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.** Both here and in ver. 21 Saul's intention is, by conferring upon David the honour of being the king's son-in-law, to lay upon him the obligation to encounter all dangers in the king's cause, and so, if possible, to meet death at the hands of the Philistines.

18. **Who am I?** David's modesty is a constant feature in his character. We see it in his encounter with Goliath, in all his dealings with Saul, and again when God gives him the great Messianic promise. See 2 Sam. vii., especially ver. 18 onwards.

30. **Went forth, i.e. to battle.**

in the field where thou *art*, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee. 4. And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good: 5. for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against ^einnocent blood, to slay David without a cause? 6. And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain. 7. And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past. 8. And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him. 9. And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with *his* hand. 10. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night. 11. Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to ^dwatch him, and to slay ^dhim in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain. 12. So Michal let David ^edown through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped. 13. And Michal took ^ean image, and laid *it* in the bed, and put ^ea pillow of goats' *hair* ^ffor his bolster, and covered *it* with ^ga cloth. 14. And when Saul sent messengers to take ^hthe head thereof.

^c S. Matt. xxvii. 4.

^d Ps. lix. (title).

^e Josh. ii. 15; Acts ix. 24.

^e the teraphim.

^f at the head thereof.

^g the clothes.

XIX. 13. And Michal took an image, etc. The pillow of goats' hair seems to have been intended to counterfeit the hair of the supposed sleeper. There is a distinct touch of humour about this description of the escape of David which we need not think at all beneath the dignity

David, she said, He *is* sick. 15. And Saul sent the messengers *again* to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. 16. And when the messengers were come in, behold, *there was* an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' *hair* for his bolster. 17. And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee? 18. So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. 19. And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah. 20. And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *as* ⁹ appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. 21. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied like-

head over
them.

of Holy Scripture. Humour is part of the human nature which God created (which Puritanism has too often forgotten).

Michal's deceit and falsehood are, on the surface, of course contrary to the law of God both in Old Testament and in New Testament (Lev. xix. 11; Eph. iv. 25); but, on the other hand, there are cases in which the law of *love* (which is the supreme law) overrides this commandment. But we should be careful that it *is* love, and not veiled fear or self-interest.

20. And when they saw the company of the prophets, etc. There are other examples in history of the effect produced by the sight of orderly divine worship upon infuriated men. A notable instance is that of the Arian Emperor Valens in the year 372, whose persecution of S. Basil was checked by the impressiveness of divine service in the cathedral of Cæsarea. It is thus described by S. Gregory Nazianzen: 'When the emperor was within the church, and his ears rang with the sound of the Psalms as with a peal of thunder, and when he saw the sea of people present, and the almost angelic order and decency of divine worship in the Sacrament, and the bishop standing erect like a pillar before the people—as Samuel is described in Scripture—and not moving his body, his eye, or his mind in any direction, as if nothing had occurred, but wholly riveted on God and on the altar; and when he also saw those who were around him standing with fear and reverence, he felt his human weakness, and was seized with a sudden dizziness and darkness. . . . Then he began to totter, and would have fallen to the ground, if he had not been held up by the hand of one of the ministers' (Wordsworth's *Church History*, ii. 255, 256).

wise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. 22. Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah. 23. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night.

Wherefore they say, *'Is Saul also among the prophets?'* / chap. x. 11.

24. Wherefore they say, *'Is Saul also among the prophets?'* This saying had originated in chap. x. 11. It now received a new exemplification; but how different from the first! *Then* Saul had 'prophesied' as one under the overmastering influence of the Spirit of God. His words were a sign of this, as was the 'speaking with tongues' on the Day of Pentecost. *Now*, that same power which he had despised and forfeited turns him for the time into a naked raving madman—a byword to all.

LESSON XI

God's care for those who love Him

INTRODUCTION.—Remind children of the features of David's character which stand out in his battle with Goliath, viz. humility and love of God. David's life now undergoes a great change. He is no longer an unknown boy at home, but one of the most prominent at the king's court, where he now resides permanently. Instead of keeping a few sheep in the wilderness, he is captain over a thousand warriors (xviii. 5, 13).

MATTER.

1. The dangers of David's new life.

(1) The new position must have been a great temptation to *vanity*. He was a popular favourite, successful in battle; the popular voice placed him on a higher level even than Saul; and he was the king's son-in-law. Besides, he knew that Samuel had already anointed him to be king.

METHOD.

1. Question on the points contained in this section. Show that a great position is not to be desired for *itself*.

The praise of men is always full of peril.

LESSON XI—continued. GOD'S CARE FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM

MATTER.

(2) Saul's growing jealousy must have been a continual danger, and also a temptation. There must have been an inward struggle at times between the loyalty he owed to Saul, and which he always paid, and the natural desire to make an end of the danger and suspense, and seize the throne.

(3) David was also in frequent peril from the Philistines, and this must have been embittered by the knowledge that Saul desired him to be killed, and put him into danger purposely.

2. God's help to David.

(1) The continual presence of God gave him *wisdom* (xviii. 14) to retain his humility (xviii. 18), to be superior to popular praise, to do his work well and patiently, and to wait, without trying to retaliate on Saul.

(2) The hand of God protected him—perhaps by unseen angels—both in the battle with the Philistines, and when Saul's javelin hurtled past him. This help is promised in Ps. xci.

(3) God raised up friends to David. *Jonathan*, one of the most beautiful characters in the Bible, whose life seems a compendium of all the Beatitudes. He is ever ready to sacrifice himself, even to endanger his own life, for David's sake.

Michal, David's wife, who, according to God's ordinance, sets her husband even before her father, and saves his life.

3. Why did God help David?

(1) Because God had *called* him to a great office and work, and whenever God truly calls any one, He *always* gives the grace and protection necessary for the fulfilment of the call.

METHOD.

The sin of envy or jealousy is akin to murder (sixth commandment), and often, as here, leads directly to it.

Illustrate by conduct of Joseph's brethren, and the high priest's envy of our Lord (S. Matt. xxvii. 18).

'Through *envy* of the devil came death into the world' (Wisdom ii. 24).

Illustrate from Catechism: 'To bear no malice nor hatred in my heart.'

2. 'The Lord was with David (xviii. 14).

Illustrate by the Holy Spirit given to Christians. The first gift of the Spirit is the 'fear of the Lord,' *i.e.* *humility*, and this is the road to true *wisdom*, which is the Spirit's highest gift.

[The gifts of the Spirit in Isa. xi. are in *descending* order: wisdom is the highest; to attain this we must begin with the lowest, 'the fear of the Lord.' Cf. the first Beatitude.]

Ps. xci. 5: 'Thou shalt not be afraid for the arrow that flieth by day.'

No one need *fear* unseen perils if he is doing his duty as in God's sight.

Speak of one's *guardian angel*. Speak of the excellence of *friendship*, how we ought to value a friend, and try to be ourselves true friends. Unselfishness the essence of friendship.

S. John xv. 13.

3. Illustrate (1) by

Moses (Exod. iv.).

Joshua (Josh. i. 1-9).

Gideon (Judg. vi. 14, etc.).

S. Paul (2 Cor. xii. 9).

LESSON XI—*continued*. GOD'S CARE FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM
MATTER. METHOD.

(2) David, amid the trials and distractions of his new life, kept his old simple faithfulness to God: 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'

(2) By Daniel (Dan. i. 8; vi. 10).

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

God's care for those who love Him.

1. *David is called to a life of danger and temptation.*
 - (1) Many temptations to pride.
 - (2) Danger of Saul's envy.
 - (3) Dangers from the Philistines.

2. *God gives help to David.*
 - (1) The gift of wisdom keeps him from pride.
 - (2) The hand of God turns Saul's javelin from striking him.
 - (3) God raises him up friends to help and encourage him.
Jonathan.
Michal.

3. *Why was God's help given to him?*
 - (1) To enable him to do the work to which he had been called.
 - (2) Because he never forgot God.

Learn: 'Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him' (Ps. xci. 14).

CHAPTER XX.

a Ps. vii. 3.

AND David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? *a* what *is* mine iniquity? and what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? 2. And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? *it is not so.* 3. And David swore moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, *there is* but a step between me and death. 4. Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do *it* for thee. 5. And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow *is* the *b* new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third *day* at even. 6. If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me that he might run to Beth-lehem his city: for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family. 7. If he say thus, *It is* well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, *then* be sure that evil is determined by

b Num. x. 10;
xxviii. 11; Ps.
xxxii. 3.

6. There is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family. This is a survival of the patriarchal religion in which the family is the unit, and the head of the family, or the first-born, is the priest. Perhaps this is alluded to in ver. 29: 'my brother, he hath commanded me to be there.' Just as the *nation* developed out of the family, so also did the *Church*. The Israelitish Church founded at Sinai absorbed into itself the older family religion; but this still retained some of its old sacredness, and had its family feasts, and its family sacrifices, even its family superstitions, as we see in the continued use of the 'teraphim.' The Catholic Church is the highest development of the family life; its High Priest is the 'first-begotten among many brethren,' Jesus Christ; the Eucharist is its family sacrifice, and its common prayer the 'Our Father' (see Eph. iii. 15).

him. 8. Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant ; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee : notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself ; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father ? 9. And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee : for if I ¹knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee ? ¹ should at all know that.

10. Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me ? ²or what if thy father answer thee roughly ? ² if perchance thy father.

11. And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field. 12. And Jonathan said unto David, ³O LORD God of Israel, when ³ The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness. I have sounded my father about ⁴to-morrow any time, or ⁴ this time to-morrow. the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, ⁵and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee ; 13. the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan : ⁶but if it please ⁵ shall I not then send unto. my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send ⁶ should it please . . . if I disclose it not unto. thee away, that thou mayest go in peace : and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father. 14. And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not : 15. ^cbut also thou shalt not ^c 2 Sam. ix. ; cut off thy kindness from my house for ever : no, not when ^{xxi. 7.} the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. 16. So Jonathan made a covenant

8. A covenant of the Lord, *i.e.* the friendship of David and Jonathan was no ordinary friendship ; it was a sacred thing, ratified by religion and the blessing of God. Friendship in this light, like Matrimony, is elevated from the natural order to the supernatural, and may almost be called a 'sacrament.' Hence the Lord Jesus Christ is not only the Bridegroom of the Church, but He calls individual Christians His 'friends.' See S. John xv. 15 and Prov. xviii. 24. Religion is not an *unnatural* thing, but the consecration of what is human and natural, so that it may return to 'the image of God.'

15. Thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house. Jonathan here divines David's future. He foresees that David will be king, and he is anxious for his own children, because it was a regular Eastern custom to destroy all possible rivals to the throne.

16. Let the Lord even require it, etc., *i.e.* 'May the Lord make the enemies of David into His own ministers of vengeance, to punish David

with the house of David, *saying*, Let the LORD even require *it* at the hand of David's enemies. 17. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him : for he loved him as he loved his own soul. 18. Then Jonathan said to David, To-morrow *is* the new moon : and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. 19. And *when* thou hast stayed three days, *then* thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was *in hand*, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel. 20. And I will shoot three arrows on the side *thereof*, as though I shot at a mark. 21. And, behold, I will send a lad, *saying*, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows *are* on this side of thee, ⁷take them; then come thou : for *there is* peace to thee, and no hurt ; *as* the LORD liveth. 22. But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows *are* beyond thee ; go thy way : for the LORD hath sent thee away. 23. And *as touching* the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever. 24. So David hid himself in the field : and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat. 25. And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, *even* upon a seat by the wall : and Jonathan arose,

⁷ take them and come.

if he fails to fulfil this covenant.' David faithfully kept his word. See the references.

19. **When thou hast stayed three days.** This expression illustrates exactly the 'three days' of our Lord's burial. There was only one *whole* day, and parts of two other days.

Ezel. The margin of the Bible explains this as the stone 'that sheweth the way,' a Jewish traditional explanation. The word, however, literally means 'departure,' and the stone perhaps received that name only in after-time, in memory of the parting of David and Jonathan.

23. **The Lord be between thee and me for ever.** Cf. the parting of Jacob and Laban and the meaning attached to 'Mizpah' (Gen. xxxi. 49).

25. **And Jonathan arose.** Saul sat on the seat by the wall, *i.e.* opposite the door, the place of honour, Abner on one side of him and Jonathan on the other. The verse means apparently that Jonathan arose and took David's empty place, perhaps in order to draw Saul's attention to David's absence.

and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty. 26. Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day : for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean ; surely he *is* not clean. 27. And it came to pass on the morrow, *which was* the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty : and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to - day ? 28. And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked *leave* of me *to go* to Beth-lehem : 29. and he said, Let me go, I pray thee ; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city ; and my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there* : and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table. 30. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness ? 31. For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. 32. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, ^dWherefore d S. Matt. xxvii. 23. shall he be slain ? what hath he done ? 33. And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him : whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. 34. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat

26. **He is not clean.** Saul means that David must have failed to go through the ceremonial 'cleansing' necessary before partaking in a religious feast ; or having been cleansed, he has become accidentally polluted, *e.g.* by touching a dead body. See Lev. vii. 21. This ceremonial uncleanness lasted only until the evening, and as David did not appear on the next day, it was clear that there was some other cause for his absence.

30. **Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman.** No reflection is intended really upon Jonathan's mother. The most deadly way of insulting an Oriental is to speak insultingly of his mother. Saul is adopting the most outrageous way of venting his anger upon Jonathan.

34. **So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger.** Anger in a just

no meat the second day of the month : for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame. 35. And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. 36. And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37. And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is* not the arrow beyond thee? 38. *And* Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. 39. But the lad knew not any thing : only Jonathan and David knew the matter. 40. And Jonathan gave his ⁸ artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city. 41. *And* as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a *place* toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times : and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. 42. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed : and Jonathan went into the city.

⁸ weapons.

cause is not inconsistent with a gentle character. Gentleness is not the same as weakness. Moreover, such anger is not a sin. Jonathan's anger was not for himself, but for his friend. So we read that even our Blessed Lord was angry (S. Mark iii. 5), and Rev. vi. 16 speaks of 'the wrath of the Lamb.' Cf. Eph. iv. 26.

40. **Artillery.** This is an old English word for 'missiles.' Its derivation is a little uncertain ; it seems ultimately traceable to the Latin 'ars,' art ; and there is both an old French word 'artillerie' and a late Latin 'artillaria,' but it cannot be said with certainty from which of these our word 'artillery' is immediately derived ; probably the former. An illustration is seen in the 'Honourable Artillery Company' of London, which was originally a regiment of archers. It is described in Henry VIII.'s charter as the 'Fraternity or Guild of Artillery of long-bows, cross-bows, and hand-guns.'

41. **Exceeded.** The meaning of this is doubtful. Perhaps it means that David wept till he was 'overcome' with tears.

LESSON XII

True Friendship

INTRODUCTION.—Recapitulate the part of last lesson which dealt with the friendship of Jonathan, reminding the children that a true friend is the gift of God, and that it was God's providence and loving care for David that raised him up such a friend as Jonathan. This lesson should draw out some of the characteristics of true friendship.

MATTER.

1. Jonathan's faithfulness.

Faithfulness and loyalty are essential to friendship. There must be openness and sincerity in the dealings of friend with friend; and above all, a friend must be the same when absent as when present. So it is to be noticed that not only are Jonathan and David open with one another (see verses 8-10, 12-16), but Jonathan is ready to defend David in his absence, when a less straightforward character might have refrained from saying anything, or even have fallen in with Saul's mood, and agreed with him. See verses 28-34.

2. Jonathan's kindness.

This is called in ver. 14 'the kindness of the Lord.' 'Kindness,' the kindness which seeks out means of helping those who are in need, and does not shrink from trouble, is a Divine attribute. See 2 Sam. xiv. 14 and Titus iii. 4. All human kindness for kindness' sake is a help towards understanding the perfect kindness of God, as it shines forth in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this way Jonathan is a type of Christ. His one desire is to 'do good' to David, and he can call God to witness his absolute sincerity in this (verses 12, 13).

METHOD.

1. Describe David's danger; his uncertainty as to Saul's intention. Jonathan is his friend—

(1) In adversity just as much as when he was the successful warrior and favourite.

(2) In his absence just as in his presence.

Speak of 'fair-weather friendship.'

Cf. S. Peter denying his Lord through fear.

2. If we want to be like God, one of the surest ways is to try to be *kind* (S. Luke vi. 35).

Illustrate this according to the age and condition of the children—

Kindness to parents,
brothers and sisters,
friends,
the needy and helpless,
animals.

Illustrate from the kindness of the Lord Jesus, whose life is summed up in the words, 'Who went about doing good' (Acts x. 38).

Kindness is the way to be happy. God is always happy, not so much because He is almighty, but because He is all-loving.

LESSON XII—continued. TRUE FRIENDSHIP

MATTER.

3. Jonathan's self-sacrifice.

We are told that Jonathan 'loved David as his own soul' (ver. 17). This is the love which our Lord pronounces to be one of the two 'great commandments of the Law.' And Jonathan exemplifies further what our Lord says of friendship at its highest: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (S. John xv. 13). For though Jonathan did not actually die for David, he shows himself willing to face death at his father's hands. And he willingly surrenders his own title to the kingdom for love of David, and in submission to what he feels to be the will of God. Cf. xxiii. 16-18.

METHOD.

3. Describe Jonathan's care to help David; and his courage to defend himself, risking even death.

End with comparison with the self-sacrifice of our Lord, culminating in the Passion and the Cross.

He calls us His 'friends.'

Do we deserve it?

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

True Friendship.

1. Jonathan was *faithful* to David—

- (1) In his adversity.
- (2) In his absence.

2. Jonathan showed *kindness* to David—'the kindness of the Lord.'

Kindness is the way to be like God, and the way to be truly happy.

3. Jonathan *sacrificed himself* for David—

- (1) He gave up his own comfort at home.
- (2) He gave up the prospect of being king.
- (3) He endured the danger of Saul's anger.

In all these things Jonathan is a type of Christ.

Learn: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'

CHAPTERS XXI. 1-3 ; 6-15 ; XXII. ; XXIII.

THEN came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest :
 and Ahimelech ¹ was afraid at the meeting of David, ¹ came to meet David trem-
 and said unto him, Why *art* thou alone, and no man ^{bling.}
 with thee? 2. And David said unto Ahimelech the
 priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath
 said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business
 whereabouts I send thee, and what I have commanded thee :
 and I have appointed *my* servants to such and such a place.
 3. Now therefore what is under thine hand? give *me*
 five *loaves* of bread in mine hand, or what there is present.

6. So the priest gave him ^a hallowed *bread* : for there ^a S. Matt. xli.
 was no bread there but the shew-bread, that was taken ^{3, 4 ; S. Mark ii.}
 from before the LORD, to put ^b hot bread in the day ^{25, 28 ; S. Luke}
^{vi. 8, 4.}
^b Lev. xxiv. 5-9.

1. Nob. The place is unknown, but it appears from Isa. x. 32 that it was on the north of Jerusalem, and within sight of it. The tabernacle was evidently pitched at Nob at this time, though the ark was still at Kirjath-jearim.

Ahimelech. In S. Mark ii. 25, 26 the priest is called Abiathar, whom we see from chap. xxii. to have been the son of Ahimelech. We cannot harmonise the apparent discrepancy without more knowledge of the circumstances, which, if known, would probably here, as in many other cases, show that there is no discrepancy at all.

6. **Hallowed bread.** The 'shew-bread,' or 'bread of the Face' (of God)—Hebrew—or bread set forth or 'shewn' before God, is described in Lev. xxiv. The golden table on which it was laid is portrayed, along with the seven-branched candlestick, in the bas-relief on the arch of Titus at Rome, and may be still seen there.

The shew-bread seems to have been a continual memorial of God's people, the twelve loaves corresponding to the twelve tribes, set forth before His face. It was therefore a type of the Holy Eucharist. Cf. S. Paul's words, 1 Cor. x. 17: 'we being many are one bread.'

Our Lord uses this incident in the Gospels as a rebuke to the Pharisees. That the priests only should eat the shew-bread was certainly a commandment of God, but on that occasion a higher law, the law of charity to one who was an outcast and starving, superseded the ceremonial law, and the priest was right in giving the shew-bread to David.

There was no bread there but the shew-bread. This shows incidentally the poverty of the priesthood. In the absence of the ark, the visible mark of God's presence, the priesthood was doubtless 'under a cloud,' and the sanctuary but little visited.

when it was taken away. 7. Now a certain man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the Lord; and his name *was* *Doeg*, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul. 8. And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. 9. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for *there is* no other save that here. And David said, *There is* none like that; give it me. 10. And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. 11. And the servants of Achish said unto him, *Is* not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? 12. And David laid up these words

7. Detained before the Lord, *i.e.* Doeg was being kept by the priests at the sanctuary, either because he was under a vow (cf. Acts xxi. 23-26), or was suspected of leprosy (Lev. xiii.).

Doeg, an Edomite. The marginal references here, and in several other places in the following chapters, refer to the titles of the Psalms in the Bible version. These titles are of great antiquity, though they cannot be considered of absolute certainty, nor part of the inspired word of God. They are, however, very interesting, and it is not unlikely that in some cases they are quite correct. Probably some of the Psalms in the earlier part of the Psalter, which describe so pathetically the unjust sufferings of the righteous, and his persecutions by the wicked, were written by David during this period of his wanderings.

The great and evil influence of Doeg himself is very remarkable, especially as he was not an Israelite. But both his bloodthirsty brutality and his apparent hatred of David are characteristic of the race from which he sprang. The Edomites, the descendants of Esau (Gen. xxv. 30), the 'profane person' (Heb. xii. 16), the rejected of God, appear all through their long history as the unceasing opponents of Israel, and of the purposes of God. They grudge Israel entrance into Canaan (Num. xx.), they exult when Babylon carries Israel captive (Obadiah 2, etc.). The later books of the Old Testament are full of remarkable denunciations of Edom, and predictions of their overthrow (Ps. cxxxvii., Ezek. xxxv., Mal. i.). Isaiah represents the triumph of Messiah Himself under the type of the conquest of Edom (Isa. lxiii.).

in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. 13. And he ^d changed his behaviour before them, ^d Ps. xxxiv. and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on (title). the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. 14. Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad : wherefore *then* have ye brought him to me ? 15. ^a Have I need of mad men, that ye have ^a Do I lack mad brought this *fellow* to play the mad man in my presence ? ^{men}. shall this *fellow* come into my house ?

XXII. 1. David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave ^e Adullam : and when his brethren and all his ^e Ps. lvii. and father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. cxlii. (titles).
2. And every one *that was* in distress, and every one that *was* in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves unto him ; and he became a captain over them : and there were with him about four hundred men. 3. And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab : and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray

13. **Feigned himself mad.** Madness was, and is still, looked upon by the Oriental nations as something supernatural, and to be treated with awe and respect. In this case, although Achish declined to have anything to do with him, David was at least allowed to go away in peace.

15. **Have I need of mad men.** See R. V. reading, which harmonises with the curious Jewish tradition that both the wife and the daughter of Achish were mad.

Come into my house, i.e. enter my service. Cf. Ps. ci. 7.

XXII. 1. **Adullam** was an ancient Canaanite city in the valley of Elah, and the smaller valleys which surrounded it were full of caves.

2. **And every one that was in distress, etc.** The behaviour of David during this period, when he was at the head of a band of outlaws, is very remarkable. Whatever the character of his men, David himself was neither in opposition to the king nor to society. His action was (1) in self-defence ; (2) an effort to help his countrymen and be a champion for them during a time of oppression and bad government. He was not seeking to gain the crown from Saul, but was content to wait God's time. We cannot justify all David's actions during this period. He was often guilty of falsehood and deceit, but his main principle of action was truly a religious one. And doubtless, in ruling such a difficult collection of followers, he gained experience which stood him in good stead afterwards when he came to the throne.

3. **And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab, etc.** The book of Ruth throws light on this action of David, for it shows that Ruth the Moabitess was the ancestress of David. There was, therefore, a family tie between

³ the tamarisk tree.

^f Num. xxvii. 21.

thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me. 4. And he brought them before the king of Moab : and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold. 5. And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold ; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth. 6. When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under ³ a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing about him ;) 7. then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites ; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds ; 8. that all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and *there is* none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day ? 9. Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. 10. And he ^finquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. 11. Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that *were* in

Jesse and his family and the Moabites, which accounts for the willingness of the latter to give them a refuge.

5. **The prophet Gad.** This is the first appearance of Gad, who afterwards occupied an important place at the court of David. He was one of the writers of the records of the kingdom, from which the historical books of the Bible were afterwards compiled (1 Chron. xxix. 29).

10. **He inquired of the Lord for him,** *i.e.* he consulted on David's behalf the Urim and Thummim, to gain for him the Divine guidance. This fact is not mentioned in chap. xxi., but Ahimelech seems to admit it in ver. 15. The Urim and Thummim seem to be implied in the 'ephod' mentioned in chap. xxi. 9 and elsewhere. The breastplate which contained these two mysterious objects was fastened to the High Priest's ephod, and was not to be removed from it. See Exod. xxviii. 28, and Supplementary Note on p. 160.

Nob : and they came all of them to the king. 12. And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I *am*, my lord. 13. And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? 14. Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who *is* so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and ⁴goeth at thy bidding, and is ⁴is taken into thy council. honourable in thine house? 15. Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me : let not the king impute *any* thing unto his servant, *nor* to all the house of my father : for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more. 16. And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. 17. And the king said unto the ⁵footmen that stood about ⁵guard (*mary.* Heb. *runners*). him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD ; because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. 18. And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. 19. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the

15. Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? This means that it was no extraordinary thing for Ahimelech to 'inquire of God' for David. He had done it before, and could not possibly know that what was harmless before would now be considered by Saul as treason.

17. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand, etc. It ought to have opened Saul's eyes when his own bodyguard and fellow-tribesmen (ver. 7) refuse to obey him, but he seems to have been perfectly insane with rage. His command even in that wild age was considered monstrous and sacrilegious, and he can get no one but an alien Edomite to execute it.

In this destruction of the priests at Nob we see again a fulfilment of God's curse upon the house of Eli. In 1 Chron. xxiv. 4 David finds only half as many 'chief men' of the family of Ithamar as of the family of Eleazar.

edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword. 20. And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. 21. And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests. 22. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew *it* that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul : I have occasioned *the death* of all the persons of thy father's house. 23. Abide thou with me, fear not : for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life : but with me thou *shalt be* in safeguard.

XXIII. 1. Then they told David, saying, Behold, the g Josh. xv. 44. Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing-floors. 2. Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. 3. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah : how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? 4. Then David inquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah ; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. 5. So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. 6. And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, *that* he came down

23. **Abide thou with me, etc.** Abiathar remained faithful to David through all his wanderings, and even in the rebellion of Absalom. But he took the side of Adonijah against Solomon, and was deposed by the latter (1 Kings ii. 26).

XXIII. 1. **Then they told David, etc.** This illustrates what was said in the note on chap. xxii. 2. David was recognised already as a champion of the people of God.

2. **David inquired of the Lord.** Cf. verses 4 and 9-12. David's prayerfulness and dependence upon God are very marked, especially when we contrast them with Saul's headstrong rashness and disregard of holy things. Cf. chap. xiv. 19.

with an ephod in his hand. 7. And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand ; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars. 8. And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. 9. And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him ; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod. 10. Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. 11. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand ? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard ? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down. 12. Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul ? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up. 13. Then David and his men, *which were* about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah ; and he forbore to go forth. 14. And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in ⁶a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought ⁶the hill country. him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand. 15. And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his

14. The wilderness of Ziph—the wilderness of Judah, stretching towards the Dead Sea. Ziph is in the mountains to the south of Hebron.

The "hill country"—the "mountain country," as it is called, "of Judah" in earlier, "of Judæa" in later times—is the part of Palestine which best exemplifies its characteristic scenery: the rounded hills, the broad valleys, the scant vegetation, the villages or fortresses, sometimes standing, more frequently in ruins, on the hill-tops; the wells in every valley, the vestiges of terraces, whether for corn or wine. . . . Throughout the troubled period of the judges from Othniel to Samson, Judah dwelt undisturbed within these mountain fortresses. In these grey hills, and in their spacious caverns, David hid himself when he fled to the mountains, like one of their own native partridges.—Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 161, 162.

life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood. 16. And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. 17. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. 18. And they two made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house. 19. Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, ^a Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of ⁷ Jeshimon? 20. Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand. 21. And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me. 22. Go, I pray you, ⁸ prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, *and* who hath seen him there: for it is told me *that* he dealeth very subtilly. 23. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah. 24. And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men *were* in the wilderness of Maon, in ⁹ the plain on the south of ⁷ Jeshimon. 25. Saul also and his men went to seek *him*. And they told David: wherefore he came down ¹⁰ into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul

^b Ps. liv.
(title).

⁷ the desert.

⁸ make yet
more sure.

⁹ the Arabah.

¹⁰ to the rock.

16. And Jonathan Saul's son arose. This is the last recorded meeting between Jonathan and David. The generosity of the former is made still more pathetic when we remember his approaching end (chap. xxxi.). Jonathan chooses for himself the second place, though the first was his by hereditary right, and as a warrior he was no unworthy heir to the throne (see chap. xiv.). There is no more Christ-like figure in the Old Testament than that of Jonathan.

19. The south of Jeshimon. See Supplementary Note, p. 123.

heard *that*, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. 26. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them. 27. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. 28. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place ¹¹ Sela-hammahlekoth. ¹¹ A. V. marg. *The rock of divisions*; R. V. marg. *The rock of divisions or escape.* 29. And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at En-gedi.

29. **En-gedi.** A remarkable and well-known spot on the western shore of the Dead Sea, a plain with fresh water forming a kind of oasis among the limestone cliffs.

LESSON XIII

The Wanderings of David

INTRODUCTION.—Recapitulate the jealousy of Saul; the righteousness of David. Remind the children that it has always been the lot of the good to be persecuted. Cf. Cain and Abel. Repeat the eighth Beatitude.

MATTER.

1. The persecutions of David.

What a sudden change for David, from being a court favourite and the popular darling, to find himself alone, destitute, forced even to beg his bread from the priests, and wandering from place to place with his life in his hand.

We notice the different elements in this persecution. As soon as it is known that *Saul* is his enemy, all the cruel and spiteful are ready to turn upon him.

(1) *Doeg* the Edomite finds a means of gratifying the hereditary hatred of Israel by informing

METHOD.

1. Mainly descriptive. The story of David's outlawry is extremely graphic and picturesque, and is sure to interest without much comment.

LESSON XIII—continued. THE SUFFERINGS OF DAVID

MATTER.

against the priests, bringing them to destruction, and causing David the anguish of thinking that *he* is indirectly the cause of their death (xxii. 22).

(2) The men of *Keilah* are ungrateful enough to be ready to give up their benefactor.

(3) The *Ziphites* wish to curry favour with Saul by betraying David, who has done them no harm.

2. David's endurance.

It is important to notice that David never attacks Saul, nor sets up as an aspirant to the throne. He uses his band of followers in self-defence, and as a help to those who are in danger; never to wage war against one who, as long as he lives, is the rightful king.

David's endurance is based—

(1) On his consciousness of his own integrity, and of the Divine calling. These characteristics stand out clearly in the earlier Psalms.

(2) On earnest and constant prayer.

3. David a type of Christ.

David, the ancestor of Christ according to the flesh, is a type of Christ in his sufferings, so much so that the Psalms of David which allude to these sufferings are really prophecies of Christ, inspired by the Holy Ghost, and recognised and used as such by the Catholic Church.

It adds an inexpressible beauty and solemnity to the 'Psalms of David' to remember that as an historic fact, David's greater Son must have learned them as a child, and used them in His own prayers to the Father. Three out of the seven last words from the Cross are taken from the Psalms.

METHOD.

2. Bring out clearly that *rebellion* is a *wrong* thing, however excusable it may seem under certain circumstances.

Saul had ceased to be worthy of the kingdom. David had been called and anointed by God, and yet David never tries to get the kingdom till God's time.

Contrast (with older children) Jacob scheming to get the blessing (Gen. xxvii.), and Hazeal's murder of his master (2 Kings viii.).

Illustrate the prayers of David (with older children) from one or other of the Psalms, e.g. xxxv., cix. 3.

3. (1) Christ, like David, was anointed King (in His baptism), yet he was persecuted for his life (S. John xi. 53, 54)—had not where to lay His head (S. Matt. viii. 20)—those who helped Him had to suffer for it (S. John ix. 22).

(2) Like David He was treated with *ingratitude* by His own people the Jews; with *treachery* by His own disciple.

(3) Christ refused to be made an earthly king (S. John vi. 15), but conformed Himself entirely to the Father's will (S. Matt. xxvi. 39). He found comfort and strength in prayer (S. Luke v. 16), and used the Psalms of David as His own prayers.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Wanderings of David.

'Blessed are they which are persecuted
for righteousness' sake.'

1. *The persecutions of David.*

- (1) Hunted by Saul.
- (2) Suffering poverty,
 ingratitude,
 treachery.

2. *David's endurance.*

David did not make war on Saul, but

- (1) helped those in need.
- (2) waited for God's time.
- (3) was earnest in prayer.

3. *David a type of Christ.*

- (1) In His persecutions and sufferings.
- (2) In His ungrateful treatment by Jews.
- (3) In His betrayal by Judas.
- (4) In His prayers.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

XXIII. 19. 'In the Old Testament this land is called the Jeshimon, a word meaning *devastation*, and no term could better suit its haggard and crumbling appearance. It covers some thirty-five miles by fifteen. We came upon it from Maon. The cultivated land to the east of Hebron sinks quickly to rolling hills and waterless vales, covered by broom and grass, across which it took us all forenoon to ride. The wells are very few, and almost all cisterns of rain-water, jealously guarded through the summer by their Arab owners. For an hour or two more we rode up and down steep ridges, each barer than the preceding, and then descended rocky slopes to a wide plain, where we left behind the last brown grass

and thistle; the last flock of goats we had passed two hours before. Short bushes, thorns, and succulent creepers were all that relieved the brown and yellow bareness of the sand, the crumbling limestone, and the scattered shingle. The strata were contorted; ridges ran in all directions; distant hills to north and south looked like gigantic dust-heaps; those near we could see to be torn as if by waterspouts. When we were not stepping on detritus, the limestone was blistered and peeling. Often the ground sounded hollow; sometimes rock and sand slipped in large quantity from the tread of the horses; sometimes the living rock was bare and jagged, especially in the frequent gullies, that therefore glowed and beat with heat like furnaces. Far to the east ran the Moab hills, and in part of them we got glimpses of the Dead Sea, the deep blue of which was a most refreshing sight across the desert foreground. So we rode for two hours, till the sea burst upon us in all its length, and this chaos which we had traversed tumbled and broke down 1200 feet of limestone, flint, and marl—crags, corries, and precipices—to the broad beach of the water. Such is Jeshimon, the wilderness of Judæa. . . . When you realise that this howling waste came within reach of nearly every Jewish child—when you climb the Mount of Olives, or any hill about Bethlehem, or the hill of Tekoa, and, looking east, see those fifteen miles of chaos, sinking to a stretch of the Dead Sea, you begin to understand the influence of the desert on Jewish imagination and literature. It gave the ancient natives of Judæa, as it gives the mere visitor of to-day, the sense of living next door to doom; the sense of how narrow is the border between life and death; the awe of the power of God, who can make contiguous regions so opposite in character. *He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and watersprings into a thirsty ground.* The desert is always in face of the prophets, and its howling of beasts and its dry sand blow mournfully across their pages the foreboding of judgment.—G. Adam Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 312-314.

For a remarkable description of En-gedi, see the same book, pp. 269, 270.

CHAPTERS XXIV. ; XXVI.

AND it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of En-gedi. 2. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. 3. And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men ¹remained in the sides of the cave. 4. And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David rose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. 5. And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. 6. And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD. 7. So David stayed his servants with these words, and ^asuffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul ^aPs. vii. 4. rose up out of the cave, and went on *his* way. 8. David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul

¹ were abiding
in the inner-
most parts.

3. And he came to the sheepcotes. In Palestine sheep are commonly folded in a cave, with a rough wall of stone built across the entrance.

4. Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee. There is no record of such words having been said by God to David. They may, however, quite well have been spoken on some unknown occasion by God through one of His prophets, e.g. Gad. But the interpretation which David's followers wish to put upon them was a wrong one. Men may wrest the very words of God to a sinful meaning to justify their own desires (cf. 2 S. Pet. iii. 16). It is quite possible that at such a time David's followers would not be at all careful to quote accurately.

5. David's heart smote him. Not only did David restrain himself from doing any actual hurt to Saul, but he repented immediately of even doing him the indignity of cutting off his garment. This shows a fine

looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself. 9. And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? 10. Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave: and *some* bade *me* kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he *is* the LORD'S anointed. 11. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that *there is* neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it. 12. The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. 13. As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. 14. After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea. 15. ^bThe LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand. 16. And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul

^b Judg. xi. 27;
Ps. xxxv. 1.

sense of *honour* in David. He was a true knight, in all chivalry, courtesy, and reverence. Kingship in his eyes was sacred, for it was given by God, however much the actual king might abuse it. How different was the spirit of David from that of Cromwell and his followers!

9. **Wherefore hearest thou men's words?** David's nobility shines out in all this address to Saul. He cannot believe that Saul himself of his own will is thus persecuting him: it must be the work of evil counsellors.

13. **Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked.** The same thought is expressed more graphically by our Lord Himself in S. Matt. vii. 16-18. It is only those who are wicked *at heart* who can do really wicked deeds such as Saul thinks David capable of. David's own conscience is clear, and he is not afraid of saying so (cf. S. Paul's words, Acts xxiii. 1; xxiv. 16).

14. **After a dead dog, after a flea.** These similes are intended to express something utterly worthless and insignificant. David means that as he is not really a rebel, Saul is spending time and labour in hunting after what is not worth the capture.

said, *Is this thy voice, my son David?* And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. 17. And he said to David, *Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.* 18. And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. 19. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. 20. And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. 21. Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. 22. And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

xxvi. And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, *Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?* 2. Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. 3. And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that

16. And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. Saul never quite loses the original nobility and generosity of his character. His life has been ruined by lack of self-discipline and reverence for God, but here and there, in the intervals free from rage and madness, there flashes out something of the old Saul whom David had served and loved, and by whom he had been loved in turn. He appreciates David's forbearance, and in a moment of insight sees what is God's will, but his repentance was only on the surface, and was evidently mistrusted by David.

xxvi. Though the events of this chapter are in some respects very similar to those of chap. xxiv., the two are quite distinct, and are not two different accounts of the same thing. The two chapters may well be combined into one lesson; but they are too circumstantial to be confused.

³ within the place of the wagons.

Saul came after him into the wilderness. 4. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed. 5. And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay ³ in the trench, and the people pitched round about him. 6. Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. 7. So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping ³ within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. 8. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not *smite* him the second time. 9. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless? 10. David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend

^e Ps. xciv. 1;
Rom. xii. 19.

6. Ahimelech the Hittite. The Hittites were one of the nations of Canaan expelled by the Israelites. In Gen. xxiii. we find them in possession of Hebron, and on friendly terms with Abraham. They established a powerful empire in North Syria, which lasted till the eighth century B.C., when it was destroyed by the Assyrians. See the allusion to this in 2 Kings vii. 6. Individual Hittites survived among the Israelites in Canaan, as Ahimelech here, and Uriah, mentioned later on in David's reign.

Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab. The first mention of this family, whose history is so tragic and so strangely intertwined with that of David. Zeruiah, David's sister, had three sons—Abishai, Asahel, and Joab. See 2 Sam. ii. and iii., especially iii. 39. Joab, though David's commander-in-chief, appears as David's evil genius during most of his reign. Retribution falls upon him at last at the beginning of the reign of Solomon (1 Kings ii. 28-34).

10. The Lord shall smite him. See marginal references. David here declares a truth which runs throughout the Bible in different forms. God is the perfectly righteous Judge of all men; and it is absolutely

into battle, and perish. 11. The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is* at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go. 12. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them. 13. Then ^{f Gen. ii. 21; xv. 12.} David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space *being* between them: 14. and David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king? 15. And David said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. 16. This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. *As* the LORD liveth, ye *are* worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is*, and the cruse of water that *was* at his bolster. 17. And Saul knew David's voice, and said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king. 18. And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand? 19. Now therefore, I pray thee, let

certain that all wrong-doing will sooner or later be avenged by Him. Though it is right for criminals to be punished in the interests of society, and God has appointed human justice for this purpose; yet we are always warned against trying to avenge ourselves, i.e. to exact vengeance for our personal and private wrongs (cf. S. Luke xviii. 7, 8).

'Though the mills of God grind slowly,
 Yet they grind exceeding small,
 Though with patience He stands waiting,
 With exactness grinds He all.'
 Longfellow, *Retribution*.

19. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me. David again asserts his own innocence. It may be, however, that he has committed some sin

my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, cursed *be* they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods. 20. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth ⁴before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains. 21. Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. 22. And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. 23. The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into *my* hand to-day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed. 24. And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation. 25. Then Saul said to David, Blessed

⁴ away from the presence of the LORD.

through ignorance, for which this persecution by Saul is a Divinely sent punishment. If so, he is willing, he says, to offer a sacrifice of propitiation, a 'sin-offering,' and to make his peace with God.

Go, serve other gods. This is a relic of the older and imperfect idea of God, which is put by David in the mouth of the wicked, viz. that each nation had its own proper God, and that Jehovah was God of Israel only, and not of the whole earth. From this point of view, when a man was outlawed, he was exiled not only from the land, but from the God of the land also. A truer and worthier conception of God is taught to Moses (Exod. xix. 5): 'all the earth is mine.' It had, however, been known long before that by Abraham (Gen. xviii. 25), 'Shall not the Judge of *all the earth* do right?' and it is most beautifully expressed in Ps. cxxxix.

20. As when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains. The partridges of Palestine, as a rule, run instead of flying, and are commonly hunted on foot with sticks.

22. Let one of the young men come over and fetch it. Saul's repentance has already been seen to be short-lived, and David cannot trust him. If Saul wants his spear returned, he must send one of his own bodyguard for it.

be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

LESSON XIV

David's Forbearance

MATTER.

1. David's opportunities of revenge.

David's two great opportunities to kill Saul, or at least take him prisoner, must have been hard for human nature to resist. David's followers thought it the obvious, and indeed the righteous thing to do; and suggested that these were opportunities given by God.

In refusing to take advantage of them, David, at a critical moment of his life, puts principle before expediency. He acts in the very way which is afterwards laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, and which still seems to many, even followers of Christ, too hard a saying for human nature to follow.

2. David's reasons for forbearance.

(1) David's reverence for kingship is very noteworthy. Again and again he speaks of 'the Lord's anointed.' Not the individual in himself, but that individual *as sent and appointed by God*, he holds sacred. He calls the king 'my father' (xxiv. 11), and honours him in the spirit of the fifth commandment.

This reverence for the royal office is one of David's own great qualifications for being king himself. A thing which one thinks highly of is the more likely to be worthily performed. To despise one's office, whether it be ruler, or priest, or teacher, is to execute it badly.

METHOD.

1. Describe—

(1) David in the cave. Saul seeing nothing, and absolutely in his power. David's followers whispering to him that now is his chance.

(2) David with Abishai in the darkness—all Saul's warriors fast asleep—one stroke of the spear, and no more persecution and outlawry.

But each time he refuses to take his revenge.

Cf. 2 Kings vi. 21, 22; S. Matt. v. 38-44.

Revenge, 'paying people out,' is always wrong, and un-Christlike.

Rom. xii. 19.

2. (1) Rom. xiii. 1-7; 1 S. Pet. ii. 13-17.

Repeat fifth commandment, with explanation in the Catechism.

Enlarge, if time allows, on the reverence due to kings, not because they are of the royal line, nor because they are elected by the people, but because *their office is appointed by God*.

Contrast the martyrdom of Charles I.

LESSON XIV—*continued.* DAVID'S FORBEARANCE

MATTER.

(2) Again David was conscious of his own innocence, and on both occasions he sets that clearly before Saul. To have killed Saul would have been a blot on his conscience, and turned his righteous cause into a bad one, into mere self-seeking.

(3) Lastly, David has complete faith in the supreme ordering of all things by God, and in the certainty of the Divine justice being one day made manifest; to take into his own hands that which he felt belonged to God alone, would have been dishonouring God.

So everywhere the greatness of David lies in his putting God *first*: God's appointment, God's holiness, God's justice. And it is just this which makes the Psalms of such profound religious value.

3. Saul's false repentance contrasts remarkably with David's sincerity. Saul did not mean to be false. He is undoubtedly sincere for the moment on both occasions in what he says. He knows David is innocent, he recognises in him the Divine choice, he appreciates David's generosity in sparing him.

But these feelings remain mere *feelings*, they bring no fruit in amendment, and so pass away like the 'morning cloud' and the 'early dew' (Hosea vi. 4).

METHOD.

(2) Speak of the blessing of a clear conscience.

It was better for David to *keep* this, than to win a kingdom by doing wrong.

Cf. chap. xxv. 31.

(3) Ps. vii.

Our Lord's example in His Passion.

He refused the sword of S. Peter.

He refused the twelve legions of angels.

'He committed himself to him that judgeth righteously' (1 S. Pet. ii. 23).

3. Explain the three parts of true repentance—

(1) Sorrow.

(2) Confession.

(3) *Amendment.*

Without the third, the other two are worse than useless.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

David's Forbearance.

1. *David had two opportunities of taking vengeance on Saul—*

- (1) In the cave.
- (2) In the camp by night.

2. *David would not avenge himself, because*

- (1) he honoured the king.
- (2) he knew his own conscience was clear.
- (3) he knew that God would do what was just both to himself and to Saul.

Thus David is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ in His Passion.

3. *Saul's repentance was false because, although*

- (1) he felt sorry, and
- (2) he confessed his sin, he did not
- (3) try to do better.

Learn S. Matt. v. 44: 'Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.'

CHAPTER XXV.

AND Samuel died ; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and ^a lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of ^b Paran. 2. And *there was* a man in Maon, whose possessions *were* in Carmel ; and the man *was* very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats : and he was shearing his sheep in ^c Carmel. 3. Now the name of the man *was* Nabal ; and the name of his wife Abigail : and *she was* a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance : but the man *was* churlish and evil in his doings ; and he *was* of the house of Caleb. 4. And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. 5. And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name : 6. and thus shall ye say to him that liveth *in*

^a Deut. xxxiv. 8.

^b Gen. xxi. 21 ; Num. xiii. 3.

^c chap. xv. 12.

2. **Carmel.** This Carmel is on the plateau or 'hill-country' of Judæa, and is to be distinguished from the better-known Mount Carmel, the scene of Elijah's victory over the priests of Baal. Carmel means literally 'a park,' and is a name applied generally to any piece of country which combines cultivated land and woodland. It is the same word which is translated in other parts of the Old Testament 'fruitful field,' as in Isa. x. 18. This district stands in strong contrast to the 'Jeshimon' or 'wilderness' which is so close to it. It is described by Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 101, as 'hardly distinguishable (except by ruined cities and red anemones) from the Lowlands of Scotland.' And a later traveller, Dr. G. Adam Smith, speaks of it as 'very like a bit of higher and less fertile Aberdeenshire—rolling red ground, mostly bare, partly wheat and barley, broken by limestone scalps partly covered by scrub, and honeycombed by caves.'

Mount Carmel similarly owes its name to its fertile and wooded character. Stanley describes it as 'a ridge, an upland park, extending for many miles into the interior of the country.'

3. **Now the name of the man was Nabal.** It seems likely that this was a nickname, as it means 'fool' (ver. 25) ; but, on the other hand, many proper names originate in nicknames, sometimes of a very uncomplimentary character. Cf. the Roman name 'Brutus,' which literally means 'idiot.'

prosperity, ^d Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. 7. And now d 1 Chron. xii. 18; S. Luke x. 5.

I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. 8. Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David. 9. And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased. 10. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. 11. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be? 12. So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. 13. And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode

7. **And now I have heard that thou hast shearers.** A season of great festivity among a pastoral people, like 'harvest-home' among an agricultural. It is to this day quite usual for Arab sheiks to make similar requests to that which David makes on the like occasions. David was certainly justified in asking for a present, for the protection which he had given to the shepherds is admitted by themselves (verses 15, 16).

10. **And Nabal answered David's servants.** Notice how extremely life-like and characteristic is this speech of Nabal's. He is a character to be found among every generation of farmers—cantankerous, mean, and overbearing, and with a ready sneer at everything modern—'there be many servants *now a days*,' etc. What a contrast is Nabal to the generosity and openness of Boaz, or to the piety of Job!

13. **Gird ye on every man his sword.** David, who could restrain himself from taking vengeance on Saul, is provoked (perhaps more for the sake of his followers than his own), by the one insult of Nabal, to plan immediate revenge. He is saved from 'bloodguiltiness' by the wisdom of Abigail, whose 'soft answer' turns away his wrath (Prov. xv. 1).

by the stuff. 14. But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master ; and he railed on them. 15. But the men *were* very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields : 16. they were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. 17. Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do ; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household : for he *is such* a son of Belial, that a *man* cannot speak to him. 18. Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched *corn*, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid *them* on asses. 19. And she said unto her servants, Go on before me ; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal. 20. And it was *so*, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her ; and she met them. 21. Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this *fellow* hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *pertain*ed unto him : and he hath requited me ^e evil for good. 22. So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that *pertain* to him by the morning light ¹ any that pisseth against the wall. 23. And when Abigail saw David, she hastened, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, 24. and fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, *upon* me *let this* iniquity *be* : and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. 25. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, *even* Nabal : for as his name *is*, so *is* he ; Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him : but I thine

^e Ps. cix. 5.

¹ so much as one man-child.

handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. 26. Now therefore, my lord, *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee ² from coming to *shed* blood, and from avenging ² from blood-thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. 27. And now this ³ blessing, ³ which thine handmaid hath brought unto my ³ present. lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow ³ f 2 Kings v. 15. my lord. 28. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee *all* thy days. 29. ⁴ Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy ⁴ And though man be . . . the soul of my lord, etc. soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, *as out* of the middle of a sling. 30. And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; 31. that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast

28. **For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house.** Abigail's speech is very remarkable, not only for its practical wisdom and its eloquence, but also for its expression of what was no doubt the growing popular feeling with respect to David, viz. that David is the Divinely appointed champion of Israel, and will be king, and will, unlike Saul, found 'a sure house,' i.e. a permanent dynasty. A similar conviction is expressed in the words of Rahab to the spies (Josh. ii. 9-11) with regard to the nation of Israel as contrasted with the kingdoms of the heathen.

29. **The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life.** This singular and beautiful expression may be paralleled with the language of the parable of the wheat and the tares (S. Matt. xiii. 30), and the drag-net (S. Matt. xiii. 48). The same solemn truth is more frequently expressed in Scripture by the metaphor of the 'book of life' (cf. Isa. iv. 3). For another metaphor see Mal. iii. 17.

As out of the middle of a sling. The margin of the Bible reads, 'in the midst of the bought of a sling.' The old English word 'bought,' from 'bow,' means the *bent* part of the sling where the stone was placed. The R. V. reads 'hollow.' A similar metaphor is found in Jer. x. 18.

31. **That this shall be no grief unto thee.** Abigail means that David, if he refrain from killing Nabal, will not hereafter have remorse of con-

shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid. 32. And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: 33. and blessed be thy ⁵ advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day ² from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. 34. For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israël liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light ¹ any that pisseth against the wall. 35. So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person. 36. And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was

science to spoil his prosperity. There is a sad contrast suggested by David's psalm of repentance, where he laments his murder of Uriah (Ps. li. 14).

32, 33. There is a remarkable sermon by Bishop South, 'Prevention of Sin an Invaluable Mercy,' on this text.

35. **I have accepted thy person.** This phrase is commonly used in Scripture in a bad sense, meaning unfair partiality for an individual. Here, however, it is used in a good sense, and means, 'I have shown thee favour.'

36. **For he was very drunken.** This is one of the many passages in Holy Scripture which plainly suggest the sin and folly of drunkenness. Wine is always represented in the Bible as being in itself a gracious gift of God to man, as having a right use for exhilarating our natural powers, and increasing the joy of human fellowship. So it is spoken of in Ps. civ. 15, and Prov. xxxi. 6, 7. And so our Lord Himself sanctioned its festal use by his first miracle at Cana. To speak of wine or other intoxicants as evil *in themselves* is a heresy ('Manicheism'), and cannot further the cause of temperance. On the other hand, the Bible is full of the most solemn warnings against misuse of this gift of God, both in object lessons, like those provided by Noah (Gen. ix.), Nabal, or Benhadad (1 Kings xx.), and by direct denunciations as in Prov. xxiii. 29-35, Isa. xxviii., Habak. ii. 15, Gal. v. 21. All bodily pleasures become sin, as soon as they gain the mastery over a man. Drunkenness is in itself a striking example of this, for in causing a man to lose his self-control it lowers him plainly from true manhood, leads directly to other

merry within him, for he *was* very drunken : wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light. 37. But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became *as* a stone. 38. And it came to pass about ten days *after*, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died. 39. And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath ^gpleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand ^g Prov. xxii. 23. of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil : for the LORD hath ^a returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own ^b Ps. vii. 16 ; head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to ^c Rom. xii. 19. take her to him to wife. 40. And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. 41. And she arose, and bowed herself on *her* face to the earth, and said, Behold, *let* thine handmaid *be* a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. 42. And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her ; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife. 43. David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel ; and they were also both of them his wives. 44. But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to 'Phalti the son of ^d 2 Sam. iii. 13-16. Laish, which *was* of Gallim.

sins, and places him in the power of Satan. And God has set His mark of special reprobation upon this sin, by the temporal penalties of disease and death which follow it, as in the case of Nabal.

37. **His heart died within him**, etc. This probably means that Nabal was smitten with apoplexy, and a second 'stroke' following (ver. 38) proved fatal. Diseases may spring from natural causes, and yet still be direct visitation of God—'the *Lord* smote Nabal.'

43. **David also took Ahinoam**. This probably refers to a previous marriage—'took' = 'had taken.' But see note on chap. i. 2.

44. **Gallim**. Probably between Gibeah and Jerusalem. See reference in Isa. x. 30.

LESSON XV

David's Humility

INTRODUCTION.—This chapter is extremely graphic and picturesque. Although it stands out complete in itself, there are remarkable connections between David's action here and his forbearance on two occasions towards Saul. In giving this lesson allusion should be made to the last one.

MATTER.

1. David's temptation.

It must have been a sore temptation to David to punish Nabal. He was everything that David was not: mean, discourteous, ungrateful, and ungenerous in his thoughts and words about others. These provocations are for the moment harder to bear than the open hostility and persecution of Saul. Besides, David's followers had heard him insulted, and they expected him to take vengeance.

2. Abigail's wisdom.

Abigail shows herself both a brave and a wise woman in going at once herself to face David and his men. And she not only shows a woman's gentleness and ready wit, and a woman's natural power of *influence* in what she says, but also a singular appreciation of David's position. She practically recognises him as the future king; she knows that a throne must be built on righteousness, and she is anxious, not only to spare Nabal's life and property, but to keep David from committing an act of personal vengeance which would practically lower him to the level of Saul.

METHOD.

1. Point out the *rudeness* of Nabal in contrast with the courtesy of David's message. Even if he refused, he might have refused gently.

Describe the temptation of David to 'pay him out' for his rudeness and meanness.

The impulse to do this will be readily appreciated by children. Show them quite clearly that it is a temptation, a trial or testing.

2. Describe graphically Abigail's setting out, and her meeting with David and his armed men.

Point out—

(1) The wisdom of *facing* an enemy. See S. Matt. xviii. 15.

(2) The wisdom of 'a soft answer.'

(3) The wisdom of thinking well of another. Abigail is a contrast to Nabal, who, judging others by his own standard, thinks *meanly* of David as of a mere servant broken away from his master. Abigail appeals to what she thinks to be *noble* in David, and prevails.

Dwell on the subject of prevented sin.

LESSON XV—*continued.* DAVID'S HUMILITY

MATTER.

3. David's humility.

David never shows himself more great than in *his willingness to be taught*. He sees the justice of Abigail's words, and he is not afraid at once to admit himself wrong before his own followers, and to withdraw from his hasty vow (ver. 22).

Moreover here, as always, David is ready to recognise God's hand in the coming of Abigail, and to give Him thanks for it (ver. 32).

4. God's judgment on Nabal.

The 'fool' in Holy Scripture is not merely one who is stupid and without understanding. He is one whose lack of understanding is the result of his own evil conduct. Evil-living and self-indulgence blind him to the truth (cf. Ps. xiv.).

Nabal is a typical specimen. He is a coarse and selfish sensualist; and he is unable *in consequence* to see things which are quite plain to Abigail, and even to his shepherds. And his drunkenness and passion combine to bring him to his end, by God's judgment. There is a natural justice in his death. He had stupefied himself with drinking and feasting, and his punishment is to 'become as a stone' (ver. 37).

METHOD.

3. Point out how *pride* keeps many people from admitting themselves in the wrong, or being willing to be taught by others.

Humility is the foundation of true greatness.

David had been tempted to take vengeance on Nabal; pride might have made him persist in it. But he humbly confesses himself wrong, and gives thanks to God for showing him.

4. Why was Nabal so ungracious, so mean, and so unjust to David?

Because he was a man who lived only for *self*. His idea of happiness was to feast and get drunk.

Cf. the rich man of S. Luke xvi.

So he could not understand the truth about David. He was 'a fool,' and was only saved from death by his wife's intercession: and in the end God punished him.

See Prov. xx. 1.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

David's Humility.1. *David again is tempted to avenge himself.*

Nabal is rude to him, and mean.

2. *Abigail's wisdom.*

- (1) She meets David bravely.
- (2) Speaks to him softly.
- (3) Offers him a present.
- (4) Reminds him that he is God's soldier.

3. *David's humility.*

David, being a truly great man, is *humble* enough to confess himself wrong, and to give up his purpose.

4. *God punished Nabal.*

Nabal is called 'a fool,' not because he was stupid, but because he lived for himself; was a drunkard, and cared nothing for God nor man.

Learn: 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.'

CHAPTERS 1 SAM. XXVII. 1-7 ; 1 CHRON. XII. 1-22 ;
1 SAM. XXVII. 8-12 ; XXVIII. 1, 2 ; XXIX. ; XXX.

AND David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: *there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines ; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in ¹any coast of Israel : so shall I ¹all the borders. escape out of his hand.*

2. And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that *were* with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath.

3. And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, *even* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife.

4. And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath : and he sought no more again for him.

5. And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there : for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee ?

6. Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day : wherefore Ziklag per-

1. **And David said in his heart, etc.** David, after the second encounter with Saul, being convinced of the latter's untrustworthiness, seems to have despaired for the time of his own cause. We notice the remarkable fluctuations of feeling in the Psalms, such as are natural to a strong and intensely sensitive character. David's action here is quite in harmony with this. It was a difficult step, however, to take refuge with the Philistines. They were the hereditary enemies of Israel. He could not conscientiously fight with them against Israel ; and his sojourn with them involved him in falsehood and in danger.

2. **Achish, son of Maach.** It is doubtful whether this is the Achish of chap. xxi. Probably the name was borne by more than one king.

6. **Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day.** David's request was no doubt due to the feeling that he was not trusted by the Philistines, in spite of the friendship of Achish.

Ziklag (see Josh. xv. 31, and xix. 5) was originally part of the territory of Judah, and afterwards of Simeon. At some unknown date it must have been captured by the Philistines. The exact site is unknown, but it was on the edge of the southern wilderness, called 'the South,' or Negeb. This establishment of David in Ziklag marks an important turning-point in David's career. He is now no longer a mere leader of a

taineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day. 7. And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

1 CHRON. XII. 1. Now these *are* they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish: and they *were* among the mighty men, helpers of the war. 2. *They were* armed with bows,

^a Judg. xi. 16;
² Cor. vi. 7.
³ slinging.

and could use both the ^a right hand and the left in ² *hurling* stones and *shooting* arrows out of a bow, *even* of Saul's brethren of Benjamin. 3. The chief *was* Ahiezer, then

⁹ Anathothite.

Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; and Jeziel, and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth; and Berachah, and Jehu the ³ Antothite, 4. and Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty; and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Josabad the Gederathite, 5. Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite, 6. Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azareel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites, 7. and Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor. 8. And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might, *and* men of war *fit* for the battle, that could handle shield and

⁴ spear.

⁴ buckler, whose faces *were like* the faces of lions, and *were* ^b as swift as the roes upon the mountains; 9. Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, 10. Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, 11. Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, 12. Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, 13. Jeremiah the tenth, Machbanai the eleventh. 14.

^b 2 Sam. ii. 18.

These *were* of the sons of Gad, captains of the host: one

band of wandering outlaws, but almost an independent prince, dwelling in his own city, gradually gathering contingents from various tribes (see 1 Chron. xii.), and dispensing presents to his allies quite in royal style (xxx. 26-31).

Wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day. This comment of the historian is interesting, as it shows that 1 Samuel was written after the division of the kingdoms (975 B.C.), as it speaks of the kings of 'Judah'; and before the Captivity, when, of course, the kings ceased to exist (584 B.C.).

of the least *was* ⁵ over an hundred, and the greatest ⁶ over a ⁵ equal to thousand. 15. These *are* they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all his banks; and they put to flight all *them* of the valleys, *both* toward the east, and toward the west. 16. And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David. 17. And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you: but if *ye be come* to betray me to mine enemies, seeing *there is* no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look *thereon*, and rebuke it. 18. Then the spirit came upon Amasai, *who was* chief of the ⁶ captains, *and he said*, Thine *are we*, David, ⁶ thirty. and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace *be* unto thee, and peace *be* to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band. 19. And there fell *some* of Manasseh to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle: but they helped them not: for the lords of the Philistines upon advisement sent him away, saying, He will fall to his master Saul to *the jeopardy* of our heads. 20. As he went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jedaiel, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zilthai, captains of the thousands

I CHRON. XII. 15. These are they that went over Jordan, etc. This is a reference to some otherwise unknown exploit of these Gadites, who apparently crossed the Jordan in time of flood, and thus surprised and defeated their opponents who dwelt there.

The first month, *i.e.* the month of Abib or Nisan, corresponding to part of March and April, when the melting of the snows of Hermon caused the flooding of the Jordan, which is mentioned in Josh. iii. 15; Jer. xii. 5.

18. Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, lit. 'clothed Amasai'—just as we speak of 'enduing,' as in 'Endue thy ministers with righteousness,' which is exactly the same metaphor. Amasai is, for the moment at least, supernaturally inspired by the Holy Ghost to recognise in David the chosen of God, and his words are both poetry and 'prophecy.'

19. He will fall to his master Saul, *i.e.* he will desert our side, and return to his old master Saul, and so endanger our lives.

that *were* of Manasseh. 21. And they helped David against the ^c band of the rovers: for they *were* all mighty men of valour, and were captains in the host. 22. For at that time day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God.

1 SAM. XXVII. 8. And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those *nations were* of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to ^d Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.

9. And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish. 10. And Achish said, Whither have ye made a ⁷ road to-day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites.

11. And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so ⁸ will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines. 12. And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

⁸ hath been . . .
he dwelt.

XXVIII. 1. And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men. 2. And David said to Achish, Surely

22. Like the host of God. Perhaps an allusion to the angels seen by Jacob at Mahanaim (Gen. xxxii. 2). Or it may be only a Hebraism for 'very great.'

1 SAM. XXVII. 8. The Amalekites. Saul's destruction of Amalek had evidently not been complete. Stragglers and fugitives had again combined to give 'Amalek' something of a national existence.

10. And David said, etc. David represents himself to Achish as having been fighting against his own countrymen and their confederate tribes. These falsehoods are not to be justified, even though David told them. Scripture never represents to us *perfect* characters except our Lord.

thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

XXIX. 1. Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek : and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which *is* in Jezreel. 2. And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands : but David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish. 3. Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, *Is* not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell *unto me* unto this day? 4. And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him ; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary

XXVIII. 2. **Keeper of mine head for ever.** A forcible phrase implying that David is so trusted by Achish that he permanently appoints him chief of his bodyguard, and so puts his own 'head,' or life, in David's keeping.

XXIX. 1. **Aphek.** Not the same place as in chap. iv. 1, which was at the entrance of the pass of Beth-horon.

A fountain in Jezreel—rather '*the fountain.*' This 'fountain,' evidently a well-known one, is probably the same as that at which Gideon had tested his army (Judg. vii.), bidding all who were afraid to depart. There it is called 'the well of Harod,' *i.e.* of 'trembling.' In more modern times it has borne the name of *Ain Jalud*, *i.e.* 'the well of Goliath,' perhaps from a false tradition that this was the scene of David's encounter with Goliath. The well has been described as follows: 'It is a very large fountain, flowing out from under a sort of cavern in the wall of conglomerate rock, which here forms the base of Gilboa. It spreads out at once into a fine limpid pool, forty or fifty feet in diameter. A stream sufficient to turn a mill flows off eastwards down the valley' (Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* ii. 323).

2. **And the lords of the Philistines, etc.,** *i.e.* the (five) lords of the Philistines (see ver. 8) marched past at the head of their divisions, which were composed of 'hundreds' and 'thousands.'

4. **Lest in the battle he be an adversary to us.** The opportunity to make peace with Saul by turning traitor against the Philistines would be, so the lords of the Philistines thought, too tempting for David to resist.

to us : for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? *should it not be* with the heads of these men?

^{e1 Sam. xviii.} 7. 5. *Is not this David, of whom* ^ethey sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands? 6. Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, *as the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight : for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day : nevertheless the lords favour thee not.* 7. Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines. 8. And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king? 9. And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou *art* good in my sight, as an ^sangel of God : notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle. 10. Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee : and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart. 11. So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

^{f2 Sam. xiv.}
17, 20; ^{xix.} 27

xxx. 1. And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites

8. And David said unto Achish, etc. David must really have been glad to be released from the difficult position he was in. He did not want to fight against his own nation, and yet his career shows him too chivalrous for us to suppose that he would have turned traitor to the Philistines. We must, therefore, understand these last words of his to Achish as a piece of Oriental politeness.

10. Thy master's servants, *i.e.* the subjects of Saul who had joined David at Ziklag.

xxx. The South. This should be spelt with a capital letter, as also in chap. xxvii. 10, and elsewhere. It was a tract of wild, open, undulating country extending from the ravine of the Jordan to the sea-coast, and

had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; 2. and had taken the women captives, that *were* therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried *them* away, and went on their way. 3. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, *it* was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. 4. Then David and the people that *were* with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 6. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of ^gstoning him, because the soul of all the people was ^g Exod. xvii. 4. grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God. 7. And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. 8. And David inquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake *them*, and without fail recover *all*. 9. So David went, he and the six hundred men that *were* with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. 10. But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor. 11. And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and

from the hills of Judah to the desert. It belonged partly to Judah and Simeon, and partly to various nomadic tribes.

6. But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. Hints of this sort show us the deep-rooted religiousness of David's character. Sudden crises prove a man. David's natural impulse when calamity, bereavement, and threatened rebellion came at one stroke upon him, is to turn to God, and find encouragement there. So we are helped to understand what is a difficulty to shallow thinkers, viz. how David, the warrior and outlaw, could yet be 'the sweet psalmist of Israel.' Cf. such psalms as lvi. and lix.

they made him drink water ; 12. and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins : and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him : for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk *any* water, three days and three nights. 13. And David said unto him, To whom *belongest* thou ? and whence *art* thou ? And he said, I *am* a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite ; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. 14. We made an invasion *upon* the south of the Cherethites, and upon *the coast* which *belongeth* to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb ; and we burned Ziklag with fire. 15. And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company ? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company. 16. And when he had brought him down, behold, *they were* spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. 17. And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day : and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled. 18. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away : and David rescued his two wives. 19. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any *thing* that they had taken to them : David recovered all. 20. And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drove before those *other* cattle, and said, This is David's spoil. 21. And David came to the

13. **And my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.** Notice how this detestable cruelty of the Amalekites brings its own retribution. They abandoned one who was sick to die of starvation, and he is the very means by which destruction falls upon them.

20. **This is David's spoil.** 'The Amalekites had collected in this inroad an immense quantity of cattle, and these, with the recovered herds of the Israelites, made a surprising show. The latter having been separated

two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor : and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that *were* with him : and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. 22. Then answered all the wicked men and *men* of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them *ought* of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead *them* away, and depart. 23. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. 24. For who will hearken unto you in this matter ? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* that tarrieth by the stuff : they shall part alike. 25. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day. 26. And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, *even* to his friends, saying, Behold, a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD ; 27. to *them* which *were* in Beth-el, and to *them* which *were* in south Ramoth, and to *them* which *were* in Jattir, 28. and to *them* which *were* in Aroer, and to *them* which *were* in Siphmoth, and to *them* which *were* in Eshtemoa, 29. and to *them* which *were* in Rachal, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the Kenites, 30. and

from the former, a kind of triumphal procession was formed ; and as the herdsmen drove forward the Amalekite cattle, they celebrated the victory with an extemporised ode, of which the refrain was, "This is David's spoil."—Deane, *Men of the Bible*, 'David,' p. 76.

25. And it was so from that day forward. The Law of Moses had practically laid down the same principle (Num. xxxi. 27), and Joshua had acted upon it (Josh. xxii. 8). Here David, whether he knew of the provisions of the Law or not, lays down the same rule for a precedent. His kingdom is to be founded on *justice*, not on self-will like that of Saul in his later years.

to *them* which were in Hormah, and to *them* which were in Chor-ashan, and to *them* which were in Athach, 31. and to *them* which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

LESSON XVI

The Beginnings of David's Kingdom

MATTER.

1. David's training for his kingdom.

David had to wait long even for the first beginnings of his kingdom. This period illustrates both God's method of teaching and training His chosen, and also the *patience* which is needed to profit by experience.

God taught David by many vicissitudes inward and outward. Showed him the untrustworthiness of *man*, in Saul, in the Philistines, even in his own followers; showed him by experience that the life of a king is full of labour, danger, and sudden emergencies.

David met these by prayer, by reliance on *God*, and by unselfishness and strict justice towards his own followers.

2. The steps to the throne.

Just as during his flight before Saul God raised up friends and helpers to David, so during this period of outlawry and exile we are shown how 'all things work together for good to them that love God.'

The Philistines hated and mistreated him, and he was 'a stranger in a strange land,' and yet Achish's gift of Ziklag was just what he needed to give him a settled home for a time, and an opportunity of ruling as an established sovereign rather than a sort of 'Robin Hood,' a leader of wandering outlaws.

METHOD.

1. Remind children of David's anointing to be king. It took place seven or eight years before he could have an actual claim on the crown.

He had to wait, because God saw that he needed to *learn* how to be king, before he could reign.

Long periods of waiting, which to man seem incomprehensible, are necessary in God's eyes.

Illustrate by our Lord waiting thirty years at Nazareth before He did any miracle, or gave any teaching.

We see David during this time practising—

(1) *Patience* (recapitulate some of the dangers he passed through).

(2) Prayer and reliance in God (xxx. 6-8).

(3) Justice (xxx. 21-25).

2. The important point to bring out is, that whenever God really *calls* any one to an office or work, His providence always makes the way clear before them—

(1) In His own time.

(2) In His own way.

This point should be illustrated by—

(1) The events of these chapters.

(2) The call of Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt.

Compare in his case—

(a) The danger of Pharaoh's anger.

(b) The long waiting in Midian.

(c) The weary vicissitudes and

LESSON XVI—*continued*. THE BEGINNINGS OF DAVID'S KINGDOM

MATTER.

Here again God raised him up little by little reinforcements from among the bravest of Israel, so that the little band of four hundred men (xxii. 2) becomes a great army 'like the host of God.' And the words of Amasai (1 Chron. xii. 18) were an encouragement and another proof that God was on his side, and men were learning it.

Lastly, even the terrible stroke at the hands of the Amalekites in chap. xxx.—his city burnt, and all his possessions plundered, really led to his greater influence: he rose to the occasion, won his victory, and was able to show himself a king reigning in *righteousness* by his law about the spoil; and also to strengthen his position by the presents he sent to the elders of Judah.

METHOD.

disappointments of the journeyings through the wilderness.

Contrast David's conduct during this period with Saul's *impatience*, and lack of religion.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Beginnings of David's Kingdom.

1. *God trained David by long waiting for his kingdom.*

Teaching him to practise—

- (1) Patience.
- (2) Prayerfulness.
- (3) Justice.

2. *God little by little made the way for David to the throne.*

- (1) Gave him a city—Ziklag.
- (2) Gave him soldiers and friends like Amasai.
- (3) Helped to turn disasters into successes.

Learn: 'Commit thy way unto the Lord, and put thy trust in Him; and He shall bring it to pass' (Ps. xxxvii. 5).

CHAPTER XXVIII. 3-25

^a chap. xxv. 1.

NOW Samuel was dead, ^a and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had ^b put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. 4. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. 5. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his

^b Exod. xxii. 18; Lev. xix. 31; xx. 27; Deut. xviii. 10, 11.

3. Those that had familiar spirits. Saul had evidently obeyed the strict and repeated commands of the Law of Moses. See marginal references. But his obedience must have been of the letter, and not of the heart, or he would not himself have sought to a witch in his hour of distress. Cf. chap. xv. 23.

In all ages of the world it has been believed possible for men to hold communication with evil spirits. 'Familiar spirits' were those evil spirits supposed to attach themselves to individual witches or wizards, and to put themselves at their service, or to throw them into trances and speak through them. When this familiar spirit was supposed to use his power specially to call up the souls of the dead, the witch or wizard was called a 'necromancer.' Such evidently was the 'witch of Endor.'

This dealing with spirits took many varied shapes in different countries and at different periods. Modern 'spiritualism' is obviously the same thing under another name. The subject is much too large and too mysterious for discussion here. It is evident that *imposture* (e.g. ventriloquism, sleight of hand, optical illusions) has entered very largely into 'the black art,' and many imagine that the practice has been a grand piece of deception and nothing more. It seems impossible, however, to reconcile this idea with the very plain words of Holy Scripture. From the marginal references it will be seen that every form of dealing with evil spirits was punished by death under the Law of Moses. Moreover, it is stated in Deut. xviii. that it was for these very practices that the Canaanites were driven out of their land by God. The existence of evil spirits in great numbers is plainly taught in Scripture (Ephes. vi. 12), and their readiness to deceive mankind. We can hardly escape the conclusions (1) that it is possible for men to have dealings with the powers of evil; (2) to do this in any form whatever is a deadly sin, leads men away from the true God, and puts them in the power of Satan. 'Spiritualism' is not a religion but a work of Satan, and so-called 'mediums' are his tools, and they are often punished even in this life by strange and awful diseases of mind and body.

4. Gilboa. See Supplementary Note at the end of Lesson xviii., p. 168.

5. He was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. Nothing surely could describe more effectively than this verse the moral and mental

heart greatly trembled. 6. And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by ^ddreams, ^cProv. i. 28. nor by ^eUrim, nor by prophets. 7. Then said Saul unto ^dNum. xii. 6. his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, ^eExod. xxviii. 30. that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor. 8. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the ^ffamiliar spirit, and ^fIsa. viii. 19. bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee. 9. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? 10. And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. 11. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 12. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul,

collapse of Saul. Whatever Saul had been in the past, he had never been a coward. But he had lost God, and lost even what he seemed to have (S. Luke xix. 26).

6. **Neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.** Three recognised methods which God adopted for communicating His will to His people. For *prophets* see Supplementary Note on Lesson iii. *Dreams* were used by God in the absence of Urim and prophets in communicating with S. Joseph (S. Matt. i. and ii.). They are still undoubtedly so used at times by Him, especially among the heathen. Many modern instances are known of heathen tracing their conversion to Christ to a dream. For *Urim* see Supplementary Note, p. 160.

7. **En-dor**, on the slopes of Little Hermon. See Ps. lxxxiii. 10. This was a dangerous journey, for they had to pass over the shoulder of the very hill on which the Philistines were encamped.

12. **And when the woman saw Samuel.** It has been often questioned whether the spirit of Samuel really appeared to the woman. That this was the case was believed by the Jewish and early Christian Church, and such seems the plain meaning of the narrative. Eccclus. xlvi. 20 also states that Samuel really appeared: 'After his death he prophesied, and

saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul.
 13. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what
 1 I see a god. sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, ¹I saw
 gods ascending out of the earth. 14. And he said unto
 her, What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man
 g chap. xv. 27. cometh up; and he *is* covered with a ² mantle. And Saul
 perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his*
 face to the ground, and bowed himself. 15. And Samuel
 said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me
 up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the
 Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from
 me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by
 dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest
 make known unto me what I shall do. 16. Then said
 Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the
 LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?
 17. And the LORD ² hath done to him, as he spake by me:
 2 hath wrought for himself. for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand,
 and given it to thy neighbour, *even* to David: 18. because
 thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst

showed the king his end, and lifted up his voice from the earth in prophecy, to blot out the wickedness of the people.'

In 1 Chron. x. 13 (see next Lesson) the Septuagint makes a remarkable addition: 'and Samuel the prophet answered him.'

God perhaps suffered a miracle to be done, not in answer to the incantations of the witch, but by His own will. The spirit of the dead prophet may have returned for a moment from the place of departed souls to convey God's judgment upon Saul.

Other suggestions are that (1) the whole thing was an imposture of the witch; (2) an evil spirit assumed the form of Samuel and answered in his name. But (1) is contradicted by the plain facts of the narrative. Whatever the witch may have intended to do, no one was more terrified and astonished than she at what actually happened; (2) is possible, but it receives no support whatever from the narrative, which plainly says that it *was* Samuel who both appeared to the woman and spoke to Saul.

13. I saw gods, i.e. Elohim. See R.V. The woman means that she sees some supernatural being of an impressive and exalted character. The plural of the word is regularly used for the singular in Hebrew, and is applied to other beings than the One God, e.g. to angels and to judges.

17. And the Lord hath done to him. If this reading is right, the 'him' refers to David (see R.V.). The Vulgate and Septuagint versions have 'the Lord hath done to thee.'

his fierce wrath upon ^h Amalek, therefore hath the LORD ^h chap. xv. 9 ;
done this thing unto thee this day. 19. Moreover the ^{Jer. xlviii. 10.}
LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of
the Philistines : and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be
with me : the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel
into the hand of the Philistines. 20. Then ³ Saul fell ³ A. V. marg.
straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, ^{Saul made haste}
because of the words of Samuel : and there was no ^{and fell with}
strength in him ; for he had eaten no bread all the day, ^{the fulness of}
nor all the night. 21. And the woman came unto Saul, ^{his stature.}
and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him,
Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have
put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy
words which thou spakest unto me. 22. Now therefore, I
pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine hand-
maid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee ; and
eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on
thy way. 23. But he refused, and said, I will not eat.
But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him ;
and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the
earth, and sat upon the bed. 24. And the woman had a
fat calf in the house ; and she hastened, and killed it, and
took flour, and ⁱ kneaded *it*, and did bake unleavened ⁱ Gen. xviii.
bread thereof : 25. and she brought *it* before Saul, and ^{6, 7.}
before his servants ; and they did eat. Then they rose up,
and went away that night.

20. Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth. See margin and compare with chap. ix. 2. The ruin of Saul is graphically portrayed by these words.

LESSON XVII

Saul's Despair

INTRODUCTION.—This lesson is not suited for young children. At the same time, the truths which appear in it are so important that it has been thought well to draw up a scheme which the teacher will use or not at his discretion. The bearing of the narrative on present-day questions and superstitions is self-evident, while to the historian it is one of the most remarkable passages in the Old Testament, testifying to the belief in the immortality of the soul of man.

MATTER.

1. Saul forsaken by God.

In the days of youth and prosperity Saul had thought lightly of God, had despised taking counsel of God, had disobeyed plain commandments. Moreover, after God's chastening fell upon him he had not been teachable, but had persecuted David *against his own conscience*.

All Scripture teaches us that those who persistently quench God's light within themselves, and resist God's mercy and chastisement, in the end are forsaken by God.

See notes on the case of Hophni and Phinehas.

Cf. Heb. x. 26-31.

2. Saul's apostasy.

Saul in his despair commits a worse crime. He breaks the first commandment by seeking help from evil spirits, instead of repenting and craving God's mercy. He receives what he asks for, but only in order that he may hear his own sentence pronounced.

3. The ruin of Saul.

Saul's final destiny is not revealed to us. Those who lived under the Old Covenant before Christ came were often punished *in this world* for their sins, and a place of repentance and forgiveness granted them

METHOD.

1. Recapitulate the sins of Saul.

At last God would give him no more opportunities.

(1) He felt helpless, for God would not answer him.

(2) He lost even his courage: he trembled at the Philistines.

Illustrate from

Hophni and Phinehas.

Judas Iscariot.

2. Repeat first commandment and explanation in Catechism.

Show that all 'spiritualism,' fortune-telling, any attempt to get guidance from other means than God, is a sin against that commandment, and only brings men into the power of Satan.

3. Show how the appearance of Samuel teaches us that the dead are really *living*.

We do not know, only God knows, whether Saul was lost eternally.

We know that some *will* be.

LESSON XVII—*continued.* SAUL'S DESPAIR

MATTER.

in the life to come (1 S. Pet. iii. 19, 20).

With us, under the Christian Covenant, it is different. Although we infer from S. Matt. xii. 32 that some sins may be forgiven in 'the world to come,' yet we must not forget that there *is* an unpardonable sin, and it is of the same nature as Saul committed—the persistent hardening of one's heart against God.

METHOD.

All sin may be repented of, and may be forgiven; but those who persistently go against their conscience *cannot* repent and are lost.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Saul's Despair.

1. *Saul is forsaken by God.*

God will not answer him.

God takes away his courage.

Why? Because he would not obey God's will when he *did* know it.

2. *Saul breaks the first commandment*

by consulting evil spirits.

So also do spiritualists,
fortune-tellers.

3. *All souls live for ever.*

Some are saved.

Others are lost.

We do *not* know whether Saul will be lost or not.

We *do* know that all will be lost who will not repent.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE ON 'URIM AND THUMMIM'

XXVIII. 6. 'Urim,' which is evidently equivalent to the 'Urim and Thummim' mentioned in other parts of the Old Testament, is alluded to elsewhere in 1 Samuel as 'the ephod,' which was used by the high priest in inquiring the will of God in any important matter. See note on chap. xxii. 10.

This is one of the most obscure and difficult questions in the whole Bible. The Urim and Thummim are first mentioned without any explanation in Exod. xxviii. 30, where Moses is directed to place them within the breastplate of the ephod. This absence of explanation may be due either to the fact that the meaning was already well known, or to the intention of God to keep the matter as a holy secret. The names Urim and Thummim mean simply 'light and perfection,' or as the LXX. translates them, 'light and truth,' or 'light and holiness.' It is generally supposed that these names were applied to certain sacred objects, probably jewels or crystals, which were to be used by the high priest in some unknown way to ascertain the Divine will. Many different suggestions have been made as to their exact nature, origin, and use; e.g. that they were sacred emblems derived from the Egyptian religion, or that they were little models of 'teraphim,' or that they were objects connected with the ancient pre-Mosaic worship of Jehovah, the continued use of which was sanctioned in the Law. Again, it has been imagined that they changed colour according to whether the Divine will was favourable or not, or that they were of the nature of 'lots,' the one giving a positive answer and the other a negative. This last view is supported by the LXX. version of 1 Sam. xiv. 41: 'If the sin be in me or in Jonathan my son, give Urim, O Lord God of Israel; and if in thy people Israel, give Thummim.'

The explanation of some of the Jewish rabbis was that Urim and Thummim were one object only, a plate or jewel which bore the sacred name of God. By gazing on this the high priest was inspired to utter Divine oracles. This idea has been ingeniously worked out by Trench as an explanation of the mysterious promise in Rev. ii. 17. He considers that the 'white stone' there spoken of is a diamond, and that the passage is an allusion to the Urim and Thummim. 'It is the new name of God or of Christ, "*my new name*" (cf. iii. 12); some revelation of the glory of God, only in that higher state capable of being communicated by Him to His people, and which they only can understand who have actually received; for it is a knowing which is identical with being' (*Epistles to the Seven Churches*, p. 137).

Whatever the Urim and Thummim actually were, there is no record of their use after the time of David; and after the Captivity they had plainly ceased to exist (cf. Neh. vii. 65). The gift of prophecy, however, was always associated in men's minds with the high priest's office, a fact which gives an awful significance to S. John's words about Caiaphas, 'Being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation' (S. John xi. 51).

For a longer discussion of this mysterious question, Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and the *Speaker's Commentary* on Exodus xxviii., may be consulted.

CHAPTERS 1 SAM. XXXI. ; 2 SAM. I. ;
1 CHRON. X. 13, 14

NOW the Philistines fought against Israel : and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount ^a Gilboa. 2. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons ; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons. 3. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers ¹ hit him ; and he was ² sore wounded of the archers. ¹ overtook him. ² greatly distressed. 4. Then said Saul unto his armour-bearer, ^b Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith ; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armour-bearer would not ; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. 5. And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. 6. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together. 7. And when the men of Israel that *were* on the other side of the valley, and *they* that *were* on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled ; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. 8. And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. 9. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish *it* in the house of their idols, and among the people.

XXXI. 7. The other side of the valley, *i.e.* on the north of the valley of Jezreel, the settlements of the tribes of Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali.

The other side Jordan. No doubt this expression refers as usual to the east of Jordan. But owing to the difficulty of supposing that the Philistines actually settled in that region, it is explained by some as meaning here the space between the battlefield and the Jordan.

10. And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth :
 c 2 Sam. xxi. 12. and they fastened his body to the wall of ^cBeth-shan

11. And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul, 12. all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. 13. And they took their bones, and buried *them* under ^sa tree at Jabesh, and fasted ^dseven days.

^s the tamarisk tree.
^d Gen. I. 10.

2 SAM. I. 1. Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the
 e 1 Sam. xxx. ^aAmalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag ; 2. it came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head : and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance. 3. And David said unto him, From whence comest thou ? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped. 4. And David said unto him, How went the matter ? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead ; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

10. **The house of Ashtaroth.** See note on I Sam. vii. 3. This particular temple was no doubt in Askelon, which is spoken of by Herodotus, the Greek historian (i. 105), as the most ancient of all the temples of Aphrodité (Venus).

Beth-shan. A celebrated fortress of Samaria. See G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 357, etc. : 'It is almost the farthest-seeing, farthest-seen fortress in the land, and lies in the main passage between Eastern and Western Palestine.'

11. **The inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead.** This noble and venturesome action was doubtless an act of gratitude to the dead king, whose courage and readiness had saved Jabesh-gilead from the Ammonites so many years before (see chap. ix.).

2 SAM. I. 1. David had abode two days in Ziklag. Ziklag was probably about one hundred miles from the scene of the battle. A 'runner' in ancient times would easily cover this in two days. Pheidippides the Athenian runner is said to have run from Athens to Sparta, a distance of nearly two hundred miles, in two days.

5. And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead? 6. And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. 7. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here *am* I. 8. And he said unto me, Who *art* thou? And I answered him, I *am* an Amalekite. 9. He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life *is* yet whole in me. 10. So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord. 11. Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him: 12. and they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword. 13. And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence *art* thou? And he answered, I *am* the son of a stranger, an Amalekite. 14. And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD's anointed? 15. And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, *and*

1 Sam. xxiv. 6; xxvi. 9.

6. *And the young man that told him said.* The very circumstantial account given by this Amalekite has led some to suppose that we have here an alternative account of Saul's death, given in good faith. But in all probability the Amalekite was lying. He had been plundering the slain, and finding Saul's body, had stripped off the insignia of royalty, and invented the rest of the story, thinking that David would be glad to have Saul out of the way at last, and would reward him for having killed him. He little understood David's keen sense of honour and his generosity of character (see also chap. iv.).

10. *The bracelet that was on his arm.* Bracelets were a favourite decoration of Oriental kings. They were fastened above the elbows. Plates lxxxiii. and lxxxvi. in *Oxford Bible Illustrations* show very clearly Assur-nasir-pal, king of Assyria, wearing these bracelets.

^g 1 Kings ii.
32-37.

⁴ *the song of
the bow.*

⁵ Thy glory, O
Israel.

fall upon him. And he smote him that he died. 16. And David said unto him, ^gThy blood *be* upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD'S anointed. 17. And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son: 18. (also he bade them teach the children of Judah ⁴*the use of the bow*: behold, *it is* written in the book of Jasher.) 19. ⁵The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! 20. Tell *it* not in Gath, publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. 21. Ye mountains of Gilboa, *let there be* no dew, neither *let there be* rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the

17. **And David lamented with this lamentation.** The exquisite beauty and tenderness of this dirge or lament cannot fail to impress every reader. The first part, verses 19-25, expresses the national sorrow at the loss of Saul and Jonathan; the second, verses 25-27, David's personal grief for Jonathan, 'how are the mighty fallen' forming a refrain in each part. Similar dirges are given or alluded to in chap. iii. 33, 34; 2 Chron. xxxv. 25; Jer. xxii.

18. **The use of the bow.** The translation of the R. V. is probably right. The 'use of the bow' is quite meaningless. Probably this dirge was called 'The Bow,' from the allusion in it to Jonathan's skill in archery (ver. 22). And it was this dirge which was 'taught' by David to the 'children of Judah.' Instruction by means of poetry was very common in ancient times (see Deut. xxxi. 19, and xxxii.).

The book of Jasher. 'Jasher' means 'the upright.' The Vulgate translates '*liber justorum*,' 'the book of the righteous ones.' It was evidently a collection of national ballads, a sort of early Israelite *Lyra Heroica*. It is referred to also in Josh. x. 13. The book itself has perished, but it was evidently among the materials used by the holy writers in compiling the historical books of the Bible.

19. **The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places.** See R. V. '*High places*' is an expression occurring very often in the Old Testament. It is used in two senses: (1) the unauthorised places of sacrifice upon hill-tops, which the prophets frequently denounce; (2) the mountains of Palestine generally, as in this place. We must remember that Palestine is peculiarly a land of mountains (Deut. viii. 7-9), and this physical feature has left its mark on the poetical imagery of the Jews (cf. Ps. xviii. 33; Habak. iii. 19).

21. **Ye mountains of Gilboa, etc.** As is common in poetry, the crimes and calamities of men are described as reflected upon nature herself, as

shield of Saul, *as though he had not been anointed with oil.* 22. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. 23. Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. 24. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in ⁶scarlet with *other* delights, who ⁶scarlet delicately, who. put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. 25. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places. 26. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant

bringing a curse upon beauty and fertility. Instances may be quoted from many poets, *e.g.* Wordsworth in *Hart-Leap Well*—

'There's neither dog nor heffer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

Now here is neither grass nor pleasant shade!
The sun on drearier hollow never shone;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone.

And this sympathy of nature with man is not merely a poetical fancy. See Rom. viii. 19-22, and the *Christian Year*, for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

Fields of offerings—*i.e.* fields which produce offerings for God. The highest function of the fruits of the earth and field is to provide sacrifices for God, *e.g.* tithes, first-fruits, the 'meat-offering.' See Joel i. 9-16.

As though he had not been anointed with oil. A difficult verse, but the A.V. probably gives the correct sense. Saul's body and his armour share the common fate. The Philistines attach no sacredness to the anointed king.

24. **Who clothed you in scarlet, etc.** The earlier and brighter days of Saul's kingdom had not only consolidated Israel into a united nation, but had enriched that nation with the spoils of many wars: beautiful clothing, 'delicacies,' ornaments of gold.

25. **Slain in thine high places.** Perhaps a pathetic allusion to the prowess of Jonathan in scaling the heights of the Philistines, as recorded in 1 Sam. xiv.

26. **Passing the love of women.** Jonathan, as we have seen, is one of the most truly Christlike characters of the Old Testament; and so the same tender imagery which is used to express the love of God for His people is applied to him (cf. Isa. xlix. 15).

hast thou been unto me : thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. 27. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished !

1 CHRON. X. 13. So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, *even* against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking *counsel of one that had a familiar spirit*, to inquire of it ; 14. and inquired not of the LORD : therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

LESSON XVIII

The Death of Saul

MATTER.

1. God's judgment.

The death of Saul in the hour of defeat, by his own hand, was an act of *judgment* from God. It was the final penalty, as far as this world goes, for his disobedience and irreverence. As 1 Samuel begins with a great disaster before the Philistines, owing to the sins of the *priesthood*, so it ends with a similar disaster for the sins of the *king*.

David had left the judgment of Saul in God's hands, and his words have been fulfilled (1 Sam. xxvi. 10).

2. God's mercy is revealed in this disaster as well as His judgment.

(1) The death of Saul made open the way for the kingdom of David, the faithful king, just as the curse on the sons of Eli had made the way for the exaltation of Samuel.

(2) The character of David shines out brilliantly amidst the dark clouds of calamity. He has no thought of rejoicing over his enemy's death, nor personal greed for the throne. He punishes the spoiler with death, who thought to win favour with him. And his lamentation is the self-expression of a

METHOD.

1. Refer to 1 Sam. xxvi. 10.

Remind of Saul's murder of the priests of Nob ; his attempted murder of David.

Speak of the sin of self-murder.

2. Point out to children that great evils and calamities are often God's way of calling out the good that is in men.

Illustrate by the recent South African War—a terrible evil, full of sorrow ; but it brought out—

(1) Self-sacrifice in soldiers.

(2) Generosity in many at home. So this blow which fell on Israel brought out—

(1) The beauty of David's character : his charity, which thinketh no evil.

(2) The gratitude of the men of Jabesh.

LESSON XVIII—*continued.* THE DEATH OF SAUL

noble soul, who tries to forget the evil, and to see all that was good in the dead.

(3) The noble conduct of the men of Jabesh-gilead is again a bright light amidst the universal panic and the general carelessness as to what had become of Saul.

The men of Jabesh forgot the evil that Saul had done, and remembered only the help he gave them in their hour of peril. Gratitude is such an unusual thing, that we may well call it always a gift of God.

We may learn from this to try—

(1) Always to *think the best* we can of others, even of our enemies; see their good points.

(2) Always to *speak the best* we can of others.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Saul's Death.

1. *God's judgment on Saul.* Seen by his miserable death—self-inflicted—in the hour of defeat.
2. *God's mercy.* Seen in bringing good out of evil.
 - (1) David can now be king.
 - (2) David's *goodness* shines out in his sorrow for Saul and Jonathan.
 - (3) The men of Jabesh-gilead risk their lives to show *gratitude*.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

The geography of the battlefield of Gilboa. The position of the great plain of Esdraelon or Megiddo should be carefully observed on the map of Palestine. The Philistines probably marched northwards along the coast, then turned to the east across the plain, and encamped first at Shunem, on hills called Little Hermon, to the north of the head of the valley of Jezreel, quite close to the Nain of the Gospel, and only a few miles south of Nazareth. Saul and his army were encamped on the opposite side of the valley of Jezreel, on Mount Gilboa (1 Sam. xxviii. 4).

Then, in 1 Sam. xxix. 1, the two armies move closer together: the Philistines move down to some unknown Aphek, while the Israelites, leaving the heights of Gilboa, come down to 'the fountain which is in Jezreel,' probably Ain Jalud, or 'the well of Harod.' Here the battle begins, and the Israelites are driven back by the Philistines upon the heights of Gilboa, where they make their final but ineffectual stand. The cavalry and chariots of the Philistines could hardly follow them here, but the archers (1 Sam. xxxi. 3), as in so many great battles of antiquity, decide the fate of the day.

The plain of Esdraelon and its immediate surroundings form the great battlefield of Palestine. More decisive battles have been fought here than in any other spot in the world—the battle of Megiddo (Judg. iv.-v.), which delivered Israel from Canaanite tyranny for forty years; the battle in which Gideon's three hundred followers put to flight the hosts of Midianites (Judg. vii.); the battle of Gilboa; the battle, long remembered in the dirges of Israel, where the righteous king Josiah was defeated and killed by Pharaoh Necho (2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30, and 2 Chron. xxxv. 20-25); and the battle of Hattin, 1187 A. D., the last struggle of the Crusaders. The same place has given its name to the mysterious battle, the last conflict between the armies of God and His enemies (whether it be literal or metaphorical) which is foretold both by Ezekiel (xxxviii.-xxxix.) and Zechariah (xiv.), and is announced by S. John, as taking place at Armageddon—the 'Hill of Megiddo' (Rev. xvi. 14-16).

'What a plain it is! Upon which not only the greatest empires, races, and faiths, east and west, have contended with each other, but each has come to judgment—on which, from the first, with all the splendour of human battle, men have felt that *there was fighting from heaven, the stars in their courses were fighting*—on which panic has descended so mysteriously upon the best equipped and most successful armies, but the humble have been exalted to victory in the hour of their weakness—on which false faiths, equally with false defenders of the true faith, have been exposed and scattered—on which, since the time of Saul, wilfulness and superstition, though aided by every human excellence, have come to nought, and since Josiah's time the purest piety has not atoned for rash and mistaken zeal. The Crusaders repeat the splendid folly of the kings of Israel; and alike under the old and the new covenant, a degenerate church suffers here her judgment at the hands of the infidel.'—G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 409.

CHAPTERS II. ; III. ; IV.

AND it came to pass after this, that David ^ainquired ^{a 1 Sam. xxiii. and xxx.} of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron. 2. So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite. 3. And his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. 4. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabesh-gilead *were they* that buried Saul. 5. And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him. 6. And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

1. **David inquired of the Lord.** Notice the consistency of David's prayerfulness. The death of Saul marked the great turning-point in the fortunes of David. He knew it, and his first thought is to turn as of old to God for guidance.

Hebron. Hebron was well adapted for a temporary capital, not only for its natural advantages, but for its religious and national associations. Here Abraham had lived, and here Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were buried. The Mohammedans count it still one of their greatest 'holy places'; and to be allowed to enter even the first part of the cave of Machpelah (where doubtless the bodies of the patriarchs still rest) is a very rare privilege. See Gen. xiii. 18; xxiii. 2, 19; xlix. 30, 31; Num. xiii. 22; Josh. x. 36; xiv. 13-15.

3. **The cities of Hebron, i.e. the adjoining villages.**

4. **They anointed David king.** This second anointing was, as it were, the public recognition by the tribe of Judah of the first and private anointing by the prophet Samuel (1 Sam. xvi.).

5. **And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead.** David thus endeavours to conciliate the friends of Saul. He shows them that he himself sympathises with their noble respect for the dead king. But the efforts for the present were fruitless, for Gilead became the centre of the opposition to David.

7. Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant : for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them. 8. But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim ; 9. and made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel. 10. Ish-bosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David. 11. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. 12. And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. 13. And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon : and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. 14. And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise,

8. *Ish-bosheth*. Both this name and that of Mephibosheth (iv. 4) are Jewish alterations for the original names, which were Eshbaal and Merib-baal, i.e. 'man of Baal,' and 'he who contends with Baal.' The later Jews substituted for Baal 'Bosheth,' which means 'shame.' At the time when these names were given to Saul's sons, 'Baal' had not the same offensive associations to the Jews which it had in later times for those who looked back upon the idolatries of kings like Ahab and Ahaz. The word may even have been used merely as an alternative for *Jehovah*, as its literal meaning is simply 'lord.' See note on chap. vii. 4.

Mahanaim, on the frontier between Gad and Manasseh, but exact site unknown (Josh. xiii. 26, 30). As David had Hebron with its sacred memories, so his rival could claim as a capital the spot where the 'two hosts' of angels had met Jacob in his hour of need (Gen. xxxii. 2).

12. *Abner . . . went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon*. Abner assumes the aggressive and invades Judah. Gibeon is five miles north-west of Jerusalem, originally a city of the Hivites who deceived Joshua (Josh. ix.), afterwards a noted 'high place' for sacrifice. The Tabernacle was pitched there until the Temple was built.

14. *Let the young men now arise, and play before us*. Abner suggests that instead of a general battle there should be a contest between a few picked champions from each side. Such a method was not uncommon in ancient times, though it rarely succeeded, any more than in this case, in averting a general engagement. In legendary Roman history there was a similar duel between the Horatii and the Curiatii. So Goliath

and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise. 15. Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which *pertained* to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. 16. And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and *thrust* his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which *is* in Gibeon. 17. And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David. 18. And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel *was as* light of foot as a wild roe. 19. And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. 20. Then Abner looked behind him, and said, *Art* thou Asahel? And he answered, *I am*. 21. And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him. 22. And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? 23. Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him ¹ under the fifth *rib*, that the spear came out behind ¹ in the belly.

appears as champion of the Philistines. So again in later history De Bohun engages in single combat with Robert Bruce before Bannockburn.

Abner's words seem to be intended as a grim jest; for the Hebrew word for 'play' is generally used to signify either the play of children or music and dancing. A similar metaphor, however, is found in other languages.

Cf. 'The struggle of standards,
The rush of the javelins,
The crash of the charges,
The wielding of weapons—
The play that they played with
The children of Edward.'

Tennyson, *Battle of Brunanburh*.

16. *Helkath-hazzurim*, i.e. either 'field of heroes' or 'field of edges,' i.e. sword-blades.

23. *With the hinder part of the spear*. Abner evidently did not wish to kill Asahel, but only to deal him such a blow as would hinder him from further pursuit. Hence he struck him only with the butt-end

him ; and he fell down there, and died in the same place : and it came to pass, *that* as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still. 24. Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner : and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, *that lieth* before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. 25. And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill. 26. Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren? 27. And Joab said, *As* God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone ² up every one from following his brother. 28. So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more. 29. And Abner and his men walked all that night through the ³ plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim. 30. And Joab returned from following Abner : and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. 31. But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, *so that* three hundred and threescore men died. 32. And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which *was in* Beth-lehem. And Joab

² . . . away, nor followed every one his brother.

³ Arabah.

of his spear. But this end was usually shod with iron, though not sharply pointed ; and probably the speed of Asahel's onset rendered the blow fatal.

23. **Stood still.** The death of Asahel was more than the loss of one of the rank and file. It caused consternation and pity among all that saw it.

27. **And Joab said, etc.** It is difficult to say what is the meaning of Joab's speech. It may mean : (1) if Abner had not spoken, the pursuit would have gone on all night till the morning ; or (2) if Abner had not given the word for the battle himself *that* morning, there would not have been this slaughter of brethren by one another. He alone is to blame for it.

29. **The plain, i.e. the Arabah (R. V.),** the deep ravine of the Jordan.

and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

III. 1. Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. 2. And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; 3. and his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; 4. and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; 5. and the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron. 6. And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong ⁴ for the house of Saul. ^{4 in.}

7. And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and *Ish-bosheth* said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

8. Then was Abner very wroth for the words of *Ish-bosheth*, and said, *Am I a dog's head*, ⁵ which against ^{5 that} Judah do shew kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have ^{belongeth to Judah? This day do I shew kindness . . . and yet thou chargest me, etc.} not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to-day with a fault concerning this woman?

9. So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the

III. 3. **Absalom.** It is suggestive to note that Absalom was the son of a marriage which ought never to have taken place, as the Law of Moses forbade alliances between Israel and the surrounding nations. The marriage brought its own retribution.

Geshur, to the north-east of Palestine, across the Jordan. Perhaps there was some connection between this king of Geshur and the giants who were formerly expelled from Hebron. See Josh. xv. 14.

5. **Eglah, David's wife.** Jewish tradition says that this is the same person as Michal, and is called 'David's wife' because she was his first.

8. **Am I a dog's head.** 'A dog' was a Jewish proverb for anything base or worthless. The dogs of the East are wild and dangerous, and prowl about the towns by night living on refuse. See the allusions to this in Ps. lix. Abner means 'Am I a worthless traitor?'

9. **As the Lord hath sworn to David.** This expression and that in

b 1 Sam. xv. 28. ^b LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do to him ; 10. to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba. 11. And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him. 12. And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose *is* the land ? saying *also*, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand *shall be* with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee. 13. And he said, Well ; I will make a league with thee : but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face. 14. And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my wife Michal. . . . 15. And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from *her* husband, *even* from ^cPhaltiel the son of Laish. 16. And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned. 17. And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past *to be* king over you : 18. now then do *it* : for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies. 19. And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin : and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin. 20. So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that *were* with

c 1 Sam. xxv.
44.

ver. 18 show that Abner in his conscience knew that David was the Divinely appointed king. His support of the house of Saul had been due to personal reasons. His sad end seems almost like a retribution for the civil war, which was really due to his action.

12. Whose is the land ? Abner implies that the land is in his own possession, and therefore he can give it to whom he likes. Ish-bosheth all the way through is a mere puppet on the throne.

him a feast. 21. And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away ; and he went in peace. 22. And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from ⁶ *pur-* ⁶ a foray, and *suing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them : brought, etc. but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron ; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace. 23. When Joab and all the host that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace. 24. Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done ? behold, Abner came unto thee ; why *is it that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone ? 25. Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest. 26. And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah : but David knew *it* not. 27. And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there ¹ under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother. 28. And afterward when David heard *it*, he said, I and my kingdom *are* guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner : 29. let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house ; and let there not fail

27. He died, for the blood of Asahel his brother. Vengeance for the death of Asahel was the ostensible reason for Joab's abominable crime. But doubtless he was influenced also by jealousy of Abner, and fear that if Abner came over to the side of David he himself would have to take a second place.

29. Let it rest on the head of Joab, etc. Men have indeed no power of themselves to bring Divine curses upon the heads of others. But we must remember in this case (1) the curse on wilful murder is of Divine institution (see Gen. iv. and ix.) ; (2) David was himself a prophet, and his words may have been inspired by God on this occasion.

from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread. 30. So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle. 31. And David said to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, ^dRend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himself* followed the bier. 32. And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept. 33. And the king lamented over Abner, and said, ⁷Died Abner as a fool dieth? 34. Thy hands *were* not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, *so* fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him. 35. And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down. 36. And all the people took notice *of it*, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people. 37. For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. 38. And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? 39. And I *am* this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah *be* too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

^d Gen. xxxvii.
34.

⁷ Should Abner
die as a fool
dieth?

33. Died Abner as a fool dieth? See R.V. This is evidently part of a dirge or lament composed by David. The exact meaning of the words is uncertain; but, at any rate, they mean that Abner's death was unworthy of so great a warrior.

39. And I am this day weak, though anointed king. This is one of the most pathetic touches in the intensely human portrait of David which the Bible draws for us. He dare not put Joab to death for his crime, for Joab was his commander-in-chief, and to do so would probably have cost David his own throne and life. But David feels intensely the anguish of seeing the wicked apparently triumph. He can only commit it to God. See 1 Kings ii. 28-34 for the retribution that ultimately fell on Joab.

iv. 1. And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled. 2. And Saul's son had two men *that were* captains of bands; the name of the one *was* Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin: 3. and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.) 4. And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *that was* lame of *his* feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* Mephibosheth. 5. And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a bed at noon. 6. And they came thither into the midst of the house, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him ¹ under the fifth *rib*: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. 7. For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the ³ plain all night. 8. And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and

iv. 2. Beeroth (*i.e.* 'wells') was anciently a city of the Gibeonites. Possibly the flight of its inhabitants spoken of here is connected with the persecution of the Gibeonites by Saul (xxi. 1, 2).

Beeroth, according to tradition, is the place where S. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary halted to look for the child Jesus on their return from Jerusalem (S. Luke ii. 44).

6. *As though they would have fetched wheat.* This passage is very obscure. The Septuagint is quite different: 'And behold the woman that kept the door of the house was winnowing wheat, and she slumbered and slept; and the brethren Rechab and Baanah went privily into the house.'

4. *Mephibosheth.* On the name, see note on chap. ii. 8.

^e Gen. xlviii.
16.

^g which was
the reward I
gave him for
his tidings.

^f Gen. ix. 5, 6.

of his seed. 9. And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, *As* he LORD liveth, ^e who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, 10. when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, ^g who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for his tidings : 11. how much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed ? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your ^f hand, and take you away from the earth ? 12. And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged *them* up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried *it* in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

9. As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of adversity. The form of David's oath is significant. He is ever conscious of the Divine providence which is his title to the throne. He does not need the treachery and crime of men. His generous spirit revolts from the murder of his rival, as it had done of old from taking advantage of Saul.

LESSON XIX

David King in Hebron

MATTER.

1. David's waiting.

The death of Saul and his sons seemed to have removed all obstacles to the fulfilment of God's promise to David. Yet it was not so. He still had to wait more than seven years.

It was a time of sorrow as well as waiting.

(1) He saw his country torn with civil war.

(2) He had to be dependent largely on Joab, and to refrain from punishing him for a crime which he himself abhorred.

METHOD.

1. Illustrate by examples from our own history.

Alfred's waiting and patience.

Robert Bruce.

Enforce the lesson of *hopefulness*.

If God has promised a thing, or if we know that any end we have in view is a *right* one, we must not be discouraged either (1) at the calamities of our friends or (2) the success and impunity of the wicked.

LESSON XIX—*continued.* DAVID KING IN HEBRON

MATTER.

2. The growth of David's power.

This period of waiting, in spite of its weariness and sorrows, was a time of steady growth of David's power. God's purpose never failed for a moment, but was steadily progressing.

David's growing strength (iii. 1) was based upon (1) the favour of God, (2) the favour of God's people. See S. Luke ii. 52.

(1) In all that happens he finds his guidance and comfort in God from the beginning to the end of this period. See ii. 1; iii. 39.

(2) The favour of God's people (iii. 36), which David had enjoyed from the very first (1 Sam. xviii. 16), was attracted still more by

(a) His *generous sympathy* at the death of Abner: he himself was chief mourner; fasted in token of sorrow; spoke of Abner in noble terms—'a prince and a great man';

(b) His *hatred of treachery*, even if he himself was to profit by it. So far from rejoicing at the murder of his rival Ish-bosheth, he makes himself the avenger of his blood by putting his murderers to death; and he speaks of him, although his enemy, as 'a righteous man.'

It is by such qualities as these that true popularity is won, and a king's throne truly established.

METHOD.

2. This part of the lesson may well be illustrated from the conduct of our own royal family, *e.g.* Queen Victoria's constant sympathy and self-sacrifice in every case of sorrow; her messages to those under the stroke of calamity; her visits to wounded soldiers, etc.

Inculcate in the children from David's example a hatred of every sort of *meanness*; taking advantage of another's weakness or trustfulness either in play or work.

Show that no lasting good can ever be attained by evil means.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

David King in Hebron.

1. *David's waiting.*

David, even after Saul's death, had to *wait* seven and a half years before he was king of all Israel.

A time of sorrow—

Civil war.

The wickedness of Joab.

He endured by *hope*.

2. *David's power grows—*

(1) By God's favour, which he kept by *prayer* and *trustfulness*.

(2) By the people's favour, which he kept by *sympathy*,
by his hatred of meanness and
treachery.

CHAPTERS V. 1-12, 17-25; VIII. 14-18; XXIII. 8-23; IX.

THEN came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh. 2. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, ^aThou shalt feed my ^a 1 Sam. xvi. people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. 3. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron ^b before ^b 2 Kings xi. 17. the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. 4. David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years. 5. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah. 6. And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the

1. **Then came all the tribes of Israel.** The murder of Ish-bosheth had removed all obstacles to the acceptance of David by all Israel; as the lameness of Mephibosheth and his retirement seem to have prevented him from being considered as a possible claimant to the throne.

2. **Thou shalt feed my people Israel.** 'To feed' is literally 'to be shepherd to.' In Homer kings are called 'shepherds of the people.' Cf. S. John xxi. 15-17.

3. **King David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord.** The Jewish monarchy was founded not upon force, but upon God's sanction and a solemn agreement between king and people before God. See Deut. xvii. 14-20.

4. **David was thirty years old.** This was regarded by the Jews as the age of entrance into manhood. So the Levites at this age began their ministry (Num. iv. 3). S. Jerome tells us that the Jews were not allowed to read Ezekiel, owing to the mysterious character of his prophecies, until they were thirty. And our Lord began His ministry at the same age (S. Luke iii. 23).

6. **And the king and his men went to Jerusalem.** Jerusalem is so bound up with all our associations and ideas about the Jews, that it is difficult to conceive that for four hundred years it was not the capital, nor even possessed by the Jews, but was an isolated fortress in the hands of the Jebusites.

But Jerusalem was the Divinely appointed capital and centre of worship, though its name was not disclosed by Moses in the Law, and it was

^c Judg. i. 21. ^c Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land : which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither : thinking, David cannot come in hither. 7. Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion : the same *is* the city of David. 8. And David said on that day, ¹ Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain.* Wherefore they said, ² The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. 9. So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. 10. And David went on, and grew great, ³ and the LORD God of hosts *was* with him. 11. And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to

¹ Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and smite the lame, etc. (omitting words in italics).

² There are the blind and the lame ; he cannot come into the house.

³ for.

only alluded to as 'the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in' (Deut. xvi. 6).

The time had now come for the Divinely chosen king to accomplish God's purpose, and doubtless David received a special revelation at this time to that effect, though nothing is said of this.

From a secular point of view, Jerusalem is admirably adapted for a royal city. It lay on the frontiers of Judah and Benjamin; and it is almost impregnable, being surrounded on three sides by precipitous ravines.

Except thou take away the blind and the lame. This expression, and also ver. 8, are difficult and obscure. The Jebusites were so confident that their city could not be taken, that they either said that the blind and the lame were sufficient to defend it, or they actually placed blind and lame on the walls as a taunt to David.

For ver. 8 the R.V. translation gives sufficiently good sense. The 'gutter,' or 'watercourse,' was evidently the way discovered by David as a possible means of getting into the city. The account in Chronicles adds that Joab was the first to scale the walls.

The last words of ver. 8 are evidently a popular saying which arose out of the taking of Jerusalem. It was probably used as a proverb for self-confidence and brag, like that of the Jebusites.

9. **Millo**—properly '*the Millo*,' *i.e.* some fortress already in existence, perhaps a defence to Jerusalem on the north.

11. **Hiram king of Tyre.** This king may have been father or grandfather of the Hiram who provided Solomon with the material and workmen for the Temple. Tyre was at the time, and for long afterwards, one of the richest and most famous of the maritime cities of the world; though now, in accordance with prophecy (Ezek. xxvi.), it has almost absolutely disappeared. The compliment shown by Hiram in thus building David's palace was a proof of the new importance of Israel now that it had been united under David, and thus explains the next verse.

David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house. 12. And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

17. But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold.

18. The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. 19. And David inquired of the LORD,

saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand. 20. And David came to ^d Baal-perazim, and ^d Isa. xxviii. 21.

David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters.

Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim.

21. And there they left their images, and David and his men ^e burned them. 22. And the Philistines came up yet ^e took them away.

again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

23. And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, Thou

12. He had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake. This is a very characteristic touch. David did not attribute to himself the growing glory of his kingdom, but perceived that its 'exaltation' was not for his sake, but for the sake of the *sacred nation*, the chosen people of God.

17. The hold. From chap. xxiii. 13 it is clear that this was the old stronghold of Adullam, so well known to David and his veterans.

18. The valley of Rephaim. A valley south-west of Jerusalem towards Bethlehem—the shortest way from Philistia to Jerusalem.

20. The breach of waters. The sudden onslaught of David's army upon the Philistines is poetically compared to the bursting forth of waters from some broken reservoir.

Baal-perazim. 'Baal,' literally 'lord' or 'owner,' is here used in a secondary sense to mean simply 'place of.'

21. And there they left their images. This battle forms a dramatic conclusion to the long struggle with the Philistines which begins with the disaster of 1 Sam. iv. There the Israelites presumptuously brought the Ark into battle, and lost it. Here the idolatrous Philistines bring their images into the fight, and have to leave them behind as spoil for the religious king.

⁵ make a circuit. shalt not go up; *but* ⁵ fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. 24. And ⁶ marching. let it be, when thou hearest the sound of ⁶ a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines. 25. And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.

⁷ gave victory to. VIII. 14. . . . And the LORD ⁷ preserved David whithersoever he went. 15. And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people. 16. And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; 17. and Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Seraiah *was* the scribe; 18. and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were

⁸ priests; *marg.* chief ministers. ⁸ chief rulers.
e cf. 1 Chron. xi. 10, etc.

XXIII. 8. ⁸ These *be* the names of the mighty men whom

24. When thou hearest the sound of a going, etc. Evidently some supernatural sign given by God. We may reverently conjecture that the noise of the angel-armies which fought for Israel was for a moment permitted to be heard by mortal ears, just as Moses was allowed to see the skirts of God's glory, and Elisha's servant the chariots and horsemen of fire encompassing God's people (2 Kings vi. 17).

25. Geba—1 Chron. xiv. 16 reads *Gibeon*, which is probably right.

VIII. 16. Recorder, or 'remembrancer.' 'An officer of high rank in the Jewish state, exercising the functions, not simply of an annalist, but of chancellor or president of the privy council' (Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*).

17. The priests. It is remarkable to notice that at this time there were two high priests, representing the two branches of the family of Aaron—Zadok descended from Eleazar, and Ahimelech (more probably Abiathar) from Ithamar: the former seems to have ministered at Gibeon, the latter first in David's camp and then at Jerusalem. Zadok became sole high priest owing to the unfaithfulness of Abiathar, as recorded in 1 Kings ii.

18. The Cherethites and Pelethites. These were the bodyguard of the king, and were foreigners—very likely members of two Philistine tribes, or Cretans and Philistines.

XXIII. 8. David's mighty men. This passage from chap. xxiii. seems more naturally to come in this place, as it does in 1 Chron. xi. There the

David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same *was* Adino the Eznite: *he lift up his spear* against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time. 9. And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines *that* were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: 10. he arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil. 11. And after him *was* Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. 12. But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory. 13. And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim. 14. And David *was* then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was*

list is introduced by the words: 'These also are the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, and with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the Lord concerning Israel.'

The Tachmonite that sat in the seat. The Hebrew text here is faulty; probably the hero's name was Jashobeam the Hachmonite, as in 1 Chron. xi. 11.

9. The Philistines that were there gathered together to battle. 1 Chron. xi. 13 apparently gives the place as 'Pas-dammim,' i.e. Ephes-dammim, the scene of David's battle with Goliath, and, no doubt, as the name ('boundary of blood') implies, of many other conflicts with them.

13. And three of the thirty chief went down. 'The first three' (ver. 23) were Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah. After them came a second set of three—Abishai, Benaiah, and one unnamed hero—who were the warriors who brought the water from the well of Bethlehem. This incident has always called forth admiration, on the one hand, for those who risked their lives in generous devotion to David, and on the other, for the nobility of feeling which refused to receive such an offering as a mere personal gratification, but felt it was worthy of God, and so offered it to Him.

then *in* Beth-lehem. 15. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which *is* by the gate! 16. And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD. 17. And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this: ⁹ *is not this* the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men. 18. And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, *and* slew *them*, and had ¹⁰ the name among three. 19. Was he not most honourable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the *first* three. 20. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew ¹¹ two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow: 21. and he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with

⁹ shall I drink the blood of, etc.

¹⁰ a name among the three.

¹¹ the two sons of Ariel.

17. Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this. David's words are evidently an allusion to the sacredness of blood, as a symbol of life, which is laid down in the covenant with Noah and re-enforced by the Law. See note on p. 72. He feels that there is something of the same sacred character attaching to that which his heroes had risked their lives to win; and therefore he treats their offering as if it were the blood of the sacrifice, pouring it out on the ground 'unto the Lord.'

David's 'longing' for the water of the well of Bethlehem is a very human touch in the narrative. It was his native place, where his boyhood had been spent; though it was for the time in the hands of the Philistines. In the heat and stress of battle he remembers the well by the gate, and the cool waters with which he had quenched his thirst as a boy. The well is still to be seen at Bethlehem.

Some of the Christian fathers have seen a very beautiful allegory in David's words. Like all the saints of the Old Testament, David longed for the coming of Christ; and in his words on this occasion he was unconsciously foretelling Him Who was to be born at Bethlehem, Who is the true well of living water. Cf. S. John iv. 10-14, and 1 S. John v. 6.

his own spear. 22. These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men. 23. He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him over his guard.

ix. And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake? 2. And *there* was of the house of Saul a servant / 1 Sam. xx. whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, *Art* thou Ziba? 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 shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, *which* is lame on *his* feet. 4. And the king said unto him, *Where* is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he *is* in the house of *g* Machir, *g* chap. xvii. 27. the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. 5. Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. 6. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! 7. And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan 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 shouldst

ix. This incident must have occurred several years after David's entry of Jerusalem, as Mephibosheth was only five years old at the death of Saul (iv. 4), and now he has a son (ver. 12). But it comes in naturally here, as illustrating the character of David's rule, and how his nature had not been spoiled by prosperity.

3. **The kindness of God.** A touching reminiscence of the actual words of Jonathan, uttered more than twenty years before at that memorable farewell (1 Sam. xx. 14).

7. **Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.** This was a common way among Eastern kings of showing particular honour (cf. 1 Kings ii. 7). 'Bread,' of course, is used in its metaphorical sense of food generally.

look upon such a dead dog as I *am*? 9. Then the king called to Ziba 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 Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. 11. Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons. 12. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was ^hMicha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* servants unto Mephibosheth. 13. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

^h 1 Chron. viii.
84.

LESSON XX

David King at Jerusalem

MATTER.

1. David's triumph.

The long waiting for the fulfilment of God's promise is now at an end. The many dangers and disappointments have been patiently endured; God's presence and help have been won and kept by constant *prayer*; and now three visible proofs are given that David is the king Divinely chosen.

(1) He wins the stronghold of Zion, which henceforth is *Jerusalem*—'possession of peace,' the royal city and the holy city, centre of the national life and the national religion, and type of the heavenly city: 'Jerusalem which is above.'

(2) The heathen nations acknowledge him, and give him gifts; the

METHOD.

1. Describe the coronation of David as king of all Israel.
Recapitulate briefly.

(1) Show the children a picture of Jerusalem; tell them the meaning of the name, and point out its *beauty* and its *strength*.

Illustrate by Ps. xlviii. and cxxxvii.

David is a type of Christ, Who has won for us the heavenly city—new Jerusalem (Rev. xxi., xxii.).

LESSON XX—continued. DAVID KING AT JERUSALEM

MATTER.

king of Tyre builds him a palace. See Ps. xlv. 12.

(3) The Philistines, for so many years the terror and the scourge of Israel, are twice decisively beaten. Israel had been allowed by God to be defeated and enslaved by them, and even the Ark taken captive; now the tables are turned, and the images of the false gods of the Philistines are taken from them and destroyed.

2. David's chivalry.

David was not only a great man himself—great in genius, in courage, in moral force—but he had the happiness of attracting other great men to himself. He was loyally served and loved by the noblest men of his time. We can see some of the secrets of this popularity, both in the righteousness and justice of his rule (viii. 15); and also in the chivalrous spirit, the spirit of true knighthood, which he displayed on such an occasion as that of the water brought from the well of Bethlehem. The sight of his heroes' devotion fills him with humility and reverence. Their offering he feels is too great for himself, and he pours it out before the Lord. It was the action of a 'just and perfect knight of God.'

3. David's kindness.

David remembers his friend and his promises, which few men do when raised to greatness. His behaviour to Mephibosheth is far in advance of the spirit of his age. It is truly 'the kindness of God' to provide for and honour one who was weak and helpless. It is by such actions that a king shows true greatness of soul, and proves himself a worthy vicegerent of God, the 'King of kings.'

METHOD.

(2) Illustrate by the Magi bringing their gifts to the infant Jesus.

(3) Describe the victories over the Philistines, and suggest the help of angelic armies. See note on ver. 24.

Cf. The 'twelve legions of angels' (S. Matt. xxvi. 53). Our Lord, being God, needs not the help of angels to win the battle, but they are ever present to help us in our contests with Satan and his armies, of whom the Philistines are a type.

2. Children are sure to be interested in the description of David's 'mighty men,' and in the bringing the water from the well of Bethlehem; but the important point to bring out is that the secret of true popularity, of attracting the love and help of those who are worth having as friends, is *unselfishness*, the spirit of the true 'gentleman' in all time.

Illustrate by Sir Philip Sidney's generosity at the battle of Zütphen, in giving the water to a wounded soldier.

3. Point out to the children the beauty of kindness to those who are helpless and uninteresting like Mephibosheth was.

Contrast David's conduct with Gen. xl. 23.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

David King at Jerusalem.1. *David's triumph by the help of God.*

- (1) Crowned King of all Israel.
- (2) Captures Jerusalem.
- (3) Reigns at Jerusalem in the palace built for him by Hiram.
- (4) Defeats the Philistines twice.

2. *David's mighty men.*

Great warriors love and serve David because of his *unselfishness*.

3. *David's kindness.*

He remembered his promise to Jonathan, and shows 'the kindness of God' to his poor lame son.

'Thou hast given victory unto kings; and hast delivered David thy servant from the peril of the sword.'—Ps. cxliv. 10.

CHAPTERS 1 CHRON. XIII.; XV. 1-3; 11-16; 25-29;
XVI. 1-6; 37-43; 2 SAM. VI. 20-23

AND David consulted with the captains of thousands cf. 2 Sam. vi. and hundreds, and with every leader. 2. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities ¹ and suburbs, ¹ that have suburbs; *marg.* pasture lands. that they may gather themselves unto us: 3. and let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul. 4. And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. 5. So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim. 6. And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjath-jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that ² dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called *on it*. 7. And they ² sitteth upon the cherubim, which is called by the Name.

1 CHRON. XIII. 3. We inquired not at it in the days of Saul. The Ark, as it will be remembered, had been in seclusion at Kirjath-jearim for seventy or eighty years; and the high priest with Urim and Thummim, instead of being in attendance upon it, had either ministered in the empty Tabernacle, like Ahimelech at Nob, or, like Abiathar, had gone from place to place.

5. All Israel. According to 2 Sam. thirty thousand assembled.

From Shihor of Egypt, etc. Shihor or Sihor ('the muddy river') in the prophets (e.g. Isa. xxiii. 3) means the Nile; but here, and in Josh. xiii. 3, it evidently means what is elsewhere called 'the river of Egypt' (e.g. 1 Kings viii. 65), i.e. the stream which divides Egypt from Palestine, now the Wady El-arish.

To bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim. Ps. cxxxii. apparently commemorates this great national event. 'We heard of it at Ephratah; we found it in the fields of the wood' probably means 'we heard of the Ark as having been in the territory of Ephraim (i.e. at Shiloh); we found it at Kirjath-jearim' (i.e. the 'city of the woods').

6. Whose name is called on it. See R. V. 'The Name' is equivalent to

carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab : and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart. 8. And David and all Israel played before God with all *their* might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. 9. And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark ; for the oxen stumbled. 10. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark : and there he died ^a before God. 11. And David was displeased, because the LORD had ³ made a breach upon Uzza : wherefore that place is called Perez-uzza to this day. 12. And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God *home* to me ? 13. So David brought not the ark *home* to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. 14. And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.

^a 1 Sam. vi. 19.
³ broken forth upon.

xv. 1. And *David* made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. 2. Then David said, None ought to carry the ark

'the self-revealing of God to Israel.' The Ark was the special symbol of all that God had revealed of Himself to Israel : His nature in its awful and unapproachable holiness ; and His purposes of redemption through the mediation of His Son, of Whom the mercy-seat was a type. See Rom. iii. 25, where 'propitiation' is the same word as that used in the LXX. for 'mercy-seat.'

10. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza. Familiarity with the Ark had perhaps bred contempt with Uzza, and he treated it as he would have done any common object on a cart which was in danger of falling off. The removal of the Ark to Jerusalem marked the beginning of a new era of worship ; and the awful truths concerning God and His presence with Israel, which the Ark symbolised, were vindicated anew by Uzza's death. It was an unlawful act to bring the Ark on a cart ; it should have been carried by men. Cf. Num. iv. 15.

13. Obed-edom the Gittite. A Levite (1 Chron. xxvi.) called 'the Gittite,' not as dwelling in Gath of the Philistines, but in the Levitical city of Gath-Rimmon (Josh. xxi. 24).

of God but the Levites : ^c for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever. ^{c Deut. x. 8, etc.}

3. And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it.

11. And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, 12. and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites : sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. 13. For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. 14. So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

15. And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as ^d Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD. 16. And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy. ^{d Exod. xxv. 14; Num. iv. 15; vii. 9.}

25. So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obed-edom with joy.

26. And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams. 27. And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that

xv. 26. When God helped the Levites. According to 2 Sam. vi. the sacrifice spoken of here was offered when they had gone six paces. It was a thank-offering for the commencement of the journey. We can well imagine that it must have been a solemn moment for all, with the death of Uzza fresh in their memory, when the Ark again moved forth from its resting-place.

27. David also had upon him an ephod of linen. The ephod was the distinctive priestly dress (see note on 1 Sam. ii. 18). Kings were not allowed to perform the highest priestly acts (see 2 Chron. xxvi.),

bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: David also *had* upon him an ephod of linen. 28. Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps. 29. And it came to pass, *as* the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window saw king David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart.

XVI. 1. So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God. 2. And when David had made an end of offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. 3. And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and ⁴a flagon of wine. 4. And he appointed *certain* of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to ⁵record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel: 5. Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obed-edom: and

⁴ a cake of raisins.

⁵ celebrate.

but there was a peculiar sacredness in their office which brought them very near to the priesthood. So in England, as in other Christian countries, the traditional coronation robes of the sovereign are very similar to the ancient vestments of a bishop, and include stole, cope, and dalmatic.

29. *Dancing and playing.* 2 Sam. vi. further illustrates this by the words, 'and David danced before the Lord with all his might.' A solemn dance was in ancient times considered to be a proper accompaniment of a religious function, as expressing joy and thanksgiving. The word 'chorus' originally meant a sacred dance accompanied by singing. The religious dance lasted on in some countries into Christian times.

XVI. 4. *To record.* This is much the same expression as that used in the titles to Ps. xxxviii. and lxx., where it is translated 'to bring to remembrance.' It is an interesting phrase, for it is apparently the origin of our Lord's words, 'Do this *in remembrance of Me,*' and thus helps to fix the meaning of the Holy Eucharist as an act of memorial *before God,* i.e. an act of sacrificial worship.

Jeiel with psalteries and with harps : but Asaph made a sound with cymbals ; 6. Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God.

37. So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required : 38. and Obededom with their brethren, threescore and eight ; Obed-edom also the son of Jeduthun and Hosah *to be porters* : 39. and Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place that *was* at ^eGibeon, 40. to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD ^e 1 Kings iii. 4. upon the altar of the burnt offering continually morning and evening, ^fand *to do* according to all that is written in ^fExod. xxix. 38, the law of the LORD, which he commanded Israel ; 41. and ^{etc. ; Num. xxviii. 3, etc.} with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because his mercy *endureth* for ever ; 42. and with them Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those that should make a sound, and with ^gmusical ^ginstruments ^gof God. ^gAnd the sons of Jeduthun ^gwere ^gfor the songs of God. porters. 43. And all the people departed every man to his house : and David returned to bless his house.

2 SAM. vi. 20. Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the

43. **And David returned to bless his house.** Perhaps this 'house' may have been the actual house or palace built by Hiram for David, which David, having settled the Ark of God in Jerusalem, now takes formal possession of by a religious act of consecration. See Ps. ci.

2 SAM. vi. 20. **How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, etc.** Michal's pride resented the king's taking off his royal robes, and appearing among the Levites and singers clad in a simple ephod. She unjustly compares him to a clown who takes off his clothes to dance. David's answer shows how a king's true greatness lies in his humbling himself before the King of kings. This was just what Saul had failed in : and Saul's daughter had inherited her father's spirit. The Cambridge Bible

handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself ! 21. And David said unto Michal, *It was* before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel : therefore will I play before the LORD. 22. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight : and of the maid-servants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. 23. Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

quotes a very apposite story from Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Biography*, ii. p. 68—'It is related of Sir Thomas More that he used, even when Lord Chancellor, to put on a surplice and sing in his parish church at Chelsea. The Duke of Norfolk one day found him doing so, and expostulated with him : "A parish clarke, lord chancellour, a parish clarke ! you dishonour the king and his office." "Nay," quoth Sir Thomas, smiling upon the duke, "your grace may not thinke that the king, your maister and myne, will be offended with men for serving of God his maister ; or by this my present behaviour account his office dishonoured."'

23. Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death. See note on 1 Sam. i. It is evident from such a phrase as this that the Bible use of 'unto' or 'until' is *inclusive*. The words here obviously mean that Michal had no children at all after this time. So S. Matt. i. 25 means that the Blessed Virgin Mary had no other children except our Blessed Lord. She is 'ever virgin,' as the Catholic Church has always taught.

LESSON XXI

David bringing the Ark to Jerusalem

INTRODUCTION.—This is a very important section, and might easily be made into two lessons, if time permits. The bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem is a very great turning-point in the national and religious life of Israel. It is also important as illustrating the character of David, and the use he made of his royal position and of his natural gifts, especially his love of music, to do honour to God, and to emphasise the essentially *religious* character of his rule.

MATTER.

1. Importance of the Ark of God.

(1) The Ark of God was the symbol (ordained by God, Exod. xxv.) of the *covenant* of God with

METHOD.

1. (1) Describe the Ark to the children ; its construction by God's command, after the heavenly pattern (Exod. xxv. 40).

LESSON XXI—*continued*. DAVID BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

MATTER.

His chosen people, and of His perpetual *presence* with them.

Owing to national sin God had withdrawn from Israel for a time the joy of the possession of this symbol. Although His covenant and His promise remained sure, the outward sign was removed from the Tabernacle, and kept in hiding at Kirjath-jearim.

Now that David is established in his kingdom of righteousness, one of his first and most important privileges is to restore the Ark to its rightful place.

(2) The Ark of God was a *type* of the greater things which were to come. It foretold the *New Covenant* made by God with His people through Christ, and also the *perpetual union* between God and man through the Incarnation. More particularly it foreshadowed the continual *presence* of Christ in His Catholic Church, especially in the Blessed Sacrament.

2. David's reverence.

God's covenant and presence with His people were such solemn things that He required even the symbol to be treated with the greatest reverence. He taught this by severity even to those who touched the Ark irreverently.

David being a really great man had the gift of reverence, which is a characteristic of the greatest minds. So recognising the meaning of the death of Uzza he was careful to observe all the commandments of God concerning the Ark, and he surrounded it with all that could add honour to it—sacrifice, and the ordered service of music, singing, and appointed officers of worship.

In David's ordinances of worship we are to recognise the same spirit of reverence which is characteristic

METHOD.

Tell them the meaning of the Ark. Illustrate by Josh. iii. 13 and vi.

Recapitulate the history of the Ark from I Sam. iv.-vi.

Question on the reason for David's desire to place the Ark in the royal city.

Illustrate from Ps. cxxxii.

(2) Jer. iii. 16, 17; Heb. viii.; Rev. xi. 19.

These passages may be referred to with older children. With younger ones it will be sufficient to lead them to see that the name of Christ, *Emmanuel*—'God with us'—is the reality which the Ark foreshadowed; and that in the Catholic Church the Holy Eucharist is to us far more than the Ark could be to the Jews. Cf. S. Matt. xxviii. 20: 'alway' = 'all the days.'

2. This point should be made an opportunity of inculcating—

(1) The true meaning of *worship*. Singing in church, beautiful services, and solemn ceremonial are an offering to God, not primarily for a pleasure to ourselves. Every care should be taken with every detail of Divine service.

(2) The importance of paying due reverence to outward symbols.

Point out that to behave irreverently to a symbol of God's presence is a sure way to thinking lightly of that of which it is the symbol.

Illustrate by taking off the hat in church, bowing towards the altar, etc.

Be careful to teach the children the special reverence due to the Holy Eucharist, and to all that is connected with It.

CHAPTER VII.

AND it came to pass, ^awhen the king sat in his house, ^acf. 1 Chron. xvii. and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies ; 2. that the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an ^bhouse of cedar, but the ^bchap. v. 11. ark of God dwelleth within ^ccurtains. 3. And Nathan ^c1 Chron. xv. 1. said to the king, Go, do all that *is* in thine heart ; for the LORD *is* with thee. 4. And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, 5. Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in ? 6. Whereas I have not dwelt in *any* house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. 7. In all *the places* wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar ? 8. Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of

2. **Nathan the prophet.** The first mention of one who appears afterwards amongst the chief advisers of David and Solomon. Apparently he was one of the court historians ; and it is from his pen that we doubtless derive, if not the actual books of Samuel, at any rate the materials from which these were compiled. See 1 Chron. xxix. 29 ; 2 Chron. ix. 29.

5. **Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in ?** In 1 Chron. xxii. 8, and xxviii. 3, a reason is given for God's refusal to allow David to build the Temple. David had 'shed much blood.' It is true that the wars of David were necessary and were sanctioned by God, but the words convey a lesson which must have been far in advance of the general spirit of David's age, viz. that war is after all an evil, and that peace is the proper condition of man, and the right accompaniment of the service of God. Perhaps the words were prophetic of the blood he afterwards shed unrighteously (p. 207).

7. **Spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel.** The parallel chapter in Chronicles substitutes 'judges' for 'tribes,' which certainly gives a better sense. If we retain the word 'tribes,' the reference must be to the different tribes which from time to time assumed the leading part during the unsettled period before the monarchy.

d Ps. lxxviii. 70. hosts, I took thee from the ^asheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: 9. and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off ¹ I will make thee. all thine enemies out of thy sight, and ¹ have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth. 10. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will ^a plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as before-time, 11. and as since the time that I commanded judges to *be* over my people Israel, ² and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. 12. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, ⁷ and I will establish his kingdom. 13. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14. ^g I will be his father, and he shall be my son.

e Jer. xxiv. 6; Amos ix. 15.

²: and I will cause.

f Ps. cxxxii. 11, 12.

g Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27; Heb. i. 5.

10. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel. God had already 'appointed a place,' in a literal sense, for Israel, in giving them the land of Canaan. But no doubt here, as in the similar promises in the Prophets (see *ref.*), there is a further spiritual meaning. 'Israel' has a wider meaning than the Jewish nation (*Gal. vi. 16*). The promise really applies to the Church Catholic, and is the equivalent in the Old Testament of the Lord's promise to S. Peter (*S. Matt. xvi. 18*).

11. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house. The expression 'to make an house' in Hebrew means not only to build a literal house, but to establish or give continuance to a family (*cf. Exod. i. 21*). Instead of David building an house for God, God promises to establish the kingdom for ever in David's family. This promise was not literally fulfilled; though as long as the kingdom of Judah lasted, it did remain in the family of David. The Captivity, however, brought the monarchy to an end. The latter part of *Ps. lxxxix.* is full of the foreboding of this overthrow of David's throne, which to the Jew seemed inexplicable.

But the promises of God are never exhausted by any literal fulfilment. 'The greatest is behind.' What the promise to David really meant was disclosed by Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin Mary (*S. Luke i. 32, 33*).

14. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. These words are shown by *Heb. i. 5* to have more than any metaphorical or poetical meaning. They imply not merely that the line of David would be specially favoured by God, but that He in Whom the promise was really fulfilled would stand

If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15. but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be ^bestablished for ever. ^aS. John xii. 84.

17. According to all these words, and according to all this ^cvision, so did Nathan speak unto David. 18. Then went ^dking David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my house, that thou hast brought me ^ehitherto? 19. And this was yet a small ^fthus far? thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. ^gAnd *is* ^hthis the manner of man, O Lord GOD? 20. And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant. 21. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know *them*. 22. Wherefore thou art

⁴and this too after the manner of men, O Lord God! Marg. and is this the law of man? etc.

in a unique relationship to God, and be His Son in a sense that no one else could be—the same sense in which we say in the Creed ‘Jesus Christ, His *only* Son.’ Hence this promise is a prophecy of the Divinity of Christ.

If he commit iniquity. The reference here, of course, is chiefly to Solomon and his descendants. The true ‘Son of David’ was without sin. And yet there is a sense in which the verse applies to Christ. God ‘laid on Him the iniquity of us all’ (Isa. liii. 6), He ‘made Him to be sin for us’ (2 Cor. v. 21), and God, in allowing the Passion and Death of Christ, was chastening His beloved Son ‘with the rod of men.’

18. Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord. David ‘went in’ to the tent, and prayed and meditated before the Ark. ‘Sat’ implies that he spent some long time there in contemplation of the greatness of God’s promise.

So also Hezekiah on a different occasion (2 Kings xix. 1, 14, 15) prayed in the Temple. God’s presence is not confined to ‘houses made with hands’ under either the Old or New Covenant; nevertheless, true piety often finds a special help in praying privately in the sanctuary of God.

19. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? To bring out the sense of these words as they stand, it is necessary, in reading them aloud, to emphasise ‘man.’ David’s meaning evidently is that God’s promises transcend all that *man* can expect or understand. They are supernatural and superhuman.

great, O LORD God : for *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 23. ^k And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? 24. For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel *to be* a people unto thee for ever : and thou, LORD, art become their God. 25. And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish *it* for ever, and do as thou hast said. 26. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel : and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. 27. For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house : therefore hath thy servant ⁵ found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. 28. And now, O Lord GOD, thou *art* that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant : 29. therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee : for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken *it* : and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

^k Deut. iv. 7, 8,
34.

⁵ *Marg.* been
bold.

25. Establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. In these words David with his own will accepts humbly the promise that God has just made. God always desires the co-operation of human will with His own will. He is not bound by our will, but in His love and condescension He makes us, as it were, 'fellow-workers with Him.' So the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the promise brought her by Gabriel, responds, 'Be it unto me according to thy word.'

29. With thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever. The prayer of David has a wider and more wonderful significance than he himself at the time understood. The prayer was indeed granted, but its fulfilment came not in the temporal sway of David's descendants, but in the spiritual sovereignty of Him in Whom 'all the families of the earth are blessed'; not in outward grandeur of royalty, but in the supreme blessedness of humility, in her who was taught by the Holy Ghost to say, 'Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.'

LESSON XXII

The Son of David

INTRODUCTION.—The subject of this lesson is one of great importance. For more advanced students it suggests more than one deep problem, e.g. the mystery of 'election,' God's choice of David and the line of David. But for children the important point to bring out is simply that God's promise to David is fulfilled in Christ. Great stress should be laid upon the passage, S. Luke i. 26-38.

MATTER.**1. God's promise to David.**

This promise is not an isolated thing, but one link in a long chain. A deliverer from the power of Satan had been promised to Adam and Eve (Gen. iii. 15). To Abraham, before he had even one child, it was promised that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed (Gen. xii. 3). Here to the descendants of David is promised Divine sonship and an everlasting kingdom.

So again, in later ages, a promise is given to Zerubbabel (Hag. ii. 23).

2. The fulfilment of the promise.

(1) There is a temporal and literal fulfilment within certain limitations in Solomon's building the Temple, and in the fact that though after Solomon's time the kingdom was divided, yet the family of David continued to reign at Jerusalem over Judah and Benjamin for nearly four hundred years; while the Jews, returning after the Captivity, possessed the Promised Land for six hundred years longer.

METHOD.

1. Point out that David's desire to build a house for God, though not granted, was a good one, and showed that his heart was right towards God.

Refer to the previous Messianic promises to Adam and Eve, and to Abraham, and to the tribe of Judah (Gen. xlix. 10).

An interesting parallel might also be worked out between Adam and Eve forbidden Paradise; Abraham receiving no inheritance in Canaan himself; David forbidden to build the Temple; Zerubbabel able only to build a much poorer temple than Solomon, and yet all receiving a *promise* which was much better than what they desired.

2. Show how the promise was literally fulfilled in Solomon and his descendants.

LESSON XXII—*continued*. THE SON OF DAVID

MATTER.

(2) The promise 'for ever' is truly fulfilled in Christ only. He was of the line of David in His human nature and in his legal descent, for both S. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary were of the family of David (S. Matt. i. 1-16, S. Joseph's genealogy; S. Luke iii. 23-38, probably S. Mary's genealogy).

The Catholic Church founded by Christ (S. Matt. xvi. 18) is the true temple.

Our Lord assumed this everlasting kingdom at His Ascension, and His throne is 'established for ever' in heaven at God's right hand.

3. David's acceptance of the promise.

David in receiving God's promise not only shows profound *humility* and *gratitude*, but the ready acceptance of *faith*. He neither questions nor asks for a sign. His prayer does not express any doubt as to the fulfilment of God's promise, but is the natural expression of a will which embraces the will of God, and makes it his own.

Notice also that the prominent thought in David's prayer is not *himself*, but 'thy people Israel' (cf. v. 12).

METHOD.

S. Luke i. 26-38.

Cf. also the genealogies in S. Matt. and S. Luke.

S. Matt. xxi. 9.

Dan. vii. 13, 14; S. Matt. xxviii. 18; Heb. ii. 9.

Illustrate by the pictures of our Lord crowned and reigning as king, which were the favourite pictures of the early Church.

3. Point out that God's promises usually depend upon man's *acceptance*.

Contrast the words of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Annunciation (S. Luke i. 38), and the unbelief of the people of Nazareth (S. Mark vi. 5, 6).

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Son of David.1. *God's promise to David.*

A son, who should also be the son of God ;
 who should build the Temple ;
 who should be king *for ever*.

2. *God's promise was really fulfilled in Christ.*

Both God and man.

Son of God,
 Son of David.

He founded the Catholic Church.

He is King for ever.

3. *David received the promise*

with faith,	} like the Blessed Virgin.
with humility,	
with thankfulness,	

Learn S. Luke i. 32, 33 : 'The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David ; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.'

SUMMARY OF OMISSIONS

2 SAM. VIII. records (1) the conquest of the Philistines and the taking of Metheg-ammah (probably Gath—the name seems to mean 'the bridle of the metropolis'); (2) the conquest of Moab, which a Jewish tradition states had incurred the wrath of David by putting to death his father and mother (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4); (3) the subjugation of Zobah and Damascus; (4) the voluntary submission of Toi, king of Hamath; (5) the victory over the Edomites in 'the valley of salt.' With this list of Davidic conquests cf. Ps. lx. and cviii.

Chap. x. describes the insult offered to David's ambassadors by Hanun, king of the Ammonites, and the vengeance taken upon them and their allies the Syrians by David's army, under Joab's leadership. In the next year David followed up his victory by sending Joab to besiege the Ammonite capital, Rabbah.

CHAPTERS XI. ; XII. 1-25

¹ at the return
of the year.

AND it came to pass, ¹ after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to *battle*, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and

^a chap. xii. 26;
Amos i. 14.

besieged ^a Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

2. And it came to pass in an evening-tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon. 3. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And *one* said,

^b 1 Chron. iii. 5

Is not this Bathsheba, ^b the daughter of Eliam, the wife of

^c chap. xxiii.
39.

^c Uriah the Hittite? 4. And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. 5. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, *I am* with child. 6. And David sent to Joab, *saying*, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. 7. And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded *of him* how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. 8. And

1. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. It has often been pointed out with truth that idleness is one of the most frequent causes of sensual sin. See what is said of Sodom; Ezek. xvi. 49. This applies to the mind as well as the body. A vacant mind is a natural prey to wandering imaginations and desires. A Christian should aim at having his mind full of positively *good* thoughts. See Phil. iv. 8 for a rule of life in this matter.

3. The daughter of Eliam. See note on chap. xv. 12. Eliam is the same name as Ammiel in Chronicles, only the two parts of the word are transposed.

6. Send me Uriah the Hittite. David seems to have been endeavouring to get Uriah to go home to his house to provide some cover for his sin. He might be able by this means to suggest that Bathsheba's child was after all the son of Uriah himself. Besides, Bathsheba herself was liable to death under the law of Moses for her adultery (Lev. xx. 10). Uriah's abstinence stands out in grand contrast to David's idleness and self-indulgence.

David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of *meat* from the king. 9. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house. 10. And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from *thy* journey? why *then* didst thou not go down unto thine house? 11. And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in ² tents; and my lord ² booths. Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? *as* thou livest, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. 12. And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. 13. And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house. 14. And it came to pass in the morning, that David ^d wrote a letter to ^d Joab, and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah. 15. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. 16. And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men *were*. 17. And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell *some* of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also. 18. Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war; 19. and charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, 20. and if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the

^d 1 Kings xxi.
^{8, 9.}

^e Judg. ix.

³ an upper millstone.

wall? 21. Who smote ^eAbimelech the son of Jerubesheth? did not a woman cast ³a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. 22. So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for. 23. And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate. 24. And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and *some* of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. 25. Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him. 26. And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. 27. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

^f Ps. li. (title).

XII. 1. ^fAnd the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. 2. The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds: 3. but the poor *man* had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together

XII. 1. **There were two men in one city**, etc. There are several striking parables in the Old Testament, though parabolic teaching is generally associated with our Lord Jesus Christ. See the parable of the trees choosing a king in Judg. ix., the parable of the woman of Tekoah in chap. xiv. 4-7, and that spoken by the nameless prophet to Ahab in 1 Kings xx.

The point in David's sin which this parable holds up to view is its despicable *meanness*. The glamour of excitement and passion is stripped off, and the sin is shown up, apart from all question of religion, as simply a piece of the meanest selfishness, which David himself is the first to denounce.

with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. 5. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, *As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing* ⁴ shall surely die: 6. ^g and he shall ⁴ is worthy to die. restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and ^g Exod. xxii. 1. because he had no pity. 7. And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8. and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. 9. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be thy wife*, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. 11. Thus saith the LORD, ^h Behold, I will raise up evil against ^h chap. xvi. thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives

9. **Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord?** Notice how Nathan, after having shown David the meanness of his sin as between man and man, now leads him to a higher view. It is a sin against God. And in Ps. li. this view, as is natural with a deeply religious character as the true David was, takes precedence of any other: '*Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.*' See also below, ver. 13.

10. **The sword shall never depart from thy house.** This prophecy is fulfilled in the dissensions in the family of David, which filled his latter years with sorrow. Absalom murdered Amnon, and rebelled against his own father. Absalom himself perished miserably in battle. Adonijah sought to get the throne, and was himself put to death (1 Kings ii. 25).

before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour. . . .
 12. For thou didst *it* secretly : but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. 13. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die. 14. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *that is* born unto thee shall surely die. 15. And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. 16. David therefore besought

13. I have sinned against the Lord. David makes no attempt to excuse himself, nor to throw the blame on others, as Saul had done. Saul indeed confessed his fault in the same words (1 Sam. xv. 24), but his chief anxiety seemed to be to avoid being put to shame before his people.

The Lord also hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die. The Law of Moses provided no means of forgiveness for wilful breaches of the Commandments, only for sins of inadvertence and ignorance. Full forgiveness on earth was not possible for man, except by special revelation from God, until Christ came (see p. 213). Nathan was specially commissioned by God, both to show David his sin, and on his repentance to give him absolution. But it ought to be most carefully noticed (1) that though forgiveness is immediate, the sin is treated by Nathan as of the most serious nature : readiness of forgiveness must not make men think lightly of sin. Cf. Ps. cxxx. 4 : 'There is mercy with thee ; *therefore shalt thou be feared.*' (2) Forgiveness, while it delivers from the extreme penalty, death, does not do away with *punishment*. David is to suffer a threefold penance : verses 10, 11, 14. Cf. Ps. xcix. 8 : 'Thou forgavest them, O God, and punishedst their own inventions.'

This forgiveness of David is worthy of the deepest study for the light which it throws upon both God's *mercy* and God's *justice*. See the striking verses in Tennyson's *Merlin and Vivien* :—

'The sin that practice burns into the blood,
 And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,
 Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be :
 Or else were he, the holy king, whose hymns
 Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.'

14. Thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. To a religious mind like David's this was the sharpest blow that could be inflicted. He loved God, we cannot doubt it ; and the knowledge that his sin brought dishonour on God was heavy penance indeed.

But the words are remarkable also for the light they throw on the Jewish religion as contrasted with the heathen religions. The God of Israel was above all the God of *righteousness*. His revelation of Himself

God for the child ; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. 17. And the elders of his house arose, *and went* to him, to raise him up from the earth : but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. 18. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead : for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice : how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead ? 19. But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead : therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead ? And they said, He is dead. 20. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and ⁴ worshipped : then he came to his own [†] Job i. 20. house ; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. 21. Then said his servants unto him, What thing *is* this that thou hast done ? thou didst fast and weep for the child, *while it was* alive ; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. 22. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept : for I said, Who can tell *whether* God will be gracious to me, that the child may live ? 23. But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast ? can I bring him back again ? ² I [†] Job vii. 8-10. shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. 24. And

was founded upon the Moral Law. Cf. Deut. xxxiii. 2. The gods of the heathen, on the contrary, were personifications of strength, cunning, or passion, and so far from being 'holy' they were often represented as committing crimes. Consequently a heathen god would be dishonoured by a defeat in battle ; Jehovah was dishonoured by the sins of His worshippers.

20. **Washed, and anointed himself.** See S. Matt. vi. 17. These were the outward signs of the cessation of fasting and mourning, and the return to the ordinary life of gladness and common occupations.

23. **I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.** These words may be understood either to express a belief in immortality, or not. They may indeed as they stand merely mean that David will die as the child has done, and never come back from the grave. But we know, that

David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her : and she bare a son, and he called his name ¹Solomon : and the LORD loved him. 25. And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet ; and he called his name Jedidiah, ²because of the LORD.

1 S. Matt. i. 6.
³ for the Lord's sake.

although immortality was not at this time formally revealed to the Jews, it was believed in by all the most religious among them—by Abraham (Heb. xi. 19), by Job, in his brighter moments (Job xix. 25-27), and certainly by David. We are therefore justified in understanding the words as implying that David hopes to see his child again in another world.

24. Solomon means 'peaceable'; Jedidiah—'beloved of the Lord': it is really a combination of David's own name, which means 'beloved,' with Jah, the shorter form of Jehovah.

LESSON XXIII

David's Sin and Repentance

INTRODUCTION.—Tell the children simply and seriously that David, in his wealth and prosperity, fell into great sin—adultery, taking another man's wife while the man was still living; and then tried to cover his crime by committing murder, exposing Uriah to such danger in battle that he was certain to be killed. No explanation is given or suggested in the Bible account of *how* David came to fall so terribly, whether by neglect of prayer or by other kind of carelessness. But it is certain that times of prosperity and ease are more dangerous than times of adversity: 'In all time of our *wealth*, Good Lord, deliver us.'

MATTER.

1. David's sin.

(1) Was against *man*, an act of *selfishness*, for his own gratification robbing another of what he held most dear; and also an act of indescribable *meanness* and treachery.

(2) Against *God*, for it was a transgression of two of the Commandments, the sixth and seventh. It was, moreover, an act of ingratitude against God, Who had given him so much that was good. Besides, it was a dishonour to God, for all men knew that David professed to be, and indeed was, a most religious king.

METHOD.

1. Point out that all sin is of the nature of *ingratitude* (we all naturally loathe an ungrateful person). God *loves* us; and in return for that love He desires from us—

(1) Love of Himself.

(2) Love of our neighbours.

Illustrate this from David's sin; also from any other common type of sin.

LESSON XXIII—*continued.* DAVID'S SIN AND REPENTANCE.

MATTER.

The punishment of such sins as David's was *death*. Although a king could not have been put to death legally, yet he had placed himself under the sentence of death, and was under the wrath of God.

2. God's mercy.

(1) God showed His mercy to David by not suffering him to go on in his sin comfortably, but sent to him Nathan the prophet, to show him the real nature of his acts, to strip off his self-complacency, and to arouse his conscience, making him judge himself with his own lips.

(2) Again God's mercy was shown in the acceptance of David's repentance, and the bestowal of *forgiveness* upon him through the prophet's instrumentality.

This was an exceptional act of mercy under the Old Testament, but was a type of the mercy which God now offers to all sinners through Christ.

Forgiveness is now offered to all who truly repent, and it is assured to man through the instrumentality, not of an isolated prophet, but the regularly ordained and commissioned *ministry* of the Apostolic Church:

- (a) By Baptism.
- (b) By Absolution.

3. God's justice.

Forgiveness re-unites the sinner to God, and delivers him from the *eternal* consequences of his sin, but it does not necessarily do away with the *temporal* punishment of sin. Such punishment is *remedial* and disciplinary, e.g. bodily diseases often follow the commission of sins of the flesh, even when the sinner

METHOD.

2. (1) It is not pleasant to be shown our sins and faults, but it is an act of mercy on the part of God that He should do so. To be made miserable for a time is often the best thing for us.

A contrast might be effectively drawn between David living in luxury in his palace, thinking nothing of his sin, and David smitten with remorse and anguish at the words of Nathan.

Which was really the happier state?

(2) Explain the Christian doctrine of the Forgiveness of Sins.

God forgives us for Christ's sake. He requires true repentance.

- (a) Sorrow.
- (b) Confession.
- (c) Amendment.

Forgiveness is conveyed to us on earth by *Baptism* (see Nicene Creed), Acts xxii. 16; by *Absolution*.

See three absolutions in Prayer Book.

Refer to S. Mark ii. 10; S. John xx. 21-23; the Ordination of Priests: 'Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven.'

2. This is difficult, but very important. Show that God often punishes a sinner in this world for his good, *after* He has forgiven him, to warn him from sinning again.

Refer to Heb. xii. 5-11.

Show that the fact of sin bringing suffering upon others is intended by God to be the greatest deterrent from sin.

LESSON XXIII—*continued*. DAVID'S SIN AND REPENTANCE

MATTER.

METHOD.

has truly repented; so again, as in David's case, the sin brings its consequences into the lives of others.

David, though forgiven, is punished—

- (1) by the rebellion of his son;
- (2) by the bloodshed and dissension in his own family;
- (3) by the death of his child.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

David's Sin and Repentance.

1. *David's sin.*

Breaking the sixth and seventh commandments.

A sin (1) against man, by selfishness and meanness.

(2) against *God*, by ingratitude.

2. *God's mercy.*

(1) God sends Nathan to show David his sin, and to lead him to sorrow and repentance.

(2) God forgives David by the word of Nathan.

So God forgives us for Christ's sake, if we repent, through the words of His priests, by Absolution.

3. *God's justice.*

Sin is forgiven, but the sinner is *punished*, for his own sake, to warn himself and others.

'*There is mercy with Thee: therefore shalt Thou be feared.*'

SUMMARY OF OMISSIONS

Chap. xii. 26-31 records the taking of Rabbah, the Ammonite capital, and the investiture of David with the crown of their king, perhaps alluded to in Ps. xxi. 3.

Chap. xiii. 1-36 describes the beginning of the curse on David's household, which was the temporal punishment of his sin. One of David's sons, Amnon, commits sin with his sister Tamar. Absalom, her brother, in revenge, treacherously murders Amnon at a sheep-shearing feast. Absalom then escapes for his own life to the king of Geshur, the family of his mother (iii. 3).

CHAPTERS XIII. 37-39; XIV.; XV. 1-12

^a chap. iii. 3.

BUT Absalom fled, and went to ^aTalmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day. 38. So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years. 39. And *the soul of king David* longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

XIV. 1. Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* toward Absalom. 2. And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead: 3. and come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth. 4. And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king. 5. And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I *am* indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead. 6. And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and *there was* none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him. 7. And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his

XIII. 39. He was comforted concerning Amnon. Lapse of time had softened the grief that David first felt for Amnon's death; and his old affection for Absalom returned. Chileab or Daniel, David's second son, was apparently dead also; and Absalom, of royal descent on both sides, was regarded generally as heir to the throne, although the choice of heir rested with the king himself.

XIV. 2. Tekoah, near Bethlehem, the home of the prophet Amos in after time.

7. And so they shall quench my coal that is left. A somewhat similar metaphor is used in Isa. xlii. 3 of 'quenching the smoking flax'; the meaning in each case being to extinguish the little life that still remains.

brother, that ^b we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew ; and we will destroy the heir also : and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband *neither* name nor reminder upon the earth.

8. And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee. 9. And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity *be* on me, and on my father's house : and the king and his throne *be* guiltless. 10. And the king said, Whosoever saith *ought* unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more. 11. Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth. 12. Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak *one* word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on. 13. And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God ? ¹ for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again ² his banished. 14. For we must needs die, and *are* as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again ; neither doth God ³ respect *any* person : yet doth he devise means, that his

^b Num. xxxv. ;
Deut. xix.

¹ for in speaking this word the king is as one which is guilty.

² his banished one.

³ take away life, but deviseth means.

9. **The iniquity be on me, etc.** The woman means that if the king hesitates to grant a free pardon because the bloodshed requires some avenging, she and her family will bear the guilt of that.

11. **Let the king remember the Lord thy God.** The woman in ver. 8 obtained a promise in general terms from the king, in ver. 10 a more definite one, and now in these words she presses for the further security of an oath from the king, which he gives her in the next words : ' *As the Lord liveth,*' etc.

13. **Wherefore hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God.** The woman means that David's harshness towards Absalom is a wrong to the whole nation, who look upon him as the heir to the throne.

14. **Yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.** These remarkable words may perhaps have an immediate reference to the forgiveness God had given to David himself through the prophet Nathan. They may also have a wider reference to the hope of a

banished be not expelled from him. 15. Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, *it is* because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid. 16. For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man *that would* destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God. 17. Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so *is* my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee. 18. Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak. 19. And the king said, *Is not* the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, *As* thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid: 20. ⁴to fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all *things* that *are* in the earth. 21. And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again. 22. And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To-day thy servant knoweth that I

⁴ to change the face of the matter hath thy servant, etc.

Messiah, and to the promise to our first parents in Gen. iii. But whatever was the actual thought in the mind of the speaker, there can be little doubt that these words are designed by the Holy Spirit to suggest the mercy of God to 'the banished sons of Eve' in providing a means of return to Him through Christ, in this life by forgiveness, in the life to come by the Resurrection.

15. **The people have made me afraid.** Apparently the woman wishes the king to understand by these words that the people generally are on the verge of rebellion against the king's harshness to Absalom, and that she has come forward in the king's interests to urge him to mercy.

have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant. 23. So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. 24. And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face. 25. But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty : from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. 26. And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it : because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it :) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight. 27. And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar : she was a woman of a fair countenance. 28. So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face. 29. Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king ; but he would not come to him : and when he sent again the second time, he would not come. 30. Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there ; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire. 31. Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto *his* house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire ? 32. And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur ? *it had been* good for me to *have been* there still : now therefore let me see the king's face ; and if there be *any* iniquity in me, let him kill me. 33. So Joab came to the king, and told him : and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his

26. Two hundred shekels after the king's weight. There was a 'royal shekel' as well as a 'sacred shekel.' What the difference was between the two is not known. Two hundred of the sacred shekels would weigh about six pounds.

face to the ground before the king : and the king kissed Absalom.

xv. And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him ^bchariots and horses, and fifty men to ^crun before him. 2. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate : and it was *so*, that when any man that had ^aa controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city *art* thou ? And he said, Thy servant *is* of one of the tribes of Israel. 3. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right ; but *there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee. 4. Absalom said moreover, ^dOh 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 Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment : so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. 7. And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. 8. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode

^b a chariot.
^c 1 Kings i. 5.

^a a suit which should come to the king for judgment.

^d Judg. ix. 29.

xv. 2. **Beside the way of the gate.** The gate of an Eastern city is the regular place for the administration of justice, and magistrates' offices are commonly built on either side of it. So the regular name for the Sultan of Turkey's government is the 'Sublime Porte' (French for 'High Gate').

5. **He put forth his hand, etc.** Notice the cunning with which Absalom ingratiated himself with the common people, by treating them as equals in a familiar manner, instead of receiving their obeisance, as the king's son would naturally be expected to do.

7. **After forty years.** It is impossible to say what is the meaning of this. Josephus and some other ancient authorities substitute 'four' for 'forty,' but forty is often used in the Bible for a long time.

In Hebron. Hebron was Absalom's birthplace ; but no doubt the real reason for selecting it was its connection with the first years of David's reign. It ranked next to, if not before, Jerusalem in its traditions of royalty, besides having naturally a strong position.

in Geshur in Syria, saying, 'If the LORD shall bring me ^{e Gen. xxviii.} again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD. ^{20, 21.}

9. And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron. 10. But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom ⁷ reigneth ⁷ is king. in Hebron. 11. And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, *that were* ⁸ called; and they went in ⁸ invited. their simplicity, and they knew not any thing. 12. And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

11. **They went in their simplicity.** These men thought themselves invited simply to share in Absalom's sacrificial banquet in Hebron, and did not know that they would find themselves compromised and involved in a rebellion.

12. **Ahithophel.** It has been suggested that this man was related to Bathsheba, and so by marriage to Uriah the Hittite. A comparison of chapter xi. 3 with xxiii. 34 seems to suggest that Bathsheba was Ahithophel's granddaughter. If this is true, we have the explanation of Ahithophel's treachery to David, as well as a remarkable instance of retribution for sin. Ahithophel is thought to be alluded to in Ps. xli. 9, which is also a prophecy of Judas Iscariot (S. John xiii. 18).

LESSON XXIV

Absalom's Ingratitude

INTRODUCTION.—Absalom's rebellion was foretold as part of the retribution which God suffered to fall upon David for his great sin. And it is very likely that Absalom would not have had such a large following had not David's sin alienated many of his friends, and 'caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.' See also the note on Ahithophel above. It will be well, therefore, in beginning these lessons on the sufferings of David, to recapitulate the leading facts of David's sin and repentance.

But the main point in the lesson is that David, in the manner he bears his sufferings, is a *type of Christ*, and Absalom of *human ingratitude*.

MATTER.

1. Absalom.

Absalom seems to have been a 'spoilt child.' His actions generally are marked by self-will and self-seeking. His beauty seems to have been a snare to him; and his natural cleverness, inherited from his mother and her family, he uses for selfish ends. He values Joab's friendship for what he can get out of it; and does him a spiteful injury in burning his corn when he thinks that Joab is not looking after his interests.

He never shows any sign of repentance for his conduct either towards his brother or his father.

2. David's forgiveness.

David's conduct to Absalom is throughout remarkably forbearing, whatever we may think of the wisdom of the course he pursued. There was a keen struggle between a *father's* affection and the sense of the duty which he owed as *king*, not lightly to condone such an offence as Absalom's.

METHOD.

1. Describe Absalom—very handsome, spoiled by *admiration*, wanting and getting his own way always, and thinking that everything *he* does must be right.

He murders his brother, flees from punishment, but is not sorry for what he has done.

2. Show *why* David

(1) kept his son away from him for a time;

(2) desired to forgive him.

Illustrate, by God's own forgiveness of David, and by the parable of the Prodigal Son.

LESSON XXIV—*continued.* ABSALOM'S INGRATITUDE

MATTER.

The argument used by 'the wise woman' (xiv. 14) illustrates the *typical* character of the narrative. It is apparently the thought of the fatherhood of God, and His forbearance to sinners, which influences David to be reconciled to his son. And so, in recalling Absalom, David himself becomes a type of Him Who is 'kind unto the unthankful and to the evil' (S. Luke vi. 35).

3. Absalom's ingratitude.

Absalom's rebellion seems to have been without any definite cause or purpose. It sprung out of his vanity and love of popularity and admiration (xv. 1-6).

Doubtless David learned from it the lesson which Nathan had begun to teach him (xii. 7-9). He felt the sting of ingratitude, which is the most shameful aspect of all human sin, and which reached its height in the crucifixion of Christ.

METHOD.

3. Begin by reference to *fifth Commandment* and explanation in Catechism.

Show that obedience to *father* and to *king* rest both upon the principle of obedience to God, because both father and king are God's representatives (Eph. iii. 14, 15; Rom. xiii. 1-5).

Point out the *ingratitude* of Absalom's rebellion. So all rebellion, whether against God or God's representative, is essentially *ungrateful*, for all God's ordinances spring from His *love*.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Absalom's Ingratitude.

1. *Absalom*—

Handsome.
Self-willed.
Ungrateful.

2. *David forgives Absalom*, as God had forgiven *him*.

God, being our *Father*, longs to forgive us and receive us back.

3. *Absalom's rebellion*.

A breach of the fifth commandment.
Ingratitude towards God.
Ingratitude towards his father.

*'From all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion,
Good Lord, deliver us.'*

CHAPTERS XV. 13-37; XVI.; XVII.

AND there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

14. And David said unto all his servants that *were* with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us "flee; for we shall not *else* escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. 15. And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants *are ready to do* whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint. 16. And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, *which were* concubines, to keep the house. 17. And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in ¹a place that was far off. 18. And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the ²Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king. 19. Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou *art* a stranger, and also an exile. 20. Whereas thou camest *but* yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us?

xv. 18. All the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites. For the first two of these, see note on chap. viii. 18. The Gittites were evidently a division of David's bodyguard, who for some reason were named from the Philistine town of Gath. It has been suggested that their origin is to be seen in the six hundred picked men who accompanied David in his wanderings (1 Sam. xxiii. 13). Perhaps they were largely composed of Philistines from Gath. The LXX. reads *Gibborim* for Gittites, *i.e.* 'mighty men,' the same that are described in chap. xxiii.

19. Ittai the Gittite. David shows his old generosity in not wishing to involve in his own misfortunes a refugee who had no national interests at stake. Ittai seems to have been a person of importance, as his followers are expressly mentioned (ver. 20), and he is associated with Joab and Abishai (xviii. 2). His answer to David (ver. 21) shows, what has been noticed more than once elsewhere, the wonderful personal attractiveness of David, and the charm that he exercised over his followers.

seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren : mercy and truth *be* with thee. 21. And Ittai answered the king, and said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* my lord the king liveth, ^csurely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be. 22. And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him. 23. And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over : ^dthe king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness. 24. And lo, Zadok also, and all the Levites *were* with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God : and they set down the ark of God ; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city. 25. And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city : if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me *both* it, and his habitation : 26. but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee ; behold, *here am* I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. 27. The king said also unto Zadok the priest,

Bath i. 16, 17.

d S. John xviii.
1.

23. **The brook Kidron**, *i.e.* the ravine which separates the city of Jerusalem on the east from the Mount of Olives. It is a 'brook' only in winter, and is dry in summer. Our Lord, the great antitype of David, crossed the Kidron on the night of His Betrayal, as He went forth to meet His Passion.

25. **He will bring me again, and shew me both it, and His habitation.** These words illustrate the delight which David took in the worship of God, and the service and ritual of the Tabernacle. Compare his provision for the choral services, and his preparations for the Temple. The same spirit of love of the sanctuary breathes through many of the Psalms, *e.g.* xxvi., xlii., xliii., lxiii.

26. **Let Him do to me as seemeth good to Him.** David seems to recognise throughout his flight (xvi. 11) that his sufferings are God's chastisement for sin ; and he places himself unreservedly in God's hands.

27. **Art not thou a seer?** It is uncertain what the exact meaning of these words is. The high priest might be called 'a seer,' or prophet, as possessing the Urim and Thummim. And so it is possible that David means that Zadok's prophetic gift might be used with more advantage to David in Jerusalem than in following the king's retreat (see ver. 28).

Art not thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. 28. See, I will tarry ² in the plain of the ² at the fords. wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me. 29. Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there. 30. And David went up by the ascent of *mount Olivet*, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went bare-foot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up. 31. And *one* told David, saying, Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. 32. And it came to pass, that *when* David was come to the top of ³ *the mount*, where he worshipped God, behold, ³ the ascent, where God was worshipped. Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: 33. unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me: 34. but if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; *as I have been* thy father's servant hitherto, so *will* I now also *be* thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. 35. And *hast thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, *that* what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. 36. Behold, *they have* there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear. 37. So Hushai David's

30. And David went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up. There is a remarkable parallel here between David and David's Son (see S. Luke xix. 37 and 41): both weep over the ingratitude and rebellion of their own people and city.

31. And David said, O Lord, I pray Thee, etc. It is remarkable to notice the *immediate* answer to this prayer. Hushai the Archite was the very means by whom the counsel of Ahithophel was 'turned into foolishness' (see xvii. 1-14).

32. Archite, *i.e.* a native of Archi near Beth-horon.

37. David's friend. This expression is apparently used in a technical

friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

chap. ix. 2. XVI. And when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold, ⁶ Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine. 2. And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses *be* for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as *be* faint in the wilderness may drink. 3. And the king said, And where *is* thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father. 4. Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine *are* all that *pertained* unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, ⁴ I humbly beseech thee *that* I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king. 5. And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came. 6. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men *were* on his right hand and on his left. 7. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, ⁶ Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

I do obseis-
ance; let me
find favour.

Begone.

sense. 'The king's friend' was the title of an intimate officer of the king, his 'confidential adviser.'

XVI. 3. Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem, etc. This was evidently a plot on the part of Ziba. Mephibosheth was apparently innocent (see xix. 24-30), and that he remained at Jerusalem was not very remarkable in one who was lame and helpless. David was over-hasty in giving Mephibosheth's land to Ziba, and found it necessary afterwards to resort to a compromise to smooth matters (p. 242).

7. Thou bloody man—more literally 'thou man of blood,' the favourite phrase of the Cromwellians to describe Charles I. The followers of Cromwell, and indeed the Puritans generally, drew their ideas and their spirit from the Old Testament rather than the Gospel.

8. the LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned ; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son : and, behold, thou *art taken* in thy mischief, because thou *art* a bloody man. 9. Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, ^fWhy should this dead dog ^fExod. xxii. 28. curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. 10. And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? ^gso let him curse, because ^g1 S. Peter ii. 23. the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? 11. And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life : how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it*? let him alone, and let him curse ; for the LORD hath bidden him. 12. It may be that the LORD will look on ⁶mine affliction, ⁶the wrong done unto me. and that the LORD will ^hrequite me good for his cursing ^hRom. viii. 28. this day. 13. And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust. 14. And the king, and all the people that *were* with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there. 15. And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. 16. And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king. 17. And Absalom said to Hushai, *Is* this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend? 18. And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay ; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him

12. The Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day. This at first sight seems a little inconsistent with verses 10, 11. But it is not really so. David recognises in Shimei's curse the Divine chastisement. But he knows that such chastisement proceeds from the *love* of God ; and if patiently borne, will turn to the profit of the sufferer. It is well to remember also that the curses of the wicked hurt not those against whom they are directed, but those who utter them. Cf. Ps. cix.

will I abide. 19. And again, whom should I serve? *should I not serve* in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence. 20. Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do. 21. And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are* with thee be strong. 22. So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. 23. And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, *was* as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God: so *was* all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

XVII. 1. Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night: 2. and I will come upon him while he *is* weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that *are* with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only: 3. and I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest *is* as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace. 4. And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel. 5. Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith. 6. And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do *after* his saying? if not; speak thou. 7. And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given *is* not good at this time. 8. For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they *be* mighty men, and they *be* chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father *is* a man of war, and will not lodge with the people. 9. Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some *other*

place : and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom. 10. And he also *that is* valiant, whose heart *is* as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt : for all Israel knoweth that thy father *is* a mighty man, and *they* which *be* with him *are* valiant men. 11. Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand *that is* by the sea for multitude ; and that thou go to battle in thine own person. 12. So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground : and of him and of all the men that *are* with him there shall not be left so much as one. 13. Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there. 14. And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom. 15. Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel ; and thus and thus have I counselled. 16. Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying,

XVII. 11. Therefore I counsel . . . and that thou go to battle in thine own person. Hushai gains time by playing upon the vanity of Absalom. He was to go himself at the head of a great army and win a victory over David, and not let Ahithophel strike a decisive blow at once.

This record of Hushai's speech is singularly graphic, and was probably written by one who was actually present on the occasion, perhaps by one of the priests. Its pictorial and somewhat exaggerated language is quite Oriental, and would flatter the ears of Absalom.

13. We will draw it into the river. This expression is of course metaphorical. 'The river' suggests some ravine or water-course among the hills and crags, where fortified cities would naturally be built.

16. Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness. Hushai although his counsel has been approved, thinks it best for David to know what Ahithophel's counsel is, as it might yet be followed. In any case, David would be safer at a distance.

Lodge not this night ² in the plains of the wilderness, but
⁷ speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all
the people that *are* with him. 17. Now Jonathan and
Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel; for they might not be
seen to come into the city: and a ⁸ wench went and told
them; and they went and told king David. 18. Neverthe-
less a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went
both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in
Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went
down. 19. And the ⁴ woman took and spread a covering
over the well's mouth, and spread ⁹ ground corn thereon;
and the thing was not known. 20. And when Absalom's
servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where
is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto
them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when
they had sought and could not find *them*, they returned
to Jerusalem. 21. And it came to pass, after they were
departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and
told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass
quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel coun-
selled against you. 22. Then David arose, and all the
people that *were* with him, and they passed over Jordan:
by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was
not gone over Jordan. 23. And when Ahithophel saw
that his counsel was not followed, he saddled *his* ass, and
arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put
his household in order, and ^k hanged himself, and died, and
was buried in the sepulchre of his father. 24. Then David
came to ^l Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan,
he and all the men of Israel with him. 25. And Absalom
made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which
Amasa *was* a man's son, whose name *was* Ithra an Israelite,

17. **En-rogel**—'the Fuller's fountain'—in the valley of the Kidron, south-east of Jerusalem.

25. **Nahash**. Not a woman's name, otherwise it would seem obvious that Nahash was the wife of Jesse. Jewish tradition states that Nahash is another name of Jesse. But no certain conclusion can be arrived at.

⁷ in any wise.

⁸ maidservant used to go and tell them.

ⁱ Josh. ii. 6.

⁹ bruised (cf. Prov. xxvii. 22).

^k S. Matt. xxvii. 5.

^l Gen. xxxii. 2.

that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother. 26. So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead. 27. And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and ^m Machir ^m chap. ix. 4. the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, 28. brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched *corn*, and beans, and lentiles, and parched *pulse*, 29. and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that *were* with him, to eat: for they said, The people *is* hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

LESSON XXV

David a Type of Christ's Passion

INTRODUCTION.—The leading point to emphasise in this lesson is, the remarkable parallel between the sufferings of David and the Passion of Christ. No one day is described so minutely in the whole Bible as this, with the one exception of the day of the Betrayal and Crucifixion of Christ. We should remember also that the *historical* books of the Bible are of the nature of *prophecy* as well as narrative. They were written by *prophets*, and were counted by the Jews as belonging to the prophetic books. It is no chance parallel between David and Christ, but one which the Holy Spirit Himself led the writers to describe.

Moreover, *types* of this sort are not merely interesting parallels, but have a deep theological significance. Our Lord being the second Adam, and the true head of the human race, has identified Himself with, and made His own, all the whole circle of human experience—its sorrows, and its struggles, and its joys. The sufferings of David only attain their full meaning and value as we behold them 'fulfilled' in David's Son.

MATTER.

1. David a type of Christ in his sorrows.

(1) The fickleness of popular feeling and affection is well illustrated in the rapidity with which Absalom, a worthless person, draws away the hearts of the men of Israel from David.

METHOD.

1. (1) Draw out the parallel between David and David's Son. Contrast the enthusiasm of the people after the miracle of the loaves (S. John vi. 15); or at the triumphant entry into Jerusalem (S. John xii. 12-19), with their readiness to shout 'Crucify Him' as soon as that seemed the more popular cry (S. John xix.).

LESSON XXV—continued. DAVID A TYPE OF CHRIST'S PASSION

MATTER.

(2) Sharper even than the pain of popular disaffection is the anguish of finding enemies in one's own household, among those who know one's secrets, and are bound to one by ties of special duty and love, as were Absalom and Ahithophel.

(3) Disaster brings out hidden enemies. Shimei must have been long nursing his hatred; and it bursts out in all its spite and its false accusation in David's hour of weakness.

METHOD.

(2) Illustrate this by—
The forsaking by the Apostles.
The denials by Peter.
The betrayal by Judas.

(3) Notice how, as soon as our Lord is betrayed and taken, the hatred and spitefulness which the evil feel towards the good, and the mean towards the great, break out—
In the false charges and reviling of the priests;

In the insults and blows of the servants of the high priest.

Notice also the remarkable parallel between David's forbearance when Shimei cursed him and our Lord's words to S. Peter in the garden, and indeed His whole bearing in His Passion.

2. David a type of Christ in the joys of the Passion.

(1) Some few were faithful to David in his hour of need. The populace of the villages near Jerusalem, who presumably knew him best, wept aloud (xv. 23) as he passed by.

Ittai, a stranger, offers the king his loyal service in words which cannot be surpassed for dignity and affection. *Zadok* and his family will not desert the king, who has ever been a lover of the sanctuary. *Hushai*, 'the king's friend,' is ready to risk his life by going back to Jerusalem, and defeating the counsel of Ahithophel.

(2) David had the joy of an answered prayer (xv. 31, 32), and also, what is one of the secrets of the joy of prayer, the joy of a perfectly surrendered will. He accepts his sufferings as from God's hand, and puts his trust in God for restitution.

2. Point out that sufferings and calamities have their good side. They show us our *friends* as well as our enemies; and they ought to throw us back upon God.

Illustrate—

(1) By those who accompanied our Lord from Galilee, and sorrowed over His Crucifixion (S. Luke xxiii. 48, 49).

S. John, the Blessed Virgin Mary, S. Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary at Cross and sepulchre.

Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus.

(2) By the prayer of our Lord in Gethsemane.

The words from the Cross, especially the fifth, 'It is finished,' and the seventh, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.'

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

David a Type of Christ's Passion.

1. *The sorrows of the king.**David.*Forsaken by his
people.Betrayed by his own
friend and coun-
sellor Ahithophel.

Cursed by his enemies.

Cursed by Shimei.

Christ.

'Crucify Him.'

Judas Iscariot.

The chief priests.

Their servants.

The false witnesses.

2. *The joys of suffering.*Suffering brings out
true friends—Ittai, Zadok, Hushai,
Barzillai, etc.Suffering leads to
prayer and greater
trust in God.S. John, the three
Maries, Joseph of
Arimathæa, etc.Our Lord's prayer in
Gethsemane.His words on the
Cross.

CHAPTERS XVIII. ; XIX. ; XX. 1-22

AND David numbered the people that *were* with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. 2. And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also. 3. But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth : for if we flee away, they will not care for us ; neither if half of us die, will they care for us : but now *thou art* worth ten thousand of us : therefore now *it is* better that thou ¹succour us out of the city. 4. And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands. 5. And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, *Deal gently* for my sake with the young man, *even* with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom. 6. So the people went out into the field against Israel : and the battle was in the wood of ^aEphraim ; 7. where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand *men*. 8. For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country : and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured. 9. And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his

¹ be ready to succour us.

^a Josh. xvii. 15-18.

6. The battle was in the wood of Ephraim. This 'wood,' or 'forest,' as it should be rendered, must have been on the east of Jordan, although the name 'Ephraim' naturally suggests the west. The city spoken of in ver. 3 must have been Mahanaim, and the field of battle was evidently not far off. Cf. xix. 3.

See G. Adam Smith, *Historical Geography*, p. 335, note 2.

9. His head caught hold of the oak. It is commonly supposed, and

head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away. 10. And a certain man saw *it*, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak. 11. And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest *him*, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *shekels* of silver, and a girdle. 12. And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in mine hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none *touch* the young man Absalom. 13. Otherwise ²I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against *me*. 14. Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of the oak. 15. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him. 16. And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people. 17. And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent. 18. Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in the ^bking's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name ^bGen. xiv. 17. in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own

² if I had dealt
falsely against
his life . . .
then thou thy-
self wouldest
have stood
aloof.

possibly with truth, that it was Absalom's abundant hair (xiv. 26) which became entangled in the branches of the oak; but the narrative says nothing of this. More probably his neck was caught in the fork of a branch, and he could not extricate himself.

13. **Wrought falsehood against mine own life.** The expression is a curious one, whether we read 'mine' or 'his.' 'To work falsehood' seems to mean 'to act treacherously,' 'to act against the interest of' any person.

18. **He called the pillar after his own name.** A love of popularity and

³ monument. name : and it is called unto this day, Absalom's ³ place. 19. Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies. 20. And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day : but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead. 21. Then said Joab to the Cushite. ⁴ Cushi, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab, and ran. 22. Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou ⁵ wilt have no reward for the tidings? ⁶ hast no tidings ready? 23. But howsoever, *said he*, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushi. 24. And David 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 behold 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, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said,

worldly fame seems to have been at the root of Absalom's life-failure. And in strange irony, men heap a cairn of stones over his dishonoured corpse, a memorial of shame and defeat, contrasting with the ambitious monument which he himself had erected. So a heap of stones was raised over the grave of Achan (Josh. vii. 26).

19. Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, etc. The meaning of this controversy about the bearing of tidings to David seems to be that Joab was not anxious that the news of Absalom's death should be taken to David, at any rate by any person of importance ; but he prefers to send a Cushite, an Ethiopian servant, probably thinking that David, after the manner of Eastern kings, would punish the bearer of sad tidings. Ahimaaz, on the other hand, is eager to go, perhaps with the intention of breaking the news of his son's death more gently to David.

He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings. 28. And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, 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 Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, ⁶ and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I ⁶ even me. 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, Cushie came; and Cushie 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 Cushie, *Is* the young man Absalom safe? And Cushie 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 Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

XIX. 1. And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom. 2. And the victory that day was *turned* into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son. 3. And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. 4. But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son! 5. And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all

33. And the king was much moved. The sorrow of David over Absalom is one of the most pathetic pictures in history. His grief is not merely that of a parent bereaved, but of one who recognises the retribution of his own sins in the fall of others. David, with his innate generosity, always feels more keenly the suffering which his sin has brought upon others than anything he can suffer himself. Cf. chap. xxiv. 17.

thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines; 6. in that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. 7. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now. 8. Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate.

7. . . the king.
Now Israel, etc.
(a new para-
graph).

And all the people came before ⁷ the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent. 9. And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom. 10. And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back? 11. And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, ⁸ *even* to his house.

⁸ to bring him
to his house.

12. Ye *are* my brethren, ye *are* my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

c chap. xvii. 25.

13. And say ye to Amasa, ^c *Art* thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room

XIX. 13. And say ye to Amasa, etc. David here makes a desperate effort to do what in the beginning of his reign he had felt himself too weak to do (iii. 39), and at one stroke tries to rid himself of Joab and to win to his side Absalom's commander-in-chief. But he had not reckoned with the unscrupulousness which had slain Abner for jealousy, and was equally ready to murder his new rival (xx. 10).

of Joab. 14. And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as *the heart of one man*; so that they sent *this word* unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants. 15. So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan. 16. And ^{d chap. xvi. 5;} Shimei the son of Gera, ^{1 Kings ii. 8.} a Benjamite, which *was* of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David. 17. And *there were* a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan ^{g in the presence of.} before the king. 18. And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan; 19. and said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart. 20. For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king. 21. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, ^{e Exod. xxii. 28.} because he cursed the LORD's anointed? 22. And David said, ^{f chap. xvi. 10.} What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I *am* this day king over Israel? 23. Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou

17. They went over Jordan before the king. Shimei and Ziba, in their eagerness to excuse themselves, do not wait for the king on the western bank of Jordan, but go across to meet him.

20. All the house of Joseph. The ten tribes, who formed afterwards the northern kingdom of Israel, are often named 'Ephraim' or 'Joseph,' because of the importance of the tribe of Ephraim (cf. Amos vi. 6). Shimei here associates himself with the ten tribes, and claims to be the first outside the tribe of Judah to welcome back the king.

g chaps. ix.,
xvi.

shalt not die. And the king sware unto him. 24. And
 2 Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the
 king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his
 beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king
 departed until the day he came *again* in peace. 25. And
 it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet
 the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest
 not thou with me, Mephibosheth? 26. And he answered,
 My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant
 said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and
 go to the king; because thy servant *is* lame. 27. And he
 hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but
 my lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore *what*
is good in thine eyes. 28. For all *of* my father's house were
 but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set
 thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table.
 What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the
 king? 29. And the king said unto him, Why speakest
 thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba
 divide the land. 30. And Mephibosheth said unto the
 king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king
 is come again in peace unto his own house. 31. And
 h 1 Kings ii. 7. h Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and
 went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over
 Jordan. 32. Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even*
 fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sus-
 tenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a very
 great man. 33. And the king said unto Barzillai, Come
 thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in

i chap. xvii.

24. **Had neither dressed his feet, etc.** In countries where sandals are worn, to wash one's feet is a necessary part of the usual toilet. To omit it was a sign of mourning. The ancient idea of mourning was to abstain from pleasures and from ordinary society, and therefore to omit the refinements of dress and cleanliness which society demands.

29. **I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.** 'I have said,' *i.e.* 'this is my final decision.' It is difficult to understand this compromise, but perhaps David could not make up his mind as to which story was true.

Jerusalem. 34. And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? 35. I *am* this day ^k fourscore years old : *and* ^k Ps. xc. 10. can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? 36. Thy servant will ¹⁰ go a little way over Jordan with ¹⁰ but just go over Jordan. the king : and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward? 37. Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, *and be buried* by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham ; let him go over with my lord the king ; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee. 38. And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee : and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, *that* will I do for thee. 39. And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him ; and he returned unto his own place. 40. Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him : and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel. 41. And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan? 42. And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king *is* near of kin to us : wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath he given us any gift? 43. And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten

37. **Thy servant Chimham.** In all probability the son of Barzillai; and one of those specially commended by David to Solomon in 1 Kings ii. 7.

43. **We have ten parts in the king.** In this dispute we see already the fire smouldering which was to break out into the flame of rebellion and

parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

1 Kings xii.
16.

m chaps. xv.
16; xvi. 21.

xx. And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, 'We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel. 2. So every man of Israel went up from after David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem. 3. And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women *his* concubines, whom he had left to ^m keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood. 4. Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present. 5. So Amasa went to assemble *the men of* Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him. 6. And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do

separation in the reign of Rehoboam. The personality of David had united all the tribes under one head; but Israel was not really one at heart: the transference of the birthright to Judah, as the royal tribe, was never really acquiesced in by the other tribes. Man's natural self-will always resents the mysteries of God's choice. The men of Judah, moreover, seem to have been too ready to embitter the dispute by their own hasty words (ver. 43).

xx. 1. **We have no part in David.** It is noteworthy that this is the same cry that was raised half a century later, and more successfully, by Jeroboam.

Every man to his tents. This is one of those traditional expressions which outlast their original meaning. Time was when Israel, a pastoral nation, did dwell in tents, and the phrase continued to be used after they dwelt in cities. See the curious instance of the Rechabites, who seem to have endeavoured (following their father's commandment) to maintain the original condition as a protest against the luxuries of civilisation (Jer. xxxv.).

6. **And David said to Abishai.** David is so resolute in his attempt to

us more harm than *did* Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us. 7. And there went out after him Joab's men, and the ^r Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and ⁿ chap. viii. 18. all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri. 8. When they *were* at the great stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa ¹¹ went before ¹¹ came to meet them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle *with* a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out. 9. And Joab said to Amasa, *Art* thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to ^o kiss him. 10. But Amasa took no heed ^o S. Matt. xxvi. 49. to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth *rib*, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri. 11. And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab. 12. And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people ^p stood still, he removed Amasa out of the high- ^p chap. ii. 23. way into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still. 13. When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri. 14. And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Beth-maachah, and all the Berites: and they were supersede Joab, that even when Amasa does not return, he places Joab's brother and not Joab himself in chief command.

8. **And as he went forth it fell out.** It has been suggested, with great probability (see Cambridge Bible), that Joab let fall his sword as if by accident; and Amasa, seeing him take it up in his *left* hand, had no suspicion of the treachery intended.

14. **Abel.** This is one of the towns of Naphtali, in the far north of Palestine, beyond the waters of Merom. It is also called Abel-maim (2 Chron. xvi. 4). It is implied in ver. 18 that the city had become proverbial for the wisdom of its inhabitants.

¹² against the
rampart.

q Deut. xx.
10-12.

gathered together, and went also after him. 15. And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood ¹² in the trench : and all the people that *were* with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down. 16. Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear ; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee. 17. And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, *Art thou Joab ?* And he answered, *I am he.* Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear. 18. Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel : and so they ended *the matter*. 19. *I am one of them that are^a peaceable and faithful in Israel : thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel : why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD ?* 20. And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. 21. The matter *is* not so : but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, *even against David : deliver him only, and I will depart from the city.* And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall. 22. Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

15. **They cast up a bank against the city.** Ancient sieges were very laborious and difficult operations, and were often unsuccessful, unless the defenders could be starved out. It was customary to erect mounds outside the walls from which missiles could be hurled into the city, or the walls more easily attacked by the battering-rams and other heavy engines of siege.

There are two interesting pictures of ancient sieges in the Oxford 'Bible Illustrations,' Plates lxxxiv. and xci.

LESSON XXVI

The Sword in David's House

INTRODUCTION.—The points to bring out in the lesson are (1) that David's victory over the rebellions was due to Divine help, God was faithful to His promise; (2) that the victory was full of regrets, in which we see the retribution of David's sin, of which he had been warned (xii. 10). It will therefore be well to recapitulate the circumstances of David's sin, repentance, forgiveness, and penance.

MATTER.

1. David's victory.

God had promised that His mercy should not be taken away from David, as it had been from Saul (vii.). That David's heart was right is shown by his prayerful and submissive conduct during the agony and suspense of his flight before Absalom. And God now, having allowed Ahithophel's counsel to be defeated, gives victory to the army of David.

This victory is followed up by David's restoration to his throne. Those who showed their hatred of him in his affliction, like Shimei, or their desire for their own advancement, like Ziba, are now over-eager to make their peace.

David's conduct after his victory has the stamp of his characteristic nobility of soul. His mercy to Shimei is remarkable (xix. 21-23). And so too his generosity to Barzillai, for kings and great men are wont to forget in prosperity those who helped them and were loyal in adversity.

2. The sorrows of victory.

David's victory was in itself a sorrow, for it was over his own son. It was (in the words of Newman, p. 97) 'sad success.' And it was made still more tragic by the awfulness of Absalom's end, and the fact that his death was inflicted by Joab,

METHOD.

1. Describe the battle.

Show (1) how the defeat and death of Absalom was God's punishment.

(2) How David's victory came from the hand of God, in which he had placed his cause unreservedly (xv. 25-26).

Illustrate David's restoration by the Restoration of the royal family in England after the Great Rebellion.

David's restoration is a type of Christ's Second Coming to claim His kingdom, when He will reward all those who have been faithful to Him, when other men rebelled against Him.

S. Luke xix. 12, etc.

2. Draw out the different ways in which David's victory was a sorrowful one.

(1) Over his own people.

(2) Over his own son.

(3) Joab's wickedness shown in his murder of Absalom and Amasa.

LESSON XXVI—*continued*. THE SWORD IN DAVID'S HOUSE

MATTER.

the very man who had been David's instrument in the murder of Uriah the Hittite.

David's sin has made Joab his master, and he cannot rid himself of him. Joab may be deposed, but he only murders his rival, as he had done to Abner before, and David simply has to tolerate it.

Again, an additional sorrow in the victory lay in the dissensions which it called out among David's own subjects, resulting in the further rebellion of Sheba, and preparing the way for the division of the kingdom.

There is something peculiarly pathetic in David's victorious return to Jerusalem. He comes back to a dishonoured home, to bereavement, and the domination of the hateful Joab.

3. These sorrows part of David's punishment.

We must trace the Divine hand in these sorrows of victory. God's justice and God's love alike follow up sin with punishment. And this no mere retribution. It is intended—

(1) For the chastening of the penitent sinner, as a father chastens a child.

(2) As a warning to all of the *seriousness of sin* in God's sight. Penitence and forgiveness are indeed joyful things; but happier still are those who remain in God's grace, and by His mercy and their own watchfulness are kept from falling.

METHOD.

(4) Quarrels of his own people, and further rebellion.

Point out that the hand of God is to be seen in all this. It was a punishment direct, or indirect, for David's sin, especially for his own murder of Uriah.

3. Show that sin is always punished in some form or other, even though God in His mercy may forgive the sinner.

God punishes—

(1) For the sinner's own good.

(2) To show us that sin is never a light thing, its results last for years after it is committed, and affect others besides ourselves.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Sword in David's House.

1. *David's victory.*
Given by God.
David is restored to his throne.

2. *David's victory is full of sorrow.*
Absalom is killed.
Joab kills Amasa, and becomes more powerful than ever.
The victory causes quarrels among David's own people.

3. *These sorrows are part of David's punishment :*
(chap. xii.).
Sin is always punished.
(1) For the sinner's own good.
(2) To teach us how terrible sin is in God's sight.

SUMMARY OF OMISSIONS

Chap. xxi. records the execution of seven of Saul's sons as an act of atonement for Saul's persecution of the Gibeonites, whom Israel had sworn to protect. Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, who was the mother of two of these sons of Saul, watched over the bodies of the slain day and night, to protect them from birds and beasts of prey, until David gave honourable burial to them, along with the bones of Saul and Jonathan.

This passage is omitted as not suitable for a lesson ; although it might be used to illustrate the duty of a reverent care for the bodies of the dead.

The rest of the chapter summarises other battles between David and the Philistines, and the slaying of several giants by David's heroes.

Chap. xxii. consists of Ps. xviii., which is David's triumphant thanksgiving after deliverance from his enemies, and probably belongs to an earlier date than the rebellion of Absalom.

Chap. xxiii. is dealt with in lessons xx. and xxxi.

CHAPTER XXIV.

a cf. 1 Chron.
xxi.

AND again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah. 2. For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that ^b I may know the number of the people. 3. And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see *it*: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing? 4. Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the

b Jer. xvii. 5.

1. And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. It seems evident from this that whatever the exact nature of David's sin was in numbering the people, the people themselves as a nation shared in it. The sin *began* with the nation; it found expression in the act of the ruler. See note on ver. 17.

He moved David. God is always said in Holy Scripture to *do* that which He *permits* to be done. See note on 1 Sam. ii. 25. The account in 1 Chron. xxi. tells us that Satan was the instrument of David's temptation, just as he was of Job's. Satan literally means 'an adversary,' and it has been thought that the suggestion to number the people came from some evil counsellor instigated by Satan.

Go, number Israel and Judah. There was nothing sinful in the act of ordering a census of the people to be taken. Indeed, provision is made for it in Exod. xxx. 12, etc. But there are many actions which are indifferent in themselves, and become good or evil according to the *motive* that inspires them. David's motive, in which the national feeling seems to have been with him, was one of *pride*. For the moment he ignores what had been his own particular greatness, in contrast with Saul—his dependence upon God. His kingdom was not like the kingdoms of the nations. It was Divinely appointed, and Divinely upheld, for a Divine purpose, and not for human glory and conquest. David is giving way to the old spirit of Israel in asking for a king (1 Sam. viii. 20), 'that we also may be like all the nations.' Cf. the pride of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 30).

More particularly it seems that David's intention was to number the fighting men of his kingdom, and so perhaps prepare larger schemes of empire and conquest.

It is remarkable that Joab, who for the most part is David's evil genius, on this occasion sees the true nature of David's act, and endeavours to

presence of the king, to number the people of Israel. 5. And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the ¹river of Gad, and toward Jazer: 6. then they came to ¹valley. Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi; and they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon, 7. and came to the stronghold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, *even* to Beer-sheba. 8. So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. 9. And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand men. 10. And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. 11. ²For ²And. when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD

dissuade him. Even bad men may have touches of insight. Caiaphas prophesied truly (S. John xi. 51).

5. And they passed over Jordan, etc. The course followed by the census-takers seems to have been circular. Starting at Aroer (probably the city on the river Arnon), they went northward. Tahtim-hodshi is unknown, and it is even disputed whether it is the name of a place at all. Dan-jaan is probably the well-known Dan in the north of Palestine. Thence they worked their way southward past the borders of Phenicia (Tyre and Zidon), down to 'the south of Judah,' and so by Beersheba, the southern limit, back to Jerusalem.

9. And Joab gave up the sum of the number. It will be noticed that the account in 1 Chron. xxi. mentions that Joab did not number Levi and Benjamin. Neither did he number those under twenty years of age (1 Chron. xxvii. 23). Levi, perhaps, was omitted as the priestly tribe, having no fixed inheritance like the other tribes; Benjamin (Saul's tribe) as still adherents of their old hero's family. The sum given in 1 Chron. also differs from that in 2 Sam. It has been suggested that the chronicler has added the approximate numbers of Levi and Benjamin to Joab's total.

11. For when David was up in the morning. The alteration in the R. V., 'and' for 'for,' is important. David had repented and confessed his sin to God before Gad was sent to him. His conscience is more tender than in the time of his great sin.

came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, 12. Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three *things*; choose thee one of them, that I may *do it* unto thee. 13. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. 14. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man. 15. So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men. 16. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD *repented* him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing-

c Joel ii. 13.;
Jonah iii. 10.

14. **Let me not fall into the hand of man.** The famine would, of course, have come directly from the hand of God, but it would have involved the oppression of the poor by merchants and those who had stored up corn—always a terrible aggravation of famine in ancient times.

16. **The Lord repented him of the evil.** The full punishment seems to have been mercifully shortened in response to the prayers of David. The narrative in 1 Chron. is more graphic. The angel was seen with a drawn sword in his hand.

So S. Gregory the Great is said to have averted a pestilence at Rome by his prayers, and to have seen the destroying angel alight on the fortress which has been called San Angelo in memory of the event.

Angels are represented in Scripture as the instruments of Divine wrath. So the destroying angel slew the first-born in Egypt; and the angel of the Lord smote the host of the Assyrians (2 Kings xix. 35). What appear to us to be *natural* causes have always a supernatural background, if we had eyes to see it. It was a plague that destroyed the Israelites, but the angel of the Lord was the instrument, and the will of the Lord the moving cause.

The threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusite. In 1 Chron. he is called Ornan, but both are only different spellings of the same name. He was a Jebusite, one of the ancient inhabitants of Jerusalem or Jebus, not an Israelite. This is one of the most noteworthy events in the Old

place of Araunah the Jebusite. 17. And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done ³wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let ³perversely. thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house. 18. And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. 19. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. 20. And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground. 21. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing-floor of thee, ^dto build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people. ^{d Gen. xxii. 9, etc.} 22. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: behold, *here be oxen* for burnt sacrifice, ^eand threshing instruments ^{e 1 Kings xix. 21.} and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood. 23. ⁴All ⁴all this, O king, doth Araunah give unto the king; ⁴these *things* did Araunah, *as* a king, give unto the king. *margin.* all this did Araunah the king give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee. 24. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth ^fcost me nothing. So David bought the threshing- ^{f Mal. i. 13, 14.}

Testament, for this threshing-place was to be the site of the Temple; and tradition tells us, with great probability, that it was here, in 'the land of Moriah,' that Isaac, the great type of Christ, was in will offered in sacrifice by Abraham.

17. But these sheep, what have they done? David, with characteristic nobility, takes the whole blame upon himself, although the original sin had been with the people, and in the diminution of their numbers by pestilence, they were being punished for their national pride.

24. Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee for a price. This is a remarkable contest between two noble characters: Araunah, who is willing to give of his best for God's service; David, who in the true spirit of worship will not offer to God that which costs him nothing.

floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. 25. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

Fifty shekels of silver. 1 Chron. xxi. says six hundred shekels of gold, but probably this refers to a later transaction, at which the whole piece of ground was bought on which the Temple was to be built.

LESSON XXVII

Numbering the People

MATTER.

1. National pride.

We gather from the fact that it was against Israel in the first place that God's anger was kindled, that David was tempted to number the people as a judgment on national pride.

Israel was always in danger of forgetting its high calling, of desiring to be like the other nations of the world. At this time, doubtless, the prosperity it enjoyed under David led the nation to glory in its numbers, its riches, its warlike prowess.

Israel had forgotten for the time—

(1) That all prosperity depends entirely on God's will, and may at any time be cut short by Him.

(2) Her own characteristic of holiness and separation. It was in this that the true glory of Israel lay, and not in armies of warriors. David at least should have remembered this, even if Israel forgot.

2. National calamity.

Holy Scripture invariably teaches us that calamities of every sort—famine, pestilence, oppression by enemies—are Divine judgments, either for one purpose or another: it may be for punishment, or it may be for teaching.

Nations, like individuals, are sub-

METHOD.

1. Refer to the expression in the Catechism, 'the elect people of God.' Show that as the Catholic Church is now, so the nation of Israel was in old times, God's chosen people. They were chosen by God to be holy and righteous, and not to foster their own pride.

They forgot this when David numbered the people.

Make it clear that there is nothing wrong in a *census* in itself. Moses had taken one; and so it is done from time to time in our own nation.

What was wrong was the *motive*—pride, and perhaps a desire to make war on their neighbours.

2. Describe the pestilence falling on the people. Show that they were suffering for their own sin, not merely for David's. David and the elders saw the destroying angel with the drawn sword in his hand.

Illustrate from the destroying of the first-born, and the destruction of Sennacherib's army.

LESSON XXVII—*continued.* NUMBERING THE PEOPLE

MATTER.

jects of God's mercy or God's justice. They have an existence of their own in God's eyes; and the vicissitudes which befall them are not to be assigned merely to *natural* causes, but we should try to recognise God's hand in them.

3. National repentance.

It is very instructive to notice how the mercy of God shown to Jerusalem is connected with the contrition and the prayers of David. The representatives of the nation, the elders of Israel, join with him in this repentance (see 1 Chron. xi. 16).

David himself repented before the blow fell, and we should notice—

(1) His humility in putting himself unreservedly in God's hands to be punished.

(2) His generosity in seeking to take the whole punishment himself, if it were possible.

(3) His desire to do his utmost for God's service, by paying Araunah the full price, and offering sacrifice himself.

4. God's mercy.

4. God not only spared Jerusalem, but out of the very calamity provided the place for prayer and sacrifice which had been foretold, and so gave Israel their Temple.

METHOD.

Point out that all national calamities come from God, and have a purpose in them, *e.g.* the plagues of Egypt.

Cf. Amos iv. 6-13.

Nations that will not learn from God's judgments are destroyed, and pass away in God's own time.

Show to older children how the great nations of antiquity, who sinned against God by pride and cruelty, have all passed away, and sometimes left not a trace behind them, *e.g.* Assyria, Babylon, Tyre, and Sidon. Cf. Ezek. xxvi. 4, 5, a prophecy which has been literally fulfilled.

3. Describe David's repentance.

Illustrate from { Joel ii.
Jonah iii.

Point out how, in the calamities which befell England at the beginning of the South African War, 1899, it was not till a day of *prayer* was observed by the whole nation that the tide of battle began to turn.

4. Illustrate by the *Cross*, which shows us God's wrath against sin; and which yet is our ground of *hope*.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

Numbering the People.

1. *National pride.*

The numbering was a sin because it was done through pride.

Israel forgot that they were God's people, and gloried in themselves, their own numbers, and strength.

2. *National calamity.*

God punished the people by a pestilence.

All great national calamities come from God; and nations that will not learn by them are destroyed.

3. *National repentance.*

David humbled himself before God.

David prayed.

David offered sacrifice.

4. *God's mercy.*

God spared Jerusalem.

God gave Israel a place for the Temple.

1 CHRONICLES XXI. 28-30; XXII.; XXVIII. 11-21;
XXIX. 1-22

AT that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. 29. For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, were at that season in the high place at ^a Gibeon. 30. But David could not go before ^a 1 Kings iii. 4. it to inquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

XXII. 1. Then David said, This is the house of the LORD God, ^b and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel. ^b Deut. xii. 5, 11.

1 CHRON. XXI. 28. When David saw that the Lord had answered him. The preceding verses tell us that God had answered David by fire from heaven upon the altar which he built on the threshing-floor of Araunah. So the first sacrifice of Aaron was accepted by God (Lev. ix. 24), the first offered by Solomon in the Temple (2 Chron. vii. 1), and the great sacrifice of Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings xviii. 38). These miraculous descents of fire from heaven were typical of the descent of the true fire from heaven, the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, when He descended upon the sacrifice of redeemed humanity, consecrating the Catholic Church as His dwelling-place, and making possible the fulfilment of our Lord's command—'Do this'—in the Holy Eucharist. Cf. Wilberforce, *Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, chapt. x. p. 257.

30. He was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the Lord. David knew that his offerings were acceptable to God in this new place of sacrifice, and he was afraid if he forsook this place, which clearly had Divine approval, and returned to the altar at Gibeon, the plague might again break out.

XXII. 1. This is the house of the Lord God. It had been revealed long before (see reference in Deut. and Josh. ix. 27), that one special place for the worship and sacrifices of Israel would be appointed by God. The time had now come; and God showed His mercy by revealing this place at a moment of national repentance after national sin. David was not to build the Temple, but the place was revealed to him, and he was allowed to make all preparations for the great work. Henceforth the great religious question in Israel was the *unity* of worship. The old places of sacrifice ('the high places') were with difficulty suppressed in Judah by Hezekiah; but the self-will of Jeroboam and his successors had set up the opposition shrines of Bethel and Dan in the northern kingdom, so that the unity of worship, which was the Divine ideal, was never wholly realised in old Israel.

c 1 Kings ix.
20, 21; 2 Chron.
viii. 7-9.

2. And David commanded to gather together the 'strangers that *were* in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God. 3. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance without weight; 4. also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David. 5. And David said, Solomon my son *is* young and tender, and the house *that is* to be builded for the LORD *must be* exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will *therefore* now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death. 6. Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD God of Israel. 7. And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, ^dit was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God: 8. but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed

d 2 Sam. vii. 2,
etc.

5. So David prepared abundantly before his death. It is a striking illustration of the profoundly religious spirit of David, in spite of his grievous fall, that he was willing not only to offer the very best to God's service, but to leave the glory to another.

On David's preparation for the Temple, see a striking sermon by Liddon in the volume *Sermons on the Old Testament*. The following is a characteristic passage: 'David's feeling was, that if anything was to be attempted by him in the service of God, it must be on a splendid scale; that a great effort was due, first of all, to God Himself, as being what He is; and next, for the sake of those who did not know Him, the surrounding heathen peoples, who must not think meanly of what God's servants thought to be due to His service.'

'Had David lived in our day, and taken some of its ruling principles for granted, he would have expressed himself, I fear, differently. No doubt he would have said, "A house must be builded for the Lord; the tabernacle and the altar of burnt-offering cannot always remain in the high place of Gibeon. But although necessary, it need not be expensive. The first thing to do is to extend, beautify, and fortify Jerusalem; to expend what wealth there is in the royal treasury in augmenting the state and establishing the position of the dynasty; to provide, in short, for immediate practical needs, and then do what may be done economically to satisfy religious sentiment. The house of the Lord," he would have said, "must indeed be builded, but it must be exceeding cheap."

8. Thou hast shed blood abundantly. See note on 2 Sam. vii. 5. The Temple was the place of peace (Haggai ii. 9), and He Whom it typified was foretold as the Prince of Peace. Hence the appropriateness of the Temple

blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. 9. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. 10. He shall build an house for my name; ^e and he shall be my son, and I *will be his* ^{e Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27; Heb. i. 5.} father: and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever. 11. Now, my son, the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as he hath said of thee. 12. Only the LORD give thee ^f wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge ^{f Ps. lxxii. 1.} concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God. 13. Then shalt thou prosper, ^g if thou takest ^{g Josh. i. 6, etc.} heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed. 14. Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto. 15. Moreover *there are* workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work. 16. Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, *there is* no number. Arise *therefore*, and be doing, and the LORD be with thee. 17. David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, *saying*, *Is* not the LORD your God with you? and hath he *not* given you rest on every side? for he being built by one whose name was 'Peaceable,' and whose characteristic was peace.

14. In my trouble, *i.e.* in my poverty, or my affliction. David's humility minimises his own prosperity and the greatness of his gift. Probably the word 'talents' ought to be 'shekels.' Even this would be a very large sum, nearly £300,000 of our money.

hath given the inhabitants of the land into mine hand; and the land is subdued before the LORD, and before his people. 19. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise therefore and build ye the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the LORD.

xxviii. 11. Then David gave to Solomon his son the ^h pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner ^l parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, 12. and the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things: 13. also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the LORD. 14. *He gave* of gold by weight for *things* of gold, for all instruments of all manner of service; *silver also* for all instruments of silver by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service: 15. even the weight for the candlesticks of gold, and for their lamps of gold, by weight for every candlestick, and for the lamps thereof: and for the candlesticks of silver by weight, *both* for the candlestick, and *also* for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick. 16. And by weight *he gave* gold for the tables of shewbread, for every table; and *like-wise* silver for the tables of silver: 17. also pure gold for the fleshhooks, and the bowls, and the cups: and for the golden basons *he gave gold* by weight for every bason; and *like-wise silver* by weight for every bason of silver: 18. and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for

xxviii. 12. The pattern of all that he had by the spirit. A comparison with ver. 19 shows us that whether 'spirit' here means the Holy Ghost, or David's own spirit, the details of the Temple were Divinely revealed, just as the pattern of the Tabernacle had been shown to Moses on the mount.

the pattern of the chariot ² of the cherubims, that spread ² even the out *their wings*, and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD. 19. All *this*, said David, the LORD made me understand ⁴ in writing by *his hand* upon me, *even* all the works of this pattern. 20. And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do *it*: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, *even* my God, *will be* with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD. 21. And, behold, the ^k courses of the priests ^k and the Levites, *even they shall be with thee* for all the service of the house of God: and *there shall be* with thee for all manner of workmanship every willing skilful man, for any manner of service: also the princes and all the people *will be* wholly at thy commandment.

XXIX. 1. Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, *is yet* young and tender, and the work *is* great: for the palace *is* not for man, but for the LORD God. 2. Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for *things to be made* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and the brass for *things* of brass, the iron for *things* of iron, and wood for *things* of wood; onyx stones, and *stones* to be set, ³ glistening stones, and of ³ stones for divers colours, and all manner of ¹ precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. 3. Moreover, because I have set my affection ^m to the house of my God, ⁴ I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, *which* I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, 4. *even* three thousand talents of gold, of the ⁿ gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses *withal*: 5. the gold for *things* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and for all manner of work *to be made* by the hands of artificers. And who *then* ⁵ is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD? 6. Then the chief of the

² even the cherubim (see Ps. xviii. 10).

⁴ Exod. xxv.-xxvii.

^k chaps. xxiv.-xxvi.

³ stones for inlaid work. ¹ Isa. liv. 11, 12; Rev. xxi. 18, etc.

^m Ps. xxvi. 8. ⁴ seeing that I have a treasure of mine own of gold and silver, I give it . . .

ⁿ 1 Kings ix. 28.

⁵ offereth willingly to consecrate himself.

fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly, 7. and gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand ^e darics, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. 8. And they with whom *precious stones* were found gave *them* to the treasure of the house of the LORD, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. 9. Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered ^o willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD : and David the king also rejoiced with great joy. 10. Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation : and David said, Blessed *be* thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. 11. Thine, O LORD, *is* the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty : for all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is thine* ; thine *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. 12. Both riches and honour *come* of ^p thee, and thou reignest over all ; and in thine hand *is* power and might ; and in thine hand *it is* to make great, and to give strength unto all. 13. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. 14. But who *am* I, and what *is* my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort ? for all things *come* of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. 15. For we *are* ^q strangers before thee, and sojourners, as *were* all our fathers : our days on the earth *are* as a shadow, and *there is* none abiding. 16. O LORD our God, all this

^e darics.

^o Exod. xxxvi. 5 ; 2 Cor. ix. 7.

^p Rom. xi. 36 ; 1 Cor. iv. 7.

^q Heb. xi. 13 ; xii. 14.

XXIX. 14. All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. These beautiful words, which express the truest spirit of religious devotion, have passed into the liturgical language of the Catholic Church, and are found in many of the ancient liturgies in connection with the offering of the Eucharist.

15. Our days on the earth are as a shadow. The transitory character of human life is contrasted with the eternity of God (cf. Ps. xc.). And religious men have always found consolation in the abiding character of God's Church, and the continuity of Divine worship.

store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name *cometh* of thine hand, and *is* all thine own. 17. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things : and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee. 18. O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee : 19. and give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all *these things*, and to build the palace, *for* the which I have made provision. 20. And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the

This thought is remarkably illustrated in the following passage from Carlyle's *French Revolution*, book i. chap. ii. :—

'Observe, however, that of man's whole terrestrial possessions and attainments, unspeakably the noblest are his symbols, divine or divine-seeming ; under which he marches and fights, with victorious assurance, in this life-battle ; what we can call his Realised Ideals. Of which realised ideals, omitting the rest, consider only these two—his Church, or spiritual Guidance ; his Kingship, or temporal one. The Church ! what a word was there ; richer than Golconda or the treasures of the world ! In the heart of the remotest mountains rises the little Kirk ; the Dead all slumbering round it, under their white memorial stones, 'in hope of a happy resurrection':—dull wert thou, O Reader, if never in any hour (say of moaning midnight, when such Kirk hung spectral in the sky, and Being was as if swallowed up in Darkness) it spoke to thee—things unspeakable, that went into thy soul's soul. Strong was he that had a Church, what we can call a Church ; he stood thereby, though "in the centre of Immensities, in the conflux of Eternities," yet manlike towards God and man ; the vague shoreless Universe had become for him a firm city, and dwelling which he knew. Such virtue was in Belief ; in these words, well spoken : *I believe*. Well might men prize their *Credo*, and raise stateliest temples for it, and reverend Hierarchies, and give it the title of their substance ; it was worth living for, and dying for.'

19. **The palace**, *i.e.* the Temple, for the Hebrew word is the same for both.

20. **Worshipped the Lord, and the king**. This does not mean, of course, that divine worship was paid to David, but that the outward expression of homage was rendered to him. There are different sorts of 'worship' recognised in the Church : there is the highest worship, which may be offered to God alone ; and the lower worship, which may be given to all

congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads and worshipped the LORD, and the king. 21. And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings unto the LORD, on the morrow after that day, *even* a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, *and* a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel: 22. and did eat and drink before the LORD on that day with great gladness.

connected with, or specially consecrated by God. So in holy matrimony the bridegroom says to the bride, 'With my body I thee worship,' meaning that he gives the due honour which ought to be paid to that human nature which is sanctified by the Incarnation.

22. Did eat and drink before the Lord on that day with great gladness. A feast on the sacrifice was the regular accompaniment of all joyful offerings. In the 'peace-offerings' and 'thank-offerings' the priest and all the worshippers feasted together. See note on 1 Sam. i. 4. Cf. Exod. xxiv. 11.

LESSON XXVIII

David's Preparation for the Temple

MATTER.

1. David's desire to prepare for the Temple.

David, though he could not build the Temple, yet like all God's saints 'did what he could.' See S. Mark xiv. 8. He prepared for the Temple, because (a) he knew that the worship of God, the honouring of God's name, is the highest glory of a nation just as it is of an individual. David knew the value of riches and prosperity; he had felt the glory of victory, and the comforts of peace; but beyond all that he desired that his people should give due honour to God, should worship and thank Him collectively. (b) He himself loved the Name of God, i.e. all that God had revealed. So he loved the beauty of ordered worship, all that tended to make God's Name revered by men. He had previously arranged the courses of priests and all the

METHOD.

1. Recapitulate briefly David's first desire to build the Temple. Then question as to David's *motives* in preparing for it.

Illustrate David's insight into the importance of *national* religion by explaining the phrase 'Church of England.' Our own forefathers knew that England's national existence began with the foundation of the Church; and that a nation without religion can never be really great in the eyes of God.

Point out how much we owe in England to the past, to the kings and great men who loved the Church; speak of our cathedrals, parish churches, our Prayer Book, and the beautiful reverent services of the Church.

LESSON XXVIII—*continued*. DAVID'S PREPARATION FOR THE TEMPLE

MATTER.

officers of the sanctuary; he had written Psalms himself for the worship of God, but he still seeks what more he can do to show his love and to set an example of devotion to his son and his people.

2. The manner of David's preparation for the Temple.

Note (a) *his generosity*. Everything must be of the best, the best material and the best workmanship. And he gave of *his own* (2 Chron. xxix. 3); though it was a national offering, yet he gave first of 'his own proper good.' Just as he would not take Araunah's threshing-floor for religious purposes without paying for it, so now he will not merely collect money from his people, though he might reasonably have done so, but gives first of his own.

(b) *His obedience*. He conforms his design for the Temple to the Divine teaching and the heavenly pattern. He does not seek to impose upon the service of God his own private fancies and likings. He knows that 'to obey is better than sacrifice.'

(c) *His zeal*. He does not merely labour and give himself, but seeks to influence others. He leaves no effort to infuse his own love of the sanctuary and his own generosity into the heart of Solomon and of the nation at large. And he has the joy of seeing a ready response. More than that, he sees his people learn themselves the joy of giving and of self-consecration (ver. 9).

(d) *His prayerfulness*. David's gifts are offered in a prayerful spirit. There is nothing of self or self-importance in what he does. In making his truly royal gifts he confesses the greatness of God

METHOD.

Try to inculcate *love* of the national Church.

2. Remind the children of David's *buying* the threshing-floor of Araunah.

(a) Describe his preparations, and illustrate from the devotion of our ancestors in giving the very best to the cathedrals.

Take advantage of any cathedral or old parish church which may be known to the children.

(b) Show that *obedience* is the distinguishing mark of the Catholic Church as opposed to sects which are the invention of men. The same plan is observed in all churches, the altar is most prominent; the purpose of a church primarily is for *worshipping* God and receiving the sacraments which God ordained, not for hearing music or pleasing ourselves.

(c) Point out that the danger of belonging to such a Church as ours, where so much has been done for us, is to think that we need not do anything ourselves.

Every one may and ought to help. Remind of the offertory, the poor-box, the missionary collections.

(d) Almsgiving is no virtue unless it be done in the right spirit—humility, prayer, thankfulness.

Illustrate by the builders of the cathedrals, who never published their names nor put up memorials

LESSON XXVIII—*continued*. DAVID'S PREPARATION FOR THE TEMPLE

MATTER.

alone, and the nothingness of man. And he directs the people not to bless and thank *him*, but God. God has given all, and thanks must be given to Him both for the gifts and for the will to return His gifts to Him.

METHOD.

of themselves. Their names, both architects and builders alike, are forgotten ; God remembers them.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

David preparing for the Temple.

'God loveth a cheerful giver.'

1. *Why did David prepare for building the Temple ?*

(1) Because *religion* is the glory of a nation, more than riches, prosperity, victory.
So we have the *Church of England*.

(2) Because he *loved* the worship of God.

2. *How did David prepare for the Temple ?*

(1) He gave of his very best—gold, silver, precious stones.

(2) He was *obedient* to what God taught him.

(3) He tried to make others generous :
Solomon,
his people.

(4) He gave with prayer,
humbly,
thankfully.

Learn—'All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.'

1 CHRONICLES XXVIII. 1-10; 1 KINGS I.

AND David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem. 2. Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people : *As for me*, I had in mine heart to ^a build an house of rest ^a 2 Sam. vii. for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the ^b footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building : ^b Ps. xcix. 5. 3. but God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou *hast been* a man of war, and hast shed blood. 4. Howbeit the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever : for he hath chosen ^c Judah to be the ruler ; ^c Gen. xlix. 8. ; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father ; and ^d among the sons of my father he ^d liked me to make me ^e king over all Israel : ^e 1 took pleasure in me. 5. and of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. 6. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts : for I have chosen

1 CHRON. XXVIII. 1. **And David assembled**, etc. It is almost impossible to arrange the two accounts of David's later years in Kings and Chronicles in order of time with any certainty. The first ten verses of 1 Chron. xxviii. are inserted here, because they contain the most definite statement of David's appointment of Solomon as his successor, and so form an introduction to the futile attempt of Adonijah to gain the crown (apparently at a later date).

2. **The footstool of our God.** God is represented in the Old Testament as enthroned above the mercy-seat, which thus as it were forms the footstool of His throne. So the cherubim, with their outstretched wings, are the support of God's throne. Cf. Ps. xviii. 10 and Ezek. i. 24-26.

him *to be* my son, and I will be his father. 7. Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day. 8. Now therefore in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the LORD, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God: that ye may possess this good land, and leave *it* for an inheritance for your children after you for ever. 9. And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. 10. Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do *it*.

1 KINGS I. 1. Now king David was old *and* stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. 2. Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin; and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. 3. So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. 4. And the damsel *was* very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but
d 2 Sam. iii. 4. the king knew her not. 5. Then ^dAdonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he
e 2 Sam. xv. 1. ^eprepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. 6. And his father had not displeased him at

1 KINGS I. 5. Adonijah the son of Haggith. See marginal reference. Probably he was now the eldest surviving son of David, and naturally would consider himself heir to the throne. But in the kingdom of God Divine election overrides mere human standards. So Ephraim was set before Manasseh, Jacob before Esau. Cf. Adonijah's own confession (ii. 15).

6. His father had not displeased him at any time. What a concise description of 'a spoilt child'; and what a proof that 'spoiling' children

any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also *was a very goodly man*; and ²*his mother* bare him after ²he was born. Absalom. 7. And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped *him*. 8. But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which *belonged* to David, were not with Adonijah. 9. And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which *is* by ^fEn-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and ^f2 ^{Sam. xvii.} all the men of Judah the king's servants: 10. but Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not. 11. Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth *it* not? 12. Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. 13. Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? 14. Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and

is neither good for themselves nor their parents! David's indulgence to Adonijah brought sorrow upon himself and ruin to his son. We may reasonably conclude that Solomon had in his mind David's mismanagement of his children when he spoke the different Proverbs which deal with this subject. See Prov. xiii. 24; xxii. 6; xxiii. 13, 14; xxix. 15.

12. That thou mayest save thine own life, etc. This alludes to the common Oriental custom of putting to death possible claimants to the throne. Both Bath-sheba and Solomon would have met this fate at the hand of Adonijah had his attempt been successful.

13. Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid. This special promise to Bath-sheba is nowhere recorded. The allusion illustrates the fact that should always be remembered, that the Bible is not a complete history of events, but a *selection* made under the Holy Spirit's guidance for a Divine purpose.

confirm thy words. 15. And Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber : and the king was very old ; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. 16. And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou ? 17. And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, *saying*, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. 18. And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth ; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest *it* not : 19. and he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host : but Solomon thy servant hath he not called. 20. And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel *are* upon thee, that thou shouldst tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. 21. Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders. 22. And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. 23. And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. 24. And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne ? 25. For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest ; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah. 26. But me, *even* me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. 27. Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed *it* unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him ? 28. Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And

she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king. 29. And the king swore, and said, *As* the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, 30. even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day. 31. Then Bath-sheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever. 32. And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. 33. The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own ^g mule, and bring him down ^g Esth. vi. 8. to ^h Gihon: 34. and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the ^h prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye ^h with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. 2 Chron. xxxii. 30. 35. Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. 36. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*. 37. As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David. 38. So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. 39. And Zadok the priest took ³ an ⁴ horn of oil out of the taber- ³ the horn. nacle, and anointed Solomon. ⁴ Exod. xxx. And they blew the trumpet; ²³ etc. and all the people said, God save king Solomon. 40. And

39. **And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil.** See Revised Version. Evidently a special vessel of sacred oil was kept in the Tabernacle to anoint high priests and kings. So for many centuries the kings of France were anointed with oil from a special vessel kept in the cathedral of Rheims.

all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them. 41. And Adonijah and all the guests that *were* with him heard *it* as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore *is this* noise of the city being in an uproar? 42. And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou *art* a valiant man, and bringest good tidings. 43. And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king. 44. And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule: 45. and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This *is* the noise that ye have heard. 46. And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom. 47. And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king * bowed himself upon the bed. 48. And also thus said the king, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which hath given *one* to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing *it*. 49. And all the guests that *were* with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way. 50. And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. 51. And it was told Solomon, saying,

50. **Caught hold on the horns of the altar.** The sanctuary of God in ancient times, both in Israel and among the heathen nations, just as in the mediæval Christian Church, was always considered a place of refuge for those in peril of their life. There was nothing to justify this in the law of Moses; but it is an example of an early custom surviving into more settled times. It was undoubtedly a good custom in days when

Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon : for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to-day that he will not slay his servant with the sword. 52. And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth : but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. 53. So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon : and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

private vengeance was permitted, and before the absolute supremacy of law had been established. But in Israel, though recognised, it was not allowed to become an abuse for shielding the guilty. Cf. Ex. xxi. 14. It did not avail Joab to seek sanctuary (ii. 29-34).

LESSON XXIX

The Coronation of Solomon

MATTER.

1. God's choice.

All the way through the sacred history we see the mystery of God's choice : Seth is chosen rather than the family of Cain ; Shem from the sons of Noah ; Isaac rather than Ishmael ; Jacob than Esau ; Judah from the sons of Jacob, and not Reuben the firstborn ; David, the youngest of the sons of Jesse ; and now David solemnly announces to the heads of his people, being himself a prophet, that the Divine choice rests upon Solomon.

In considering this mystery of election, we have to remember (a) the sovereignty of God. He has an undoubted right to do what He will with His own creatures : to lift up the beggar from the dunghill ; to override all the world's standards and the ordinary judgments of men ; to choose whom He wills, without reference to age or station or outward greatness.

METHOD.

1. Illustrate the Divine choice of Solomon by the previous history of God's dealings with man (as opposite).

LESSON XXIX—*continued*. THE CORONATION OF SOLOMON

MATTER.

(b) There is ever a reason for God's choice, a reason which is in accord with absolute justice, truth, and love. But we must not expect to be able always at first sight to see this reason. It will be revealed to us in God's time. And those who are content to wait, knowing that whatever God wills *must* be right, are just those who will understand in the end. It is the self-willed to whom God's judgments and choosings are dark.

2. Adonijah's self-will.

Adonijah had been accustomed to live for *himself*, to make his own self-will the standard of everything. He had never been disciplined, and he had much on his side to make him think that he might snatch the crown from Solomon. He had the position of eldest son; he was good-looking; had a party on his side; was a person of 'dash' and generosity. So in contrast to the Divine fiat, 'he hath chosen Solomon,' Adonijah puts forward *his* decision, 'I will be king.' And in the first confusion, amidst the profuseness of the coronation banquet and the shouts of the mob, 'God save King Adonijah,' it seemed, humanly speaking, that God's will counted for nothing and Adonijah had triumphed.

3. God's providence.

It is absolutely certain that whatever God wills must ultimately in one way or another come to pass. He is master of all circumstances, and they are shaped by Him to further in the long-run His purpose. So here, in spite of human seeming, God's choice of Solomon is vindicated. Nathan, Bathsheba, David himself are God's instruments for carrying out His will. And so the sham coronation of

METHOD.

2. Describe Adonijah, and his rebellion and its result.

Show how the discipline of home and school may help people to submit their own will to God in later life.

No one in the world is to be so much pitied as the child who is allowed to have 'all his own way.'

3. 'Thy will be done.'

Show how God's will was done in spite of Adonijah.

Tell the children that the best thing that can be done by us in life is to help God's will to be done. Nathan, Bathsheba, David were not afraid because they knew that they were doing this.

Show that Solomon is a *type of Christ*, Who is the true King of

LESSON XXIX—*continued.* THE CORONATION OF SOLOMON

MATTER.

Adonijah is followed by the lawful coronation of Solomon, with the sanction of religion and the acceptance of the people. And all these things are types of the great principles which are ever at work in the world: types, too, of what will happen at the Last Day.

METHOD.

the world, and will be confessed as such by all at the last. Adonijah is a type of all who try to usurp the throne of Christ: false religions, tyrants, Satan.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

The Coronation of Solomon.

1. *God's choice.*

God chose Solomon to be king.

So He had chosen Jacob, the tribe of Judah.
David.

God's choice is always right.

2. *Adonijah's self-will.*

Adonijah said, 'I will be king.'

He had his own way at home, and thought he
could have it with God.

3. *God's providence.*

God's will is done. Solomon is crowned.

Adonijah confounded and terrified.

Nathan, Bathsheba, David are instruments
in doing God's will.

So in the end all men will see that *Christ* is
King, and not Satan.

1 KINGS II. 1-10; 1 CHRON. XXIX. 26-30;
1 KINGS II. 12-46

NOW the days of David drew nigh that he should die ;
 and he charged Solomon his son, saying, 2. ^a I go the
 way of all the earth : be thou strong therefore, and
 shew thyself a man ; 3. and ^b keep the charge of the LORD
 thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his
 commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as
 it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper
 in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thy-
 self; 4. that the LORD may continue his word which he
 spake concerning me, saying, ^c If thy children take heed to
 their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart
 and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a
 man on the throne of Israel. 5. Moreover thou knowest
 also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, *and* what he
 did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto ^d Abner
 the son of Ner, and unto ^e Amasa the son of Jether, whom
 he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the
 blood of war upon his girdle that *was* about his loins,
 and in his shoes that *were* on his feet. 6. Do therefore
 according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down
 to the grave in peace. 7. But show kindness unto the

^a Josh. xxiii.
14.

^b Josh. i. ;
Deut. xvii. 18-
20.

^c 2 Sam. vii.

^d 2 Sam. iii.

^e 2 Sam. xx.

4. **If thy children take heed to their way.** The temporal promises of God in the Old Testament to the Jewish nation are *conditional* on their faithfulness to Himself. This accounts for such apparent discrepancies as 2 Sam. vii. 16 compared with Jer. xxii. 30. We ought also to remember that God's threatenings of judgment, however absolutely worded, are yet conditioned by the possibility of repentance. See Jonah iii. 10. The promise of continuance made to the Catholic Church is absolute (S. Matt. xvi. 18). The Church as a whole cannot fail; but any particular part of that Church may (Rev. ii. 5).

5. **(He) put the blood of war upon his girdle, etc.** The idea implied in these metaphorical expressions is that blood-guiltiness stains indelibly. It clings to Joab as closely as his girdle and his shoes. Cf. Ps. cix. 18, 19. For the horror with which blood-guiltiness was regarded, see Ps. li. 14. But Joab never repented as David did.

sons of ^fBarzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those ^f2 Sam. xix. that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. 8. And, behold, *thou hast* with thee ^gShimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of ^g2 Sam. xvi. Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, ^hI will ^h2 Sam. xix. not put thee to death with the sword. 9. Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou *art* a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood. 10. So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the ⁱcity of David.

ⁱ Acts ii, 29;
^{xiii.} 36.

1 CHRON. XXIX. 26. Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. 27. And the time that he reigned over Israel *was* ^kforty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, ^k2 Sam. v. 4. and thirty and three *years* reigned he in Jerusalem. 28. And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead. 29. Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the ^lbook of Samuel the seer, and in ^lhistory. the ^lbook of Nathan the prophet, and in the ^lbook of Gad the seer, 30. with all his reign and his might, and the ^ltimes that went over him, and over Israel, and over all ^lDan. ii. 21; the kingdoms of the countries. ^{iv.} 23.

1 KINGS II. 12. Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

8. And, behold, *thou hast* with thee Shimei. We must not accuse David of breaking his promise to Shimei, as we do not know all the circumstances. Most probably Shimei, in spite of the mercy shown to him, was still disloyal at heart, and only waiting for the opportunity to attack the throne of Solomon.

1 CHRON. XXIX. 29. Now the acts of David the king, etc. This verse is interesting as showing us the authority for the narrative of the earlier history of the kingdom of Israel. The most gifted men of the time who had the best opportunities of knowing the truth kept records; and, apart from all question of inspiration, contemporary records of this kind are the most trustworthy sources of history.

13. And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably. 14. He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on. 15. And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and *that* all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the LORD. 16. And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on. 17. And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife. 18. And Bath-sheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king. 19. Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his ^m right hand. 20. Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; *I pray thee*, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay. 21. And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. 22. And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag, the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he *is* mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah. 23. Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. 24. Now therefore, *as* the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised,

^m Ps. xlv. 9.

1 KINGS II. 22. Ask for him the kingdom also. To ask in marriage one who, if not actually the wife of David, had occupied that position, was, in the eyes of an Oriental, equivalent to making an attempt on the throne. Adonijah had evidently not learnt by experience, although he knew (ver. 15) that Solomon's throne was Divinely established.

Adonijah shall be put to death this day. 25. And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada ; and he fell upon him that he died. 26. And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields ; for thou *art* worthy of death : but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou ^a barest the ark of ⁿ 1 Sam. xxiii. the Lord GOD before David my father, and because thou hast been ^o afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted. ^o 2 Sam. xv.

27. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD ; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, ^p which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh. ^p 1 Sam. ii. 31, 35.

28. Then tidings came to Joab : for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. 29. And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD ; and, behold, *he is* by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him. 30. And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay ; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. 31. And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him ; that thou mayest take away

26. **Abiathar the priest** (see i. 7). Abiathar's punishment for the part he took in Adonijah's rebellion had apparently been deferred. But now that it is seen that the danger was not past, he is punished by deposition and exile from court.

27. **That he might fulfil the word of the Lord.** It is not meant that Solomon had this idea in his mind, but simply that events were so ordered by God that the retribution foretold against the house of Eli (1 Sam. ii.) might after so many years be consummated. With the accession of Zadok (ver. 35) the high priesthood passes now again to the elder branch of the family of Aaron.

28. **And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord.** See notes on chap. i. 50. It is remarkable that Gibeon, the place of the tabernacle, was the very spot where Joab had murdered Amasa. So the dogs licked Ahab's blood in retribution for the murder of Naboth, and the dead body of Joram his son was cast into the very spot of the murder, by order of Jehu (1 Kings xxi. 19, xxii. 38 ; 2 Kings ix. 26).

g Num. xxxv. 33. the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father. 32. And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. 33. Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD. 34. So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. 35. And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar. 36. And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. 37. For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head. 38. And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. 39. And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath. 40. And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. 41. And it was told Solomon that

36. And the king sent and called for Shimei, etc. The policy pursued by Solomon is more merciful than would generally have been adopted by Oriental kings. It seems pretty certain, as suggested above, that Shimei was still disloyal. The light way in which he breaks his oath to pursue two runaway servants shows that he had no real respect for Solomon nor for his own word and oath.

Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again. 42. And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard is good. 43. Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with? 44. The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head; 45. and king Solomon *shall be* blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever. 46. So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

LESSON XXX

David's Farewell

MATTER.

1. A good death.

David's life had been full of the strangest vicissitudes: dangers, humiliations, and triumphs. Throughout it all we can trace, as David did himself, the hand of God in providence, mercy, and justice. His extreme old age is peaceful, happy in itself, and honoured by men. Why? Because in spite of many mistakes, and one grievous fall, he had clung to God with the whole affection of his heart. This was the secret of his life, and the reason why he could face death with equanimity. Death is not merely the end of life, but the consummation of life. Life is a preparation for death. So to die well we must

METHOD.

1. Begin with the phrase, 'I go the way of all the earth.' Question on the meaning of death: its origin, its certainty, its hopes. Especially show that none need be afraid of death, except those who have lived without God. Show that David could face death with a peaceful mind because he had always *loved* God.

LESSON XXX—continued. DAVID'S FAREWELL

MATTER.

live well. Knowing this, David gives his last solemn charge to Solomon: he lays down general principles of life, as well as gives him advice on details of policy.

2. Rules for a good life.

(1) *Courage.* It is remarkable how often in Holy Scripture this is insisted upon. Moses commands Joshua over and over again to be strong and of a good courage. So S. Paul bids Christians 'quit themselves like men and be strong' (1 Cor. xvi. 13; Eph. vi. 10). The secret of this courage is supernatural: it consists in faithfulness to a divine vocation. When God calls a man to any work or any line of life, true faithfulness consists in being brave to answer to this calling, not to shrink from it in false humility. So Solomon has been chosen by God to this high office of royalty, to be the builder of the Temple, and to carry on his father's work. He must be brave to respond to the call. It may involve on the very outset acts of severity such as the execution of Joab; but true courage will not shrink from such.

(2) *Loyalty to God's Word.* Again, just as Moses commands Joshua (Josh. i.) to be obedient to the Word of God, to whatever has been revealed, so David bids Solomon, as the guarantee of prosperity, to take heed to the Law. Revelation is the greatest and most solemn fact in the world's history, and the standard of belief and of life to God's faithful in all ages has been this—has God revealed it? spoken it, commanded it? So Dr. Pusey tells us that at a most trying time of his life, when death seemed near and there was much to perplex and discourage, he found consolation in

METHOD.

2. (1) Question on courage.

Show that the truly brave are those who have something to fight for—home, country, truth, the law of God. Solomon is bidden to be brave because God has called him to be king. He has God behind him, as it were, and ever supporting him.

Illustrate by our Christian calling in Baptism to be soldiers of Christ.

(2) Show that the Bible is the guide of life. David had very little, only the Law of Moses; but he valued that and lived by it.

Illustrate by Bible given to bishops at consecration, and to priests at ordination, and to sovereign at coronation.

Cf. Ps. xix. 7-14; Ps. cxix., especially verses 97-104; 2 Tim. iii. 14-16.

LESSON XXX—*continued.* DAVID'S FAREWELL

MATTER.

this confession—'I believe whatever God has revealed; and if there be anything which God has revealed and I do not know it, I would fain know it that I may believe it' (*The Truth and Office of the English Church*, p. 7).

METHOD.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

David's Farewell.

1. *A good death.*

David had a peaceful and happy death because he had loved God.

He knew that a good life is the only preparation for a good death.

Therefore he gave Solomon rules of life.

2. *Rules for a good life.*

(1) Be brave, because God has called you to work for Him and to do right.

(2) Obey God's word.

Look for guidance always in the Bible.

Learn: 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths.'

2 SAMUEL XXIII. 1-7

NOW these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, 2. The ^a Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue. 3. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, ¹ He that ruleth over men *must be* just, ruling in the fear of God. 4. And *he shall be* as the light of the morning,

a S. Matt. xxii. 43; Acts ii. 30.
1 Marg. There shall be one that ruleth over men righteously—and it shall be.

1. **Now these be the last words of David.** This passage is worthy of the most careful study. It gives us the inspired key to the meaning of the Davidic sovereignty. And it also sets David himself in the right relation to the great mystery of Prophecy. He was not only a Divinely appointed king; and the ancestor according to the flesh of the Messiah; but he was also an inspired prophet. This is plainly implied in the next words, as explained in the note.

David the son of Jesse said. The words mean literally the 'oracle of David,' etc., as in Ps. cx. 1, and imply that what follows is a Divinely taught utterance.

The sweet psalmist of Israel. David himself not only wrote elegies, such as those in 2 Sam. i., but psalms which were used in the liturgical worship of God. Some of those are undoubtedly included in our present Psalter. The Church has always believed this, so much so indeed that all the psalms have been spoken of as 'Psalms of David.' This, of course, is not literally true, nor are the titles of the psalms, as we find them in the Bible version, of inspired authority; but to deny that David wrote any of the existing psalms is to go in the very teeth of clear evidence. It was the great distinction of David to be the first to give the Church, both Jewish and Catholic, words in which to express rightly the praise of God, and the aspirations of the creature towards his Creator.

3. **He that ruleth over men, etc.** The alternative translations given in the margin of the Revised Version bring out more clearly the fundamental idea in these 'last words of David.' God had given David the promise of the eternal ruler in 2 Sam. vii. And now the Spirit of God suggests to him at the end of his life of what sort this Ruler will be. It is a vision of perfectness, which is only fulfilled in Christ the King. The characteristic of Christ's kingdom will be not *force*, but *righteousness*. It will dawn upon men as the revelation of perfect beauty: cf. Ps. cx. 3; and as the wakening into life of all human powers and possibilities of perfection.

4. **And he shall be as the light of the morning.** One of the favourite images under which Holy Scripture describes the coming of Christ. Cf.

when the sun riseth, *even* a morning without clouds; as the tender grass *springing* out of the earth by clear shining after rain. 5. ² Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me ^b an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow. 6. But *the* ³ sons of Belial *shall be* all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: 7. but the man *that* shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in ⁴ the *same* place.

² Marg. For is not my house so with God? for he hath made with me . . . for all my salvation, and all my desire, will he not make it to grow?
³ Isa. lv. 3. ungodly shall
⁴ their place.

Isa. ix. 2; Hosea vi. 3; Mal. iv. 2, 'the Sun of righteousness'; in the *Benedictus* 'the day-spring from on high'; in the *Nunc Dimittis*, 'a light to lighten the Gentiles.' So the early Christians at their baptism turned to the east, the place of the sun-rising, to confess their new faith; having first, with their faces to the west, renounced the devil, and the setting-sun of paganism, and the old world of sin.

As the tender grass springing out of the earth. This is another favourite image in Scripture, comparing the coming of Christ to the gracious, life-giving influence of the rain, followed by the sunshine. Cf. Ps. lxxii. 16; Isa. xlii. 3, 4. Just as the world was *in darkness* till Christ came and shone upon it, so the world was *dead*, all the strivings and hopes of human nature ended in vanity, the flowers of human life were withered; but Christ came and awoke all the powers of human nature, and made it live with a true and undying life. The simile is even more expressive to those who know the wonderful transformation in the face of nature which the annual rains effect in eastern countries.

5. Although my house be not so with God. The marginal reading of the Revised Version again suggests the meaning. David recognises in prophetic vision that this ideal of kingship will be realised through the promise made to his family by God (2 Sam. vii.). God in His good time will 'make it grow.' Even though it appeared to men 'not to grow,' as the Davidic sovereignty ran its chequered course through kings like Ahaz and Manasseh, and seemingly ended for ever in the miserable weaklings who brought upon themselves the wrath of Babylon; yet the Divine purpose remained sure, and was ever progressing beneath the surface of history; until the fulness of time came, and the maiden of David's line conceived and bare a Son Whose name was Immanuel, 'God with us.'

6. But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away. The revelation of Christ's kingdom brings with it as a necessary consequence the judgment of the wicked. They who elsewhere are spoken of as the 'tares' among the wheat, and who ultimately will be rooted out and burned, are here represented as 'thorns.' The hand of man is powerless to tear them out, but the armed angels of judgment shall in the end root them up (Ps. xxxvii. 38; S. Matt. xiii. 41-42), and burn them utterly (Isa. lxvi. 24).

LESSON XXXI

David's Vision of the Christ

MATTER.

1. David a prophet.

A prophet is one to whom God reveals truth, which he may in turn declare to his fellow-men. In these 'last words' David declares the sum and substance of what God had revealed to him, how or when we know not.

God not only promised David that the kingdom should be eternal in his family, i.e. that *Christ should come of David's line*: but He also gave David the power of seeing in vision, dimly but truly, *what manner of king Christ should be*. The perfect ruler of mankind on earth was the ideal to which all the prophets looked forward. David speaks of it as 'all my salvation and all my desire.' So Jacob on his death-bed had said, 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord' (Gen. xlix. 18). Cf. 1 S. Peter i. 10, 11; Acts ii. 30, 31.

2. David sees Christ as the king.

(1) Of *perfect justice*. It is the function of a king to maintain justice. Judges receive their authority from the crown. And in earlier days the king himself would sit in the gate or on his throne and administer justice, punishing the wicked, justifying and rewarding the righteous. But all earthly justice is imperfect, full of human infirmity; the wicked often seem to triumph, the just and the innocent to fail (cf. Ps. lxxiii.). Even David felt himself 'weak, though anointed king' (2 Sam. iii. 39). Human conscience, our inborn sense of right, craves for the revelation of perfect justice. So David sees in vision

METHOD.

1. Remind of God's promise to David (2 Sam. vii.). Tell the children that God by His Holy Spirit helped David to understand and to write down what Christ would be like when He came. Explain the word 'prophet.' Quote the words of the *Benedictus*: 'As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began.'

Illustrate, if time permits, by the different visions of other prophets.

David saw Christ as King; Isaiah saw Him as a little child, a virgin's son, a sufferer; Zechariah as a priest (Zech. vi. 13).

2. (1) Explain how *conscience* demands that right should triumph, the good be rewarded, and the wicked punished.

Show how earthly justice, kings, judges, laws, etc., are attempts to satisfy this demand.

When Christ comes to reign, perfect justice will be done, and all human mistakes and injustices put right.

Illustrate by S. Matt. xxv. 31-46, and the vision of judgment in Rev. xx. 11-15. We pray for this when we say, 'Thy kingdom come.' The souls of the faithful

LESSON XXXI—continued. DAVID'S VISION OF THE CHRIST

MATTER.

the Christ, Whose justice is perfect, being indeed the Divine righteousness; and Who will ultimately abolish even the mystery of evil itself. The 'sons of Belial,' the ungodly, will be utterly destroyed.

(2) Of *perfect beauty*. Beauty is a necessary part of human ideals. We cannot conceive of perfection except as beautiful. So in Holy Scripture, the Lord Jesus in His Transfiguration, when men for a moment saw Him as He really is, appeared awfully and ineffably beautiful.

Again the heavenly city, new Jerusalem, the perfect state of humanity redeemed, is described as altogether beautiful (Rev. xxi.).

Light, the first creation of God, is the necessary condition of all earthly beauty. So, naturally, the beauty of Christ and of all connected with Him is described under the figure of light. He is compared by David to the sunrise. In the Transfiguration 'His face did shine as the sun'; in the isle of Patmos S. John saw His countenance 'as the sun shineth in his strength' (cf. 2 Cor. iv. 6).

So in the sight of Jesus, all our aspirations after beauty will be perfectly fulfilled and realised.

(3) Of *perfect love*. The ancients spoke of the fertilising of the land by the rain, as the marriage of earth and heaven. So David beautifully describes the effect of the coming of Christ among men, as like the springing forth of the grass, by 'the clear shining after rain.' Following out this same thought, the Church sees in the description of spring-time in the Song of Solomon (ii. 8-17) a figure of the coming of Christ, and especially of His Resurrection.

METHOD.

departed are also praying for it (Rev. vi. 9-11).

(2) Explain the simile of the sunrise, as applied to Christ.

Illustrate by the narrative of the Transfiguration.

Point out how kings are always surrounded by what is beautiful—robes, crown, splendidly dressed guards, beautiful palace.

So we love also to adorn our churches with all that is beautiful.

And all this helps to remind us that our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes again will be perfectly beautiful and glorious.

(3) Explain the simile. Just as the sun and the rain make the grass grow when nothing else will, so the love and encouragement that Christ gives to us makes us true men and true women.

Show how we always do our *best* for those who love us, encourage us, sympathise with us. Work done for love is better than work done from fear or necessity.

So the love of Christ has made

LESSON XXXI—*continued.* DAVID'S VISION OF THE CHRIST

MATTER.

One of the highest functions of kingdom is to encourage and draw out the *best* in man, by sympathy and love. And this has ever been one of the characteristics of Christ's religion. Heathen religions degrade and terrify. Mohammedanism turns the fair places of the earth into deserts. Christianity has always elevated, civilised, beautified, and given *joy* to life.

METHOD.

men aim at the highest, made great artists, great poets, great saints.

BLACKBOARD SKETCH.

David's Vision of the Christ.

1. *David was a prophet.*

God showed him

- (1) That Christ should be David's son.
- (2) What Christ would be like when He came.

2. *David's message to us.*

- (1) Christ will be the King of perfect *justice*.

All goodness will be rewarded by Him.
All evil punished, and done away with.

- (2) Christ will be the King of perfect *beauty*—shining like the sunrise upon the world's darkness.

- (3) Christ will be the King of *love*, helping all to do their best; as the sun and the rain make the grass grow.

Learn: 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty, they shall behold the land that is very far off' (Isa. xxxiii. 17).

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