

## The Sunday-School.

THIRD QUARTER,  
LESSON IX.—Aug. 30.

## DAVID SPARES SAUL.

I SAMUEL 26: 5-12, 21-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you.* Luke 6: 27.

THE LESSON includes the two stories of David's sparing Saul (1 Sam. 24: 1-22; 26: 1-25).

LEARN BY HEART.—Matt. 5: 43-45; Rom. 12: 17-21; Matt. 6: 12.

HISTORICAL SETTING.—*Time.* Some time during the seven years of exile before he came to be king, B.C. 1062-1055, or 1024-1017.

*Place.*—The wilderness of Judea, including Maon, Carmel, the hill Hachilah, and the wilderness of Ziph, all from four to eight miles south and east of Hebron; the cave of Adullam, southwest of Jerusalem, about two miles from Elah, where David conquered Goliath; and Engedi, a wilderness west of the Dead Sea, and bordering upon it.

Saul's capital was at Gilbeah, three or four miles north of Jerusalem.

Samuel died about this time at Ramah, aged 86.

David was between 25 and 30 years old, and an exile.

DAVID'S EXILE EXPERIENCE AND WHAT IT TAUGHT HIM.—Most of David's exile was in the mountainous regions of Judah, with which his early life at Bethlehem must have made him well acquainted.

*Flight to Nob.*—Immediately after David's parting with Jonathan at Gibeah he fled southward to Nob. Nob was the religious capital of the nation, where were the high priest and the tabernacle. In his terror and distrust he told a falsehood to Ahimelech the high priest, and as a friend and relative of the king he was allowed to eat of the sacred shewbread and to take with him the sword of Goliath. The fruit of this lie was the massacre by Saul of the high priest and his family (save Abiathar), and the ministering priests, eighty-five in all (1 Sam. 21, 22).

*Flight to Gath.*—David hastened away from Nob, and fled southwesterly to Gath, a city of the Philistines, the old residence of Goliath. Here he was soon recognized, and was sore afraid. After a very short stay he escaped by feigning madness. In his flight David seems to have lapsed from his accustomed trust in God.

*In the Cave of Adullam.*—Leaving Gath, David returned to the tribe of Judah, and took refuge in the cave of Adullam. Here gathered around him a large band of discontented people.

*The Effect upon David's Future Life of This Exile Experience.*—Hard as these seven years of exile were for David to bear, yet they were most fruitful years to him, as his apprenticeship for the kingdom. He learned his weakness and his need of divine help. He learned entire trust in God under all circumstances. He had the best of opportunities for becoming acquainted with the people; their grievances under Saul; their needs; their dispositions and tendencies. He understood their spiritual as well as their temporal wants. He had practice in the art of governing. He gained experience in

war. He obtained a knowledge of the country and of its enemies. Many of his sweetest songs were wrought out by this long and hard experience, for the comfort and hope not only of his own people, but for God's children in all ages. In spite of his few lapses from faith, he grew in character and manhood, he became strong in faith, large-hearted, wise, and consecrated to God.

DAVID'S BATTLE WITH TEMPTATION.—1 Sam. 26: 1-8. *The Scene.* David, pursued by Saul for years, was now in hiding in the wilderness of Ziph, about four miles southeast of Hebron.

*The Pursuit.*—For some reason some of the inhabitants of the village of Ziph sent word to Saul that David was in their neighborhood. Saul came down with an army of three thousand men. *And David arose*, after he had learned where Saul was encamped, and came to the place. *Abner the son of Ner*, the uncle of Saul was the captain of his hosts, and Saul lay in the trench, within the barricade formed by the baggage wagons. *The people pitched.* Lay down, wrapped in their cloaks, round about him.

*The Temptation.*—*Then answered David*, in response to their suggestions as to what they should do. *Ahimelech the Hittite.* A warrior from the nation of the Hittites. *Abishai the son of Zerujah*, David's sister, and therefore a nephew of David. All were active, trained soldiers. *Abishai*, with reckless gallantry and intense devotion to David, said, *I will go down with thee. Saul lay sleeping within the trench.* The weary soldiers feeling safe slept soundly. *His spear stuck in the ground at his bolster*, the place where his head is. *God hath delivered*, by his guiding providence, *thine enemy into thine hand.*

*The motives* which would powerfully influence David to kill Saul were (1) self-preservation; (2) desire to escape persecution; (3) he could thus immediately occupy the throne; (4) perhaps revenge for all he had suffered; (5) the knowledge that Saul was rapidly becoming unfit to be king; (6) the pressure from his followers, who would consider him foolish not to use his opportunity.

*The wrong* was in the deed itself. He had no business to do evil that good might come. It would have been not only a sin against God, and a crime against the king, but treason against his country. Moreover, Saul was his father-in-law.

DAVID'S VICTORY OVER SELF.—*Who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed* (the divinely appointed king) *and be guiltless?* David restrained his offer from doing what he was unwilling to do himself. *David said*, as if arguing the case with himself. *As the Lord liveth*, etc. The person of the anointed king is in Jehovah's hands. *Take . . . now the spear.* Of beautiful and costly workmanship. *And the cruse.* A small jug. *And no man saw it, nor knew it.* David and Abishai were practised scouts who could do such work noiselessly. *Moreover a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them.* Not necessarily miraculous, but perhaps only providential.

OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD.—Vs. 21-25. *Then said Saul, I have sinned. . . I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.* Saul was doubtless sincere, but his repentance was like the

early dew. *Let one of the young men*, etc., for he durst not now venture to put himself in Saul's power. *The Lord render*, etc. David committed his case wholly to God. He would not take vengeance into his own hands. *Delivered thee into my hand.* I have been faithful to you. *So let my life.* So may the Lord cause Saul to spare David's life, etc. *Blessed be thou, my son David.* There is a ring of falseness; and this was evidently the impression made on David, for he not only silently declined the royal overtures, but almost immediately removed from the dominions of Saul. *David went on his way, and Saul . . . to his place.* They never looked on each other's faces again.

*Overcoming Evil with Good.*—David practised the divine rule given one thousand years later by Paul, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."



## WHY ATTEND SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The late Mr. B. F. Jacobs, of Chicago, who was well qualified by his forty-four years' experience as a superintendent, to enumerate the grounds on which Sunday school attendance may be urged, gave the following reasons:

1. Our greatest need and greatest gain is personal acquaintance with God.
2. The Bible is the only satisfactory revelation we have of God. His character, and His purpose toward us.
3. It is therefore of supreme importance, even from what might be called a selfish view, that we study the Bible to become acquainted with God and learn our own high destiny.
4. The Sunday school is the only provision of the church for the regular systematic study of the Bible.
5. Of those who do not attend Sunday school, not one in ten studies the Bible at all.
6. It is safe to say that a church member who does not study the Bible is a Christian only by name.
7. As a guide to true success in life, the making of character, the formation of correct habits, acquaintance with right principles of living, and our duty to our fellowmen, the Bible stands far above any book written.
8. For young men, especially, who wish to succeed in business, no book in the world gives such helpful instruction as the Book of Proverbs, while the life and teachings of Jesus Christ present the highest ideal of a noble life.
9. Association with others is a great incentive and a great aid in any branch of study. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."
10. Young men have peculiar temptations from within and without. They need the benefit of helpful associations, a noble ideal, and a pure influence. These can be found nowhere better than in the Sunday school, in a young men's Bible class, taught by a noble Christian man or woman, thoughtfully studying the book in which God reveals to us His own glorious character and how we can become like Him.
11. The Sunday school is not an end in itself, but it is a blessed means to a glorious end. If a young man does not care to learn the highest truth, or to become a noble man, the Sunday school offers him few attractions; but if his

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aim is high, his purpose noble, his heart true, the Sunday school may become an efficient means for securing the aim in view.



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I am not aware of a single supreme effort for the amelioration of the manifold miseries of mankind which has not been due to the inspiration of Christian enthusiasm.—Archdeacon Farrar.

*It Lays a Stilling Hand on Pain*—For pains in the joints and limbs and for rheumatic pains, neuralgia and lumbago, Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil is without a peer. Well rubbed in, the skin absorbs it, and it quickly and permanently relieves the affected parts. Its value lies in its magic property of removing pain from the body and for that good quality it is prized.

What portion of God's life of his sanctity, of his tenderness, of his benign activity, of his untroubled peace, of his supreme regard for holiness, lives also in us? That is the meaning of the measure of our devotion.—John Hamilton Thom.