

The Sunday-School.

FOURTH QUARTER,
LESSON VI.—Nov. 8.

DAVID'S GRIEF OVER ABSALOM.

2 Samuel 18: 24-33.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*A foolish son is a grief to his father.*—Prov. 17: 25.

THE LESSON includes 2 Sam. 15: 13—19: 43.

LEARN BY HEART.—V. 33; Ex. 20: 12; Prov. 13: 15; John 3: 16.

HISTORICAL SETTING.—Place. (1) Between Jerusalem and Mahanaim, (2) Mahanaim (the two hosts or camps), David's temporary capital, a strongly fortified town east of the Jordan, and near the Jabbok. The battlefield was the *Wood of Ephraim*, not the highlands in the tribe of Ephraim, west of the Jordan, but some part of the great forests of Gilead, east of the Jordan, and within one day of Mahanaim (2 Sam. 19: 2.)

DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM JERUSALEM.—In our last lesson we left Absalom with his army marching from Hebron toward Jerusalem to take possession of his father's throne. As soon as David learned of this he prepared to flee from Jerusalem.

Why David Fleed.—This action seems strange. But, so sudden was the outbreak that the city was not in a condition to stand a siege; and the popular excitement had so affected the citizens that David scarcely knew whom to trust. He might be betrayed if he remained. David had no large standing army with which to resist this sudden attack. It was one of the saddest hours in all David's life. "Sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

The Procession.—It was early on the morning of the day after he had received the news of the rebellion that the king left the city of Jerusalem. There is no single day in the Jewish history of which so elaborate an account remains as of this memorable flight.

The Ark Returned to Jerusalem.—The ark of the covenant was the center of religious worship and the symbol of the presence of God. It was felt that where the king was there was the place for the symbols of religion; and, possibly, the high priest felt that God's presence and power would go with the ark. But David ordered them to return with the ark to Jerusalem and place it again in its home on Mt. Zion.

Arrangements for News.—David made arrangements with the priests to send news to him at the fords of the Jordan by means of their two sons.

The Hypocritical Servant.—David and his company proceeded toward the fords of the Jordan. As they began to descend the Mount of Olives, Ziba, the head servant of Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, met them with bread, fruit and wine, and declared that his master took sides with the usurper. David naturally believed him, and gave him all his master's property. Later on, when Mephibosheth declared himself innocent, one-half of the possessions were restored to him.

The Encampment by the Jordan.—David and his company camped toward night in the plain of the Jordan, not far from the fords of Jericho, and awaited news from the capital. As soon as Ahithophel had given his counsel a messenger was despatched to David, telling

him what might take place. That same night he broke camp and crossed the Jordan, out of immediate danger.

The New Capital.—With his company, David proceeded to the fortified town, Mahanaim, near the Jabbok, which he made his temporary capital. Here an army of Israelites was assembled and organized, and three neighboring chiefs sent in provisions.

THE DECISIVE BATTLE.—After David left Jerusalem, Absalom and his army took possession of the city and the palace that same day.

The Council of War.—A council of war was called. Ahithophel advised an immediate attack. This man had been David's close and trusted friend and counselor. He had a grievance since he was the grandfather of Bathsheba and he saw the weakness of David's position at the time, and the strength of Absalom against the other heirs. But David had another counselor, Hushai the Archite. He met David, offered his services, and was sent to Jerusalem to defeat the political wisdom of Ahithophel, by pretending to be on Absalom's side. He defeated Ahithophel's wise counsel by proposing a plan which appealed to Absalom's vanity. Ahithophel felt so certain that Absalom's cause was now lost that he committed suicide.

The Brief Reign of Absalom.—This delay enabled Absalom to reign three months in Jerusalem while he was assembling his army.

The Battle Array.—The armies assembled in the forest of Ephraim. The nature of the country gave advantage to David's little band of trained warriors. The army of Absalom must have been very much larger than David's, for twenty thousand men were slain, besides the many that escaped. But they had no such discipline and organization as David's troops. The armies met, and David's army, under Joab, gained a decisive victory.

THE DEATH OF ABSALOM.—Absalom was separated from his men, and as he fled from a party of the enemy, the mule on which he rode carried him beneath the low branches of a spreading terebinth and left him hanging by the head, probably in a forked bough. Perhaps, also, his long, thick hair got entangled, but there is nothing to support the common idea that he was suspended merely by the hair. The first soldier who came up spared his life because of the king's command, and went to tell Joab. The unscrupulous chief hurried to the spot, and thrust three javelins into Absalom's heart. Absalom's body was cast into a great pit, and a great heap of stones were cast upon him.

HOW THE NEWS WAS BROUGHT TO DAVID.—Vs. 24-32. Two runners brought the news to David. *David sat between the two gates.* The inner and the outer gates. The gates and the gateways of Eastern cities were used as places of public resort, either for business, public deliberation, administration of justice, or of audience for kings and rulers. *If he be alone, there is tidings,* for if he were a fugitive after defeat, there would be others with him. *Is like the running of Ahimaaz.* Every runner has his peculiarities. *A good man . . . with good tidings.* Being a friend of David's he would not be in such haste unless he could bring good news. *Ahimaaz . . . said . . . All is well.* He spoke the truth, but not all the truth. It was well that Absalom was defeated, and that he

was dead; well for he kingdom, and well for David. *Is the young man Absalom safe?* David's heart turned toward his wayward son. *A great tumult, but I knew not what it was.* This was a falsehood. *Cushi came.* He was not so delicate in his announcement of the news. *The enemies of my lord,* etc. He blurts out, as if he were the bearer of good news, that which filled up the measure of David's woe.

DAVID'S LAMENT FOR ABSALOM.—V. 33. *Went up to the chamber.* To be alone in his sorrow. *And wept.* Tears are the safety-valves of the heart. *O my son Absalom!* There is not in the whole of the Old Testament a passage of deeper pathos than this. *Would God I had died for thee* His wish to die in Absalom's stead was no mere extravagance of grief. David knew his own peace was made with God; he could die at any time. If Absalom were spared in life, he might yet repent.

LESSONS FOR TODAY.—Absalom from out the far-off past is still pointing our modern youth to certain great lessons his career teaches us: (1) The way of transgressors is hard. (2) The success of the wicked is short, and then he is like chaff which the wind bloweth away. (3) Sin is sometimes attractive at first, but at last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. (4) The way to true success is not through disobedience to parents. (5) No failure is so terrible as the failure of a life; no ruin like the ruin of a soul. (6) The death of the wicked is lighted by no ray of hope. (7) They that sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind.

Is the Young Man Safe? This is the question every parent and every friend of young men should ask. Is the young man safe from intemperance, from bad companions, from bad books, from dishonest conduct, from bad habits? Is he safe in Jesus Christ? Is he safe in a good home and among good influences? Is he safe for this world? Is he safe for eternity? Ask yourself, also, what you are doing to make him and keep him safe?

A wicked man is reckoned according to his deserts when history makes up its final verdict. Any one who goes in these modern times to Jerusalem will find the men and women and boys still flinging stones against what is called the 'Tomb of Absalom,' to show their detestation of a rebellious child (Prov. 10: 7).



THE ELEVATOR BOY.

Many years ago a wealthy lady living in an inland city, became interested in an elevator boy in the hotel that was her home. She asked him to go to Sabbath school, but was told that his duties would not permit. "Would you go if you could?" On receiving an affirmative reply she went to the proprietor. He readily agreed to let the boy off during Sabbath school time. But another difficulty arose. He had no clothes but his uniform. She supplied them. She took him into her class. She finally brought him to church, with which, in due time, he united. One day she asked what he intended to be when he became a man, and found that he hoped some day to be a minister. By her aid he went to school, to college, to the theological seminary.

When her funeral took place a few years since, a young man was seen to be deeply moved as he gazed into the dead face.

"Who is he?" was asked. "Mrs. — had no sons."

"No, but she was a mother indeed to

Ayer's

Take cold easily? Throat tender? Lungs weak? Any relatives have consumption? Then a cough means a great

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deal to you. Follow your doctor's advice and take Ayer's Cherry Pectoral. It heals, strengthens, prevents.

"For 40 years I have depended on Ayer's Cherry Pectoral for coughs and colds. I know it greatly strengthens weak lungs."
Mrs. F. A. ROBINSON, Saline, Mich.Sec. 50c. \$1.00. J. C. AYER CO., Lowell, Mass.
All druggists.

for Weak Lungs

Ayer's Pills increase the activity of the liver, and thus aid recovery.

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in Fruit Trees, Small Fruits, Ornamentals, Shrubs, Roses, Vines, Seed Potatoes, &c.

Stock true to name and free from San Jose Scale. A permanent position for the right man on either salary or commission.

Stone & Wellington,

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this man when he was an orphan boy," and this story was told.

That minister is still living, and his eye may read these words. He is preaching with power and acceptance, the old Gospel. Through his lips, this retiring, unassuming woman, though dead many years, yet speaketh.—*Presbyterian*.



You Feel all Used Up.

You're discouraged and disgusted—not enough energy to think, less to go to work upon. The reason? You are run down, your blood is poor, your nerves are like India Rubber not like steel as they ought to be. Use Ferrozone and the tired feeling will go, for it makes plenty of rich, red blood that feeds the brain and nerves. The desire to labor comes back and you enjoy it. You don't get tired, because you have used Ferrozone. Neglect not a day longer, Ferrozone will cure you. Sold by all druggists.

Tearing down signals does not delay storms. Opium-laden "medicines" may check coughing, but the cold stays. Do not trifle; when you begin to cough, take Allen's Lung Balsam, free from opium, full of healing power.

A Purely Vegetable Pill.—Parmelee's Vegetable Pills are compounded from roots, herbs and solid extracts of known virtue in the treatment of liver and kidney complaints, and in giving tone to the system, whether enfeebled by overwork or deranged through excesses in living. They require no testimonial. Their excellent qualities are well known to all those who have used them and they commend themselves to dyspeptics and those subject to biliousness who are in quest of a beneficial medicine.