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ANALYSIS
OF THE
SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

WITH NOTES
CRITICAL, HISTORICAL, AND GEOGRAPHICAL;
ALSO
MAPS AND EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

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EZRA, AND NEHEMIAH.

CHIEFLY INTENDED FOR
CANDIDATES PREPARING FOR THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE LOCAL
AND THE COLLEGE OF PRECEPTORS' EXAMINATIONS.

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PREFACE.

IN studying Scripture History, a difficulty is often experienced, especially by young students, in not being able to obtain a simple and connected view of the whole narrative, before entering upon the minute details. Being aware of this difficulty, I have endeavoured in the following work to give such a connected view of the incidents recorded in the Second Book of Samuel as should make the study of that Book interesting and profitable.

I would recommend a careful study of the narrative portion of the Analysis first, and, after this is done, an examination of the Book, chapter by chapter, with the aid of the notes and questions in the latter portion. Clear views of the Book will thus be obtained in an easy and gradual manner.

I hope this Analysis, like those which have preceded it, will be found useful, not only to those who are preparing for the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations, but to all who avail themselves of its help in studying this interesting and important part of the Word of God.

T. B. J.

SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

For some years David had been compelled to wander from place to place to escape the vengeance of King Saul. In the desert of Ziph, whither he had been pursued, he had been assured of the royal protection and friendship, but, notwithstanding this, and the merciful interposition of Divine providence in his favour, David feared that he should "one day perish by the hand of Saul;" and so, in a fit of despondency, he again sought refuge for himself and his friends in the Kingdom of Achish, the King of Gath. Achish, in the belief that David would be able to render substantial help in any military expedition which might be undertaken, received him kindly and gave him Ziklag, a town in the frontier of Judah, to dwell in. This town had been allotted to the tribe of Simeon in the time of Joshua (Josh. xix., 5,) but had been taken by the Philistines and was now unoccupied. Here David remained for about a year and a half, during which time the number of his followers considerably increased. During this period, also, David made successful incursions upon the territories of the Amalekites and other enemies of Israel, Achish, however, being led to believe that these inroads were upon Judah itself,—an act of deception which flowed from David's unbelief in Divine protection, and which occasioned much perplexity and trouble.

The Philistines having resolved to invade the territories of the Israelites, Achish showed his confidence in David by inviting him to join the expedition. David must have felt great difficulty in knowing how to act, consistently with the confidence which the King of Gath reposed in him, with patriotism and the duty he owed to his own countrymen, and with his own interests as the anointed heir to the Crown and Kingdom of Israel. It seemed as if he would be compelled to decide between fighting against his country and being so convicted of duplicity and intrigue as to forfeit the protection and bring down upon himself the wrath of Achish. But from this difficulty he was providentially extricated by the jealousy of the Philistines, who did not feel the same confidence in David's loyalty and attachment that Achish felt, and who, therefore, urgently requested his dismissal. Achish was distressed by the rudeness and distrust of his associates, and apologised to David for the affront. But David was no doubt well pleased to be disengaged from service against his own countrymen, and thus delivered from a most embarrassing and equivocal position. He and his men were sent back, and the army of the Philistines proceeded northwards, penetrating as far as Shunem, in the plain of Jezreel (Esdraelon), whence they descried Saul and his army encamped on the opposite mountains of Gilboa, to the south-west of the Sea of Galilee, and separated from them by a valley about three miles broad.

On the return of David and his men to Ziklag a sad spectacle presented itself. The town was a heap of smoking ruins, and all their relatives had been carried off. The leaders of the Philistines, eager to strike a decisive blow, had led all their disposable forces against the Israelites and thus left their own country unprotected. On the southern borders

there hung a foe only too able and too willing to profit by this opportunity. The Bedouin Amalekites, who had been plundered during the previous year, took advantage of the absence of the Philistine troops to invade the country and carry off much spoil. Among these depredations Ziklag had been taken and burned, and the Amalekites had gone off, like true sons of the desert, with all the plunder they could carry, and all the captives they could conveniently convey to be retained or sold as slaves. The two wives of David were among the captives. This unexpected raid and disaster placed David in the greatest peril. When the news of the plunder and conflagration became known, a wild scene of passionate weeping, frantic grief, and angry recrimination ensued. The people were ready to stone David because he had not been there to defend the place or left a sufficient guard. But in this situation of perplexity and distress he acted calmly and wisely. He did not give way to despair, he asked direction and help from God, and his self-possession, piety, and decision rapidly restored quietness and confidence. By Divine guidance and with the promise of success, David and his troops pursued the retreating Amalekites, and, having come upon them while off their guard, and encumbered with prisoners and spoil, they suddenly attacked and utterly defeated them. All that the Amalekites had taken away was recovered, and David and his followers were enriched with the valuable booty of the invaders. After satisfying the just claims of his soldiers, he sent presents to the elders of Judah who were friendly to him, and also requited the inhabitants of those towns and districts whose hospitality he had enjoyed. As the consequence of David's bravery, success and liberality, there was a further increase to the number of his followers.

DAVID RECEIVES INFORMATION OF THE DEATH OF SAUL. On the third day after David's return to Ziklag from the pursuit and slaughter of the Amalekites he was informed by an Amalekite, who had come from the camp of Saul and who appeared before him "with his clothes rent and earth upon his head," of the result of the engagement between the Philistines and the Israelites. This man was either a camp follower or a plunderer, and, in either case, he desired to enrich himself at the expense of the defeated army. The Israelites had been completely routed, and very many of the people in their endeavour to escape across the heights of Gilboa into the Jordan valley had been put to death. Saul and three of his sons were among the slain. When David met the Amalekite he anxiously enquired the result of the battle. It was his patriotism, his deep interest in the welfare of Israel, that excited his concern, and not personal ambition or any selfish principle. The Amalekite, however, seems to have known that Saul was David's bitterest enemy, that David was the generally accepted successor of Saul, and to have thought that he would be pleased to learn that the obstacle which stood between him and the throne had been removed. He therefore, in the expectation of ingratiating himself with David, stated that he had killed the King of Israel; that Saul, wounded and weary and leaning upon his spear for support, with his followers scattered or dead, and his pursuers close at hand, had entreated him to slay him, for, said he, "anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me,"—and that he had done so. He had done so effectually, assured "that he could not live after that he was fallen." In proof of his statement the Amalekite produced the spoils of royalty, the little crown or diadem which the King had worn round his brazen helmet to mark

his position and dignity, and the ornamental bracelet which he had worn on his arm. But when David learned the terrible issue of the battle and the miserable fate of the King and his sons, he rent his clothes in token of his bitter grief and likewise all the men that were with him :—

“ 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.” (2 Sam. I., 12.)

On three occasions and in circumstances of strong temptation, David's reverence for Saul as the Lord's anointed had restrained him from taking his life when he was absolutely in his power, and the acknowledgment of the Amalekite that he was guilty of the death of Saul had aroused disgust and indignation. The crown was unwelcome to him at the price of treason ; he was not to be tempted with a throne purchased for him by murder. The boastful and self-condemned assassin suffered the penalty of his crime. It was important in the circumstances that David should free himself from the imputation of being in any way accessory to the crime of regicide, and he acted with dignity, prudence, and a proper sense of justice. To show his righteous indignation, he commanded one of his young men to slay the self-convicted Amalekite, who had so rudely finished the work which the arrows of the Philistines and the sword of Saul himself had all but accomplished.

“ And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head ; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed.” (2 Sam. I., 16.)

DAVID'S LAMENTATION FOR SAUL AND JONATHAN.—Saul had fallen with all his sins upon his head, in the bitterness of despair, and, apparently, under the shadow of the Divine curse. During his life, regal government, the sovereignty of an earthly king—established on the foundation of Theo-

cracy, the immediate rule of God—had been introduced among the Israelites. It was believed that the appointment of a visible monarch would help to consolidate the scattered tribes into a body strong enough to maintain its independence, and enable Israel to occupy a more influential position among surrounding nations. Saul had been selected as the first occupant of the throne. He was chosen by the Israelites themselves, and was a king according to their own ideal. He had a fine physical appearance, and was brave and energetic. He soon manifested, however, much weakness, disregard of principle, vacillation in his plans and purposes, unfaithfulness and selfwill. He became arbitrary, ambitious, and cruel; his treatment of David being especially marked by unworthy jealousy, malice, and hatred. On two occasions he had aimed a javelin at David's head with the intention of killing him; had sought by various contrivances to compass his destruction, and had openly pursued him as an enemy. But David forgets and forgives all wrong in the holy presence of Death. There is no manifestation of revengeful feeling or of triumph over a fallen foe. David composes a most beautiful and pathetic ode as a lamentation over Saul and as a permanent memorial of the friendship and affection which had subsisted between him and Jonathan his son. In that ode he dwells on the best qualities of the departed, recalls the Saul of earlier years, the mighty conqueror, the chosen of the people. He thinks of Saul only as the Lord's anointed, as the king in whose service he had been employed, and from whom he had received many tokens of favour and esteem, as the father of his faithful and beloved friend Jonathan. In his poem he laments generally over the brave men of Israel, whose lives have been sacrificed in defence of their

country, and who were its glory and its pride. He expresses anguish at the thought that the death of the king and the defeat of his army, proclaimed in Gath and Askelon, the chief towns of the Philistines, would occasion feelings of mirth and triumph among the daughters of the uncircumcised. In his flight the king had cast away his shield or light buckler stained with blood, begrimed with filth, the polish of the consecrated oil all gone; a defiled polluted thing. It was the poet's passionate desire that the greatest of all calamities should befall Gilboa, the scene of such a terrible disaster, that the fertilizing dew and rain be withheld from the fields around, so that they might be smitten with eternal barrenness, and share in the bleakness and bareness of the mountain above. . He then reviews the past victories of Saul and Jonathan, and reminds the daughters of Israel of the songs of greeting with which they had met them on their return from war (1 Sam. xviii., 6) and of the rich spoil which on these occasions had been distributed among them, the scarlet robes and golden ornaments which had been brought back as their prey. With special pathos he dwells upon the excellences of Jonathan's character and the friendship that had subsisted between them. "He was swifter than an eagle"—he could, as it were, soar up into the eagles' nests. He was "stronger than a lion"—he could plant his claws in the crags and force his way into the heart of the enemy's lair (1 Sam. xiv., 13). He was specially proficient in the use of the bow. His whole tribe was a tribe of archers, but he was the chief archer of them all. The league of friendship formed between them was one which for sincerity, constancy, and romantic pathos, stands unrivalled in the annals

of history, sacred or profane. The fair countenance, ruddy complexion, well knit frame and fearless courage of David, had evoked the admiration of that prince of Israel. His humility, affectionate disposition, and ardent piety, had won his heart, so that "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved David as his own soul." They were similar in their tastes, in their courage, in their genius for military leadership, and in their faith in God. Such friendship for the shepherd of Bethlehem on the part of the king's son was eminently disinterested: it was untainted by any feeling of envy and jealousy, and it was maintained even in face of personal danger and of his father's wrath. David had lost no common friend. His loss was irreparable, and his sorrow finds utterance in words which, for tenderness and deep feeling, have never been surpassed.

"How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"—2 Sam. i., 25-27.

DAVID ANOINTED KING OVER JUDAH.—With the death of Saul, which occurred B.C. 1055, the supremacy of the house of Joseph came to an end. For more than four hundred years Ephraim, with its two dependent tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin, had exercised undisputed pre-eminence—Joshua, the first conqueror, Gideon, the greatest of the judges, whose brothers were "as the children of kings" and whose children all but established hereditary monarchy in their own line, and Saul, the first king, being members of one or other of these three tribes. But now the time predicted of old by the dying Jacob has arrived when Judah is to receive the supremacy (Gen. xlix., 8-12). And, in the person of David and his descendants, Judah for the most part maintained it to the close of sacred history.

After the death of Saul and the defeat of his army, the Philistines appear to have obtained undisputed possession of the central and northern portion of Palestine. The Israelites were disconcerted, depressed, and weak, in a state of helpless exhaustion at the feet of their conquerors. In every respect their condition was pitiable and apparently hopeless. Incessant wars with neighbouring nations had not only prevented the development of the national life, but also in such a measure drained the national resources that industry was almost at a standstill. Only a few years earlier not a single smith could be found in the realm who could sharpen a sword or spear (1 Sam. xiii., 20).

But the way was now open for the fulfilment of God's promises and designs regarding David. David himself seems to have recognised this. On account of the jealousy of the Philistines he could not continue longer, with any degree of comfort or sense of safety, within their territories. After the raid of the Amalekites, in which Ziklag had been burned down and probably rendered almost uninhabitable, he felt that he must settle elsewhere. And his justifiable expectations of succeeding to the vacant throne of Israel, if they were to be realised, seemed to demand immediate and resolute action.

David had an undoubted right to the throne of Israel. There was no hereditary succession in the family of Saul. God had emphatically declared that the kingdom of Saul should not stand or be perpetuated in his family, but be transferred to a more suitable neighbour (1 Sam. xv., 28). In these circumstances no one's rights would have been injured by any person who chose to take just and honourable measures to gain over the tribes to his own interest. But David's right to the crown was the highest by which

any man could claim it. By the command of God, Samuel had anointed him to be king (1 Sam. xvi., 1-13). And the fact that he had been so appointed and anointed appears to have been well known. Saul knew it (1 Sam. xx., 30-31). Jonathan knew it (1 Sam. xx., 14-15, xxiii., 17). Abigail knew it (1 Sam. xxv., 30). Abner knew it (2 Sam. iii., 9-18). Even before the death of Saul many hundreds had revolted to David and recognised him as their leader. His personal virtues and military abilities, his affectionate disposition, skill, courage, and generosity were widely known, and had gained for him the esteem and confidence of his countrymen (1 Sam. xviii., 5). Besides, the tribe of Judah, to which David belonged, was now the most powerful of the tribes; it had a right to choose its own sovereign; it was anxiously expecting the fulfilment of Jacob's promise; it knew the appointment of God, and it would naturally expect that the other tribes would follow its leading and would submit to the Divine arrangement. David's claims to royal dignity were, therefore, paramount and amply justified.

But, before taking any decisive step, David wisely besought the guidance and help of God. He did not at once press forward to the capital and seize the vacant throne. He consulted Him "by whom kings reign and princes decree justice." Abiathar had escaped the general slaughter of the priests at Nob (1 Sam. xxii., 18-23), and had since acted as High Priest among David's followers. Probably by means of the Urim and Thummim in Abiathar's possession, direction was sought, and an answer, at once timely and definite, was returned. To David's enquiry (1) whether he should go up into one of the cities of Judah, an affirmative reply was given, and (2) into which of the cities, a reply that he should

go to **Hebron**, a town which, by reason of its central and mountainous position, and also by reason of its ancient associations, was admirably adapted to become the capital of a kingdom of Judah. Hebron was hallowed by patriarchal memories (Gen. xxiii., 19); it was remembered as part of the inheritance of Caleb, the faithful spy (Josh. xv., 13); it was one of the cities of the Levites, and a city of refuge (Josh. xx., 7); it was the capital of the tribe of Judah, and the centre of one of the richest regions in Judea; it was a priestly settlement, and an ancient royal residence. In the neighbourhood of Hebron David had spent a considerable part of his fugitive life, and had gained many adherents and friends. Piety, patriotism, and policy, therefore, combined to attest the wisdom of this selection. Thither David went with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, formerly the wife of Nabal the Carmelite, and all his followers, and occupied the towns and villages around Hebron. At an assembly of the tribe of Judah, David was unanimously elected King, and was "**anointed King over the house of Judah.**" The appointment of God was thus confirmed by the voluntary choice of the people. And under the sceptre of their much esteemed kinsman, they doubtless anticipated greater happiness and prosperity than they had enjoyed under that of his predecessor, Saul.

Thus from the shepherd life in Bethlehem, the courtier life at Gibeah, and the outlaw life in the wilderness of Judah and among the Philistines, David had risen to royal life in Hebron. Some fifteen years before this time, he had been privately anointed by Samuel, and had so secured a right to the Kingdom. So far as Judah was concerned, his title was now publicly ratified and the promise of God fulfilled. David was about **thirty** years of age when he ascended

the throne of Judah. To the strength of the man there was added the experience of a well tried and disciplined warrior. God always prepares a man whom he designs to accomplish some special work, by the discipline of His providence, by the difficulties and disappointments of life. David was well inured to privation and trial, was trained to submission to God and trust in His power and goodness. Amid all difficulties and dangers he had learned to strengthen himself in God, had experienced Almighty protection and blessing, and had manifested rare courage, fortitude, and patience. In every sense he was now a king among men.

DAVID'S MESSAGE TO THE MEN OF JABESH-GILEAD.—When the Philistines came to strip the bodies of those who had been slain in the battle on Mount Gilboa, they discovered the bodies of Saul and his three sons. They cut off the heads, appropriated the armour, and, in order still further to insult the vanquished Israelites, fastened the bodies to the wall of Bethshan, a town in the valley of Jordan, near to which they had fallen, which belonged to the tribe of Manasseh. But when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, who had been delivered by Saul from Nahash, the King of the Ammonites (1 Sam. xi., 1-11), heard of the indignity with which Saul and his sons had been treated, they, from feelings of reverence and gratitude, went by night and took the bodies from the wall to which they had been affixed. Having conveyed them home, they then, to prevent the Philistines from digging them out of a grave and exposing them to fresh insult, burned them, and, having reverently gathered up the bones, buried them under a tree, "the terebinth," at Jabesh. They also, to mark their sorrow and affection, fasted seven days. David was greatly gratified by this

instance of respect and honour. He respected Saul as his legitimate sovereign, and he loved Jonathan as his bosom friend. One of his first acts, after he was anointed King in Hebron, was to send messengers to the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, to express his warm appreciation of their loyalty and courage, to assure them of his protection and favour, to supplicate the Divine blessing to rest upon them for their bold and perilous enterprise, to intimate to them that his brethren of Judah had made him King, and to request their allegiance and support. The remains of Saul and of his sons were afterwards disinterred by David, and buried with royal honours in the family burying place at Zelah, in Benjamin. It does not appear that the overtures of David were successful in securing the attachment of the people of Jabesh-Gilead. They may have been suspicious of one who, in their view, had compromised himself by his long sojourn in the country of the Philistines, or they were too strongly attached to the house of Saul.

CIVIL WAR.—Very little is recorded of the earlier years of David's reign in Hebron. He was doubtless quietly strengthening his position and consolidating his little Kingdom by careful attention to all the details of political administration and military discipline. The country generally was occupied by the Philistines; and the adoption of active measures for deliverance from their yoke would soon have excited determined opposition.

David's army was already in a good state of organization and efficiency. During his stay in the cave of Adullam or in the town of Ziklag he had founded a military order, somewhat analogous to that of Knighthood in more recent times, as a means of honouring those who distinguished

themselves in any signal manner. The members of this order were called "worthies," or "mighty men." In David's band there were three chief heroes, three second in prowess, and 30 inferior to these—36 in all, the different degrees answering probably to the three degrees in the Order of the Bath, in which there are Grand Crosses, Knights-Commanders, and Companions, and which are distinguished from each other by different badges or insignia of honour. The commander-in-chief of David's army was Joab, the son of his sister Zeruah. His own body guard consisted of the Cherethites and the Pelethites. The 600 men whom he had with him previous to his coronation, and who were thoroughly trained and disciplined, formed the basis and support of the regular standing army which he formed in Hebron. And, we doubt not, various civil and ecclesiastical arrangements were instituted or developed during this period, arrangements to which were largely due David's strength and prosperity in subsequent years.

But during this period David did not reign without a rival and without opposition. A powerful party still supported the cause of Saul, and were opposed to a king of the tribe of Judah. After the fatal battle of Gilboa, **Abner**, Saul's cousin, and the commander-in-chief of his army, had fled with the remnants of the host, accompanied by **Ishbosheth**, the fourth son of the late king. They had crossed the Jordan and had settled at the ancient eastern sanctuary at Mahanaim, the remote but well-protected town where Jacob on his way from Padan-aram was met by the angels of God (Gen. xxxii., 2). There Ishbosheth had been proclaimed king over Gilead, that is, over those Israelites east of the Jordan, who had not submitted to the Philistines; and a court and camp had been set

up. Abner knew he had little prospect of preferment under David, whom he had frequently pursued with the troops of Saul and endeavoured to destroy. He was envious of his skill and power, having more than once been out-generaled by him in the field. He knew that Joab, being a near relative of David and the experienced general of his army, would naturally occupy the highest military position in his kingdom, and he therefore resolved to support the interests of Saul's house as long as he could. Had he acted upon principles of justice and honour, he would have advanced Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, Saul's eldest son, to the crown; but as he was only a child of five, and, moreover, lame, owing to his nurse having let him fall when she fled upon hearing that the Philistines had been victorious at Gilboa, he chose Ishbosheth instead, who was at least the eldest survivor of the royal house. But Ishbosheth had only the name and appearance of royalty. He was simply a tool in the hands of Abner, who retained the command of the army, and without whose powerful advocacy no rival kingdom could have been established. Besides Ishbosheth, Mephibosheth, and Abner, there also gathered at Mahanaim, Rizpah, the concubine of Saul, with her two sons, and the two princesses,—Michal, with her second husband Phaltiel, and Merab, with her five sons and her husband Adriel. It was Abner's aim to drive the Philistines from the land and to build up again from its ruins the kingdom of Saul. Gradually he did succeed in dislodging the Philistines. He first drove them out of the coasts of Asher, then out of the great plain of Esdraelon, the principal city of which was Jezreel, and then from the hill fortresses of Ephraim and Benjamin. With this reconquest of the land from the Philistines **five and a half years** were

occupied, and during the next **two years** the authority of Ishbosheth was acknowledged "over all Israel," *i.e.* in the narrow sense, as distinguished from Judah. Probably when Abner touched the frontiers of Judah, having recovered all the land of Israel, he caused Ishbosheth to be again publicly proclaimed.

David might have opposed the settlement of those who adhered to the cause of Saul in the Trans-Jordanic provinces, and now in the country of Israel. He might with consistency and success have vindicated and enforced his just claims to rule over the united kingdom, but he seems calmly to have waited the natural development of the Divine purposes. He knew God would make him king in His own time and way. Some years had passed, as we have said, without any acts of hostility between the two portions of the divided kingdom. The one king had no desire to dispossess the other at the expense of the lives of their respective subjects through involving the country in the calamities of a civil war. The Philistines evidently did not offer much interference, thinking that the division and mutual jealousy of the tribes would weaken and effectually prevent them from doing any injury. But at length war was commenced by Abner, and during the two years of Ishbosheth's reign over all Israel there was increasing war between the house of David and the house of Saul. David regarded the crown as his by right of Divine appointment; Ishbosheth regarded it as his by right of birth, and believed the southern kingdom of Judah to be founded in rebellion.

THE COMBAT AT GIBEON.—Considerable unwillingness existed to engage in open warfare, and the occurrence of the actual outbreak was remarkable. A band of soldiers under

Abner had encamped at the pool of Gibeon, six miles north of Jerusalem, apparently with an aggressive design. David had sent an army under Joab to watch their movements, and to resist further advances. The two armies sat confronting each other for some time. At length, Abner, desirous to avoid the horrors of a civil war, which would weaken the whole nation in the face of its common enemy the Philistines, perhaps also prompted by friendly relations with Joab, proposed to decide the issue by a combat between two bodies of picked men, twelve on each side. This was agreed to. But so passionate was the feeling on both sides that self-defence was forgotten in the ferocity of the struggle, and all the combatants fell together by a mutual slaughter. The fight by championship, instead of settling the dispute, inflamed the fiercest passions of the two rival parties, and a general engagement followed, in which the forces of Abner suffered a signal defeat.

“And there was a sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David. (2 Sam. ii, 17.)

THE DEATH OF ASAHEL.—After the battle and the defeat of Abner's troops there was a close and persistent pursuit. In this pursuit **Asahel**, the youngest brother of Joab, who was distinguished by his fleetness of foot—“as light of foot as a wild roe”—endeavoured to overtake Abner, being ambitious of adorning himself with the armour of that general, which would have been deemed the grandest trophy of the battle. He would exert his antelope swiftness for no meaner prize than the mighty Abner. Asahel had outstripped all other pursuers and was fast making on the retreating foe. Conscious of his own skill and strength, and perhaps also remembering the implacable

disposition of Joab, and of what he might expect should he slay his brother, Abner twice urged Asahel to desist. The impetuous young soldier, however, disregarded the remonstrance, and Abner, to protect himself, raised his spear, "smote Asahel with the hinder end of the spear under the fifth rib," completely transfixing him, so that he fell down on the spot and lay weltering in his blood. As the pursuers behind came up, they "stood still" over the dead body of their leader, struck dumb with grief, feeling that the victory had now been robbed of much of its glory, perhaps also anticipating that Joab would terribly revenge his brother's death. The death of Asahel to some extent checked the pursuit, and greatly favoured the escape of the vanquished. Joab and Abishai, another brother of Joab, who had probably been on a different road, hastened on after Abner and his followers, who, being now joined by fresh reinforcements from among the children of Benjamin, stood to defend themselves to the last extremity on the hill of Ammah. Then Abner, to prevent further bloodshed, cried out to Joab, "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?" To which Joab replied, "As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother." The signal for retreat was given, Abner and his men were permitted by forced marches to recross the Jordan and return to Mahanaim, while Joab and his men, after having buried Asahel in the sepulchre of his father, in Bethlehem, returned to Hebron. The loss on Abner's side had been 360 men; on David's side only 19 had fallen—besides Asahel, who was greatly beloved by his brothers, and who

would have doubtless won a high place amongst the heroes of his youthful uncle's army. Such was the commencement of the civil wars between Israel and Judah. They led to the ultimate division of the two kingdoms during the reign of David's grandson Rehoboam.

DAVID'S SUCCESS AND PROSPERITY.—In the continuous state of enmity between the houses of Saul and David, the latter grew stronger and stronger, the former weaker and weaker. The sacred historian here interrupts the course of the narrative in order to insert information about **the family of David**. Apparently in order to strengthen and perpetuate his house, David entered into marriage alliances with the daughters of surrounding chiefs. In early life he had, like his countrymen generally, but one wife, the Princess Michal. By a brave deed of courage and adventure he had won her hand, and her skill and zeal in assisting his escape from the wrath of her father shows that she reciprocated his affection. But she had been taken from him and married to another, Phaltiel, with whom she was now living in exile across the Jordan. During his wanderings David had married Ahinoam and Abigail, and to these, other four wives were added during his reign in Hebron. Polygamy was not forbidden by the Mosaic law, but it was regulated and discouraged, the king being expressly forbidden to "multiply wives" (Deut. xvii., 17, xxi., 15-17). David married wife after wife as if it was a perfectly warrantable and legitimate thing. By so doing he sowed seeds of disunion in his household,—instead of strengthening his house he weakened it, and his conduct in this respect led to much domestic crime and sorrow which darkened the later years of his life. Of the six sons born to David in

Hebron, of six different wives, three of them, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah, occasioned their father, by their wickedness and rebellion, much shame and suffering. His marriage with Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, King of Geshur, may have been wise in a political point of view, as it secured him an ally in the neighbourhood of Ishbosheth's capital, but it was not only a violation of the marriage law but a violation of the law which forbade the Israelites to intermarry with the people of the land. Absalom was the fruit of this union.

DISPUTE BETWEEN ABNER AND ISHBOSHETH.—Abner had thrown the whole weight of his influence in favour of the house of Saul, and was vigorously upholding his dynasty. Ishbosheth, however, entertained the suspicion that his powerful kinsman, by attempting to win for himself the widowed Rizpah, was aspiring to the throne. This Rizpah was a concubine of Saul. It is customary with Oriental kings to take possession of the wives and concubines of their predecessors, and Abner's marriage of Rizpah would have been not only an invasion of royal rights but an act of treason against Ishbosheth. Whatever Abner's ultimate design may have been, he very forcibly resented the charge of Ishbosheth as an indignity; stated that his fidelity to the house of Saul had alone prevented him from surrendering both Ishbosheth and the kingdom into the hands of David, and now expressed his determination to transfer all his influence to the opposite party.

"Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ishbosheth, and said, 'Am I a dog's head, which against Judah do show kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hands of David, that thou chargest me to-day with a fault concerning this woman? So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him; 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 Beersheba.'" (2 Sam. iii., 8-9.)

Ishbosheth was so afraid of his haughty imperious uncle that "he could not answer him a word again."

ABNER NEGOTIATES WITH DAVID.—Abner at once proceeded to carry out his threat. He perhaps foresaw the impossibility of continuing a successful opposition to David's growing power. He perhaps began to perceive, too, the sin of trying to frustrate the Divine decree regarding David. Had he only acquiesced in that decree at the beginning, however distasteful it may have been, much jealousy and bloodshed would have been saved. His present acknowledgment of wrong was no justification for his past conduct, and his return now to what he knew to be his duty bears the aspect of treachery, meanness and dishonour.

Abner sent messengers to David with overtures of peace and allegiance, which David at once entertained on condition that his wife **Michael be first restored to him**. She had not been legally divorced, but forcibly separated from him, and justice, affection, and policy combined to require her restoration as a preliminary condition. David probably retained some genuine affection for the wife of his youth, who had been the means of saving his life (1 Sam. xviii., 20; xix. 11). It was a public act of justice that she should be restored, it would efface the slight put upon him by her removal, it would be a clear exhibition of the power of David and the weakness of Ishbosheth, it would be an unmistakable evidence of Abner's sincerity, and the renewed alliance with Saul's family might tend to conciliate the goodwill of the northern tribes. So Ishbosheth, who apparently dared not resist the will of Abner, sent and took Michal from her husband, who followed her weeping until ordered to return. Phaltiel knew when he married

Michal that she was David's wife and that he had no right to her, so he only suffered the consequence of his own unrighteous deed.

Abner then **consulted the elders** of the northern tribes, who represented the people, as to their feelings towards David. From the first, a powerful party of them had been favourable to David, but their opposition to Ishbosheth had been overcome by the strong will and the vigorous efforts of Abner. They were now reminded of David's Divine right to the kingdom, Abner pretending that his present movement was prompted by religious rather than by revengeful motives. Besides the general communication with the elders of Israel, Abner entered into a special and confidential negotiation with **the tribe of Benjamin**, who were the most likely to offer opposition, through fear of losing prestige and advantage by the transference of the royal house to the tribe of Judah. Finding a general readiness to acknowledge David as king, he proceeded to Hebron, his mission with Michal, who was accompanied by 20 men as an official escort, enabling him to cover his treacherous designs against his master. As a public ambassador who had come to arrange for the termination of the civil discord, Abner was cordially welcomed and hospitably entertained. So gratified was he with his reception that he proposed at once to convene a national assembly, to arrange the terms of the "**league**" between David and the people, and ratify his election to the throne. Abner left Hebron with the intention of having the kingdom, which his own energy had consolidated, formally transferred to David. But he was not permitted to execute his design.

ABNER MURDERED BY JOAB.—During the visit of Abner

to Hebron, Joab had been absent on a military expedition. Joab was the eldest, most unscrupulous, and most influential of all David's nephews. He was strongly attached to the fortunes of his house and implacable to all who opposed them. Nor had he yet forgotten the death of Asahel or forgiven Abner for the cruel deed. He had reluctantly forborne pursuit when Abner was within his power, but he had not laid aside the intention to avenge his brother's death.

When Joab, on his return to Hebron, heard of Abner's visit, and of his reception by David, he was displeased and alarmed. He doubted the sincerity of Abner's proposals and disapproved the policy of relying on his fidelity. Perhaps, too, he feared, lest Abner, by his military talents, his popularity with the army, his influence throughout the nation, the claim he would have on David's gratitude if he were the means of bringing over the other tribes, should prove a dangerous rival and supplant him in the royal favour. He therefore endeavoured to persuade David that Abner was playing him false and had come only to discover his movements and intentions. David refused to believe this, so Joab determined by all means to have Abner removed, feigned some reason for recalling him, decoyed him to an interview in the gateway of Hebron, and there **treacherously slew** him, "smote him under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother." Since Abner had slain Asahel in self-defence and during open warfare, the act of Joab was not justifiable on the score of blood revenge, but was a base and deliberate murder.

DAVID'S LAMENTATION FOR ABNER.—It was important for David to make known his entire innocence of any complicity in the murder of Abner, and to show his abhorrence

of Joab's crime. Policy and manly feeling demanded a formal repudiation of such cruelty. He and his "kingdom," that is, his royal house, descendants, and successors, were not liable to punishment for shedding innocent blood. "Let the curse of blood-guiltiness" (Gen. iv., 11 ; Deut. xxi., 6-9), he said,

"Rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house ; and let there not fail 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." (2 Sam. iii., 29.)

It was an awful curse, but it fittingly expressed the genuineness and energy of David's indignation, and the just desert of Joab's crime. David also gave public expression to his profound sorrow by every sign of mourning and by the funeral honours he appointed for Abner. He himself followed the bier in the midst of universal lamentation, and he forced Joab to take a prominent part in the mournful ceremony. At the grave he wept bitterly, and pronounced the brief but expressive elegy,—

"As a fool dies, so Abner died ;
Thy hands were not bound,
Thy feet were not put into fetters ;
As a man falls before the wicked, so fellest thou."

In the mind of the people the king was entirely exempted from any share in the deed of Joab. But that deed was an intimation to David of his relative's power, and of his own weakness.

"And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel ? And I am this day weak, though anointed king ; and these men the sons of Zeruah be too hard for me ; the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." (2 Sam. iii., 38-39.)

Abner had been a man of exalted position and extensive influence, and he had been foully murdered. But Joab was at the head of the army, the kingdom was as yet far from

being securely established, and David, in the circumstances, even with the best intentions, was made to feel the limits of human supremacy. He, however, never forgot this treacherous murder and the vengeance it deserved (1 Kings ii., 5, 28-34).

ISHBOSHETH MURDERED.—Abner's death brought ruin on the cause of Ishbosheth. Abner had been the real stay of his kingdom, almost the solitary pillar on which it had rested. Ishbosheth was dismayed when he heard the tidings, and his adherents were discouraged. A conspiracy was soon formed, and the feeble king fell under the blows of assassins.

Ishbosheth had two men, **Baanah and Rechab**, who were leaders of predatory troops, of troops whose duty it was to procure supplies for the army. They were members of his own tribe of Benjamin. They formed an infamous plot against the life of their master, which they executed with treachery and cruelty. Entering Ishbosheth's house, as they may have been accustomed to do, to procure wheat for their men from the king's granary, they found Ishbosheth asleep on his couch during the oppressive heat of mid-day. Their entrance had excited no surprise or suspicion, the guards were absent or asleep, and the king fell an easy victim. Having cut off his head, they hastened with it to Hebron as a trophy to David, expecting to gain the royal favour and receive some signal reward for their devotion to his cause shewn in removing the only existing obstacle to the union of the two kingdoms. David, however, expressed his indignation at their crime, administered a well merited rebuke, related to them what he had done to the Amalekite who had professed to have slain Saul, and rewarded them with the death of traitors. They had pretended to act

as the instruments of providence, but they had been regarding only their own interest. They had expected a reward, but justice demanded satisfaction for the murder of their master. David commanded his young men to fall upon them. The hands that had been stretched out to kill, and the feet that had been swift to seek reward, were cut off and exposed to view in the most frequented spot in Hebron for a spectacle and a warning, to attest David's abhorrence as well as to punish the crime. In the same place, in the sepulchre of Abner, the head of Ishbosheth was buried, a mark of respect well fitted to gain the affections of the tribes of Israel.

DAVID ANOINTED KING OVER ISRAEL.—Every obstacle to the full royalty of David was now removed. Saul and Jonathan, Abner and Ishbosheth were all dead; the only legitimate representative of the house of Saul was Mephibosheth, the lame helpless child of twelve; David was already head of a large portion of Israel; he had furnished ample proof of his military and administrative abilities, and it was the will and purpose of God, as declared by Samuel, that he should be raised to the throne; the Philistines, and perhaps the remnants of the Canaanites, were restless and threatening; and it was obviously the interest of the Israelitish nation to unite themselves under the sovereignty of a wise and powerful king. A combined deputation of the leading authorities of each tribe accordingly waited on David, and, on the ground of **relationship** of proved **capacity** and of the **divine choice**, offered him the crown. David's alliance with the Philistines had raised a painful suspicion respecting his patriotism, and had created powerful obstacles to the universal recognition of his claims

to the throne. But these doubts were now dispelled, and his patriotism and loyalty had been proved to their entire satisfaction. They had not forgotten the day when he overthrew Goliath in the valley of Elah, nor lost sight of the fact that the most brilliant part of Saul's reign was that in which David had acted as their leader in war. And the national choice now was only the fulfilment of the divine decree. The people regretted their previous resistance to that decree, and they were now ready to receive him in the name and from the hand of Him whom they both recognised as the real Sovereign of the nation. David accepted the crown, which was thus so heartily offered, and entered into a solemn "league" to rule in accordance with the principles which had been already laid down by Jehovah for the administration of the national affairs (1 Sam. x., 25). They on their part promised allegiance to his person and government, and he, on his, recognised that his authority and prerogatives were founded upon and regulated by the divine statute-book. Thus in the **thirty-eighth year** of his age, while he was yet in the prime and vigour of his manhood, and, with all the experience which the trials of his early years had given him, David was seated upon the throne of the united kingdom of Israel, amidst the rejoicing of the people (1 Chron. xii., 23-40) and with every token of the favour of his God.

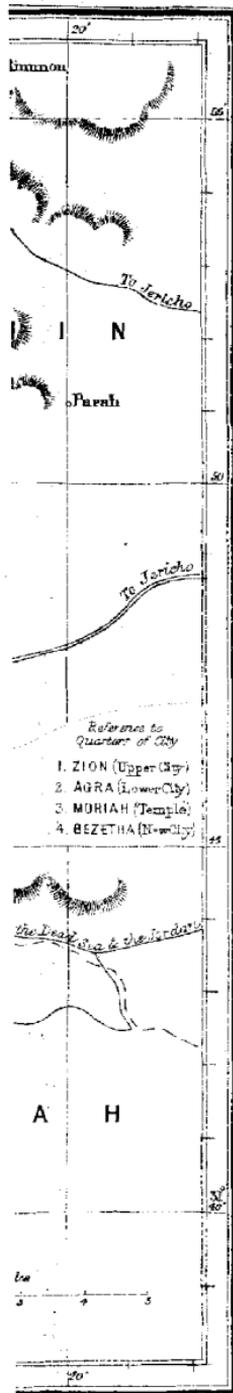
"David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over Israel and Judah." (2 Sam. v., 4, 5.)

It was the *third* time he had been anointed with sacred oil, the first having been by Samuel some twenty years before this time (1 Sam. xvi., 13), the second when he became king in Hebron. But

this was the most important and joyous of the three occasions. All the eminent warriors whom David had drawn about him during his life in the wilderness, and whom he had trained to extraordinary martial skill, gathered round him, and lent to his coronation at once strength and romance. To the same centre thousands came from all parts of the land. Each tribe contributed to the common feast the peculiar products of its own territory. The priesthood, as well as the army, gave their support, and for three days the feasting and the rejoicings continued. Perhaps such a large and harmonious national gathering was before unknown. It was certainly a great crisis in history, when he who had been specially designated by God to rule over Israel, and whose dynasty was to be perpetuated for generations, ascended the throne. His strong hand, resolute will, and unique experience were required to compress and mould into a closely compacted and well-ordered whole, the various tribes. And the sentiments with which he entered upon the duties of his important office were highly creditable. Piety towards God and justice to man formed the deep desire of his heart.—Psalms xxvii. and ci.

JEBUS CAPTURED.—David's first care, as king of the whole country, was to obtain **a suitable capital**. Hebron was too far south to be a convenient centre of government, and his continuance there might have provoked a feeling of jealousy and division. He therefore wisely resolved to select some other city for the metropolis, some city, too, which was more defensible than Hebron.

In the centre of the land was a fastness which had hitherto defied the armies of Israel, and which from its



situation and fortifications had been hitherto deemed impregnable. This was **Jerusalem**, or Jebus. Situated upon an upland ridge of the backbone of hills which extend through the country from the Desert to the plain of Esdraelon, and guarded on three sides by deep rocky ravines, it presented an almost inaccessible position. This town had been assigned to the tribe of Benjamin, but, lying on the border, was first attacked by the tribe of Judah (Jndg. i., 8) and afterwards by the tribe of Benjamin. The citadel, however, was either never taken, or was soon recovered by the original Canaanite inhabitants who had dwelt there ever since the days of Joshua.

This fortress David must frequently have examined from the heights of his native Bethlehem, and perhaps the conquest of it had been one of the fondest aspirations of his youth. Could these Jebusites be now dislodged, its strength, central situation, and associations, all combined to point to it as the best place for a capital which the country contained. There, as was supposed, Melchisedek had reigned. Upon Moriah, one of the adjoining hills, Abraham was commanded to offer up his son. And it is not unlikely that David received the approval of the Lord in selecting such a site, and that he had perhaps some prescience of its future glory. Taking advantage, therefore, of the enthusiasm that attended his coronation, David marched against it with his army. Calling emulation to his aid, he offered the chief command of his forces—which was the highest prize in his kingdom—to the person who first should enter the citadel. By so doing he avoided giving offence to either the men of Judah or the ten tribes.

But it was no easy task. As they looked down from the lofty walls of their fortress and marked the depth and

steepness of the valley below, the Jebusites felt assured that they occupied an inaccessible position, and that no assailant would be sufficiently adventurous to scale its dizzy heights. They sneered at what they considered the vain attempts of David and his army to dislodge them.

But David succeeded, Joab being the first to clamber up the cliff and dash down the defenders, and thus to gain, by courage and success, the highest object of ambition. The stronghold of Zion was immediately occupied as the capital of the new kingdom, the name being changed to "**City of David**," to signify the importance of the conquest and to perpetuate the memory of the event. Fortifications were added by the king according to his own ideas, and the city immediately became the royal residence, growing in extent with the growth of David's power, until from the southern base of the mountain range it covered the neighbouring heights. It was thus, that Jerusalem—"Place of Peace," as henceforth it was named, became the metropolis of the Jewish monarchy. The selection of such a site—so formidable in strength, so stately in situation, so hallowed in its associations, and so beautiful in its surroundings—manifested great sagacity and fine feeling on the part of David. But when he acquired it he added a city, not to the nation alone, but to the history of the world. Ages cannot diminish the devotion of the Jews to their ancient capital, even though now in ruin, or impair the deep interest which the civilised world feels in the events of which it has been the scene.

With the capture of Jerusalem began a grander national history for the Hebrews. From that moment, as the king of a united and harmonious nation,

"David went on and grew great and the Lord God of Hosts was with him."
(2 Sam. v., 10.)!

DAVID'S PALACE AND FAMILY.—Among those who sent to congratulate David on his accession to the throne, was **Hiram, King of Tyre**. Probably, Hiram was anxious to secure David's help against the Philistines, who had once before conquered Phœnicia, and were still dangerous neighbours. A cordial alliance was formed between the two kings, which was of mutual advantage, on account of the great excellence of the Tyrians in all branches of commerce and industry. Of this excellence David now took advantage. In addition to fortifying Jerusalem, he was desirous of building a **palace** worthy of such a capital. Jewish skill, however, was unequal to this, nor did the country afford the timber needed. Arrangements were therefore made with Hiram to float rafts of cedar beams down the coast, from the forests of Lebanon, and to send skilled workmen to erect the building. Cedar wood was the emblem of strength and durability, and in due time a substantial and magnificent palace of this material was built for David's accommodation in Jerusalem. The friendly co-operation of so powerful a king as Hiram, and the success which attended his enterprises generally, was to David a clear proof of the Divine favour and blessing.

In accordance with the custom of Oriental monarchs, David married more wives and concubines. He probably thought it expedient to strengthen his interest by extending his matrimonial connections with his own nobility and the royal families of neighbouring kingdoms. But in doing so, he unconsciously laid the foundation of future evils to his house and to his nation. By his wives he had fifteen sons; of whom six were born in Hebron and nine in Jerusalem. The number born of his concubines is not stated. Nor, with the single exception of Tamar, is the name of any

of the daughters given, it not being customary to enter the names of daughters in the national records.

VICTORIES OVER THE PHILISTINES.—The **Philistines** were the most active and aggressive race of Palestine. They were strong in their military organisation; fierce in their warlike spirit; and rich by their position and commercial instincts, their cities being centres of commerce and of every form of activity. They were pre-eminently devoted to war, alike by sea and land. Since the conquest of Canaan, under Joshua, they had frequently oppressed the Israelites and reduced them almost to a condition of slavery. Climbing the passes at their will, they had not unfrequently harried the valleys and carried off not only the harvest when it was ripe, but men, women, and children, into captivity. The victories of Shamgar and of Samson had freed the Israelites, for a time, from their ravages and secured national independence, and Saul and Jonathan had, on more than one occasion, surprised and defeated them. But on the hills of Gilboa the Israelites had been utterly routed, the king and princes, the flower of their youth and an immense number of their army, being left dead on that fatal field. After that battle, all the Hebrew towns of Esdraelon and its neighbourhood had been at once deserted by their population and occupied by the Philistines, who now held the entire length of the caravan route from Asia, for the control of which they had begun the war.

During the civil war between the house of Saul and the house of David, the Philistines had remained quiet spectators of the contest. And so long as David held his court at Hebron they did not reckon him worthy of attack. It may even be that up to this time he had paid them tribute and

lived on terms of good will with them. But when David became King of the United Kingdom and inaugurated his reign by a brilliant military achievement, the Philistines became alarmed. They felt that they must do something to maintain their national supremacy, and that, too, before the government of David should be fully established. Even during the reign of Saul his name had inspired terror; he had defied and defeated their champion Goliath, and made several successful forays against them; his courage and enterprise were undoubted, and he might not unlikely prove a formidable rival and snatch from them all the advantages gained by the victory of Gilboa. They therefore mustered all their forces for a strenuous effort to crush him, and pressed forward to the very base of the threatening stronghold which David had made his capital, occupying with their troops the Valley of Rephaim, a broad upland valley about a mile in length, which stretches in a south-westerly direction from Jerusalem towards Bethlehem. In this crisis, David desired Divine guidance and aid, and "enquired of the Lord," by means of the Urim and Thummim of the High-priest Abiathar, as to the success of an attack upon the Philistines. On receiving a favourable reply, he at once gave battle and won a signal victory. Sweeping down from the surrounding heights upon the Philistines in the plain, as with the irresistible might of an overwhelming flood, he drove them back to the sea coast in utter confusion. He took no credit to himself for this success. In a spirit of gratitude and humility he commemorated the victory by calling the name of the place **Baal-Perazim**, saying, "The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters." The enemies' camp was rifled, and the images which the Philistines had brought with them to

stimulate their courage and inspire confidence were contemptuously burned, in compliance with the Mosaic law (Deut. vii., 5-25), and in proof of the helplessness of these heathen divinities to deliver either themselves or those who trusted in them from destruction.

Shortly after, the Philistines renewed their attempt and again invaded the Valley of Rephaim, apparently with a larger force. This time David, on enquiry of the Lord, was forbidden to attack in front, but was bidden to make a wide circuit and march round to the rear of the enemy, aided in doing so by the cover and rustling of a wood of mulberry trees. He was also cautioned to choose for attack the moment when he should hear a special rustling on the tops of these trees like the marching of an army. That was to be the signal to advance, assured that Jehovah Himself would lead the army to victory. David followed these directions, marching northwards to Gibeon, a rounded hill about five miles north-west of Jerusalem. Then, sweeping down suddenly on the rear of the enemy at the appointed signal, he threw them into thorough disorder and chased them before him, with a great slaughter, even to their own city of Gazer, on the sea coast. The sound in the mulberry trees had been mistaken for the march of an army, and had diffused a sudden panic through the ranks of the Philistines, which had led to their complete discomfiture.

Repeated conflicts, in which David's heroes were to win their proudest laurels, were still to take place before so fierce and proud a nation as the Philistines was finally subdued. But the battles of Perazim and Gibeon so weakened them that David was, ere long, able to lay on them the ignominious yoke of tribute they had imposed on Israel. He could now organise his empire in peace.

THE ARK CONVEYED FROM KIRJATH-JEARIM.—David had now been established as king over Israel. The political unity of the nation had been restored, and had been consolidated by the establishment of the new capital; and already many magnificent buildings adorned the old stronghold of the Jebusites. But something was yet required to make Jerusalem the real capital of the kingdom. It was the seat of supreme civil government, being the residence of the monarch and of the courts of justice, but David wished to make it also the centre of religious worship. Many centuries earlier God had promised by Moses to choose a place to put his name there, a place where the people might enquire of God and seek His guidance and blessing, present their sacrifices and offer their songs of praise, (Deut. xii., 5-14, xvi., 16.) David entertained the hope that Jerusalem was that chosen place. He reckoned himself only as the representative of God, and the instrument through whom He governed the people. He was intensely devoted to the theocratic constitution, and, believing it to be God's will that Jerusalem should be the religious capital as well as the political, he now resolved to bring thither the **Ark of the Covenant**, which was the most sacred relic of the Mosaic tabernacle and the symbol of God's special presence. David was at peace at home, and free from foreign wars. He had, therefore, the leisure needed for regulating the affairs of religion, for making the necessary arrangements for the more regular performance of the duties of Divine worship, and for more imposing services than had hitherto been known. His highest desire was to give an impulse to the national religion.

The Ark was an object of the greatest importance and interest to the Israelites. That sacred chest had been made

by Moses, by command of God, and minute instructions had been given regarding its formation and the reverence in which it was to be held (Exod. xxv., 10-22, xxvi., 33). It contained a copy of the law of Moses, a golden pot of manna which had been preserved as a memorial of the journey through the wilderness, and the rod of Aaron, which budded, and which, besides being associated with the deliverance of the nation from Egyptian bondage, remained as a visible proof of the Divine appointment of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office. The Ark was overlaid with gold and overshadowed by golden cherubim. Above it was the Mercy Seat where God had promised to commune with His people, and where was a brilliant visible token of the presence of Him whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, but who condescended to dwell between the cherubim and afford assurance to all true worshippers of His protection and blessing. The Ark was therefore associated with the grandest events in national history, and was an object of peculiar sacredness. David felt that Jerusalem could not be in all respects the capital of his kingdom unless it were consecrated by this symbol of the Divine presence, and the people were thus led to look up to it as the home of their faith no less than the seat of their King. The Ark, above all things, would add to its splendour and its stability.

The usual place for the Ark was in the inner place of the tent or tabernacle which Moses, by Divine command, had prepared for its reception. But at this period religious matters were in a state of great confusion, and the Ark and the tabernacle were in different towns. In one of their wars with the Philistines the elders of Israel, trusting more in the symbol of God's presence than in God Himself, had taken the Ark out of Shiloh, where it had been placed by

Joshua (Josh. xviii., 1) and had carried it with them into the field of battle (1 Sam. iv., 4). On the defeat of the Israelites and the death of Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli the priest, who had charge of it, the Philistines took possession of the Ark and placed it in the temple of their god, Dagon. Troubles and diseases of various kinds occurred which were traced to the presence of the Ark, and it was ultimately restored to the Israelites. It was received by the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, a city on the outskirts of the hills of Judah, about eight miles from Jerusalem. And there, in the house of one Abinadab, it remained during the ministry of Samuel and the reigns of Saul and Ishbosheth, Eleazar, a son of Abinadab, having been set apart for the purpose of attending to it. David had now prepared a sumptuous tabernacle or tent for it on Mount Zion, where it was to have its fixed abode and be no more moved about as necessity or convenience might require. A national assembly was summoned to attend the removal of the Ark and its conveyance to its new sanctuary. And never before had such a high festival been held in Israel. Representatives of the tribes assembled to the number of 30,000, and David proceeded in state, and amid great demonstrations of national joy, to Kirjath-jearim,

"To bring up from thence the ark of the Lord, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims. (2 Sam. vi., 2.)

THE DEATH OF UZZAH.—Nothing had apparently been omitted in the arrangements for the transference of the Ark to Jerusalem, which the importance and solemnity of the occasion demanded. The people played and sang with great heartiness "before the Lord." Suddenly, however, an incident occurred which interrupted the procession and turned the joy into mourning. A new cart or wagon, which

had never been employed for any common or profane service, had been provided, and the two sons of Abinadab, **Uzzah and Ahio**, who had so long been in charge of the ark, superintended the arrangements for the removal, Ahio walking before and Uzzah guiding the oxen which were drawing the cart. The threshing floor outside the town, known as the threshing floor of Nachon, had been reached, and there, owing either to some sudden start or stumble of the oxen, or to the roughness of the road, the Ark was violently shaken and seemed in danger of falling. Uzzah took hold of the Ark to steady it. Instantly, "for his error," he was smitten by God and fell dead by the side of it. David and all present were surprised, distressed, and terrified by this sudden exhibition of Divine power and anger, the instruments of music were silenced, the procession stopped, and the Ark having been conveyed aside to the nearest house, which happened to be that of Obed-edom, the people dispersed to their homes awed and saddened.

"And David was displeas'd (i.e., grieved), because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day. And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, 'How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?'" (2 Sam. vi., 8-9.)

After such an exhibition of God's anger, David did not know what the consequences of the removal of the Ark might be, and what method he should now adopt to bring it to Jerusalem, with safety to himself and his people. The cause of Uzzah's death, however, it was not difficult to discover. At first sight his action seemed natural and well-intentioned and the penalty strangely severe. But evidently he did not realise the sanctity of this symbol of God's presence, the importance of the duty that devolved upon him, and the solemnity of the occasion. For some 70 years the Ark had been in his father's house, and he had

come to look upon it with undue familiarity. In these circumstances, the lesson, terrible as it was, was imperatively demanded. Besides, he had violated the express arrangements of God and had not shown scrupulous regard to His instructions. The Ark should have been borne on the shoulders of the priests by staves put into the rings provided on its sides (Exod. xxv., 14), or, if borne by Levites, only after having been carefully covered with a vail by the priests (Numb. iv., 5-15). The Ark should not have been touched by Uzzah. David, as well as Uzzah, ought to have known the observances required for its proper removal and conveyance (Deut. xvii, 18-19). It was, therefore, necessary for the Divine honour and for the welfare of the people, especially when a new era of worship was about to be inaugurated, that God should mark His displeasure for irreverence, and His desire that every detail of the law should be scrupulously obeyed on pain of death (Numb. iv., 20), and a deeper reverence be felt for sacred symbols and institutions.

REMOVAL OF THE ARK TO JERUSALEM.—David had been interrupted in carrying out his purpose, but he had not abandoned it. Leisure was allowed him to reflect upon an event which at the time was mysterious and filled him with wonder and dismay, and he had no doubt come to view it in its proper light. When, therefore, three months afterwards he was informed that the house of Obed-edom, in which the Ark had rested, had been notably blessed, he was encouraged to resume his endeavour to bring the Ark up to Zion. Obed-edom had not pleaded the danger, expense, or trouble, which the presence of the Ark in his house might have occasioned, and he had gained by his generous entertain-

ment of the symbol of the Divine presence. On this second occasion the directions of the law were more carefully studied and obeyed. The solemnity and splendour of the previous occasion were greatly exceeded, the assembly was larger, there was a numerous and more experienced staff of priests and Levites, and a better disciplined choir and orchestra (1 Chron. xv.). David himself, dressed in a white linen robe, accompanied the dances with the music of the harp, and manifested the greatest delight and devotion. As soon as the procession had started on its way, without any sign of the Divine displeasure, David, as an expression of gratitude, sacrificed oxen and fatlings. Thus were fittingly expressed the gladness and the awe which clustered round the dread symbol of the presence of Jehovah. With song, music, dancing, and sacrifice, with every demonstration of enthusiasm and joy, was the Ark brought in and **“set in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it.”** After many sacrifices, the priestly benediction pronounced by the King, and festivities and presents on the most generous scale, fitly closed this inauguration of worship and sacrifice and the enshrinement of the visible symbol of Divine majesty and holiness in Jerusalem. Henceforth the heathen Jebus was not only Jerusalem but **“the Holy City.”**—See Psalm xxiv.

THE CONDUCT OF MICHAL.—One incident only in the experience of David clouded the perfect happiness of that day. The King's fervour had been witnessed by **Michal** his wife, who could not enter into his feelings of religious enthusiasm, and did not sympathise with them. On his return home, after all the fatigues and solemnities of the day, **“to bless his household,”** Michal met him and mock-

ingly upbraided him for having lowered his dignity in the presence of the people by the prominent part he had taken in the proceedings, and by divesting himself of his royal robes. Evidently Michal had no proper sense of religion, no reverence for the Ark which had "not been enquired at" during her father's reign, and little respect for her husband. Like her father, she was proud and self-willed. Her taunting sarcasm was repelled by David in a manner that could not be agreeable to her feelings, while it indicated his own ardent piety and gratitude. In words of anger and rebuke he told her that he reckoned himself as unworthy as the meanest citizen to rejoice before Jehovah and take part in His service, reminded her of the gratitude he owed to Him who had rejected her father and chosen himself as King, and expressed his assurance that, even though he humbled himself yet more deeply, his servants and subjects would continue to respect and honour him. For her disrespect Michal was condemned to the reproach of childlessness, which was the sharpest punishment a Hebrew woman could suffer.

DAVID'S PROPOSAL TO BUILD A TEMPLE.—David had already given an impulse to the religion of his countrymen, which continued till the overthrow of the monarchy and the dispersion of the nation. His bringing up the Ark and reorganisation of the tabernacle service commenced a new religious development in the religious history of mankind. But what he had done he did not deem sufficient. The Ark had been placed in a mere temporary tent, and the services connected with it were only imperfect and provisional. David's desire was to erect a splendid sanctuary for its permanent abode. He himself was dwelling in a beautiful cedar

palace, and God had granted him an interval of peace, both from foreign war and internal trouble. It did not seem becoming that he should live in a cedar-roofed and cedar-lined palace, while the Ark of God had only a tent, ("dwelt within curtains")—that he should attend more to his personal comfort and regal dignity than to the splendour and attractiveness of God's worship. Perhaps, too, the interval of peace was that foretold by Moses (Deut. xii., 10, 11) for the erection of a substantial and permanent temple for Divine worship. It appeared to him that some other provision than had hitherto existed should now be made for the ordinances of the national worship. However suitable a movable sanctuary might have been during the migratory life of his forefathers in the desert, it did not seem suitable or respectful to God in a settled state of society, and for a nation that was steadily growing in wealth and power. David mentioned to Nathan, the prophet, his desire to erect for Divine worship an edifice adorned with all that wealth and art could furnish; and the impulse of generous devotion on the part of the King, which could not bear to lavish more upon self than it gave to God, at once commended itself to Nathan's mind. He cordially approved and encouraged the royal plans. Nathan, however, had only expressed his individual opinion, and that same night, before David could take any measure or incur any expense, God sent him with a message to David interdicting him from building a temple as a residence for the Ark, but giving promises of the greatest importance to himself and to all nations.

GOD'S MESSAGE TO DAVID.—It was in a very kind and considerate manner that intimation was made to David that his cherished wish was not to be gratified. His kingdom was

not yet thoroughly established and consolidated. Many enemies had yet to be encountered and overcome. Besides, David had shed much blood and been engaged in great wars (1 Chron. xxii., 8 ; xxviii., 3), and he who would engage in the solemn rites of religion and be prominent in the services of God's house must be a man of purity and peace. "Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?" asked God. "Since the children of Israel left Egypt I have accompanied them in their wanderings, and since the conquest of Canaan, Gilgal, Shiloh, Nob, Gibeon, and other places have been the abode of the Ark of my presence." "I have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle." "I have not asked for an house of cedar." God then, through Nathan, informed David that he had done well to care for His worship, and that, as a reward for his pious purpose, that same God, who had raised him up from an humble position to be ruler over Israel, and who had so far fulfilled His promises to His people by putting them in actual possession of Canaan, would now, through his instrumentality, establish their tenure of the land and all their national privileges in spite of all the assaults of "the children of wickedness," and would confirm without interruption or termination to David's lineal successors the throne of Israel. His son should rear the temple for Divine worship in token of the perpetuity of his kingdom and dynasty. Should that son sin against God he should be punished, but the Divine procedure towards him would be tender and paternal, and no such instance of the departure of the Divine favour as had occurred in the removal of the family of Saul would be experienced. The reiteration of the perpetuity of David's house, kingdom, and throne closes the message.

"And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever." (2 Sam. vii., 16.)

Regarding this message it may be remarked that the simple tent or tabernacle was more in accordance with the spiritual character of God's worship, and was well fitted to educate a people long accustomed to the gorgeous temples and sensuous religion of Egypt in the nature of true religious services; that there was a strong feeling of conservatism in the Hebrew nation which shrunk from any change in the institutions of Moses; and that Nathan, knowing this, and afraid lest the introduction of a splendid temple service might divert the mind of the people from what was spiritual to what was merely outward, with keen spiritual insight, and under the guidance of special revelation, recognised the wisdom of delaying meanwhile the erection of a temple and the appointment of a more elaborate ritual in the services of the sanctuary. But if David could not build a house for God, God would build a house for him. Upon him had devolved the preparatory duty of battle and of conquest, but his son, whom God would raise up, and who should reign in unbroken peace and prosperity, would carry out his desire.

This message, moreover, forms a new landmark in the development of the Divine plans and promises. The posterity of David could only continue for ever in the person of one who lives for ever, and we cannot be wrong in believing with David himself that "a greater than Solomon" is referred to here. Henceforth the progress and continuance of God's kingdom of grace upon earth is involved in the progress and continuance of David's line. And the promise to David does not receive its full realization until He comes concerning whom it was declared:—

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and 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." (Luke 1, 32, 33.)

DAVID'S SUPPLICATION AND THANKSGIVING.—If at first there was a pang of disappointment in the heart of David when he was so decisively told that his cherished desire to build a house was not to be gratified, it was speedily suppressed, and he was not only resigned to the Divine will, but grateful and jubilant. On receiving the message from Nathan he went into the sanctuary, and sitting down poured forth his heartfelt thanks to God. He was satisfied with the knowledge that a temple should ultimately be erected to the honour and for the worship of Jehovah. He heartily acknowledges his unworthiness. In the contemplation of the grace and extent of the Divine promises he forgets his own personal wishes and expectations, is dumb with amazement at the Divine regard for him, and takes refuge in God's omniscience as a guarantee that his silence would not be misunderstood. He rejoices in the assurance that He who had shown His power and grace in the choice of Israel and the redemption from Egypt would continue to bless them, would confirm them to Himself and be their God, and in the promise that his own family should be continued in prosperity upon the throne for ages to come. In that promise he discerns the future advent of One who should realise visions of glory he had not dared to expect. A new element had been added to his hopes, and a new object had been presented to his faith. He then humbly but confidently turns the promises which God had vouchsafed into prayers. Thus he gives expression to his gratitude for the undeserved favour shown to him and to his house, praises God for past tokens of favour to His chosen people, and prays for the complete fulfilment of His gracious promises.

“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.” (2 Sam. vii., 29.)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DAVID'S KINGDOM.—There is given to us in the eighth chapter of the book a general summary of the wars in which David engaged, and of the victories he won. These wars are not necessarily described in the order in which they occurred, but are gathered up into one aggregate account.

He conquered the **Philistines** and **Moabites**. The former he deprived of Gath, the old capital of Achish, and the farthest south of the Philistine cities, as also of its dependent district and villages. Such a conquest was nothing less than "the taking the bridle of their supremacy out of their hands" for ever. He reduced the latter to subjection, and treated the prisoners of war with great severity, executing two-thirds of the entire number taken. He made the Moabite nation render both service and tribute.

The war with Moab drew others in its train. Of these the particulars given are few, and such as rather excite than satisfy curiosity. But they show the power which David had acquired, and the means by which his supremacy among neighbouring nations was established. One powerful enemy against whom he led his troops was **Hadadezer, king of Zobah**, whose kingdom extended into northern Mesopotamia to the river Euphrates. He signally defeated him, and possessed himself, besides a great number of foot soldiers, of an immense amount of booty in chariots and horses. As the Israelites were forbidden to use horses either in war or agriculture (Josh. ix., 6, 9), the horses, with some exceptions, were hamstrung. The **Syrians of Damascus** came to the succour of the king of Zobah, but they, too, were defeated and made tributary, their fortified towns being taken and garrisoned by the Israelites. It was then that the ancient promises that the dominion of Abraham's seed

should extend to the Euphrates were for the first time realized (Gen. xv., 18-21). The valuable spoils of brass and the golden shields, found by David in the cities which he captured, or upon the persons of the prisoners, were dedicated to the great object on which his heart had been set—the future temple of the Lord.

THE CONGRATULATIONS OF TOI.—When the King of Hamath, a district to the north of Zobah, heard of David's victory over his powerful neighbour he sent his son with valuable presents to congratulate him on his success, and to solicit his alliance and protection. The presents consisted of various vessels of gold, silver, and brass, which also were preserved for use in the future temple.

CONQUEST OF EDM.—It appears from the superscription to Psalm lx., "Michtam of David, when he fought with Aram of the two rivers (Mesopotamia), and Aram of Zobah, and Joab returned and smote Edom in the valley of Salt, to the number of twelve thousand men"—that while David was occupied with his campaign against the Syrians the **Edomites** seized the opportunity for invading the south of Judah, and succeeded in inflicting serious damage, until David sent back part of his forces, under Joab, by whom they were defeated and completely subdued. Hebrew garrisons were placed in the strongholds and chief towns of Edom, "And all they of Edom became David's servants. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went." (2 Sam. viii., 14.)

These wars, and others incidentally alluded to (2 Sam. viii., 12), probably occurred about twenty years after David's accession, and are to be assigned to the second half of his reign. The war with the Ammonites, which was probably

by far the most important and most distant of them, is referred to again in the tenth chapter, when further details are given. It must have been a great crisis in the history of David and of his kingdom, when one powerful nation after another assailed him, and when enemies on every side combined for his overthrow. But amidst the dangers which threatened him he never wavered in his piety or in his confidence of success. He believed that the cause for which he was contending was the cause of God, that these wars were fought under the protection and with the aid of Jehovah, and that therefore victory must attend his arms. His loyalty and patriotism inspired his followers with a like enthusiasm, and led his subjects to see in the brilliant deeds and triumphs of their sovereign the reflection of the Divine favour. They were now united into one compact kingdom, they had been raised to a position of great influence and prosperity among the nations of the earth, and they were governed by a prince whose character inspired them with lofty purpose, who was arranging and administering the affairs of the kingdom with great sagacity, and with a due regard to further efficiency, development and permanence, and who, by the manner in which he **“executed judgment and justice unto all his people,”** gave ample evidence that he was the true representative of Jehovah, whose attributes these are (Psalm lxxxix., 14), and a true type of the perfect Messianic King, whom they had been taught to expect.

DAVID'S PRINCIPAL OFFICERS.—David had a regular army of 288,000 men, who unitedly composed what was called “The host.” It consisted of all males capable of bearing arms. It was divided into twelve portions, each of which

had its month of service in the year, the time not occupied in military duty being devoted to agriculture, or other ordinary employment. Over each division was a general officer, who again had under him captains of thousands and of hundreds. Over the entire army, as commander-in-chief, and as the reward of personal heroism in the taking of Jerusalem, was **Joab**, David's nephew. David also established new social and moral institutions for pastoral, agricultural, financial, judicial, educational, and other purposes. He gave new vitality to the old tribal arrangements, improved the courts of justice, carried out various civil and sanitary injunctions of the Mosaic law, and did all in his power to promote the national stability and the domestic comfort of his people (1 Chron. xi). **Jehoshaphat** was the name of his principal "recorder," or historian. **Zadok**, who joined David at Hebron, after the death of Saul, and who now ministered by the ancient tabernacle at Gibeon; and **Abiathar**, who had been the companion of his exile, and now attended the king at Jerusalem, were the High-priests. Over the king's body-guard, which was composed of foreign troops, whom David gathered round him during his residence at Ziklag, was **Benaiah**, the son of the priest Jehoiada. **Seraiah** was the scribe, or secretary of state, and **David's sons** were chief rulers, occupying important civil or ecclesiastical positions. Thus David extended the boundaries of his empire, organised and consolidated its different departments, and gathered round himself in Jerusalem as his counsellors and friends the wisest and most eminent men of the nation.

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH.—David's constant loyalty and magnanimity to Saul had been shown even

under the greatest provocation, and his love for his dear friend Jonathan was as enduring as it was sincere. When firmly established in the kingdom, and surrounded with wealth and splendour, he bethought himself of his earlier days, and the name of Jonathan was recalled as one of the prominent and most esteemed companions of his youth. He inquired of those around him if there was any survivor of the first king to whom he could show kindness "for Jonathan's sake." Ziba, an old servant of Saul, who, apparently by doubtful means, had acquired property since the defeat of Gilboa, and was now a prosperous and influential man, with fifteen sons and twenty servants, informed the King that **Mephibosheth**, the lame son of Jonathan, still lived at Lo-debar, not far from Mahanaim, among the mountains of Gilead. This poor prince, feeble in body and broken in spirit, had for safety exiled himself to a distant part of the country; and, when now called to appear before the King, he was evidently afraid lest he had been sought out to be put to death, it being a common practice among Oriental usurpers to slay the kindred of their predecessors. But David assured Mephibosheth of his sympathy and favour, explained to him the reasons of his desire to show him kindness, and gave him many tokens of his sincerity. He restored to him the private estate of his grandfather at Gibeah, set apart for him apartments in the royal palace, and a place at the royal table, and arranged with Ziba to take charge of the estate and administer it for the benefit of Mephibosheth. It is pleasant to note that the race of Jonathan did not become extinct, but through Micha, the son of Mephibosheth, continued numerous and powerful for many generations (1 Chron. viii., 35-40; ix., 40-44). The comfort, indepen-

dence, and honour conferred by David with kingly grace upon Mephibosheth, presents him in a most agreeable aspect. He was above suspicion and misgivings when he honoured and retained in his palace, as a living monument of his youthful friend, the legitimate heir of the house of Saul. But David remembered Jonathan, and that bound him to Mephibosheth; he believed in the promise of God, and that kept him from all fear of being dispossessed of his throne.

DAVID'S AMBASSADORS INSULTED BY THE AMMONITES.—The **Ammonites**, who inhabited the district between the Arnon and the Jabbok, had sustained a terrible overthrow during the judgeship of Jephthah, and had been deprived of territory east of the Jordan. This severe blow they endeavoured to avenge during the reign of Saul, by appearing in great force before the town of Jabesh-Gilead, and threatening its inhabitants with the deprivation of the right eye, even in the event of surrender. Saul, however, summoned the people to arms, came suddenly upon the Ammonites with a large army, and defeated them with immense slaughter. (1 Sam. xi.) It may well be believed that the Ammonites never forgot that humiliating defeat and its consequences; and now, forty years at least since that event, having recovered in some measure their former power, they cast an insult upon the nation of Israel to show their contempt and hatred, and their readiness again to meet them in the field. This led to one of the most important wars in which David engaged, for, beginning and ending with Ammon, it involved in its sweep the whole country east of the Jordan as far as the Euphrates.

Nahash, the king of Ammon, though he had roused the hostilities of Saul, had been friendly to David, and when David heard of his death he sent an embassy of condolence to his son and successor Hanun, desiring to show kindness unto him on account of the kindness shown by Nahash his father. The princes of Hanun, however, alarmed at the recent subjugation of Moab, saw in the ambassadors from Jerusalem only spies, persons sent "to search the city, and to spy it out and to overthrow it." Hanun, thus warned, seized David's servants, caused one-half of their beards to be shaved away, which, in the East, was reckoned a very gross insult and disgrace, and their robes to be cut short at the girdle, and then turned them out of the country in this plight. The men, ashamed to return to Jerusalem, halted at Jericho, and sent David word of their treatment. Such an outrage on royal messengers, whose persons were always sacred, as representing and being under the protection of the sovereign who had appointed them, provoked the most determined vengeance recorded in the whole of David's reign.

DEFEAT OF THE AMMONITES AND THEIR SYRIAN ALLIES.— Hanun, alarmed at the prospect of an invasion by the conquerors of Moab, entered into a powerful confederacy with Syrian mercenaries, who were probably but too willing to form a coalition for the overthrow of the advancing Hebrew power. David called out his military forces and despatched Joab to take charge of the campaign against the Ammonites. The Jordan having been crossed, the Ammonite army was found encamped in front of their capital, the Syrian auxiliaries, numbering more than 30,000, being posted at different parts in the neighbourhood. Joab

swiftly marched between the two forces, selected picked men for the attack upon the Syrians, who were probably the most formidable part of the enemy, and, taking command of this division in person, left the remainder to Abishai, his brother, with which to operate against the Ammonites. The brief soldier-like address of the commander-in-chief to his brother, was well fitted to excite the greatest enthusiasm and courage. Each was to help the other as required, and all were to remember that they were fighting "the Lord's battle," under His protection, with His aid, and for His glory.

"Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good." (2 Sam. x., 12.)

The result of an engagement, undertaken in this spirit, could not be doubtful. The hired army of Syrians gave way before the rush of Joab's warriors, which, when the Ammonites beheld, they also hastily fled, entering into the city. Joab left his brother to prosecute the siege of the capital, while he hastened to Jerusalem with news of the victory and to prepare for another campaign.

RENEWED ATTACK OF THE SYRIANS, AND THEIR TOTAL DEFEAT.—The **Syrian** allies of Ammon had been defeated but not crushed. As the Israelites expected, they soon resumed hostilities, and on a still greater scale. Syria was now the chief object on the part of the Israelites, and therefore the whole body of Aramaic tribes, who occupied this wide region, rallied in a death struggle for their independence. The whole military strength of Israel was called out, and was led over Jordan by the king himself. The armies met at Helam, a town whose site is now unknown, and the Israelites gained a signal victory, no fewer

than 40,000 Syrians being slain. Hadadezer, the king of Zobah, had been the moving spirit in this confederacy, and his tributaries and vassals forthwith hastened to make peace with the conqueror and transfer their allegiance to him. From the Euphrates to Lebanon, officials from Jerusalem now levied tribute for David's empire. David had now reached the highest point of royal glory, the climax of his reign. The splendour of his victories spread his name far and wide, and left the impression of his greatness even on outside nations; whilst his subjects esteemed and loved him as their prophet, whose songs of gratitude and expectation awakened the deepest emotions and the highest hopes, as their priest, whose devotion to religion had inspired a spirit of piety and zeal unknown before, and as their king, who had united them into a strong and happy nation, had subdued their enemies and won for them a vast empire, and whose alliance was eagerly sought by neighbouring powers. Little wonder, if now their sanctuary hymns of praise become full of martial ardour, and, while abounding with allusions to the ancient victories of the people, are world-wide in their anticipations of future triumph.—Psalms xx., xxi., lx., and probably lxxviii.

DAVID'S GREAT SIN.—But the bright vision was sadly clouded. In the eleventh chapter we are introduced to the second period of David's reign in Jerusalem, which was very different from the first. We have there recorded his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, actions which cast an indelible stain on his character, the remembrance of which embittered the remainder of his reign, and which brought a series of calamities upon himself and family and upon the nation over which he ruled.

It is with great disappointment and anxiety that the student of David's life contemplates this part of his career. He refers to it with reluctance, and would willingly drop over it the mantle of concealment. But the Word of God is impartial. It records vices as well as virtues, and neither attempts to palliate faults nor to exaggerate excellencies. It is an evidence of the **truth** of Scripture that it does not conceal the errors and imperfections which appeared in the lives and character of even the most eminent saints, and an evidence of the **intention** of Scripture, which is not to preserve a collection of national annals, but to emphasise the moral crises in the lives of men, to warn against sin, to encourage in paths of uprightness, and to show the growth of God's kingdom in the world and in the individual soul. Accordingly, while the wars and victories of David are only briefly referred to, his sin, its terrible consequences, and the deep penitence and soul-conflicts which followed, are painted with fulness and fidelity.

The **circumstances** in which David was placed at the time of his fall are worthy of consideration. Such a sin as his is seldom committed unless a variety of circumstances combine to put the heart in such a state as to make it ready to yield to temptation.

David's troops had already gained important victories, and with the return of spring, the usual season for resuming military operations, had now gone to besiege **Rabbah**, the capital of the Ammonites, a town about 22 miles east of the Jordan, in the mountainous regions of Gilead. They were under the command of Joab, the King, from indolence or self-indulgence, "tarrying still at Jerusalem." It was "the time when kings go forth to battle," but David preferred the luxury and safety of the palace to the hardship

and peril of the camp. Deprived of the companionship and counsel of his wise and mighty men, feeling apparently little anxiety for the safety and success of his troops, his mind unoccupied with pure and elevating pursuits, he was living an idle and therefore a perilous life. His worldly prosperity had indisposed the soul for self-denial and watchfulness, and induced a state of heart in which he was least able to resist temptation. The polygamy in which he had indulged had weakened his impressions of the sanctity of the marriage bond, had impaired the pure and refined feelings which he ought to have cherished, and had made his ardent nature peculiarly susceptible to seduction. The idleness which gave to temptation its opportunity and power, the prosperity and success which produced a state of satisfaction and moral weakness, and the blunted sensibility which polygamy superinduced, combined to make David an easy prey to the Tempter.

Having rested during the heat of the day, as is the custom in Eastern lands, David arose in the cool of the evening to enjoy a walk upon the palace roof. While so engaged he was attracted by the sight of a woman bathing herself in the court of a house which was overlooked by the palace. She was apparently a woman of extraordinary beauty, and, unfortunately for David, the lawless desire at once possessed him to make her his own. On inquiry he found that she was the wife of **Uriah**, a Hittite by race, and thus one of the old Canaanite stock, but one who had adopted the Hebrew religion, and was now one of his bravest officers. But this knowledge did not calm his passion or alter his design. He had adopted the presumptuous opinion of Eastern despots that he could dispose of the persons and lives of his subjects as he pleased, and he at once sent for

Bathsheba to come to the palace. She unhesitatingly obeyed the king's command. Vanity and ambition prevailed over the voice of conscience and the claims of fidelity,—and she offered no resistance to the wishes of the King.

The sin of which David was thus guilty was the sin of adultery, which is expressly forbidden by the seventh commandment of the moral law. It was a breach of the marriage oath, destroying the sanctities of Uriah's house, and striking directly at the foundations of domestic virtue and happiness, of national purity and strength. It lowered and debased David's own nature, and added a mean and selfish crime to his sinful weakness. After a long life of pre-eminent piety and usefulness it went far to undo all the good of his example and enthusiasm. Though it was no premeditated crime of which he was guilty, no base contrivance deliberately devised to plot the ruin of Bathsheba, and upon the execution of which the energies of his mind had been concentrated, and though this act was one which was habitually done by the kings around, yet, considering the age and experience of David, the extensive influence he wielded, the excellent character he bore, and the religious privileges he enjoyed, we are constrained to characterise his fall as one of the saddest moral catastrophes which history records. It shows how dangerous it is to tamper with temptation, it proves that no one in this world at any period of life is secure against its power, and teaches the need of increasing vigilance and of God's restraining grace.

THE DEATH OF URIAH.—A great sin seldom stands alone. Either other sins of less enormity have led up to it, or additional transgressions are committed in order to conceal it from public view. In David's case there is a breach of the sixth commandment to cover the breach of the seventh.

He had been taken by surprise and been blinded by passion. After Bathsheba returned to her own house, and he had time for reflection, and especially after he learned the result of his unhallowed alliance, he felt anxious to conceal his crime. He only increased his guilt by the measures he adopted to avoid the scandal and infamy of exposure, and the punishment of death which, according to Mosaic law (Lev. xx., 10), he and the partner of his guilt had incurred. He evidently did not know how best to extricate himself from the difficulties in which he was involved. Concern for his own character, regard for the honour and the life of Bathsheba, and consciousness of guilt, urged him to adopt the expedient of sending for Uriah from the war, ostensibly to inform him of its progress, but really to induce him to share the privileges of domestic life. A hollow audience ended, the veteran soldier was courteously dismissed with the recommendation to go home and refresh himself after his fatigues, the King sending thither at the same time for his entertainment, and as a token of special favour, provisions from the royal table. But the wily scheme failed. Uriah was brave and self-denying, was inured to all the privations of the camp, and so he refused any self-indulgence while the Ark of God was in the field, the army in rough booths of branches, and Joab and his companions sleeping on the ground. Nothing would induce Uriah to spend the night anywhere but in the quarters of the watch at the gate of the palace. On the second day the King tried to gain his base end and lead Uriah to break his resolution, by making him drink to excess. But even this failed, and it seemed as if the scheme would be frustrated. Then David, determined at any cost to screen himself and Bathsheba from disgrace and punish-

ment, and knowing that the life either of Uriah or of Bathsheba must be forfeited, in dire desperation resolved to add murder to adultery, and to use Uriah himself in carrying back his own death warrant to Joab. Perhaps he comforted himself with the thought that by this plan Uriah would die bravely on the battle-field, and be buried honourably in a soldier's grave; at any rate, would be saved the agony of learning his wife's infidelity and the King's unworthy conduct. But it was a very heartless and wicked crime. With cold-blooded cruelty, David sent Uriah with a letter to Joab, which instructed that general to take advantage of the devotion and heroism of Uriah, to assign him a post of extreme danger, and to allow him to be smitten in defending it. Joab was unscrupulous enough to obey this royal order. He was no doubt pleased to have David as a partaker of his sins, and to acquire ascendancy over him. Uriah was placed opposite a strongly guarded part of the city where, in case of a fresh sally, the fighting was likely to be fiercest, he was left unsupported close to the very walls, and was struck down by a missile from above. Thus Joab became an accomplice in David's crime.

When the messenger was sent to Jerusalem with the news of the engagement, Joab instructed him to relate first the incidents of the war, and then, in case the King expressed displeasure at the army having approached too near the walls of the besieged city, to mention the death of Uriah. When David received the intelligence, he said, with smooth hypocrisy,

"Let not this thing displease (depress) 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." (2 Sam. xi., 25.)

As the sword of war knows no distinction, but cuts down

the bravest as well as the most cowardly, Joab should not be too much affected by death or disaster, but earnestly prosecute the siege to a successful termination.

When Bathsheba heard of her husband's death she mourned with the usual signs of grief, as a widow, for the required period. She was then married to David, and her child was born. The account, however, is closed with the assurance which prepares us for subsequent manifestations of the Divine retribution—

“But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.” (2 Sam. xi., 27.)

NATHAN'S VISIT TO DAVID.—The crimes of which David had been guilty were probably not unknown in those days among neighbouring kings, and were little thought of by their subjects. But Israel stood in a peculiar position toward God, and Israel's king could not be permitted to sin so heinously without being reprovèd and punished. David kept up the appearance of innocence for a considerable time, made no acknowledgment of his transgression, and acted as if nothing of the kind had occurred. During the time he “kept silence” (Psalm xxxii., 3-4), his mental agony made itself visible in his outward frame, it vented itself in groans, and produced the symptoms of premature old age. But there was no public expression of remorse and shame. God saw it to be necessary to bring David to a full realisation of his wickedness, to free and frank confession and repentance. While the appearance of outward innocence was being kept up, David was cherishing a deadly leprosy in the heart of the nation, which was as contagious as it was fatal.

At length the prophet **Nathan** was instructed to appear before the king and accuse him of his crime. This he did

in true Oriental fashion by means of a **parable**. The king is first probed with a story of fictitious distress, his judgment as sovereign of the realm is demanded upon an imaginary case of wanton and cruel oppression, and thus, unbiassed and unprejudiced, he is left to decide upon his own case. The parable is very beautiful and touching; it is admirably constructed, and it was perfectly adapted to the end in view. A rich man, not content with the ample means and luxuries he already possessed, went and robbed a poor neighbour of his little ewe lamb, the source of much interest and delight to his family; which, as Nathan shows with much pathos and emotion,

“Grew up together 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.” (2 Sam. xii., 3.)

The prophet spoke, with an eye flashing with indignation, of the unfeeling covetousness and cruelty of the rich man, and then awaited the royal verdict. The conduct of David had been selfish and merciless, but he was blind to his own sin, and did not recognise himself under the disguise which the prophet had thrown over his case. The selfishness and cruelty of another aroused his indignation, and he longed to vindicate the innocent and chastise the oppressor. In his natural generosity of disposition and hatred of wrong, David pronounced the sentence:—

“As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.” (2 Sam. xii., 5-6).

We may well ask—While the accents of justice rushed to his lip, and his award was even more severe than the case deserved, or than the Mosaic statute warranted (Exod. xxii., 11),—did no hidden pang remind him of his own

guilt; did not memory and conscience recall the irreparable wrong he himself had done? We fear blindness, prejudice, and self love prevented David from fully appreciating the guilt of his own sin, though he was fully alive to the guilt of the sins of others. But Nathan, with startling directness, tore the veil of self-delusion asunder, showed to the astonished king himself, convicted him of the folly of severely condemning in another man the very faults of which in a greatly aggravated form he had himself been guilty, and brought home to his heart the greatness of his iniquity and the condemnation it deserved, by reminding him of the mercies that had been conferred upon him, and of the irrevocable consequences of his ingratitude and disobedience. For his two-fold sin of adultery and murder David would suffer a two-fold punishment answering to the sin. He would witness the commission of murder and outrage in his own family.

The direct words of Nathan, "**Thou art the man,**" and the awful denunciations of Divine judgment, drove the arrow of conviction home; David stood self-condemned before the prophet; there was no excuse or palliation of his sin, but, with thoroughly broken spirit, he openly and candidly confessed it. Conviction was followed by deep contrition and by frank confession. When Nathan beheld the genuine sorrow of the king, he assured him of the remission of the penalty he had incurred, and of the Divine forgiveness, but added that, seeing "**he had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme,**" the child just born should die. Thus the sin of David, while an awful warning, becomes also to all ages, by the manner in which it was confessed and forgiven, a testimony of the exceeding abundance of Divine grace. God hates the sin, but He pardons the penitent, believing sinner. Yes, He pardons,

but He does not wholly spare. Bereavement, dissension, and bloodshed followed the commission of David's sin, and embittered the remainder of his life. Family trials and national troubles succeeded each other in quick succession, and wrung his heart with severest anguish, not only by their own bitterness, but chiefly by the vividness with which they brought back the remembrance of his iniquity. The glory of the Theocracy was dimmed when the Divine law was dishonoured by the king of God's chosen people, by one who had shown great devotion and zeal in the service of God. Though he might escape the sentence of death which he deserved (Lev. xx., 10; xxiv., 17), and the justice of which he had acknowledged, he could not escape all the consequences of his sin.

DEATH OF THE CHILD.—The first visible chastisement inflicted upon David appeared with regard to the child that was born of Bathsheba. The prediction of Nathan that the child should die was speedily fulfilled. It was taken suddenly ill. David was very anxious that it might be spared, and he earnestly prayed for its recovery. Had it been spared it would have been a constant living monument of his sin, but affection for Bathsheba, natural parental love for a child that had won his warm and sensitive heart, and, above all, a deep sense of sin and of God's displeasure as shown in the child's sickness, which he had been taught to connect with his sin—all combined to produce extreme anxiety and distress, and desire for the child's recovery. He knew that God's threatened judgments were often to be understood conditionally, and as long as the child was yet alive he hoped the Lord would have mercy upon him, reverse the sentence, and spare the child as an evidence of for-

giveness and favour. In token of his deep humiliation and distress David mourned and fasted, and lay all night upon the earth sobbing and groaning. His leading domestics, pitying his grief, and apprehensive that he would injure his health, besought him to rise and take some needed refreshment. But he would not. On the seventh day the child died. So great had been David's grief when the child had only been sick, that the servants feared he would be inconsolable if he knew the child was dead, and they feared to tell him. But when the king perceived by their whispering that the child was dead, to their surprise he rose from the ground, bathed, anointed himself as Orientals do when they go into society, and laid aside all outward signs of mourning. After solemnly worshipping God, he returned to his wonted repast. The servants, astonished at his behaviour, requested an explanation. He returned an answer which evinced at once the strength of his character and the firmness of his faith in a future life of conscious existence, of reunion with departed friends, of mutual recognition and eternal blessedness :—

“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? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.” (2 Sam. xii., 22-23.)

Here was true resignation, acquiescence in the will of God, the great Disposer of all events, strong faith and glorious hope. The death of that child, however, was but the beginning of a long course of righteous retribution.

After much anguish of spirit, David regained peace of mind and came again to rejoice in a sweet sense of God's forgiveness. When, therefore, a year or two afterwards, Bathsheba had another son, he called him **Solomon** (the Peaceful), deeming him a pledge that he should now again

enjoy peace with God. But God punishes in love as well as in anger, and the freest forgiveness and the happiest consciousness of it may consist with the infliction of divine chastisement on account of sin. Meanwhile, Nathan was sent by God to assure David that He loved the boy whom Bathsheba had now borne; he was **Jedidiah** (beloved of the Lord).

CONQUEST OF RABBAH.—For a lengthened period—perhaps for two years—the siege of **Rabbah** (page 55) had continued. At length, the lower part of the town, which was insulated by the winding course of the Jabbok, was taken by the troops under Joab. With the true loyalty of his character, and unwilling to have the glory of the conquest ascribed to himself, Joab reserved for the king the honour of capturing the upper and more strongly fortified parts of the town, where the royal palace was situated, and where now the Ammonites, with all their property, were gathered. When David received a message from Joab to come and finish the war, “lest I take the city and it be called after my name”—he roused himself from his ease in Jerusalem, collected a large force, and proceeded to assail the acropolis of Rabbah. Without much difficulty it was captured, and the immense treasure it contained fell to the lot of the victorious troops. David retained for himself the crown of the king of the Ammonites, which was heavy and of great value. The inhabitants of the city, on account of the formidable resistance they had made, and as an act of retributive justice for the cruelties which they notoriously practised in similar circumstances (1 Sam. xi., 2.; Amos. i., 13), were treated with excessive severity. Thus ended the war with the Syrians and Ammonites, which was the

fiercest in which David was ever engaged, and was also the last great war of his life. The boundaries of his kingdom were now so far extended that it was secure against heathen nations. But this splendour of outward power and dominion stood in sharp contrast with the inward disintegration of the royal house and of the whole people through David's sin.

AMNON'S OUTRAGE ON TAMAR.—Another part of the fulfilment of the terrible doom pronounced by Nathan on David's house is narrated in the thirteenth chapter. Probably the incident occurred not long after David's sin with Bathsheba, the son's indulgence of his passion being encouraged by the evil example of his father's still recent crime. Thus David's punishment sprang immediately out of his offence, for Amnon's act was the seed of a long series of calamities.

The polygamy in which David had indulged (pages 20, 31) gave opportunity for terrible retribution. His numerous wives were jealous of each other, and lived with their children in separate establishments of their own. The children, growing up under the care of their different mothers, were not placed under strict paternal discipline, and they thought they had a right to gratify their fleshly desires and carry out their ambitious plans. The different families formed separate parties in the state, and their homes were hotbeds of faction and intrigue. And though David regulated the administration of his kingdom according to the will of God, yet he seems to have disregarded all the precepts of Divine law in his domestic affairs, and to have been easy and over-indulgent in his treatment of his sons.

The physical beauty which distinguished the sons of

Jesse seems in the family of David to have specially descended to the children whom he had by Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, the King of Geshur. Absalom and his sister **Tamar** were celebrated for their personal beauty in Jerusalem, and were objects of admiration and promise as they rode through its streets on their royal mules. David's eldest son and heir to the throne, **Amnon**, son of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, conceived a violent passion for his beautiful half-sister Tamar, and desired to possess her. Such a marriage was forbidden by the law of Moses (Lev. xviii., 2), but the sanction which the example of Abraham had given to it, and the common practice of neighbouring countries, probably excused it in the view of Amnon. He wished to make known his affection to Tamar, but her own maidenly reserve and the difficulty of obtaining free access to her, as unmarried daughters were kept in close seclusion, prevented him. His disappointment and ardour so preyed upon his mind as to produce a visible change in his appearance and health. At length, the pale worn looks of Amnon attracted the notice of his clever but unprincipled cousin Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, who, on discovering the reason, contrived and proposed to Amnon a plan by which he could obtain an unrestricted interview with his sister. He was to feign himself to be sick, and request the king to send Tamar to wait upon him and to make some special delicacy suited to the fastidious taste of an invalid. Amnon did so; his request seemed natural to his father, and Tamar, flattered by the request, at once went to render the required service in the house of her sick brother. But when Tamar was alone with Amnon, all the attendants having been sent out, as she handed him the food she had prepared, he pressed her to lie with him. She at once

repelled his advances, and urged strong and affecting arguments and remonstrances to induce him to desist. Israel was a holy nation, sanctified by the peculiar presence of Jehovah among them, and all acts of unchastity were an offence against the true character and calling of the nation (Levit. xx., 8). Shame and contempt would meet her everywhere should she consent, and he was acting as a fool in casting off the restraints of decency and morality. Wishing to restrain his passionate advances for the present, she assured him that the king, their father, would not object to their marriage if he were formally asked. But Amnon, goaded on by lustful passion, was deaf to her arguments and entreaties, overpowered her, and forced her.

When his passion was gratified, Amnon's love turned to bitter hate, and in spite of the protest of Tamar, who was innocent and had done nothing but what affection for a sick brother had dictated, he had her put out, the atrocity of his conduct, with all the feelings of shame and remorse, and dread of exposure and punishment, rendering her presence now intolerably painful to him. With every mark of grief and shame, with ashes on her head, her royal princess's robe rent, and her hands clasped above her head, she went away through the streets, sobbing and wailing on account of the wrong she had endured. In this plight she was met by Absalom, who was the proper protector of her interests and honour; and when he saw her distinguishing robe as a royal virgin rent, and other signs of shame, he at once conjectured what had taken place. But Absalom was cold and deliberate in wickedness and cruelty. He advised his sister to bear the outrage patiently, so as to avoid public scandal, assuring her that he would avenge her wrong. He felt certain his father's own consciousness of guilt and his

partiality for his firstborn son would prevent him from inflicting the adequate and legal penalty of this crime (Lev. xx., 17), but he was resolved to watch a suitable opportunity for revenge. The King, when he heard what Amnon had done, was grieved and very angry; but his conscience made him a coward. He feared to bring the law into force against his son, lest the sword should descend on his own head. Tamar, ruined and deserted, the joy of her life hopelessly destroyed, dwelt in Absalom's house. Absalom, to quiet Amnon's suspicions, made no allusion to his crime. Unrelentingly he bided his time, but never relinquished his purpose of revenge. His father's inaction made him the more resolute, and he was one who knew neither compunction nor pity in pursuing his plans of revenge or of ambition.

MURDER OF AMNON BY ABSALOM.—Two years passed after the occurrence of the incident previously recorded, before Absalom carried out his intention of punishing his brother. Amnon's fears were now disarmed, and the remembrance of the incident was becoming faint. But Absalom was keeping his eye on his prey, and calmly and cunningly was preparing to spring upon his victim.

Absalom had a sheep farm at **Baalhazor**, and he invited the King and his brethren to a sheep-shearing festival. The King, unwilling to be burdensome to his son and put him to the heavy cost which his presence would entail, declined the invitation, but gave permission, though with some reluctance, to the princes to attend their brother's feast. He evidently had some misgiving, but the entreaties of Absalom and his own fatal irresolution prevailed.

When the feast was at its height, and "Amnon's heart was

merry with wine," on a preconcerted signal from their master, who took all the responsibility on himself, Absalom's servants rushed upon Amnon and slew him at the table. The princes were attended by a numerous retinue, but the attack had been so sudden and so unexpected that interference and resistance were unthought of. They were horror-struck, and, apprehensive of a general massacre, fled in affrighted haste to Jerusalem with tidings of the treacherous deed.

Thus Absalom avenged his sister's wrong, and rid himself of one who stood between himself and succession to the throne. In the consternation and tumult which the atrocious deed occasioned, he fled, and went to his maternal grandfather's, at Geshur. He knew that the law as to wilful and premeditated murder (Numb. xxxv., 21) gave him no hope of remaining with impunity within the bounds of Palestine, and that the cities of refuge could afford no sanctuary in such a case as his.

An exaggerated report of Absalom's crime preceded the princes who fled to Jerusalem, and David and his household, believing that all the King's sons had been slain, were plunged in the depths of grief and despair. David rent his clothes and sat upon the ground, while the servants, also with rent clothes, stood motionless by. Jonadab, with much sagacity, and, perhaps, from some hint given by Absalom regarding his intention, assured the King that the rumour was exaggerated, and guessed accurately what had really happened. His surmise was confirmed when the young man who had been set to look out for the returning princes beheld them coming in the distance, and when at length these young men arrived at the palace. But David ceased not to mourn for Absalom. The poor King was

experiencing the truth of the prediction that "sin shall not go unpunished." A little child snatched by death from the family circle, a lovely and beloved daughter ravished and desolate, his eldest son murdered amidst the revelry of a drunken banquet, and that by another son, who was the pride and admiration of the palace, and who was now an exile from his father's house and his native land—these were the first consequences of his sin.

THE SCHEME FOR ABSALOM'S RETURN.—Absalom had now been **three years** absent from Jerusalem. David's grief at Amnon's death gradually diminished as time rolled on, and his active hostility towards Absalom and desire to punish the fratricide were not only mitigated, but changed into a feeling of pity and of earnest longing for his recall from banishment. He dared not, consistently with the requirements of justice and the best interests of the kingdom, recall him, but he was ready to adopt any pretext which would enable him to do so.

The state of the King's feelings towards Absalom could not be concealed from those who were constantly near him, and Joab devised a scheme for pleasing the King and for restoring Absalom.

Having procured a countrywoman of superior intelligence and address, he induced her to put on mourning, as one who had been mourning for a long time for some one who was dead, and to seek an audience of the King in this attire, to solicit his royal interposition in the settlement of a pretended domestic grievance. The story she told the King was that she was a widow, that her two sons had quarrelled in the field, and as no one was near to interfere, one of them had killed the other. The whole

family had now risen against her, and in pursuit of the blood revenge sanctioned by the Mosaic law (Numb. xxxv., 19; Deut. xix., 12, 13), had demanded the death of the survivor. But she had taken upon herself the "iniquity" of arresting the course of justice, and of shielding the homicide, lest "**her coal that was left should be quenched,**" and the only remaining hope of preserving the name and family of her husband be extinguished. The King felt interested in her case, and promised to give the necessary commands to save her son from the avenger of blood. This promise she induced the King to confirm on oath, that she might bind him the more firmly. She then endeavoured to apply her story to the case of the King himself. He had acknowledged that in certain circumstances the life of a murderer might be spared. Was it not possible that his own scruples about pardoning Absalom might be removed? If prepared to exercise royal clemency on behalf of a stranger, the death of whose son would be a loss to her family only, could he not consent to the restoration of Absalom, whose criminality was not greater than that of one who had killed his brother in similar circumstances of provocation, and whose preservation was the common interest and desire of all Israel, who regarded him as the heir-apparent to the throne? The application was indeed expressed in terms necessarily ambiguous, and as if still enforcing her own case; but it was not difficult for the King to understand her allusions, and to see through her disguise.

"And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished. For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him."—(2 Sam. xiv., 13, 14.)

The King was thus reminded of the certainty, impartiality, and irretrievable nature of death, of the brevity and uncertainty of human life, and of the great mercy of God in devising measures for the pardon and restoration of the guilty. He could not but think of the fact that Amnon would have died some time, and that Absalom would die all the sooner if he were treated so harshly, and that it was his duty while he himself was spared to be reconciled to his son. The device succeeded, for David did not need much argument to persuade him to recall Absalom. His suspicions being aroused, he asked the woman if the hand of Joab was not with her in all this? She confessed it was, adding the flattering words that the King was "wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God to know all things that are in the earth." Joab was called, and assured that the request which he had presented through the medium of the woman should be fulfilled, and he was commissioned to repair to Geshur to bring home the exiled son. So Absalom was brought back to Jerusalem, though, when he came there he was told to return to his own house that he might not see his father's face.

David was probably induced to agree to the recall of Absalom by the fact that the murder of which he was guilty had been committed in revenge of the wrongs done to his sister, by the fear lest he should imbibe a love for heathen principles and worship, and specially by the belief that the safety and interests of the kingdom required the return of him who, as brought out in the stratagem of Joab, was looked upon as the heir apparent to the throne. It is questionable if this plausible apology for the act of clemency authorized the king to dispense with the plain requirements of the Divine law (Gen. ix, 6; Numb. xxxv., 30, 31). But

if Absalom was to be forgiven he should have been wholly forgiven, and received back to court. The conduct of the king was unjust, imprudent, and impolitic, and it bore bitter fruit. To recall without bestowing full pardon could not fail to irritate, to cause alienation and provoke antagonism. It can easily be seen, too, that Joab, in seeking for the reconciliation of David and Absalom, and in his professions of joy and gratitude at the king's act of grace in agreeing to his application—an application probably made frequently before but without effect—was actuated by selfish designs, and the wish to bring both father and son under great and lasting obligation.

ABSALOM RECONCILED TO THE KING.—An account is given of Absalom's personal appearance and of his family affairs. He possessed winning courtly manners, a fascinating address, a very handsome appearance, and beautiful luxuriant hair, which was specially striking and which was cut only once a year. The weight of the year's growth of hair was 200 royal shekels (about 7lbs. troy.) He had three sons, and a daughter of great beauty named Tamar. The sons, however, died while young, and Absalom erected a monument in a property which he had near the Jordan valley, to keep alive the remembrance of his name (2 Sam. xviii., 18).

After remaining **two full years** in Jerusalem without seeing the king's face, Absalom sent for Joab, that through his intercession a full pardon might be obtained. As Joab thought proper twice to disregard his earnest message, he resorted to a violent expedient to force his case on Joab's attention. Probably Joab did not choose to incur the King's displeasure by visiting his son while still in disgrace. But when he found his barley field which was next to Absalom's

property set on fire by Absalom's servants, furious at the insult and destruction caused, he at once went to complain and request an explanation. Absalom told him that half forgiveness was really worse than none, that he had better have remained at Geshur, that if he were guilty he should be punished, but if innocent, as his recall suggested, he should be restored to court. Joab was won over by the splendid appearance and specious words of Absalom; the king, on Joab's intercession, consented to receive his son, and when, after five years separation, father and son met, Absalom was raised from the prostrate position of homage and penitence which he had assumed, to receive the kiss of forgiveness and reconciliation.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION.—After his restoration to favour, Absalom began to aspire to the throne, and during the next four years he made preparations for a formal **rebellion** against the crown and life of his indulgent father. He set up a princely court, drove in a grand state carriage, had fifty liveried men to form his escort, and endeavoured, by his display of royal pomp, to attract the attention of the people. As he drove through the streets of Jerusalem he was a vision of dazzling beauty. Besides this, he went early in the morning to the palace gates, where the King was expected to sit to receive supplicants, and to redress wrongs. Here he intercepted those who were about to enter, invited them to lay their case before him, pronounced a favourable decision upon it, professed deep sympathy with the people on the improbability of ever obtaining a proper hearing, and, while he thus threw suspicion on his father's rule, hinted how differently matters would be arranged, the course of justice accelerated, and the public interests advanced, if

he were in power. Others he won by his affability and condescension, raising them when they knelt and did homage to him as the King's son, taking them by the hand and kissing them. By such means he turned the hearts of the people towards himself. By his smooth crafty ways, he flattered the weak and imposed upon the credulous. The people neither penetrated his motives, nor foresaw the tendency of his conduct.

Four years had passed in this insidious plotting, and the time was now ripe for bold and decisive action. Discontent had been fanned, vain hopes excited, and a spirit of revolt against the king and his government awakened and fostered. Then Absalom, under the cloak of religion, proceeded to put his treasonable designs into execution. Under pretence of having made a vow during his time of banishment which he now desired to fulfil, he obtained permission from his father to go to **Hebron**. This was the town of his birth; it was still a kind of royal city, and probably the inhabitants had been irritated by the removal of the court to Jerusalem, and would, therefore, be the better prepared to listen to his proposals. To enhance the importance of the occasion, and to increase the number of his adherents, Absalom invited to the sacrificial feast two hundred men of known position and influence. They had no suspicion of Absalom's intention, but he wished it to appear that they were in the plot, and he trusted to them to join him when they found themselves so compromised. Spies were sent out to the different tribes to ascertain the feelings of the people, to forward the interests of Absalom, and organise his supporters, so that whenever they should hear the sound of the trumpet—the signal for revolt and muster—they might join his standard and shout "**Absalom reigneth in Hebron.**" He would thus be simultaneously proclaimed all over the land.

Absalom also sent a special invitation to **Ahithophel** to come from his home among the mountains of Judah to give him counsel and help. Ahithophel was David's tried counsellor and friend, but he was also, it seems (2 Sam. xi, 3; xxiii, 34, 39), the grandfather of Bathsheba, and probably Absalom was aware that he was ready to join the revolt on account of the dishonour and wrong done to his house in the person of Bathsheba, and in the murder of Uriah.

The enterprise of Absalom was eminently successful; "The conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom." From this it is evident that feelings of discontent and a readiness to rebel existed. The time of David's brilliant victories was past, his sin had broken the charm of reverence and respect and awakened feelings of contempt and scorn, he had become morbid and melancholy, and had almost dropped out of public view. Meanwhile, one of the most important duties of an Eastern ruler—the duty of sitting to hear appeals—was neglected, private causes remained long undecided, decisions were given hastily and arbitrarily, and the King, through the growing infirmities of age, illness, or other cause, took little interest in public affairs. The rapid spread of the rebellion is clear evidence of the general dissatisfaction which existed against the person and government of David, and this dissatisfaction his wicked and rebellious son scrupled not to employ to forward his own ambitious and unnatural purposes. For the moment the rebels had the whole land at their feet, David, who had trusted Absalom implicitly, being entirely unsuspecting and quite unprepared for the terrible blow.

DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM JERUSALEM.—As soon as David heard that "the hearts of the men of Israel were after Absalom," he was overwhelmed with grief and terror. That his son should prove a traitor, that his own tribe of Judah should desert him and lead the rebellion, and that such wide-spread disaffection should exist amongst his subjects was appalling. And probably the importance and extent of the insurrection were exaggerated in the reports that first reached him. Accordingly, in order to prevent the sack of his capital, a general massacre, and all the horrors of civil war, as well as to secure his personal safety, David at once resolved to flee, and to cross the Kidron with his faithful adherents. This he did, leaving only ten concubines behind to keep the palace. Going out of the city by the east side, towards the valley of the Kidron and the Mount of Olives, he halted at "the far-off house"—probably the last house on the outskirts of the city on the road to Jericho—in order to give the members of his household and his loyal subjects time to rally and to fall into the ranks in an orderly way. All his ministers and chief officials clung loyally to him, and marched by his side, while in front marched the whole of his trained body-guard, the Cherethites and Pelethites with six hundred well tried veterans who had come in his train from Gath. Practically, therefore, the whole of the standing army accompanied the king in his flight, under the leadership of Joab, Abishai, and a certain Philistine general Ittai, who with his family and followers had entered his service. The last of these the king urged to return, as he was but an exile, could have but little attachment to his person, and was not under the necessity of taking a side in the civil revolution of a foreign country; but the noble Philistine stood well this test of his fidelity, and protested his desire "whether in death or life" to defend his rightful sovereign.

As an evidence of the importance of that critical day in the fortunes of David and of Israel, every incident in the eventful journey is carefully noted. Of no single day in Jewish history does such an elaborate account remain. Our attention is directed to these **five** points—the grief of the king and the lamentation of the people, the priests sent back with the Ark, Hushai requested to return to Jerusalem, the treachery of Ziba, and the insulting behaviour of Shimei. The patience and piety, the generosity and forethought of David, were conspicuously displayed in these incidents.

(a) **THE GRIEF OF THE KING AND THE LAMENTATION OF THE PEOPLE.**—Bursts of wild lamentation were heard all around, and the excitement was intense as the King, who had been a national hero from his youth, conquering wide realms and occupying a position of eminence and glory, walked forth towards the wilderness of Judah, driven from his throne by the treason of his son, and showing every sign of deep penitence and grief. The feeling of confession and sympathy was specially manifested as the King toiled up the ascent of Olivet “and wept as he went, and he had his head covered and went barefoot.” The calamities which Nathan had predicted were now breaking forth in all their fulness.

(b) After the Kidron—the little winter torrent which flows between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives—had been crossed, the company were overtaken by a procession of priests and Levites, Zadok and Abiathar at their head, bearing “**the ark of the covenant of God.**” David, however, had too great a reverence for the Ark to expose it to the perils of uncertain wanderings and possibly of battle and he knew he could enjoy Divine direction and help without that sacred pledge of Divine presence and blessing. He

had now recovered his equanimity and his noble trust in God, and with feelings of submission he calmly ordered Zadok to 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 show me both it and his habitation : but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee ; behold, here am I, let him do as seemeth good unto him." (2 Sam. xv., 25, 26.)

Besides, the two sons of Zadok and Abiathar might be useful in reporting to him the course of events in the city. He would wait at the fords of the Jordan till he should receive this report.

(c) HUSHAI REQUESTED TO RETURN TO JERUSALEM.—When David and his company reached the summit of the ridge of Olivet—a place at which a sanctuary had been erected for divine worship—they were met by **Hushai** the Archite, who had been absent from Jerusalem when the rebellion broke out, and now hastened to join his master. Hushai was a state officer and confidential adviser of the king, and, though old and infirm, and of little use for defence, was plausible and clever, and a master of political stratagem. He arrived at an opportune moment. David had just been informed of the defection of Ahithophel,—and the tidings that a chosen friend and counsellor had joined in the revolt was specially painful to his heart,—and he had prayed "**O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness,**" when, as if in answer to his prayer, Hushai appeared. As he seemed to be the very man who could frustrate the designs of his enemies, the king requested him to return to Jerusalem, to profess friendship for Absalom, and through the sons of the priests to send reports of what occurred in the palace. Hushai returned to Jerusalem, and was just in time to meet Absalom arriving from Hebron.

(*d*) THE TREACHERY OF ZIBA.—When the top of Olivet had been crossed, **Ziba**, the servant of Mephibosheth, met David's company with some very acceptable provisions. There were a couple of asses saddled and laden with 200 loaves, 100 raisin-cakes, 100 fig-cakes, and a large skin bottle of wine. Doubtless Ziba anticipated the speedy failure of Absalom's conspiracy, and wished to prepare for his own future advancement on the King's restoration. He came with the story that his master, in the hope that the present royal family would destroy themselves in their mutual broils, and the people reinstate the old dynasty, had remained in Jerusalem. As Mephibosheth was a weak cripple who had never taken any part in politics and was unfit to govern, such an expectation on his part was absurd, and the whole story of Ziba improbable, but David, in his exhausted and excited state, and in the haste and confusion of the moment, believed the representations made to him, and promised to Ziba all that belonged to his master. By this rash promise he inflicted great injury on the character and interests of a devoted friend, and handed over to a traitor and vile slanderer the lands that he had given him, and which Ziba had been farming for his benefit.

(*e*) SHIMEI INSULTS THE KING.—A little further on, near the village of Bahurim, in the plain of Jordan, **Shimei**, a relation of the house of Saul, standing on an eminence which commanded the road, hurled insults and reproaches on David as he passed. All the fury of the rival dynasty seemed to burst forth anew in his person as he followed the King and his people with curses, pelted them with stones, and threw handfuls of dust in mockery and contempt. With malicious fierceness he charged David with the guilt

of crimes which he had repudiated and punished, and called him "a bloody man" who had forcibly usurped the throne of Saul, but whose misdeeds were now recoiling upon his own head. Abishai could scarcely restrain himself at this ebullition of insult, violence, and disloyalty, and proposed at once to end it by the death of Shimei; but the King, in a spirit of deep and humble resignation, recognised in Shimei the instrument of God for his chastisement on account of the sins of which he was really guilty. Anything could be tolerated after the desertion and rebellion of his own son, and it might be that the Lord, who was just and merciful, would avert the evil and change suffering into blessing.

"It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." (2 Sam. xvi., 12.)

In a state of great weariness and sadness, the exiles at length reached the Jordan, and there, probably at some ford or bridge, after the strange events of that long, eventful day they rested, unloaded the asses of Ziba, and "refreshed themselves."

ABSALOM ENTERS JERUSALEM.—On the same day on which David left Jerusalem **Absalom** and his followers entered it. In its deserted and defenceless position possession was easily obtained, and Absalom was welcomed and anointed king. On his arrival he was met by Hushai, who offered him his allegiance, and successfully removed any suspicions Absalom may have entertained regarding his fidelity.

AHITHOPHEL'S COUNSEL.—At a council held shortly afterwards **Ahithophel** advised Absalom to make decisive

assumption according to Eastern usage of royal authority and privilege by publicly taking possession of what remained of the royal harem. This would show his claim to heirship and succession, and it would instigate his followers to identify themselves with his interests and maintain his cause with firmness and devotion by making an irreparable breach between him and his father. With all his partiality David could never be reconciled to a son who acted so outrageously, and therefore success or death could alone be the issue of the conspiracy. Absalom readily obeyed the selfish and unprincipled recommendation of his counsellor. He thus unconsciously fulfilled the prediction of Nathan (2 Sam., xii., 11), and he made the retribution of David's sin signally striking, the place of sin being the public scene of its punishment and the nature of the punishment corresponding to the nature of the sin.

Ahithophel was a man of great sagacity and wisdom—so much so that the people believed in him as an oracle, and in his words as if they had been the words of God given by the Urim and Thummin in the breastplate upon the High-priest's ephod. He advocated prompt and decisive measures for the destruction of the late king. If only 12,000 picked men were placed under his command he would pursue David and overtake him while he and his band were weak and weary; during the confusion caused by this bold and sudden attack he would seize the person of David, and thus would at once end the war and secure the allegiance of the people, who would flock to their legitimate Prince, in the event of David's death, as a bride to her husband. It was a plan worthy of Ahithophel's reputation, and had it been adopted would probably have completely changed the subsequent history. The advice,

parricidal though it was, pleased Absalom well, and the elders who were sitting in council with him. But it was defeated by **Hushai**—

“For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.” (2 Sam. xvii., 14.)

AHITHOPHEL'S COUNSEL DEFEATED.—When the opinion of Hushai, in whom Absalom placed full confidence, was invited he, with ready duplicity, urged a totally different course. He saw that it was essential to gain time, so as to give the disaffected time to repent and return to their allegiance, to give the loyal time to organise and unite, and, especially, to give his aged sovereign time to make good his escape. He therefore recommended a scheme which was cleverly devised to appeal to Absalom's vanity and love of display, and was well fitted to secure Hushai's purpose. He magnified the difficulties in the way of the execution of his rival's proposal, so as to prepare the way for the acceptance of his own, and he couched his proposal in that strong hyperbolic language which is so likely to dazzle an Oriental imagination. He reminded the king and his counsellors of the prowess of David and his worthies, of their exasperation and hatred, of the likelihood that David would be hid in some cave or on some inaccessible hill, that the smallest loss of Absalom's men would be fatal to the conspiracy; and urged that a preferable plan would be for Absalom to gather all Israel from Dan to Beersheba, in number like the sand of the seashore, and, placing himself at the head of this large and irresistible force, to completely overwhelm David and his adherents, who would then become an easy prey, whether met in the open country or besieged in a fortified town. It was well known that David and his men were courageous as lions, and that they would be as ferocious as bears “robbed of

their whelps in the field," but if they were surrounded as silently, suddenly, and complete'y "as the dew falleth on the ground," there would be no chance of escape, and their destruction would be inevitable. Even if entrenched in a fortified city, by the united exertions of all Israel the city would be dragged down from the rock on which it was built "into the river, until there be not one small stone found there." Such a plausible and attractive proposal was at once preferred. It flattered Absalom's pride and ambition, but it as certainly, blinding him by a divinely ordered infatuation, secured his defeat and ruin.

SUICIDE OF AHITHOPHEL.—The issue of the conference filled Ahithophel with indignation and despair. He was mortified by the rejection of his counsel; he perceived the danger involved in delay; he knew that for him, the instigator and soul of the rebellion, a traitor's death would be the certain doom should he survive the defeat of Absalom and the restoration of David. Humiliated and ruined, he went home to his own city, and, after arranging his temporal affairs, deliberately hanged himself, "and was buried in the sepulchre of his father."

INTELLIGENCE SENT TO DAVID.—The sons of the high-priests were suspected of being loyal to David, and "they might not be seen to come into the city;" but they remained in concealment at Enrogel, a well-known landmark between the boundaries of Judah and Benjamin. By means of a maidservant, Hushai at once acquainted them with the result of the council meeting, and, afraid lest Absalom might change his mind and follow the counsel of Ahithophel after all, he sent a message to the King to pass over the

fords of Jordan without delay, "lest the king be swallowed up and all the people that are with him." A young lad saw Jonathan and Abimaaz, and, divining their purpose, betrayed them to Absalom. They, dreading treachery and pursuit, hurried on till they reached Bahurim, where they obtained refuge in an empty cistern, over which a friendly woman spread a covering, with ground corn on the covering as if set out to dry. When Absalom's servants came asking after them they were by an equivocal reply sent off in the wrong direction, and then the two young men hastened to David's encampment with their message. David and his men at once made for a place of safety, and halted not until they had entered **Mahanaim**, the most important and the strongest city in the Trans-jordanic country, and formerly the royal residence of Ishbosheth. There kind and generous friends welcomed the exiled king and his "hungry, weary, and thirsty" adherents. With profuse liberality **Shobi**, son of his old friend Nahash the King of Ammon, **Machir**, the former protector of Mephibosheth, and **Barzillai**, an old chief of great wealth and influence, brought the various products with which the forests and pastures of Gilead abounded, besides mats of skins for beds, and other necessities, as tokens of their loyalty and attachment.

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.—Some weeks, perhaps even months, were needed before Absalom could collect his forces, according to the advice of Hushai; but at the earliest moment after the muster he went forth across the Jordan and pitched in the land of Gilead. **Amasa**, a cousin of Joab and of Absalom, was appointed commander-in-chief. The spirit of David, too, soon revived, and he made preparations to resist the attack and quell the rebellion. The hardy

mountaineers of Gilead remained loyal and gathered around him, and he soon found himself again at the head of a considerable army. He divided his forces into three detachments, under Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, and then proposed to go with them himself to the battle that was now inevitable. His followers, however, dissuaded him from taking the field in person and exposing himself to the risks of war. Their cause now depended on his life, and even if they were defeated or the half of them slain, that would be of less account than if his life were lost. He was worth 10,000 of them, they said. David therefore stayed behind in the city with a reserve force, ready to march to their relief in case of need.

As the troops passed out before the king, his partiality for Absalom again manifested itself. He still yearned for him with wounded but tender affection, and with quivering voice and tearful eye commissioned his generals, in the hearing of the entire army, to "Deal gently for his sake with the young man Absalom." David was conscious that the rebellion was the chastisement of his own crimes, and that Absalom was merely an instrument in the hand of retributive Providence. He feared, too, lest the young man should die with all his sins unrepented and unforgiven.

THE BATTLE "IN THE WOOD OF EPHRAIM."—The decisive battle between the forces of David and of Absalom was fought in or near a forest or jungle, called "**the Wood of Ephraim,**" and issued in the defeat and hopeless rout of Absalom's army. David's men were better disciplined and better led than the hastily-mustered troops of Absalom, who got entangled and bewildered in the thickets, and were easily broken and dispersed. There had been a fierce hand-

to-hand struggle, in which many were slain, but the wood, by its pits, bogs, and thickets, caused the death of many more. The dead were estimated at 20,000 men.

THE DEATH OF ABSALOM.—The nature of the ground had contributed greatly to Absalom's defeat. Nor did the forest afford protection when the issue of the contest was known, large numbers being cut down as they tried to extricate themselves from the interlacing brushwood. But the historian omits the details of the conflict in his desire to record particularly the fate of Absalom, and the anxiety and grief of David for his erring son.

When Absalom saw that the battle was lost, he tried to escape from the fatal field, but he unexpectedly found himself in contact with a company of David's men. As he galloped precipitately through the wood he became entangled in the boughs of an oak or terebinth tree. His head was caught in the branches, the royal mule which he rode ran out beneath him, and left him there stunned and helpless, suspended "between the heaven and the earth." When Joab was informed of the circumstance, he reproached his informant for his scruples and conscientiousness, and told him he would have given him great rewards of military merit if he had smitten Absalom to the ground. Joab was reminded of the king's express orders, and was assured that prospect of reward would have been no temptation to break them. But Joab took upon himself the responsibility of breaking them, deeming them opposed to the requirements of strict justice and of David's own interests. He was a grim, stern soldier, who felt little pity for Absalom, and did not sympathise with the feelings of his father. He did not think there could be any peace or security so long as

Absalom lived. Besides, he had his own wrongs to avenge (2 Sam. xiv., 30, 31), and probably he was more actuated in what he did by personal vindictiveness than by political necessity. The death of Absalom would be the surest and speediest way of ending the rebellion, preventing further bloodshed, and satisfying his own revenge.

Taking three darts in his hand, Joab went up to Absalom and **“thrust them through his heart while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak,”** and his young armour bearers quickly finished the bloody deed.

The campaign was now ended, and Joab sounded the trumpet as the signal to stop further pursuit. The death of Absalom saved the lives of his followers.

Absalom was dead. Still further to manifest contempt and hatred for the unfilial son and ambitious rebel, his mangled body was thrown into a large foul pit in the marshy wood, and a tumbled heap of stones laid over his grave, as it was customary to do in the case of a great malefactor. The prince, in the pride of his heart, and to perpetuate his name, had erected for himself a splendid mausoleum in the King's dale, and there he had hoped to be buried. Instead thereof, no royal burial or mark of respect, but a desolate damp pit in a forest and a huge cairn—a monument of shame, at which successive generations of his countrymen cast stones and curses. It was a sad but fitting end of ambition, ingratitude, treason, rebellion, and murder.

INFORMATION CARRIED TO DAVID.—**Ahimaaz**, the son of Zadok the priest, expressed to Joab his desire to be allowed to convey to Mahanaim the news of the victory. Joab forbade him to do so at first, but ultimately granted permission. Meanwhile an Ethiopian slave in Joab's service

was despatched with the tidings, but Ahimaaz struck into an easier route and outstripped him.

David, in an agony of suspense, was waiting for tidings from his army in the tower house that was over the gate of Mahanaim. On a roof above a sentinel was posted eagerly watching for the arrival of a messenger. At length he descried in the distance two men running towards the city. Defeat and flight would have brought a host of fugitives; solitary runners presaged good tidings. As the first came nearer, his well-known manner of running pointed him out to be Ahimaaz, the son of one of David's most faithful friends. He could not have been chosen except to bear good tidings. On his arrival Ahimaaz called out "All is well" (**Shalom**, peace), and reverently bowed before the King. David showed, however, that thoughts of throne, crown, army, and kingdom were swallowed up in eager concern for Absalom. "Is the young man Absalom safe?" he enquired. As Joab probably feared, Ahimaaz had no heart to answer, and professed ignorance of his fate. Then the Ethiopian proudly burst in with the tidings, "The Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee," and his answer regarding Absalom's safety was direct and unambiguous, "The enemies of my lord, the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is." A scene followed which revealed the tenderness of David and the depths of his paternal heart. The victorious king was lost in the bereaved father. Falling down in his chamber over the gate, while shouts of gratulation and victory filled the air without, he wept, and burst forth into an exceedingly bitter cry of disconsolate grief and despair, "**O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee. O Absalom,**

my son, my son." He seems to have been unable to take a just view of the heinous crime of which Absalom had been guilty, or to recognise the penal justice of God in his defeat and death. Gratitude to God for victory, belief in His overruling Providence, and submission to His will are for the moment forgotten, and he would willingly resign all the hopes and successes of his life, if only that son, who had rebelled against him and wronged him in every possible way, but who had been cut off in early manhood, and in circumstances of humiliation and hopelessness, could be restored.

JOAB REPROVES DAVID FOR EXCESSIVE GRIEF.—In his passionate sorrow on account of Absalom's death, David was unmindful of his duty to himself and his subjects. He ought to have welcomed back his troops with demonstrations of gratitude, and loaded them with honours for risking their lives in his cause, and putting an end by their promptitude and valour to a dangerous rebellion. Instead of this, he allowed them to steal into the city silently and secretly in small detached parties, like disgraced fugitives, or persons ashamed of crime. To some extent, no doubt, his soldiers and subjects sympathised with him for the loss of his son, whose winning appearance and manner had charmed the heart and secured the affection of many, and they would be willing to make every allowance for him ; but his excessive grief had spread a universal and unseasonable gloom over the city, and threatened to alienate from him the loyalty and affection of many who had remained faithful. It looked as if the king had failed to appreciate the risk that had been run, and the services that had been rendered. He remained invisible, and instead of welcome there was only the echo of his bitter and unceasing wail.

Joab rightly estimated the situation, and in his own blunt and unfeeling manner remonstrated with David. The reproof was just and necessary, but it might have been couched in more respectful and less insolent terms. Joab pointed out to the king the impolicy of dispiriting his followers, of treating them like offenders instead of benefactors, of allowing his private grief to outweigh his gratitude for the services of his brave and devoted soldiers; and urged him, if he would not see his army disband, to arouse himself to his duty.

David felt the force of Joab's words, rose up and sat in the gate, and rewarded his men with fitting words of praise and gratitude. There was at least the semblance of a triumphant reception, as his troops marched proudly before him.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR DAVID'S RESTORATION.—Though David had thus regained the attachment of his troops, through whom the fire of rebellion had been quenched, he still remained at Mahanaim and took no steps to return to Jerusalem. The circumstances required on his part great prudence and caution. By the rebellion the kingdom had been broken up into parties and become thoroughly disorganised. The jealousy of the tribes, and especially the rivalry between Judah and Ephraim, if not carefully guided and controlled, might lead to a renewal of the civil strife. The preference of one tribe might excite the opposition of another. David had been called to the throne at first by the free choice of the people, and now some form of united re-election seemed indispensable to his restoration. But it was not long before the feeling of the people showed itself in favour of the exiled monarch. The rebellion had been

entirely crushed by the death of Absalom and the dispersion of his followers to their respective homes. And now the feeling became almost general that the King had been treated with ingratitude and injustice, and ought to be recalled.

The first to renew their homage were the Northern tribes, with Ephraim at their head. David was, however, disappointed and vexed at the silence and apparent lukewarmness of his own **tribe of Judah**, and he used means to stimulate it to activity and encourage it to return to allegiance and loyalty. The insurrection had broken out at Hebron, and the men of Judah had taken a prominent part in the rebellion, but it was now very important that they should be induced to take a prominent part in the King's recall. David approached the elders of Judah through Zadok and Abiathar the high-priests, reminding them of their close relationship and expressing surprise that they should be the last to bring back the King. And lest there should be any fear of vengeance on his part, as well as to secure the allegiance of the rebel army and to punish Joab for his disobedience and overbearing haughtiness, he signified his intention to elevate **Amasa**, who had been the captain of Absalom's army, to the post of commander-in-chief. David's overtures were received with much cordiality, the hearts of the men of Judah were inclined towards him,—bowed "even as the heart of one man,"—and the very ardour of their zeal for his restoration nearly produced that severance which was feared from their coldness and opposition. A large deputation of their number met the King by appointment at Gilgal to escort him back to Jerusalem, but, unfortunately, in this they did not act in concert with the other tribes, whose self-respect was wounded by the apparent preference shown to the tribe of Judah, and whose outburst of jealousy was nearly followed by fatal consequences.

DAVID'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM.—Special reference is made to **five** incidents which occurred on the way back to Jerusalem:—

(a) **Shimei sues for pardon.**—Among those who came down with the men of Judah to meet the King were **Shimei** and **Ziba**. Shimei had grossly insulted him in his hour of deep distress, and he now came with a thousand fellow tribesmen of Benjamin to entreat forgiveness and to make a display of special loyalty and zeal. Ziba, mindful of his falsehood and treachery against his master, came with his fifteen sons and twenty servants to see the King safely over Jordan again, and obtain confirmation of the grant of land that had been made to him. Boats were provided to bring over the royal household and its effects. In one of these Shimei hastened to cross, and, throwing himself at David's feet, as craven now as he had before been insolent, he confessed his guilt, but, claiming to be the first representative of Israel to welcome the King, begged for pardon. Abishai, who looked upon Shimei's confession and zeal as only a piece of hypocrisy and affectation, urged that his crime deserved death. David, however, felt that the day which had witnessed his restoration was too joyous to be marred by a display of such stern justice, and solemnly promised to the offender that he would spare his life. So Shimei was reprieved.

(b) **Mephibosheth meets David.**—Ever since David had left Jerusalem, **Mephibosheth** had lived in deep mourning. His person had been neglected, his feet unwashed, his hair untrimmed and his garments soiled, and in this woeful condition at the earliest opportunity he stumbled into the presence of his father's friend and his own benefactor. David upbraided him for not accompanying

him in his flight, but Mephibosheth explained that his servant had deceived him by not saddling his ass when he ordered him, and had slandered him to the King. His lameness had made it impossible for him to join in the flight, but his loyalty and attachment were undiminished. He was satisfied that the King had returned to his throne in safety, and deeply regretted that he had fallen under the royal suspicion. With some impatience David curtly replied, "Thou and Ziba divide the land." He was unwilling at the time to enter further into particulars, and made a compromise by revoking the half of the grant made to Ziba. But the restoration of the King was of greater importance in the estimation of this grateful and loyal prince than the restoration of his property, and he was willing that Ziba should take all—"forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house."

(c) **Barzillai bids farewell to the King.**—The aged Gileadite **Barzillai** had liberally supplied the wants of the King and his household, and he met him to conduct him over the Jordan. As a mark of gratitude and favour, the King offered Barzillai a place at court as a royal pensioner, but the old man, now in his eightieth year, felt that the pleasures of a court could not have any charm for him, and his sole desire for himself was to die in his own city and be buried in the ancestral grave. That, however, he might not seem rudely to refuse the offer so kindly made, he commended his son Chimham to the favourable consideration of the King. Chimham was accepted instead of his father, and the King turned away reluctantly from the old hospitable chief who had befriended him in his exile. It is not improbable that Chimham received from David a part of the King's own patrimonial inheritance near Bethlehem (Jer.

xli., 17), and it is pleasing to notice that his descendants continued in the land for many generations. (Neh. vii., 63.)

(d) **Dispute between Judah and Israel.**—On the other side of the Jordan, ready to receive the King, stood the chiefs of Judah who had obeyed the summons of Zadok and Abiathar, as also “half the people of Israel,” and those probably belonging to the immediate neighbourhood. The Northern tribes, though foremost in proposing the restoration, had not, on account of tribal jealousies, been invited by the men of Judah to accompany them. On the arrival of the King at Gilgal the rest of the representatives of Israel appeared, and then the old feud between North and South broke out in unchecked fierceness. The men of Israel complained to David of the conduct of the men of Judah in forestalling them and depriving them of the honour and privilege of escorting the King. Biting retort followed angry complaint. The men of Judah referred to their claim of kinship, alleged the purity of their motives, and protested that they did not desire special privileges or honours. But the men of Israel claimed ten parts in David for Judah’s two, pleaded the fact that they had first proposed his recall and maintained that, as they possessed the birthright, they were not to be slighted in this way. The irritation increased, “and the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.”

(e) **The Revolt of Sheba.**—Just when the quarrel was at its height, a wicked and ambitious Benjamite, named **Sheba**, who probably saw in it a good opportunity of restoring the sovereignty to his tribe, blew a trumpet and raised the cry of revolt. He said, “We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.” The effect of this was

very great. So slight was the coherence of the tribes, and so excited had the people become, that the appearance and words of Sheba acted like a spark which kindled them into rebellion. The representatives of the Northern tribes at once drew off and gathered round Sheba; "but the men of Judah clave unto their King," and accompanied him to Jerusalem. In such gloomy circumstances David re-entered his capital, where he took immediate steps to crush the new insurrection.

DEATH OF AMASA.—Passing over Joab, who had hitherto been commander of the forces, but whose presumption had become intolerable, David commanded **Amasa** to assemble the troops within three days and pursue Sheba. Whether from want of skill and experience, or because the King's forces did not trust him, and were therefore slow in mustering, or whether he was secretly in sympathy with Sheba's revolt, and delayed so as to enable it to gather strength, does not appear, but, at any rate, Amasa did not return within the time specified. David was impatient, being afraid lest the rebels should seize some strong town and thus render their insurrection even more formidable than Absalom's, and he gave orders to Abishai at once to take the body guard, and other troops, and hasten in pursuit. Joab professed to acquiesce in this arrangement, and went forth under his brother's command, but he was only awaiting an opportunity for revenge.

The King's troops met Amasa at Gibeon, returning to Jerusalem with the levies he had collected. Joab went up to him, and with professions of friendship and cordiality approached his cousin to give the customary salutation. In doing so he contrived to let fall out of its sheath a sword

which had been hanging in his girdle. This he immediately snatched up, and without scruple thrust it through the body of his rival, who fell dead on the spot. Thus from envy and jealousy Joab murdered Amasa, as before, under pretext of avenging his brother's death, he had murdered Abner. The horrible deed brought the men of David's army to a stand. But one of the young men at Joab's command remained by the corpse, and requested Amasa's followers to follow Joab and Abishai, insinuating that Amasa had been disloyal, and had met his death justly for his treachery. To prevent delay in the advance, the young man dragged the body of Amasa off the footpath, and covered it with a cloak. The entire army then hastened forward in pursuit of Sheba.

SHEBA BEHEADED.—Sheba and his followers were pursued northwards to the fortified city of Abel, in Beth-maachah, which was in the extreme north of Palestine. There they took refuge, and Joab, who had again assumed the command, caused a great mound of earth to be thrown round the town, and from this mound proceeded to batter it down. But a woman of the place, calling to Joab, reproached him for trying to overthrow a loyal city without due notice and consideration. He repudiated such intention, and consented to raise the siege at once if Sheba were surrendered. The woman, whose influence over the inhabitants was great, procured the death of Sheba, his head being contemptuously thrown over the wall to Joab. The trumpets thereupon sounded the recall—the rebellion, which seemed so threatening, collapsed, and the people dispersed to their several homes. Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the King, who again was under the necessity

of overlooking the crime that had been committed by his cruel and unscrupulous nephew, and even of reinstating him in his former position.

We have now probably reached, so far as regards the Second Book of Samuel, the close of the historical account of David's reign. It is generally considered that the last **four** chapters form a kind of supplementary **Appendix** to the history, and narrate events which occurred at various periods, and which are inserted here either because no fitting opportunity had presented itself before, or in order to illustrate, as a fitting conclusion, God's providential discipline of Israel, the character of David, and the heroic spirit of his age. The **eight or nine years** which intervened between the suppression of Absalom's rebellion and the death of David were probably years of steady growth and prosperity for the nation, and were spent by the King in establishing his kingdom upon a firmer basis by administrative improvements in the army, courts of justice, and sanctuary services, and in accumulating treasures for the erection of the Temple. All the errors of the past had been atoned for, the trials which had followed the commission of sin had been met in deep penitence and humility, and in calm submission to the Divine will; and David was permitted to close his reign in peace, in developing his empire, and in laying a broad foundation for what was to be the magnificent reign of his son and successor. The people, too, had been taught the folly of entertaining rash hopes from revolution and disunion, and had come to appreciate more fully the real worth and greatness of their sovereign. The **Appendix** gives an account of two national punishments—a famine and a plague; it gives a list of David's

heroes and examples of their heroic deeds ; and it preserves the song of praise which he composed for deliverance from all his enemies, and his last prophetic words.

THE THREE YEARS' FAMINE.—A list is given of David's chief officers, similar for the most part to that previously given, though belonging to a later period of his reign, and then the historian proceeds to tell of a **famine**, which, during three successive years, visited the land of Israel. When the King inquired of the Lord for what reason this calamity had been sent, he was informed that the offence consisted in a massacre of the **Gibeonites**, which, many years before, had been accomplished by Saul in his mistaken zeal for the interests of his kingdom. David at once appealed to the remnant of the injured race, desiring to know what satisfaction would be acceptable to them for the wrong which had been committed. The Gibeonites refused to take blood-money for the loss of their relatives, and stated that their cry for revenge was not against the nation at large but only against the house of Saul. They demanded **seven of Saul's descendants**, whom they would execute before the sanctuary at Gibeah as a solemn religious act of expiation. David granted their request, surrendering five sons of Merab, Saul's eldest daughter, and two sons of Saul by his concubine Rizpah, but sparing Mephibosheth on account of his solemn bond of friendship with Jonathan. These seven the Gibeonites hung in the beginning of barley harvest, and they allowed their bodies to remain exposed till rain fell again. But **Rizpah**, with self-denying devotion, never ceased to watch the dead to save them from desecration ; and when this was told to David, in proof of his appreciation of her conduct and to

show that he had no personal enmity to the house of Saul he caused them to be taken down and reverently buried along with the bones of Saul and Jonathan, which had been brought from Jabesh-gilead for the purpose, in the family sepulchre of Kish. Then God accepted the intercession that was made on behalf of the land.

THE CENSUS, AND THE PLAGUE WHICH FOLLOWED.—The previous calamity was occasioned by the sin of David's predecessor. His ordering Joab to **number the people**, in order probably to ascertain their fitness for war, was the occasion of the terrible pestilence which is now to be noticed. The Theocratic principle involved a recognition of the Divine will and power to protect or deliver the chosen people, whether by many or by few. David appears at the time to have forgotten this, and to have been impelled by a desire to consolidate and increase the royal power by founding a powerful military despotism,—which, while exalting the King himself in the eyes of the neighbouring nations, would as certainly have trampled upon the rights and liberties of his subjects. Joab remonstrated against the order of his royal master, but in vain, and officers were sent all over the land to take a list of the males of military age. They began in the South-east of the kingdom across the Jordan at Aroer in Reuben, and proceeded northwards to Kedesh and to Dan in the extreme North, and thence east-ward to Gilead, and then south through the tribes west of the Jordan as far as Beersheba in the extreme South. At the end of **nine months and twenty days** the census was completed, and it was reported to the King that **1,300,000** men were ready for military service, being 800,000 in Israel, and 500,000 in Judah.

A message from the Lord revealed to David his sin and

guilt, and, seeing he was about to boast proudly and to glory in the number of his people, God determined to punish him by reducing their number either by famine, war, or pestilence. The King was required to choose between **three years of famine, three months of defeat in war, or three days of pestilence.** He selected the last, saying, in deep sorrow of heart—

“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.”..“ 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.”—(2 Sam. xxiv., 10, 14.)

But not till **70,000** victims had been carried off did the plague cease. Jerusalem was mercifully saved from its ravages, although it came extremely near, coming even to the threshing-floor of a Jebusite named **Araunah**, which was on Mount Moriah, the hill east of Jerusalem, on which afterwards the Temple was built. The destroying angel was stretching out his hand upon Jerusalem when “the Lord repented him of the evil,” and commanded him to stay his hand. David had acknowledged that all the blame should fall upon himself, for his offence had been the immediate cause of the plague, and it was in acknowledgment of his humble confession and in answer to his earnest prayer that the plague was suddenly arrested.

The prophet **Gad**, who had been the medium of Divine communications, recognising that the spot where the angel had appeared hovering above the neighbouring hill, and apparently about to strike the city, was now a peculiarly sacred place, advised the King to rear an altar and offer sacrifices upon it. When David was on his way to do so, he was met by Araunah, with whom he proceeded to negotiate for the purchase of the ground. The generous chief at first offered to present it to the King, together with oxen

for the sacrifice and his threshing implements for the fire, but the King would not deprive him of his property for nothing, or "offer burnt offerings unto the Lord his God of that which cost him nothing." So the threshing-floor and oxen were duly purchased, and David built his altar and offered sacrifices on what through all the ages of the world's history was destined to be **the most sacred and interesting spot on the surface of the earth.** "So the Lord was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel."

DAVID'S HEROES AND THEIR HEROIC DEEDS.—David had great cause to praise the Lord in a psalm of thanksgiving for deliverance out of the hand of all his foes. He had been frequently in circumstances of extreme peril, and but for the devotion and heroism of his warriors would not have survived. On one occasion especially, when exhausted in a fight with a Philistian giant, was his life in danger, but his nephew Abishai came to his help and slew the giant. There were four men of unusual stature, and their death was reckoned among the greatest feats of arms that David's men performed, Elhanan of Bethlehem slaying the brother of Goliath of Gath, and David's nephew Jonathan slaying a man who had on every hand six fingers and on every foot six toes. But when David was placed in such peril his men swore unto him saying, "Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou **quench not the light of Israel.**"

David's heroes were divided into **three** classes—Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah for their heroic deeds reaching the first rank, and Abishai and Benaiah following in the next rank. The first of these slew 800 men at once; the

second smote the Philistines till his hand was weary, and so wrought a great deliverance for Israel; and the third defended a plot of ground against a host of the Philistines, and achieved a great victory. The incident recorded regarding the next three is very interesting and pathetic. David was in the cave of Adullam while the garrison of the Philistines occupied the valley of Rephaim and controlled the neighbouring village of Bethlehem. He remembered the well which was by the gate of his native village, where as a happy shepherd boy he had often quenched his thirst, and he longed for a draught of its cool, clear water. Such was the enthusiasm and devotion of his followers that three of them, resolved to gratify his wish, at once dashed through the camp of the Philistines, fetched water out of the well, and brought it to him. But he would not drink of water which had been procured for him at the risk of his comrades' life, and he poured the cherished water on the ground as an offering to the Lord. Drinking that water would, he felt, be nothing else than drinking the blood of brave, self-sacrificing men. The names of thirty heroes of the third rank are then given, Asahel the brother of Joab and Uriah the Hittite being among the number.

DAVID'S PSALM OF PRAISE.—The harp had been David's constant companion amid the vicissitudes of his chequered life. With the music of its notes he had beguiled the weary hours as he followed the sheep upon the slopes of Bethlehem. By its soothing strains he had charmed away the evil spirit from the breast of Saul. In the cave of Adullam, in the wilderness of Judah, at the court of Achish, and in the valley of the Jordan on that dismal day when he fled from Jerusalem before the rebellious Absalom, he solaced himself

with sacred song, while in the deeper darkness of the consciousness of sin he had expressed his humility and sorrow in strains of peculiar tenderness and feeling. His joys, too, as well as his sorrows, found utterance in song, and when he brought up the Ark to Jerusalem or returned in triumph from some long campaign he signalled the occasion by a joyous ode of praise. And now preserved in the Book of Psalms there have come down to us from the lips and pen of David songs of adoration, gratitude, and penitence, which have formed a suitable manual of devotion for the Church of God in every age and country. Reflecting as they do the strange experiences of his own life, they pass through every variation of jubilant praise and thanksgiving, unbroken trust in God, keenest suffering, struggle against sin, bitter remorse, and heartfelt repentance. His harp was full-stringed, and every angel of joy and of sorrow swept over the chords as he passed. His psalms, therefore, are a fitting expression of praise, penitence, and prayer, of all the griefs and fears, the desires and joys, of the sanctified heart.

It is the song sung by the sweet Psalmist of Israel when the Lord had given him deliverance from all his enemies that is now before us. He looked back on all the way by which the Lord had led him, and thought of the deliverances which He had wrought out for him, and he composed this ode of thanksgiving, which as an expression of faith, gratitude, and reliance, is unsurpassed. David had experienced many deliverances. In the early part of his life he had been delivered from the lion and the bear that had attacked his flock, from the giant of Gath who boasted that he would give his flesh to beasts of prey, and from the implacable hatred of Saul who gave orders to his servants to compass

his death, and who himself endeavoured more than once to slay him. The caves of Adullam and Engedi, the countries of the Philistines and Moabites where he had sought shelter, witnessed the loving kindness of the Lord to His faithful but persecuted servant. God had delivered him from the hands of all his enemies, He had raised him from the deepest misery and the greatest danger to royal power and glory. His distresses, indeed, did not end with his advancement to the throne, but from external enemies and civil dissensions and bloodshed, from rebellion, treachery, and degradation, God saved him ; and for all deliverances and mercies he renders heartfelt thanks.

The Psalm may be divided into **six** distinct though unequal parts. (a) The Psalmist **adores the Lord as his deliverer**. The experiences of his warlike life suggested emblems by which to describe what the Lord had been to him, and he heaped epithet upon epithet in order to make the description as complete as possible. God had been a cliff, a castle, a stronghold, a rock, a deliverer, refuge, and Saviour, his shield and the horn of his salvation. In the unchangeable and almighty God he could trust, on His immutable promises he could securely build his hopes, and He who had delivered him in the past, who had protected him, enabled him to repel the attacks of his enemies, and raised him to a position of safety and power, would do so still.

(b) The Psalmist **describes the perils in which he had been placed**. The sorrows and breakers of death had encircled him, streams of wickedness on the part of the ungodly had filled him with fear and distress, "treacherous nets of Sheol" had been drawn around him, and "snares of destruction" had overtaken him to beguile and destroy.

In such forcible language David describes the distressing circumstances in which he had been placed by the machinations of his enemies and the exceeding dread and sorrow that had possessed his soul.

(c) The Psalmist tells of his **cry to God for help**, and describes in glowing terms the awful **appearance of God when He interposed to save** (vs. 7—20). He was driven in his distress to call upon God; his cry reached the dwelling place of Jehovah, and immediately, with accompaniments of earthquake, thundering, fire and smoke, cloud-darkness, and other extraordinary natural phenomena which visibly attested the presence of God, betokened His wrath, and symbolized the mystery and glory of His appearance, the Divine Deliverer arrived to save His servant and destroy the foe. The enemy was dispersed and confounded by the arrows of the lightning, by the driving off of the water waves which revealed the very foundations of the earth, by seeing nature convulsed to its lowest depths. The sinking, distressed, and affrighted servant of God was then caught up out of the floods of calamity by the outstretched hand of the Most High; he was brought out of the deep waters which were engulfing him, and given to enjoy a full and free deliverance.

(d) The Psalmist expounds **the grounds of the Lord's deliverance** (vs. 21—29). David's deliverance was in harmony with the general principles of the Divine Administration. God was well pleased with him—"delighted in him"—on account of the sincerity of his purpose and the purity of his conduct, on account of his obedience to the rules of human conduct given in the Divine law, and his earnest endeavours to resist temptation and live a humble, upright, and godly life. God's attitude towards men is

regulated by men's attitude towards God, and the Psalmist's deliverances and victories were the natural reward of his integrity and piety.

(e) The Psalmist gives a **detailed account of the deliverances God had wrought for him** (vs. 30-47). David's mighty men had frequently by their loyalty and courage accomplished his deliverance, and he was not ungrateful for such proofs of their fidelity; but the real though invisible author of all his deliverances and mercies was God alone. He had been his "lamp," had illumined all his life with the light of prosperity, had proved the unfailling source of lasting happiness and of joyful strength. God had enabled him to resist hostile bands, and to conquer fortified places otherwise impregnable. He whose government is perfect, whose promises cannot deceive, whose faithfulness had been tested by the struggles, sorrows, emergencies, and sins of a life-time—He had bestowed the strength, energy, and skill which had secured stability and success, which had made David swift to pursue, and powerful to ward off attack. And while God's faithfulness had stood firm in conflict and calamity and in spite of failure and sin, God's "gentleness" and unmerited goodness had lifted him up to the external greatness of a throne, had subdued his enemies, and settled him peacefully on the throne of a nation which during his reign had been eminently prosperous. Heathen nations had been defeated, had been deprived of strength and courage, and had been compelled to acknowledge his authority. He had been made "head of the heathen," and a people whom he knew not had been forced to serve him.

(f) The Psalmist concludes with a **renewed expression of gratitude and devotion**. The Divine protection and

blessing vouchsafed in the past is to David a clear and convincing proof that Jehovah is the only living and true God, the Ruler of the world, the righteous and impartial Judge of human conduct, the Avenger of wrong, the Vindicator of right. He promises to "give thanks unto God among the heathen, and to sing praises unto His name;" and he expresses the assurance, based on his past experiences, that deliverance and blessing shall be conferred upon himself and upon his seed for evermore. Salvation full, free, and everlasting, shall be to him and to his posterity.

DAVID'S LAST WORDS.—David's hymn of thanksgiving and triumph is followed by his last words—his last prophetic utterance, the parting testimony which he gave to the world of his confidence in the fulfilment of the prophecy and promise God had made to him by the mouth of Nathan. On that promise he had rested for many years, and now he lays his dying head upon his pillow feeling assured that it shall be fulfilled. The Theocratic king becomes the Theocratic prophet. He whom God had raised up from the lowly position of a shepherd to be the anointed king of Israel, and whom he had endowed with gifts and graces which fitted him to be the leader of the psalmody of Israel, the author of sweet songs which had guided and sustained their devotions, is now, under the influence of special Divine inspiration, to utter words which claim special attention and awaken special feelings of gratitude and hope. Having thus described himself, as was customary with the prophets in the introduction of their more important predictions, the royal prophet proceeds to give the message with which the immovable and unchangeable God of Israel had favoured him. An outline picture is drawn of an ideal king who

rules with perfect justice and in the fear of God, and, in figurative language, of the blessings which such a sovereign would confer. The appearance of such an one is like the life-giving sunshine of a cloudless morning; he will diffuse light in fullest radiance, in his personal character he will be righteous and eminently pious, and, while he will put an end to all ungodliness, and utterly destroy all hurtful and dangerous enemies of his people and kingdom, he will dispense blessings as of the rain and sunshine, abundance, peace, and gladness, among the willing subjects of his sway. As the influences of the rains in spring, which transform the dry and dusty ground into a lovely garden of brilliant flowers, will be the gracious influences of the perfect rule of this ideal king upon a hard and desert world. Such a prospect, to be partially realised in his immediate successors, will, David feels assured, be fully realised in a royal Personage in the distant future, who, according to the eternal and well-attested and arranged covenant of God, will be his most illustrious descendant. This, says the pious monarch, "is all my salvation and all my desire." The coming and administration of the Messianic King, the blessings He will confer, the happiness of His subjects, the extent of His kingdom, and the perpetuity of His reign—these are the truths which comfort and sustain the heart of the dying king of Israel, "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." With such hopes he lives and with such hopes he dies.

THE CHARACTER OF DAVID AND OF HIS REIGN. — In many-sided character and wealth of mind David surpasses all the heroes of the Old Testament. He is at once the man of meditation and the man of action, the man of lofty poetic

genius, and the man of great resource and energy in practical affairs. He appears as priest and poet, as prophet and king, as the exile, the friend, and the hero. He is now the simple shepherd, now the powerful sovereign, now the wise statesman, now the sweet singer of Israel, now the humiliated penitent sinner, and now the safe happy soaring saint. He is not only fitted by his martial spirit and skill for the post of danger and the burden of rule in the most anxious and agitated times, by his wisdom and experience for organizing and developing the Theocratic kingdom; but is fitted also by his keen eye for the beauties of nature, by the rarest gifts of song and music, by deep spiritual insight, sincere piety, ardent love for God and His cause, and unexampled experiences, to be the poet of the Universal Church, whose songs find their way to the heart of humanity, and form the channel along which devout spirits in every land cause their feelings of joy and of sorrow, of penitence, praise, and petition, to ascend to the common Father. That he was brave and patriotic his early exploits and his conquests prove. His treatment of Saul and of Shimei proves that he was generous. His ardent love for Jonathan attests his affectionate disposition. And his piety—which was the distinguishing feature of his character—was real and practical. It was a joy in God in times of prosperity, a quenchless thirst for an assurance of God's favour and forgiveness in times of declension, chastened submission to God in times of trouble, and at all times clear trust in God, which grew in power and beauty with his years and experience. And if, notwithstanding many fine and noble qualities, he was betrayed into heinous faults—we must not forget the time in which he lived, nor the repentance which followed the commission of sin. His life and history

are truly emblematic of human struggle, progress, and aspiration.

The reign of David was the great critical era in the history of the Hebrews. It finally separated them from the surrounding heathen and led to their full recognition that they were the people of the Lord, under His protection, receiving the fulfilment of His promises and working out His purposes. It decided that they were to have for nearly five centuries a national monarchy, a fixed line of priesthood, and solemn national religious observances. But, while it did this, it also brought them into connection with other powers. The Israelites were raised from the lowest condition of anarchy and weakness to the splendour of a great empire. The coalition of the Ammonites on the east with neighbouring Syrian nations had compelled them to gather up all their energies and resources. The result had been a succession of important conquests and the subjugation of a number of foreign races. By the conquest of Edom the Israelites had extended their territory to the boundaries of the Egyptian empire, and through the defeat of the Syrians they had touched the Euphrates and secured the control of the caravan roads from the East to Phœnicia and Egypt. They were thus transformed during the reign of David from political insignificance to a great ruling power. But David's kingdom, if the culminating point of the Old Testament dispensation, also prefigured a kingdom immeasurably greater, heavenly in its nature, of universal extent and endless duration, and presided over by a King, all-glorious and Divine, David's son and David's Lord, by whom the full idea of the Kingdom of God upon earth should be realised and has finally been established.

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

WHY SO CALLED?—The name of Samuel is given to this Book because that prophet was believed—and probably justly believed—to have been the Author of the greater part of the preceding Book, and the two Books of Samuel were among the Jews but one book, and in Hebrew MSS., as also in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions, still form one undivided whole; because the Second Book is the natural continuation of the preceding history; and because Samuel anointed the first two kings of Israel, and exerted a powerful influence on the spirit of Saul's government as well as of David's. The title is therefore appropriate and suggestive.

BY WHOM WRITTEN?—The book has been compiled from original and authentic documents, but who was the compiler is not known. The Book of Jasher, documents left by the schools of the prophets, national annals, and oral tradition, the writings of Nathan and Gad (1 Chron. xxix., 29), and contributions of Seraiah the scribe, have all probably supplied valuable material for this history of David's reign. The description of the various incidents recorded is minute, vivid, and graphic. This, with many natural touches and incidental allusions, favours the idea of contemporary authorship.

WHEN WRITTEN?—Since the whole length of David's reign is mentioned (2 Sam. v., 5) it is held by some that the book must have been written after the death of David. The

fact, however, that it only comes down to the verge of David's death might show that it was substantially written while that monarch was alive.

WHAT ARE ITS CONTENTS?—It narrates the attempts made to continue the kingdom of Israel in the family of Saul, David's successes, wars, and personal history, and generally gives an account of the state and progress of his dominions during his reign. It treats of a very interesting and important period of Jewish history, during which the tribes were consolidated into a strong and united nation, with considerably extended territories and improved administration. It shows how Israel was developing and advancing towards the goal set before it in its divine calling. The services of the church were reorganised and improved, and evidence was furnished that the kingdom of David was a pledge of the establishment of the kingdom of God under the sceptre of the Son of David, the promised Messiah.

HOW MAY IT BE DIVIDED?—Into **three** parts.

I. The **triumphs** of David, embracing his reign in Hebron, his triumph over the house of Saul and confirmation in the kingdom, his victories over the Jebusites, Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Ammonites; the removal of the Ark to Jerusalem, the Divine promise that the kingdom would be perpetuated in his posterity and that all his enemies should be overthrown. (2 Sam. i.—x.)

II. The **troubles** of David, embracing his great sin and its consequences; (*a*) domestic troubles—death of his child, incest of Amnon, murder of Amnon by Absalom and flight of Absalom; (*b*) public troubles, Absalom's rebellion, flight from Jerusalem, civil war, Absalom's death. (2 Sam. xi.—xviii.)

III. The transactions which followed David's restoration to his throne, including his battles with the Philistines, his psalm of praise, his last prophetic words, his heroes, his sin in numbering the people and the plague which followed, his penitential intercession and sacrifice. (2 Sam. xix.—xxiv.)

There is thus described the happy commencement of David's reign, in which we note his generosity, his entire submission to the divine will, his zeal for religion, the success of his plans and labours, and the general prosperity of his kingdom; his unhappy fall and the sad consequences which followed. In the time of prosperity he yielded to the assaults of the tempter, and from that period a dark cloud overshadowed him and his house, and the retributive hand of Divine justice can be traced in the subsequent history. In David's fall we see the strength and prevalence of human corruption; in his domestic and political troubles the inevitable punishment of sin; and in his repentance and recovery the extent and efficacy of Divine grace.

WHAT IS THE PROBABLE CHRONOLOGY OF THIS BOOK?—It is practically the chronology of the forty years of David's reign, and is somewhat as follows:—

Reign of David at Hebron.....	B.C. 1055 - 1048
Reign of David at Jerusalem ...	B.C. 1048 - 1015
—————	
Date of great sin	B.C. 1035
Absalom's rebellion	B.C. 1023

WHAT IS THE SPECIAL VALUE OF THIS BOOK?—The historical events which it relates explain and illustrate many of the Psalms of David. They show the circumstances in which these Psalms were written, and explain allusions to persons and places in them, *e.g.*—

CHAPTER	ILLUSTRATES PSALM
v., 1, 5, 17	lxviii. and cxxxiii.
vi., 12, 17	xxiv. and cxxxii.
vii., 1	ci.
viii., 14	cviii.
x.	xx. and xxi.
xii.	xxxii. and li.
xv.	iii., xxxv., and cxi.
xvi.	vii.
xvii.	xli., xliii., lv., and cxliii
xviii.	cxliv.
xxiii.	xii.

The twenty-second chapter is substantially identical with Psalm xviii. The book, however, is specially valuable as giving an account of the life and reign of David, which was in many respects **typical of the life and reign of Jesus**, David's Son and Lord, for whose coming the Jewish dispensation was designed to prepare. Many of the institutions, events, and persons of the Old Testament were intended to prefigure and foreshadow Jesus Christ in His Person, character, offices, and work. The law of Moses, with its sacrifices and services, pointed forward to One who should be at once Priest and Victim, and make atonement for the sins of men; and the Kingdom of Israel foreshadowed that Spiritual Kingdom which Jesus was to introduce and establish in the world. Of all Old Testament types of Jesus Christ, David is perhaps the most eminent. Both as a man and a king he is a conspicuous type. He was a shepherd; he united the gentleness of the shepherd with the power of the warrior; he was an outlaw, rejected and despised by men and surrounded only by persons in need and distress; through suffering and trial he was disciplined and fitted for an exalted position among men; he was elevated to a throne, and crowned with glory and honour; at first a large number of subjects

refused to acknowledge his authority; in the face of every obstacle he waxed stronger and stronger; his distinctive title was "The Lord's Anointed;" he was the visible representative of Jehovah, who was the true King of Israel; he was the instrument of Divine government, through whom deliverance was obtained and blessings dispensed; he was "a man after God's own heart," obedient, submissive, pious and truthful; he filled the office of prophet, of priest, and of king; the promise was made to him that his seed should be set up, that his dominions should extend and his kingdom endure throughout all generations. It is not difficult to see in the character and experiences of David, in the trials he endured and in the victories he won, in the offices he filled and in the duration of his kingdom, a remarkable type of Him who received the throne of his father David, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end (Luke i., 33). This **typical** relation invests the history of David with peculiar interest and importance.

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL AND CHRONICLES.—It is to be noted that the Books of Samuel do not give a complete account of the life of David. In the account of his wars with the Ammonites and Syrians (2 Sam. viii.—x.) many details are omitted, which are supplied in 1 Chron. xviii.—xix. So, too, we must turn to the First Book of Chronicles for the details of David's preparations for the building of the Temple (1 Chron. xxii.); for the numbering and organisation of the Levites and priests (1 Chron. xxiii.—xxvi.); for the organisation of the army and the civil service (1 Chron. xxvii), and for the report of his last arrangements in the assembly of the people before his death (1 Chron. xxviii.—xxix). On the other hand, it is only in the Second Book of Samuel that an account is given of David's adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam. xi.); of Nathan's

exhortation to repentance and its results (2 Sam. xii.); of Absalom's revolt (2 Sam. xv.—xix.), and other important particulars. For an account of the usurpation of Adonijah, the anointing of Solomon and David's last charge to him, we must turn to 1 Kings i.—ii. The following are parallel sections:—

2 SAM.	1 CHRON.
v.—1-10	xi.—1-9
v.—11-25	xiv.—1-17
vi.—1-11	xiii.—1-14
vi.—12-23	xv., xvi.
vii.	xvii.
viii.	xviii.
x.	xix.
xi.—1 ; xii. 26-31	xx.—1-3
xxi.—18-22	xx.—4-8
xxiii.—8-39	xi.—10-47
xxiv.	xxi.

It is supposed that only those facts are narrated in the Second Book of Samuel which seemed to the writer to bear on the development of the Kingdom of God from a Theocratic-prophetical point of view. The realisation of the rule and Kingdom of God in the history of His chosen people, and the preparation of Israel for a more spiritual dispensation, are probably the principles which determined the writer in his selection of materials. For the first time the family in which the Messiah is to come is pointed out, and the declaration made that the Kingdom founded in Him is to be universal and everlasting.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What do you know of the authorship and purpose of this book?
2. What are its contents, and how may they be divided?
3. In what respects did David prefigure Jesus?
4. What books assist us towards a life of David?

PART I.—CHAPTERS I. TO IV.

DAVID'S REIGN OVER JUDAH ALONE.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS.

The news of Saul's death brought to David. David's grief. The Amalekite who brought the news is slain. David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. The narrative is closely connected with that given of David's return to Ziklag, and Saul's death, in 1 Sam. xxx. and xxxi. The historian desires to make an exact chronological statement, in order to bring out prominently the connection between the news of Saul's death and the events previously recorded, and to emphasize the fact that David's return from the battle with the Amalekites happened just about the same time as the battle of Gilboa.

V. 2. The **Amalekite** either belonged to the Israelitish army as a combatant, or simply followed the camp in order to plunder the slain. The Amalekites were descended from Amalek, a grandson of Esau. They inhabited the country to the south of Palestine, between Idumea and Egypt, and

to the east of the Dead Sea and Mount Seir. "**Rent garment**" and "**earth upon the head**" are the usual signs of grief. "**Ziklag**" is believed to have been in the neighbourhood of Beersheba, and therefore distant from the battlefield of Gilboa 90 or 100 miles. "**Did obeisance,**" prostrated himself as the outward token of obedience or reverence. The Amalekite acknowledged David as Saul's successor. His doing so is a striking illustration of the prevalent belief that David was destined to occupy the throne.

V. 4. "How went the matter?" *i.e.*, "**What is the matter?**"—The flight, the slaughter among the people, the death of the leaders, are mentioned in an ascending climax.

V. 6. The account given of Saul's death by the Amalekite, if not altogether a fabrication, invented in the hope of securing an additional reward for having with his own hand rid David of his bitterest enemy, and of the only obstacle which stood between him and the throne, was not improbably coloured to suit his own purpose. It is scarcely consistent with the account given in 1 Samuel. The Amalekite may have witnessed at a distance what took place as there related, and may have completed the death of the king.

V. 9. Being an Amalekite stranger, he owed no loyalty or affection to Saul: he believed him to be mortally wounded, and so he killed him outright to end his pain. "**Anguish is come upon me,**" *i.e.*, *giddiness* or cramp has seized me, which prevents me from defending myself against the enemy. Some translate it, "My mailed coat hindereth me" *i.e.*, "In my faint and exhausted condition I cannot defend myself as I would," or, "my coat prevents me from slaying myself." The meaning is doubtful, but the rendering of the text is preferable. "**My life is yet whole in me.**" The wounded King feared that he would suffer the

indignity of falling alive into the hands of the Philistines. Literally it is, "for all yet is my life in me."

V. 10. "**Fallen,**" *i.e.*, defeated. He could not survive such a calamity. His sentiments at this trying moment have been thus described—

My kingdom from me rent, my children slain,
My army lost, myself from hope cast out—
The seer hath spoken well. All is achieved.
David, thou art avenged.

The royal ornaments were of very great value. The presentation of these confirmed his words, and placed beyond all doubt the fact that the King was dead.

V. 12. Orientals are accustomed to give demonstrative expression to these feelings. When a calamity occurs they fill the air with loud wailing, weep like women, and refuse to eat till the evening. The greatness of David's sincere grief was shown. "**The people of Jehovah,**" *i.e.*, the people chosen by God out of all nations, His by covenant, His to fight the battles against the heathen. "**The house of Israel,**" *i.e.*, the nation united as a whole, but now broken, scattered, and defeated.

V. 13. The father of the Amalekite had emigrated into the land of Israel.

V. 15. The person of the King, consecrated to the Lord's service by anointing, was inviolable. The Amalekite's voluntary confession was sufficient proof of his guilt, and he deserved death.

V. 16. "Thy blood come upon thy head," *i.e.*, blood-guiltiness is upon thee. David freed himself from the imputation of being accessory to the crime of regicide, showed his righteous indignation, and inflicted the punishment which the crime merited. The nobility of David's character

comes out conspicuously in his deep grief at the death of his unrelenting persecutor, and the means he took to avenge it.

V. 18. The expression "**the use of**" is not in the original. As it stands in the Authorised English Version, the idea is that David urged his people to practise the bow, and to try to excel Jonathan in the use of it, that such a national calamity might not again occur. The Philistine archers had caused the defeat, and the Israelites must excel in the use of the bow if they are to prove victorious. It is probable, however, that "The Bow" is the title of the song, and that it was so called because the bow is referred to in it, because it is a martial ode, and the bow was one of the principal weapons used by warriors of that age, because it is in honour of Saul and Jonathan, who were specially skilful in the use of the bow, and in remembrance of the incident at Ezcl (1 Sam. xx.) We are reminded by it how beautifully Homer sings of the archery of Pandarus, how frequently the bow is referred to in connection with the Trojan wars which occurred about the same period as the battle of Gilboa, and how Ulysses on his return to Ithaca, after an absence of twenty years, "Strung his own huge bow, and with his right hand thrilled the nerve," assuring his supposed widow by his skill and success, that he was her long-lost husband. "**The Book of Jasher.**" This book is not extant, and nothing can be positively known of its character. It is supposed to have been a collection of national songs, commemorating remarkable events and deeds of bravery. Some translate it "The Book of the Upright." Only two fragments have come down to us. (Josh. x., 12-14; 2 Sam. i., 17-27.)

V. 19. The ode is one of the finest ever composed, and has fitly been made the foundation of those solemn strains

of funeral music which breathe in Handel's Dead March in "Saul." But it is very difficult to translate it, and there are several versions. It may be divided into three strophes, each opening with the acclamation, "How are the mighty fallen." The first is in praise of fallen heroes, their bravery, and the virtues of Saul as their king and leader. The second commemorates the friendship between David and Jonathan. The third utters a bitter sigh of distress. "**Beauty**," glory, or ornament. "Thy glory, O Israel, upon thy high places is slain." Some translate it "Gazelle," and refer it to the swiftness and agility of Jonathan, the antelope or gazelle being the symbol of agility and beauty. It is so in the margin of the Revised Version of our Bible.

V. 20. Gath, one of the chief towns of the Philistines, was a seaport town north of Gaza, on the Mediterranean Sea. Perhaps it was the political and Askelon was the religious centre. They are named, in the language of poetry, for the whole land which they represent. "Tell it not in Gath," became a proverbial expression (Micah i., 10.) "**Uncircumcised**," having no share in Jehovah's covenant with Israel.

V. 21. "Let no fruitful fields on your heights yield offerings," or, fruit from which firstlings might be presented. The loss of the shield was a great calamity, and the wilful "Casting it away" an indelible disgrace. Perhaps, however, it should rather be translated "The shield of heroes was stained, defiled." Saul's person was anointed with holy oil, and yet he, the consecrated one, shared the common fate. The reference, however, seems rather to be to his shield, which was now polluted with blood. "The shield of Saul as if it had not been polished."

V. 22. Their bravery ever impelled them to victory, but their sad end is a contrast to the usual issue. "The sword

of Saul was sheathed only when it was satisfied, the bow of Jonathan never resounded without drinking the blood of the slain, without piercing the fat of the mighty."

V. 23. Affection in life, prowess in war, comradeship in death. "More rapid than eagles in pursuit, more courageous than lions in the fight."

V. 24. Or, "Clothed you in purple to your delight." The Revised Version has, "Clothed you in scarlet delicately."

V. 26. "Passing the love of women," either because women generally are more ardent in affection, or, "The love of wives," because the love of Jonathan as a friend had been more constant and generous than the love of his sister Michal as a wife. Jonathan had realised the highest ideal of true and abiding friendship. It has been truly observed that the friendship of David and Jonathan is of a far higher order than any which can be found among the Homeric heroes. It is more pure, self-denying—pervaded by a higher moral and religious principle. Indeed, all antiquity fails to present a perfect parallel. Compare the narratives of Achilles and Patroclus, and Pylades and Orestes.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. How was David affected when he heard of the death of Saul and Jonathan?
2. Analyse the elegy composed on the occasion.
3. What do you know of the Book of Jasher?
4. Explain the following phrases:—
 - "Bade them teach the use of the bow."
 - "Fields of offerings."
 - "Shield . . . vilely cast away."
 - "The bow of Jonathan turned not back."
 - "Saul clothed you in scarlet, with other delights."

REFERENCES.

- V. 6. 1 Sam. xxxi., 2-4; v. 14. Psalm cv., 15; v. 18. Josh. x., 13; v. 20. Micah i., 10; v. 22 and 26. 1 Sam. xviii. 3-4; v. 23. Judges xiv., 18; v. 34. Luke xxiii., 28.

CHAPTER I I.

ANALYSIS.

David anointed king over Judah at Hebron. His message to the Gileadites. Ishbosheth made king by Abner. War between Ishbosheth and David. The combat at Gibeon.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. David enquired through the Urim and Thummim. (1 Sam. xxiii., 2, 6, 10). Hebron (Josh. xii.), as a priestly city, had special importance for David. Here was to be fulfilled the old patriarchal promise (Gen. xlix.), and the establishment of the Theocratic kingdom in the tribes of Judah.

V. 2. Ahinoam and Abigail. (1 Sam. xxv., 42-43.) Jezreel, to which Ahinoam belonged, was a city near the mountains of Judah, near Carmel and Juttah. A complete and permanent colonisation of David's entire following (1 Sam. xxvii., 2) took place.

V. 4. David was anointed three times. (1 Sam. xvi., 3; 2 Sam. ii., 4; v., 3.) Probably opposition to David's authority was anticipated from the men of Jabesh. Hence the information given to David at this crisis. (1 Sam. xxxi., 11.)

V. 6. "**Kindness and truth,**" gracious favour and the trustworthiness of His promises.

V. 7. "Be valiant, be sons of power. I have taken Saul's place as king for your sake. Espouse my cause and help me to overthrow my rival."

V. 8. Ishbosheth was Saul's fourth son. (1 Chron. viii., 33; ix., 39.) The name means "man of shame," and probably refers to the disgrace that befel the House of Saul. He was called at first Eshbaal, "man of Baal." So, too, Jerubbaal became Jerrubbesheth (2 Sam. ix., 21), and Meribaal became Mephibosheth. (2 Sam. iv., 4; 1 Chron. viii., 34; ix., 40.) Mahanaim was the central point of Gilead. Through it passed the great caravan road from the Red Sea to Damascus. It afterwards became the retreat of David when he fled from Absalom. (2 Sam. viii. 24.)

V. 9. Gilead probably stands for all the land of Israel beyond the Jordan which had not been occupied by the Philistines. "**The Ashurites**," either the Asherites (Judges i., 32), the inhabitants of Western Palestine, north of the plain of Esdraelon, or the Geshurites, who maintained themselves among the Israelites in the district south of Mount Hermon. (Josh. xiii., 13.) The Vulgate and Syriac have "Geshurites."

V. 10. Ishbosheth reigned all the time that David reigned in Hebron, which was seven years and six months. It may well be supposed that it would take five and a half years to reconquer the land from the Philistines, so that he really reigned only two years "over Israel." It is believed there has been an error in transcription as regards the age of Ishbosheth. Seeing he was Saul's youngest son, it is difficult to see how he could be so old as forty "when he began to reign over Israel."

V. 12. Gibeon, now El-Jib, was one of the cities of the Hivites, about five miles north-west of Jerusalem. It was in the territory of Benjamin (Josh. xviii., 25), and especially assigned to the priests. (Josh. xxi., 17.) Here Amasa met his death by the treacherous hand of Joab (2 Sam. xx., 5-10).

It gained its chief importance in the reigns of David and Solomon as the great centre of worship at which the tabernacle and the altar of burnt-offering were set up before the building of the Temple. (2 Chron. i., 3.)

V. 13. Three of David's nephews were present, Joab being the eldest. David's sister Zeruah was their mother. (1 Chron. ii., 16.) Joab as commander-in-chief alone is named here. Both he and his brothers Abishai and Asahel had already received a military training with their uncle, and taken a prominent position among his heroes. They were therefore well qualified to be leaders of the forces. As the reward of his valour at the capture of Jebus, Joab received a more formal appointment to the post of commander-in-chief. In this capacity he conducted the war against the Syrians and Ammonites (2 Sam. x., 7); completed the conquest of Edom (1 Kings xi., 15); and defeated the Ammonites in a second war and took their capital. (2 Sam. xi., 1, xii., 26.) He was loyal to David, but he was cruel, self-willed and unscrupulous, as is proved by his murder of Abner in revenge for the death of Asahel (2 Sam. iii., 27); of Absalom, in spite of David's express command (2 Sam. xviii., 14); of Amasa, who was appointed to supersede him. (2 Sam. xx., 10.) He was a source of much vexation to David, and at length met a traitor's death at the altar in Gibeon. (1 Kings ii., 28-34.) **The Pool of Gibeon** was probably one of the large reservoirs that are still to be found there. (Jer. xli., 12.)

V. 14. Abner's proposal to decide the contest by single combat, probably with the view of avoiding civil war, is one which has been frequently adopted. The combat of the Horatii and Curiatii, narrated in classical story, decided the battle between Alba and Rome. Livy tells how the Alban

dictator urged this plan of ending the war, lest both nations, weakened by the losses of a general battle, should fall into the hands of their common enemy the Etruscans. Hector fought with Achilles, and Marcus Aurelius with a powerful Gaul. Sir Walter Scott, in his "Fair Maid of Perth," quoting from an old Scottish chronicler, mentions a feud in 1396 between two clans, which it was proposed to settle by a combat between thirty from each side. Twenty men of the one clan and eleven of the other fell almost at once. To joke or "**play**" here denotes the war play of single combat. The exhibition was not by any means to be an amusement.

V. 16. The twelve on each side fought with great ferocity, the sword being thrust into the opponent's side simultaneously with the seizure of his head. **Helkath-hazzurim**, i.e., "*The field of the sharp knives*," referring to the mutual slaughter with swords.

V. 18. "**As light of foot as a wild roe**," *lit.*, "*as one of the roes that are in the field*." The wild roe or gazelle of Palestine is noted for its swiftness, grace and gentleness.

V. 22. "**Hold up my face**" = "present myself with a good conscience before"—a downcast look betokening shame and guilt.

V. 23. The fatal blow was not given with the front part of the spear, but with the butt-end, which was pointed with iron to be stuck in the ground. "**The fifth rib**." In Revised Version, "belly," or abdomen.

V. 26. The conversation between Abner and Joab is variously interpreted. It may be, "Shall there be no end to the slaughter?" Further prosecution of the contest would only lead to greater bitterness of feeling between the tribes. Joab's reply may mean, either "Unless in the

morning you had challenged us to single combat the armies might have separated" without coming to blows, and thus the fratricidal contest been avoided; or, "But for this acknowledgment of defeat I would not have recalled the troops until the morning." The former reading suits the context best.

V. 29. "The plain." In Revised Version, "**the Arabah**," *i.e.*, the desert tract which extends along the Valley of the Jordan from the Dead Sea to the Lake of Genesareth, now El-Ghor. "**Bithron**." This was probably a ravine in the neighbourhood of the Jabbok, between Jordan and Mahanaim.

V. 32. It was twenty-six miles from Gibeon to Hebron. "It got light to them," or, as the Revised Version has it, "The day brake upon them at Hebron."

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Whose son was Joab, and what was his relation to David? State the chief facts in his life and in the lives of his brothers.
2. Where and by whom was David anointed king?
3. Tell what you know of Ahinoam, Abigail, Abner, and Zeruiah.
4. Give the situations of Bethlehem, Jabesh Gilead, Hebron, and Mahanaim.
5. Describe the encounter between the troops of David and those of Abner; give the name of the place where it occurred, and mention a few similar incidents in history.
6. Relate the origin, events, and results of the civil war.

REFERENCES.

- V. 4. 1 Sam. xxxi, 11, 13; v. 18. 1 Chron. ii, 16.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS.

The growth of the House of David, and the decline of the House of Saul. Abner's negotiations with David. Abner assassinated by Joab. David's lament for Abner.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. "War," not continual fighting, but a state of hostility. No peace was concluded.

V. 2. The progress of the narrative is interrupted at this turning point in the history of David's reign to give information about his family. So in 2 Sam. v., 13-16.

V. 3. Of the six sons born to David in Hebron three—Amnon (2 Sam. xiii), Absalom (2 Sam. xiii, xviii), and Adonijah (1 Kings i., 6)—were noted for their wickedness. **Chileab** is called Daniel in 1 Chron. iii., 1. Talmai's kingdom was a part of Aram or Syria. A simi'ar name was borne by one of the expelled sons of Anak. (Josh. xv., 14.)

V. 5. The Rabbins believed that **Eglah** was Michal, David's first wife.

V. 6. "Made himself strong," *i.e.*, rendered him powerful help. He was the mainstay of Saul's house. This concludes the period during which the house of Saul was able through Abner to maintain itself against the house of David. Events now occurred which further depressed the house of Saul. Ishbosheth charged Abner with treason, who now ceased to support him.

V. 7. Rizpah. (See 2 Sam. xxi., 8-11.)

V. 8. "Am I a dog's head that belongeth to Judah?" in

Revised Version. Am I both despicable and hostile to your interests? The expression is proverbial, and suggests the greatest reproach and contempt. Dog is applied to a cruel person (Ps. xxii., 16), and to an impure person (Rev. xxii., 15). There was a sudden and complete breach with the house of Saul, and Abner now solemnly swore to support David. Anger, ambition, and political foresight probably decided him. Ishbosheth became as cowardly and timid as before he had been rash and reproachful.

V. 12. "Whose is the land?" *i.e.*, to whom does it belong except thee by virtue of God's promise? The view of some writers that the meaning is, "I have the land but am resolved to transfer it," is doubtful. Abner now promised to stand by David, and desired to enter into a covenant with him. He no doubt expected to be raised to a high position in the army and nation.

V. 14. "Espoused." In Revised Version, "betrothed." (1 Sam. xviii., 25.) Ishbosheth was powerless to resist and had to fulfil David's condition.

V. 15. "Phaltiel," in Revised Version, "Paltiel." (1 Sam. xxv., 44.)

V. 16. Bahurim, a town on the road from Jerusalem over the Mount of Olives to the Jordan fords. (2 Sam. xvi., 5; xvii., 18.)

V. 17. "Elders of Israel," the representatives of the people. Such an organization existed from very early times. (Ex. iii., 16; Numb. xi., 16-24.) During the time of the Judges and of the Monarchy the elders had the charge of important political and national affairs. In New Testament times, "the elders" formed one of the constituent elements of the Sanhedrim. The name is applied to those who hold office in the Christian Church (1 Tim,

5-17, &c.), and even to members of the Church in heaven. (Rev. iv., 4. &c.) Page 22. David was probably so popular (1 Sam. xviii., 5), that but for the vigorous efforts of Abner he would have been unanimously elected King. Even among the northern tribes there was a party favourable to him. His accession to the throne has been likened to that of William III. of England. His rival on the other side of the Jordan maintained, indeed, his residence in a portion of his dominions, but he seems to have had no more footing in Central and Northern Palestine (then in the hands of the Philistines) than James had in 1689 in Ireland and Scotland.

V. 19. The tribe of Benjamin enjoyed advantages from their connection with the house of Saul. It was important that their concurrence in David's recognition as King should be obtained.

V. 21. The repeated mention of Abner's name expresses well his rapidity, energy, and importance at this crisis.

V. 22. "**From pursuing a troop.**" In Revised Version, "from a foray," *i.e.*, from a plundering expedition.

V. 26. The well or cistern of Sirah was about a mile from Hebron on the old paved road to the north. It is now called *Ain Sareh*.

V. 27. Joab pretended that this cruel deed was an act of revenge for bloodshed. But Abner had slain Asahel only in self-defence and not wilfully. This was a murder, like that afterwards committed by him on Amasa. Envy and ambition were the motives which led to it, for Joab feared that Abner might have a higher position in the new kingdom than himself.

V. 28. Suspicion was cast on David by Joab's crime. He was not guilty, and neither he nor his hereditary successors on the throne should suffer.

V. 29. "Rest on the head," *lit.*, "plunge upon," suggestive of the enormity of the crime and the energy of David's anger. In Revised Version "fall upon." There was no desire for vengeance on the part of David himself, but a clear consciousness of God's primitive justice, which maintains the laws of moral government in the world, and which, in this case, might appropriately exhibit itself in a five-fold manner in Joab's house by (*a*) the continual presence of some one pining away with incurable disease and therefore ceremonially unclean (Lev. xiii., 46), or (*b*) of a leper, or (*c*) of a cripple—one who needs a "crutch," or (*d*) of one who dies untimely in battle or by the hand of an assassin or (*e*) of one who is reduced to the straits of bitter poverty.

V. 30. The Septuagint gives, "Now Joab and Abishai were lying in wait for Abner, because," &c.

V. 31. The practice of wearing coarse haircloth as a sign of mourning is very ancient. (Gen. xxxvii., 34.) Fasting was also the usual sign of mourning.

V. 32. "Lift" for lifted. The death of Abner was one more befitting a fool than so brave a warrior, a very "prince" by distinguished military ability, lofty qualities of character, and extensive influence.

V. 34. "Thy hands," &c. This may either mean that Abner was innocent of any crime deserving a malefactor's punishment and was causelessly murdered, or that, being attacked unsuspectingly by treacherous enemies, he had no opportunity either to defend himself or flee.

V. 39. David in his present situation needed the help of such an one as Abner. He was weak, and his kingdom far from being securely established, and he could not, therefore, dispense with Joab's help. He could only protest against

such hardness and cruelty, and repudiate connection with it.
(Page 24.)

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. How many sons were born to David in Hebron? What do you know of Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah?
2. Why did Abner desert the cause of Ishbosheth?
3. Describe Abner's negotiations with David.
4. How did Abner die? Write down the elegy pronounced by David on the occasion of his death.
5. What is recorded of the descendants of Saul in this book, and what were the fortunes of those members of his house who survived the battle at Gilboa?

REFERENCES.

- V. 2. 1 Chron. iii., 1-4; v. 4. 1 Kings i., 5; v. 10. Judges xx., 1; v. 15. 1 Sam. xxv., 24; v. 30. 2 Sam. ii., 23; v. 39. Psalms lxii., 12.

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS.

Murder of Ishbosheth and punishment of the murderers.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. "Feeble," *i.e.*, paralysed, lost heart. The Israelites, fearing the vengeance of David, were "confounded." Ishbosheth, they knew, was incapable of governing by himself. Since the death of Abner completely disheartened them, it is evident they were already in an evil condition.

V. 2. Beeroth, now El Bireh, *i.e.*, the well, is close to the western frontier of the tribe of Benjamin, seven miles north of Jerusalem. It was one of the four Gibeonite cities retained by their original Canaanite inhabitants, in virtue of the treaty made with Joshua. (Josh. ix., 17.) When the Gibeonites deserted it, probably on account of Saul's cruel treatment (2 Sam. xxi., 1), the tribe of Benjamin took

possession. Their flight is assumed to have been known. The crime of Rechab and Baanah was aggravated because they were of the tribe of Benjamin, to which Saul's son belonged.

V. 3. Gittaim is mentioned in Neh. xi., 33. The site is unknown.

V. 4. Mephibosheth (= *conqueror of Baal*) is called in 1 Chron. viii., 34, Merib-baal, just as Ishbosheth is called Esh-baal. The reason is not very clear. In chapters ix., xvi., and xix., 24., we have an account of the subsequent history of Mephibosheth.

V. 5. "Lay on a bed at noon," *lit.*, sleeping the sleep of noon. Ishbosheth was therefore alone and defenceless.

V. 7. Repetition is not unusual in the Bible. Here, the entrance of the murderers into the house is first briefly related, then the fact of their entrance is repeated in order to give further details. The Septuagint adds, "And, behold, the doorkeeper of the house was cleaning wheat, and she slumbered and slept. And Rahab and Baana the brothers went in secretly."

"Through the plain." In Revised Version, "by the way of the Arabah."

V. 8. From Mahanaim to Hebron along the valley of the Jordan was about eighty miles. The murderers reminded David of Saul's persecution and Abner's hostility, thinking to justify their action and gain a reward. They even represent their action as the judgment of God.

V. 9. Being under God's protection David did not need to commit crimes either for his defence or advancement. The spiritual weakness and the personal insignificance of Ishbosheth, the selfishness and dissolution of discipline which prevailed at his court, and the increasing favour of the people to David could have co-operated to bring about

naturally the fall of Saul's house and the fulfilment of the Divine promises regarding him. Ishbosheth's kingdom was founded on opposition to God's will and could not stand. (1 Sam. xxiv.. 22).

V. 10. "Who thought that," &c. In Revised Version, "Which was the reward I gave him for his tidings," *i.e.*, "I inflicted the punishment he deserved." David was determined, as God's representative and servant, to tread the paths of godly fear and conscientious fulfilment of duty.

V. 11. "Righteous" (= *zaddik*), guilty of no crime. This refutes the charge by which these men endeavoured to palliate their deed. "**Require his blood,**" see Gen. ix., 5. The King was God's instrument in punishing the guilty. He had promised to govern his people in the name of the Lord, and both he and the people had to render unconditional obedience to the real though invisible King. The conduct of David on the occasion of the murder of Ishbosheth has been compared with that of Alexander the Great towards the murderer of Darius, A.D. 331, and with that of Cæsar towards the murderers of Pompey, and contrasted with that of Antony when Cæsar was assassinated.

V. 12. Dismemberment and the subsequent exposure of the mutilated corpses publicly testified David's innocence and was a terrible example to traitors (Deut. xxi., 21,) of the punishment they merited.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What effect had the death of Abner on the adherents of Ishbosheth?
2. Give a brief sketch of the life of Ishbosheth and of the life of Mephibosheth.
3. How were the murderers of Ishbosheth received by David?

REFERENCES.

V. 2. Josh. xviii., 25; v. 9. Ps. xxxiv., 22; v. 10. 2 Sam. i.

PART II.—CHAPTERS V. TO IX.

**DAVID'S REIGN OVER THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL
AND JUDAH IN THE TIME OF ITS STRENGTH
AND GLORY.**

(a) The internal improvements in the kingdom. (b) Its external development.

CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS.

David anointed king over Israel. The capture of Jebus. David's palace and family. Two victories over the Philistines.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. "All the tribes of Israel," *i.e.* the representatives of Israel, or, all the warriors above twenty who chose to come. See precedent in 1 Sam. x., 17.

V. 2. "It was thou that leddest" would be more grammatical. Page 27. "Feed," *lit.* "be shepherd to" (Ezek. xxxiv., 23.) Evil rulers are roaring lions. (Ezek. xix., 2.) Jesus is the "good shepherd." (John x., 14.)

V. 3. "Made a league." This was a solemn "covenant" (as the Revised Version has it) in which the king on the one hand engaged to rule according to the laws, and the people on the other hand promised him their allegiance. The monarchy was constitutional, not absolute like other Eastern monarchs. The king was only the administrator of law.

And the covenant was made "**before the Lord,**" the true King of Israel. (See 1 Sam. x., 25.) For a full account of this assembly at Hebron see 1 Chron. xii., 23-40. The people of Israel were weary of anarchy, dissension, and the miseries which attend a feeble rule. They saw that Judah was wisely and righteously governed, and that under David's rule it had greatly prospered. All things had conspired to point him out as the chosen of God, and they were now prepared to lay aside all tribal jealousies and submit themselves with one mind and voice to his government. In 1025, Conrad II. of Germany was elected emperor in a similar manner on the banks of the Rhine.

V. 4. The Levites entered upon their duties at 30. (Numb. iv., 3.) So too Joseph (Gen. xli., 46) and Jesus. (Luke iii., 23.) David was four years in Saul's service; he wandered about the wilderness of Judah and other places for four years; he was a year and a half among the Philistines; he reigned seven and a half years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

V. 6. See 1 Chron. xi., 4-9, and page 29. Several Jewish writers assert that the epithets, "lame and blind," were given to the idols of the Jebusites, which were placed on the walls to protect the city. The Jebusites would scarcely have used such expressions regarding their gods. It rather seems to be a contemptuous boast on their part that the most disabled part of the inhabitants were sufficient to repel David's assaults on the fortress. David proceeded without delay to fulfil the duties that devolved upon him as the anointed King of Israel against the external enemies of the kingdom. There could be neither internal unity nor vigorous Theocratic development of national life until the land was purged from the still

powerful remains of the Canaanitish peoples. "**Jebusites**" (Gen. x., 6), inhabitants of Jebus. The possession of Middle and Southern Palestine could not be assured while they remained.

V. 8. This verse may be translated, "Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites let him hurl down the precipice both the lame and the blind who are hateful to the soul of David," or, "who hate David's soul." If the term *gutter* be retained it must be referred to some watercourse, and the city could be most easily captured by climbing up the steep bed of this waterfall. The meaning is very obscure.

V. 9. The northern part of Jerusalem, on the low-lying ground, had been in possession of the Israelites a long time before (Judges i., 8). It was Mount Zion, to the south, which the Jebusites had continued to hold, and which is here called the fort. **Millo** was a tower or castle, which formed the chief part of the defences (Judges ix., 6). The "City of David" gradually covered the mountain. The topography of ancient Jerusalem is still, however, a much disputed problem.

V. 10. "**Lord God of hosts.**" In Revised Version, "the Lord, the God of hosts." The first time this title occurs is in 1 Sam. i., 3. **Jehovah Tsebaoth**, Lord of the armies of Israel, Lord of the heavenly powers.

V. 11. (See 1 Chron. xiv., 1-16.) This fifth chapter is, probably, giving an account of events which occupied at least the first five years of David's reign. Some think David must have been too much occupied with wars, such as those against the Philistines, referred to in the end of the chapter, and the works already mentioned (v. 9), to find leisure for palace building, and they would assign this to a later period of his reign. If the Hiram mentioned here was

the same as Solomon's friend and ally (1 Kings ix., 11), it must be so. But it is more probable that this Hiram was the father or grandfather of the latter. Tyre was one of the two great cities of Phœnicia, and was celebrated for its commerce, mechanical skill, and wealth. (Josh. xix., 29.) By land Tyre was only 100 miles from Jerusalem. The language of the inhabitants was similar to that of the Hebrews. It depended greatly upon Palestine for its supplies of wheat and oil, and naturally desired to be on good terms with the people.

V. 14. Solomon and Nathan are the only two of those mentioned of whom anything is known. The latter was the ancestor of our Lord (Luke iii., 31).

V. 17. Whether "**the hold**" here refers to the well-known Adullam (2 Sam. xxiii., 14), or to the citadel of Zion, cannot positively be known. If the latter, the idea is that David went down from his residence to the fortifications in order to make them ready for defence or attack. Adullam, however, is a strong position in the Valley of Elah, and therefore one of the most likely routes for an invading army from Philistia to take (1 Sam. xxii., 1).

V. 20. "**Baal-perazim**," *i.e.*, "the place of breakings forth."

V. 21. "**Burned them.**" In Revised Version, "took them away," as spoil, though they were afterwards burned. (1 Chron. xiv., 12.)

V. 23. "**Fetch a compass.**" In Revised Version, "make a circuit." "**Mulberry trees**," balsam shrubs. (Page 34.)

V. 25. "**Geba**," is Gibeon in 1 Chron. xiv., 16. Gibeon was on the road northwards from the Valley of Rephaim to Gazer. "**Gazer**," a royal city of the Canaanites (Joshua

xii, 12), belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, but retained by its original inhabitants till the time of Solomon (1 Kings ix., 16). It lay between Bethhoron and the sea, and probably survives in *Tell Jazar*, a hill about ten miles W.S.W. of Bethhoron.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Who were "the elders of Israel?"
2. Give the chief dates in the life of David.
3. What was the first capital of David's kingdom? To what place did he remove? Why did he change his capital?
4. Describe the position and divisions of Jerusalem.
5. Describe the capture of Mount Zion.
6. Who were the Jebusites?
7. Where were Tyre, Baal-Perazim, Gibeon, and Gazer?
8. What was the law of blood-vengeance?

REFERENCES.

V. 3. 1 Chron. xi., 3; v. 6. Josh. xv., 63; v. 11. 1 Chron. xiv., 1; v. 14. 1 Chron. iii., 5; v. 18. 1 Chron. xi., 11; v. 25. 1 Chron. xiv., 16.

CHAPTER VI.

ANALYSIS.

Removal of the Ark from Kirjath-jearim (*a*) to Obededom's house (*b*) to the city of David. Death of Uzzah. Michal rebuked.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1 "Chosen men," applied to the military forces, the heroic representatives of the nation. (1 Chron. xiii., 1-15.)

V. 2. "Baale of Judah," Kirjath-jearim. (Josh. xv, 9-60.) Page 37. Its site is not yet determined. Probably it is to be found in *Erma*, a town four miles east of Ain Shems or Bethshemesh. It had probably been the seat of an idolatrous temple, and so called Baale. "**Whose name,**" &c., "upon which the name is called of Jehovah of Hosts," or, as in Revised Version, "which is called by the Name, even the name of the Lord of hosts, that sitteth upon the cherubim." The **cherubim** covered the Mercy Seat. Between them was the Shechinah, the visible token of the presence of God. The Ark was the symbol of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel, and the place where He chiefly manifested Himself to His people.

V. 3. "Gibeah." In Revised Version, "in the hill." Directions were given by Moses that the Ark was only to be borne on the shoulders of the Kohathites. Page 39. (Numb. iv., and vii., 9.) "**Sons**" is probably used after a common Hebrew fashion for grandsons. Seventy years before, Abinadab had a son old enough for the priest's office. (1 Sam. vii., 1.)

V. 5. "Psalteries," stringed instruments. "**Cornets.**" In Revised Version, "**castanets.**" "**Cymbals,**" small metal plates, which being struck together gave a clear sound.

V. 6. "Nachon" or "**Nacon,**" means a stroke or destruction, and is not the name of the owner of the place, as one might suppose, but the name afterwards given to it on account of the calamity which overtook the procession there. Others translate it "fixed." Oxen "**jostled**" it.

V. 7. "Error," rather, "**rashness.**" Tennyson says, "We mock Him, if we do not fear." The Ark was not a talisman or charm (1 Sam. iv., 4-6), but a symbol of God's unapproachable majesty. Either culpable ignorance or

wilful disobedience was shown in the manner of its removal. If David thought that the mere presence of the Ark would secure God's blessing, he had to be taught the duty of acquainting himself with the law and obeying it. Uzzah disobeyed the law to save the Ark, and his death proved that God refuses to have His cause promoted by unlawful means. Our duty is to do what is right; God will guard His own name, honour, and cause. Probably a sudden apoplectic stroke was the natural means of manifesting the Divine displeasure against Uzzah.

V. 8. "**Displeased,**" same as "**grieved,**" in 1 Sam. xv., 2. It denotes vexation akin to anger. He feared he might be similarly stricken if he proceeded further with the Ark. "Made a breach;" in Revised Version, "broken forth." Hence "**Perez-uzzah,**" the breach of Uzzah.

V. 11. David fancied that the Ark would bring only calamities on those who had to do with it, and therefore declined to carry it to Jerusalem. Obed-edom, a Levite and a Kohathite (1 Chron. xxvi., 1, 4-8), gladly took charge of it, and the blessings which came upon his house proved that while irreverent handling of the things of God is fatal, the reverent care of them turns "judgment into mercy." (Numb. vii., 9.) "**The Gittite,**" probably because born in Gath-rimmon, a town assigned to the Kohathites in Dan or Manassch. (Josh. xxi., 24.)

V. 13. "**Six paces,**" not probably "every six paces," as some think. The procession was arranged and started, and then consecrated with a sacrifice.

V. 14. "**With all his might,**" showing a high degree of joyful excitement (Exodus xv., 20, 21). Perhaps Ps. cxxxii. as also Ps. cv. were sung on the occasion. Psalms xv., xxiv., xlv., and lxviii. are also referred to this solemn event. (See

page 40.) The "**linen ephod**" was worn only by the priests (1 Sam. xxii., 18). David, on this occasion, assumed a priestly dress, and performed the functions of a priest in offering sacrifice, and in blessing the people. He was the head of "a kingdom of priests" (Exod. xix., 6). As a royal priest he was a type of Christ. (Heb. x., 21.)

V. 17. "Tabernacle." Rather, as in Revised Version, "**tent**," the Tabernacle proper being at Gibeon.

V. 18. "Blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts," *i.e.*, invoked from Jehovah such blessings as He covenants to give in accordance with His revelations of Himself and His promises. (Ps. cxxix. 8.) David's acts at this time had their root in piety, were expressive of gratitude to God, and aimed at the concentration and elevation of the religious life of Israel, which had much deteriorated during the reign of Saul. He had restored external unity, and he now laid the deepest foundations for real internal unity by again concentrating their religious thought on the dwelling of God in the midst of His people, symbolically represented in the Ark. He now placed his people under the protection and blessing of the Lord.

V. 19. A **bread-cake**, a **measure** of wine, and a **raisin cake** were given to each. The Revised Version has "a portion of flesh," instead of a measure of wine. The exact meaning of the words is doubtful.

V. 23. Michal had held herself aloof from the procession, and looked on from a window with cold unsympathetic eye. Her description of the King in his short sacerdotal dress, and mingling with the people, is bitterly ironical. But self-abasement in the presence of God ought to be exaltation in the presence of men. (Page 41.)

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What was the cause of Uzzah's death?
2. Who was Obed-edom, and what occurred to him?
3. Sketch the fortunes of the Ark since its construction, telling specially at what places and under whose charge it was during the reign of David.
4. Compare the account of the bringing up of the Ark in Second Book of Samuel with that in First Book of Chronicles.
5. What Psalms were probably composed and sung on the occasion of bringing up the Ark to Jerusalem?

REFERENCES.

V. 2. Ps. xcix., 1; v. 4. 1 Sam. vii., 1; v. 6. 1 Chron. xiii., 9; v. 11. 1 Chron. xiii., 14; v. 16. 1 Chron. xv., 29; v. 21. 1 Sam. xv., 28.

CHAPTER VII.

ANALYSIS.

David's desire to build a house for the Lord. The Lord's message to him by Nathan containing the promise of perpetual dominion to his house. David's prayer and thanksgiving.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. As the arrangement of the Book is topical rather than chronological, it is impossible to say at what period of David's reign the resolution to build a temple was expressed. The "rest" from his enemies would seem to point to a time after some at least of the wars described in the next chapter. As, however, it was before the birth of Solomon (v. 12), it cannot have been at a late period of his reign. Probably during some temporary lull in the storms and tumults of his life, David thought his opportunity had come to rear a great monument of piety and gratitude, and wind up the

blood-stained annals of his reign with a chapter which should tell the triumphs of peace and religion.

V. 2. God's house was always dearer to David than his own house. (Ps. xxvii., 4, and lxxxiv., 1-10.) We mock God if we do not give to Him the best of our time, energy, and substance. (Hag. i., 2-4; Mal. i., 6-8, 14.) The history of **Nathan** is unknown. He seems to have been a successor of Samuel, whom David consulted in important affairs. His hatred of injustice and his utter fearlessness are shown in 2 Sam. xii., 1-12. He wrote a life of David, and part at least of the life of Solomon, and the education of Solomon was entrusted to him. (1 Chron. xxix., 29; 2 Chron. ix., 29.) "**Within curtains**," within the tent-cloth, and therefore movable.

V. 3. "**Go**," equivalent to, Quite right.

V. 5. "**Thou**" is here emphatic, and the question is equivalent to a negative.

V. 7. "**Tribes**," probably judges (1 Chron. xvii., 6); unless it be understood of the different tribes to which the successive Judges belonged—Ephraim having supremacy in the time of Joshua, Dan in the days of Samson, and Benjamin in the reign of Saul.

V. 8. "**Sheepcote**," *lit.*, pasture.

V. 10. "**Beforetime**." In Revised Version, "at the first, and as from the day, &c." The reasons for the prohibition are—(a) There was no immediate necessity for such an undertaking. Religion was not dependent upon temples, and the whole history of the nation from the time of the Exodus proved that God's presence could be felt, and His mighty power realised without such aids. (b) Such a work as this should not be undertaken without an express command. (c) The kind of life David had lived was scarcely

consistent with the erection of a temple (1 Chron. xxviii., 3). (d) The time was inopportune, David's power being not yet firmly established, and his throne secure from enemies. But the message Nathan delivered, though prohibitory, was yet full of mercy and promise. It recognised the piety of the intention, and promised great, increasing, and enduring prosperity as the reward of that piety. It reminded David how all his life had been full of Divine mercies, and it promised that Israel under his rule should become a great and peaceful nation; that his own house should be established; that his sons should peaceably succeed to his dominions; that the temple, which was the great object of his hopes and prayers, should most certainly be built; and that his family should be planted for ever on the throne of Israel. (Pages 43, 44.)

V. 12. Solomon recognised the fulfilment of this promise in his elevation to the throne (1 Kings viii., 15-20); David's descendants sat on the throne of Judah for many ages; and finally in Christ it reached its highest fulfilment. (Acts ii., 29-31; xiii., 22, 23.)

V. 13. "**Stablish.**" In Revised Version, "establish," of which it is a shorter form. The promise of God to David by Nathan marks an important stage in the Old Testament revelation, which prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah. The primeval promise to Adam held out the hope of deliverance through "the seed of the woman." The family of Abraham, of Judah, of David, representing the nation, the tribe, the family, are the successive limitations of the promise. In times of darkness and captivity this promise sustained the hopes of God's people. (Psalms lxxxix. and cxxxii.; Isaiah lv., 3.)

V. 18. “**And sat,**” sitting on the heels being reckoned in the East the posture of reverence. David thanks God for His gracious promises, praises Him for past manifestations of glory in and to Israel, and prays for the final fulfilment of the promises made. “**O Lord God.**” The Jews, believing that they were prohibited by Lev. xxiv., 16, from pronouncing the sacred name Jehovah, always substituted in reading the Scriptures Adônai, which means Lord, for Yahveh (in English, Jehovah), which means The Eternal, Self-existing One; except when Adônai was joined with Yahveh, when Elôhim, *i.e.*, God, was substituted. In the English version the distinction is pointed out by “God” being printed in small capitals when the sacred name “Jehovah” is meant, *e.g.*, in verses 18, 19, 20, 28, and 29.

V. 19. “**Is this the manner of man?**” In Revised Version, “and this too after the manner of men!” Some make this an expression of humble astonishment on the part of David at the greatness of the honour designed for his house. Others consider it to refer to the gracious condescension of God—so human and familiar. Others, again, refer it to the promise made to Adam—“and this is the law of Adam!” The first seems the most natural.

V. 20. David felt that his obligations were greater than he could express, and that it was not from any personal merit that God purposed such favour and disclosed it, but solely from His own grace and goodness.

V. 25. David now turns the Divine promise into a prayer for its glorious fulfilment. The promise furnishes matter for the petition, and assurance that it will be granted.

V. 27. “**Revealed to thy servant,**” *lit.* uncovered his ear, in order to make known these gracious purposes. (Page 45.)

This chapter, on account of its Messianic predictions, is one of the most important in the Old Testament. The chain of Messianic promises, which for ages had been broken, or been transmitted obscurely under forms of Mosaic ritual, was now renewed by the addition of a most important link in the promises to David. The hopes of the world's redemption now centre in David's family, and the oracles of God are embodied not so much in a national temple of stone as in the living line of a dynasty.

The primary reference of the prediction is to Solomon and his immediate descendants. The eldest born generally succeeds his father, but, by the special ordinance of God, this custom was departed from in favour of Solomon. Eleven sons were born to David after his removal to Jerusalem, (2 Sam. v., 14,) and of these Solomon was the fourth, but he was appointed to succeed, and God kept the kingdom for him in spite of the plots of his brother Adonijah. When Solomon sinned, and when ten tribes were lost to Rehoboam, God continued faithful to His promise. Notwithstanding many aggravated sins, the descendants of David retained the throne of Judah for many generations (2 Kings viii., 19), but they were ultimately driven from the throne. The Theocracy reached its culminating point of conquest under David, and of splendour under Solomon, and there is little to relieve the sad record of fall and failure, until at length the Mosaic institutions were entirely overthrown and the sceptre departed from Judah.

But though the promises failed to David and his natural posterity on account of sin—and their fulfilment had been conditional upon allegiance to the laws of God—they are fulfilled in Christ and His spiritual seed. A greater than Solomon was promised. David's posterity could only

continue for ever in the Person of One who lives for ever, and whose Kingdom can have no end. And it was in this sense David himself, Isaiah, Mary, Zacharias, Peter, Paul, &c., understood these promises. (Psalms ii., lxxxix., cx.; Luke i., 31-33, Acts iii. 29-31, &c.)

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What do you know about Nathan ?
2. Why was not David permitted to build the Temple ?
3. Write down the promises made in this chapter to David, and show how they were fulfilled.

REFERENCES.

V. 1 Chron. xvii., 1 ; v. 8, 1 Sam. xvi., 11 ; v. 12, Acts ii., 30 ; xiii., 36 ; v. 22, Ps. lxxxvi., 10 ; v. 23, Deut. iv., 7.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANALYSIS.

David subdues the Philistines, the Moabites, the King of Zobah, and the Syrians in general. Toi sends presents to David which are dedicated to God. Edom conquered. David's chief Officers.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. "After this it came to pass" does not necessarily indicate a chronological sequence. It is only a general formula of transition and connection. "**Metheg-ammah**," *i.e.*, the bridle of the metropolis or rein of dominion, meaning that David wrested from the Philistines Gath, their chief city, and its suburban towns. The very means

employed by them to keep the people of Israel in check were now employed to restrain their own ambition.

V. 2. "Measured them with a line." The Moabite prisoners of war, being ordered to lie down in rows upon the ground, were measured with a line, and, according to the barbarous customs of the age, two-thirds were executed and the remainder spared. Jewish writers assert that the cause of this severity was the treacherous murder of David's parents, who during his exile had been committed to the care of the King of Moab (1 Sam. xxii., 3, 4.) Through Ruth, David was connected by blood with the Moabites, but this, for some reason or other, must have been a war of revenge. Though his treatment was severe it might be considered merciful compared with some of the requirements of the Mosaic law (Deut. xx., 10). The idea that "line" means "rod," and that the passage only refers to the destruction of the strong towns of Moab, is unsupported by evidence.

V. 3. "To recover his border," *i.e.*, to establish his frontier. Wishing to extend his dominions to the Euphrates, Hadadezer seems to have invaded a part of David's territory, which lay near (2 Sam. x., 16). Hadadezer ruled over nearly all the district between the Euphrates and the eastern slopes of Lebanon. By this conflict David secured the full inheritance God had promised to Israel. (Gen. xv., 18, Numb. xxiv., 17.)

V. 4. David signally defeated Hadadezer, and took from him, besides a great number of foot prisoners, an immense amount of booty in chariots and horses. According to the parallel passage in 1 Chron., 7,000 was the number of prisoners. The horses, with some exceptions, were hamstringed, the Hebrews being forbidden to use horses either in war or in agriculture. (Josh. xi., 6, 9.)

V. 5. The Syrians of Damascus having gone to the succour of the King of Zobah, were also defeated and made tributary, and their fortified towns were seized and garrisoned by the Israelites.

V. 6. "**Preserved.**" In Revised Version, "Gave victory."

V. 8. "**Brass.**" The compound metal "Brass" (copper and zinc) was unknown to the Hebrews. It should be bronze (copper and tin). But Josephus tells us it was of such excellent quality that it surpassed in value gold itself.

V. 9. Hamath was a city on the Orontes—originally a Hittite city, and therefore the natural ally of David against the Syrians. When the King heard of David's victory over his powerful neighbour, he sent his son with a valuable present, to offer congratulations and solicit alliance.

V. 11. After defraying expenses, and liberally rewarding his soldiers, David dedicated the rest of the spoil unto the Lord, as also the valuable presents sent by Toi. David now began to accumulate for the great project of his life, the erection of a temple at Jerusalem.

V. 12. David had subjugated the nations on the east and north of Palestine, garrisoned their fortresses with his own troops, and greatly extended his dominions. The neighbouring hostile states, alarmed by his increasing power, had formed a powerful confederacy against him, the Syrians attacking him from the north whilst a body of allies attempted a diversion through Edom and the Valley of Salt on the south. But victory crowned his arms. The Edomites remained tributary till the time of Jehoram.

V. 15-16. Here begins a short account of David's internal government. By his wars peace and prosperity had been obtained, and he could now attend to the administration of affairs at home. Jehoshaphat was the writer of chronicles

of events and of government. These records, though lost, were probably the foundation of the history before us.

V. 17. Unless both father and son had both names, "**Abiathar**" and "**Ahimelech**" are evidently transposed. Zadok and Abiathar were jointly high priests; Seraiah was the secretary, who probably conducted the correspondence and daily business of the government. The Cherethites and Pelethites, *lit.* Crethi and Plethi (1 Sam. xxx., 14), were probably foreign mercenaries who, on account of their valour, were made the guards of the royal person.

Such is a summary account of the internal organisation. At the end of the twentieth chapter, after the government had been thoroughly shaken and shattered, the list is repeated, with such changes as had occurred in the interval. For, alas! this eighth chapter ends the hitherto splendidly advancing history of David's kingship. In a theocratical sense he has now reached the height of power and splendour. He has permanently established the Ark in a secure capital, has extended his boundaries, and has received the promise of permanent sovereignty for his house. A chapter is added to this section to exhibit his magnanimous conduct to the sunken house of Saul, and then the historian proceeds to describe the decline of David's authority and of the estimation in which he was held—the period of retrogression which, beginning with heinous sin, was a time of anxiety, trouble, and bloodshed. (Page 49.)

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Explain the word "Metheg-ammah."
2. What conquests are recorded in this chapter?
3. Who were the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Syrians, Amalekites, Philistines, Cherethites, and Pelethites, and what were David's dealings with these at different periods of his career?

4. How did the Aramean league originate? What was its object and results?

5. Describe by a sketch map the fullest extent of David's dominions. What promise given by God to Abraham was fulfilled by his wars of conquest?

6. Find other records of David's chief functionaries.

REFERENCES.

V. 1. 1 Chron. xviii, 1; v. 11. 1 Kings vii, 51; v. 16. 1 Chron. xi, 6, and 1 Kings iv, 3; v. 17. 1 Chron. xxiv, 3; v. 18. 1 Chron. xviii, 17.

CHAPTER IX.

ANALYSIS.

David's kindness to Mephibosheth.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. David, amid his duties, cares, and wars, had almost forgotten his obligations to his early friend Jonathan. Some one had brought to his notice the fact that a son survived, and he resolved to befriend him. The chapter may be reckoned an appendix to the general summary already given of the public history of David's reign, and is intended to show his gratitude and loving fidelity when he had reached the highest point of royal glory and authority. "**Is it so that there is any one left**" is the literal translation. David wished to assure himself of the truth of what he had already heard. "**For Jonathan's sake,**" in fulfilment of my oath to Jonathan. Jonathan was convinced that David would succeed to the kingdom, and exacted from him a promise to show kindness to his posterity after his death as well as to

himself during his lifetime (1 Sam. xx., 14-17, 42). David now desired to fulfil that promise. Page 50.

V. 3. "Kindness of God," *i.e.*, kindness for God's sake; proceeding from my love to God and such kindness as God shows to men, great and unfailling.

V. 4. Machir must have been a man of wealth and position (2 Sam. xvii., 27). Since Mephibosheth was only five years old at the time of his father's death (2 Sam. iv., 4) and had now a young son (v. 12), this incident could not have occurred till David had reigned some years in Jerusalem. (Page 50.)

V. 7. Father = grandfather. "The field" of thy grandfather.

V. 8. Mephibosheth acknowledged himself to be a poor lame slave, the last survivor of his father's house, whose relatives had been but dead men (2 Sam. xix., 26-28), a dead dog—the vilest and most contemptible of all objects—and he regarded the king, who had spared his life, as an angel of God. David had come into possession of Saul's household and property (2 Sam. xii., 8) when he acceded to the throne.

V. 10. Ziba was to cultivate the land and supply food for the household of his master, who himself ate at the king's table. Having fifteen sons and twenty servants he was able easily to manage the estate.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Why did David desire to show kindness to Mephibosheth?
2. Mention any other incidents in the life of Mephibosheth.
3. Who were Ziba and Micha, and what do you know about them?

REFERENCES.

V. 1. 1 Sam. xx., 15-16 ; v. 6. 1 Chron. viii., 34.

PART III.—CHAPTERS X. TO XX.

THE REIGN OF DAVID IN ITS DECLINE.

- (1) Three campaigns against the Ammonites and Syrians, x., xi. 1.
 - (2) David's sin, xi. ; David's repentance, xii.
 - (3) Family troubles, xiii., xiv.
 - (4) Absalom's rebellion, xv.—xviii.
 - (5) Restoration of David's authority, xix., xx.
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CHAPTER X.

ANALYSIS.

Insult to David's ambassadors by the Ammonites. Defeat of the Ammonites and their Syrian allies. Renewed attack and total defeat of the Syrians.

CRITICAL NOTES,

David had now reached the height of his prosperity and power. He had strengthened and fortified the kingdom of Israel, both within and without, and raised the covenant nation to a high position among the nations of the earth. But a change takes place. He sins, and a series of heavy judgments fall upon him and his house, casting a deep shadow upon the glory of his reign.

The war with the Ammonites had already been incidentally alluded to in chap. viii., 12, and, probably, the war

with the Syrians to which it led is the same as that mentioned in chap. viii., 3-6. Here the reference is repeated, and the general details are given, because these wars lead up to and explain the circumstances of David's great sin, his loneliness, Uriah's absence, &c.

V. 1. The Ammonites were a fierce marauding tribe who dwelt to the south and east of the Israelite settlements on the eastern side of the Jordan. They were descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew. Twice during the period of the Judges they "oppressed Israel" (Judges iii., 12-14; xxi.), and they even crossed the Jordan and occupied Jericho. For their future connection with Israel see 2 Chron. xx., xxvi., 6; xxvii., 5, Nehem. iv., 7, 8. (Page 51.)

V. 3. "The city"—Rabbah, the capital, which was situated in a strong position, about twenty-two miles east of the Jordan. It was strongly fortified. It was a place of importance at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion. (Jer. xlix., 2, 3; Ezek. xxi., 20.) Ptolemy Philadelphus, in the third century B.C., changed its name to Philadelphia.

V. 4. The insult to David's ambassadors recalls a similar incident mentioned by Herodotus. In Niebuhr's "Description of Arabia" too we read—"In 1764, Kerim Khan, a pretender to the Persian throne, sent ambassadors to Mir Mahenna, the prince of Bendervigk, on the Persian Gulf, to demand tribute from him; but he in return cut off the ambassadors' beards. Kerim Khan was so enraged at this that he went the next year with a large army to make war upon the prince, and took the city and almost the whole of his territory, to avenge the insult." "Many an Arab would rather die than have his beard shaved off."

V. 6. "Stank."—In Revised Version, "were become odious." The war between Rome and Tarentum, which led

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V. 6. "Stank."—In Revised Version, "were become odious." The war between Rome and Tarentum, which led

to the invasion of Italy by Pyrrhus, originated in a similar way—insult to an ambassador. “**Hired the Syrians, &c.**” The account in 1 Chron. xix., differs in several points from that in 2 Sam. It is evident that chariots and horsemen as well as foot soldiers formed part of the mercenary army. The sum paid varies from £250,000 to £500,000. The exact localities whence these troops were obtained cannot be determined. **Beth-rehob** or Rehob (v. 8), may be either *Rehoboth* by the river (Gen. xxxvi., 37), which is a few miles below the junction of the Chaboras with the Euphrates, or *Ruhaibeh*, 25 miles north-east of Damascus. It was the capital of the Syrian kingdom. Some writers place it near Laish. “**King Maacah**,” the King of Maacah, or Dan in the far north, a small Syrian kingdom in the neighbourhood of Geshur, in the north-east of Bashan. “**Ishtob**,” the men of Tob. (Judges. xi., 3.)

V. 7. “All the host of the mighty men.” Rather, “all the host and the mighty men,” the latter referring to the six hundred picked heroes, the Gibborim.

V. 8. “At the entering in of the gate.” Probably of Medeba, 20 miles south-west of Rabbah and four miles south-east of Heshbon. This town was assigned to Reuben (Josh. xiii., 9); was now in the hands of the Ammonites; was recaptured, as we learn from the Rosetta stone in the British Museum, by Mesha; and in the time of Isaiah was a Moabite sanctuary. (Isa. xv., 2).

V. 16. “Hadarezer.” Rather, Hadadezer, meaning “whose help is Hadad,” Hadad being the name of the Syrian sun-god. He mustered his vassals and tributaries from “beyond the river,” *i.e.*, the Euphrates. (Page 54.)

V. 19. At a single stroke the kingdoms of Rehob,

Maacah, and Tob passed under the rule of David. The narrative confines itself to the fortunes of Rabbah, on account of their connection with the incidents of the next chapter.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What led to the war recorded in this chapter?
2. Who were the Ammonites, and who were their allies?
3. Write out Joab's address to his troops.
4. Which of the allies invaded Israel the following year, and with what result?
5. Who were Shobach, Hadarezer, and Hanun?

REFERENCES.

V. 1. 1 Chron. xix. ; v. 12. Josh. i., 9.

CHAPTER XI.

ANALYSIS.

The siege of Rabbah. The sin of David and Bathsheba. Uriah in Jerusalem. Uriah's death and David's remark on the occasion. David marries Bathsheba.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. "At the return of the year," as it is in the Revised Version, *i.e.*, at the setting in of spring, in the month of Abib, with which the new year began. "**Destroyed the children of Ammon,**" *i.e.*, ravaged their country. (1 Chron. xx., 1.)

V. 2. The flat roofs of Oriental houses are the usual promenade, especially in the morning and evening (Page 56.) "**Washing herself.**" In Revised Version, "bathing."

V. 3. "**Bathsheba,**" or Bathshua (1 Chron. iii., 5), was a daughter of Eliam or Ammiel. If this Eliam was the same as Uriah's brother officer mentioned in chapter xxiii., 34,

Bathsheba was a grand-daughter of Ahithophel, which would explain the adherence of the latter to the cause of Absalom as an act of revenge for the seduction of his granddaughter and the murder of her husband. **Uriah**, one of David's mighty men (2 Sam. xxiii., 39). He was a Hittite, or Hethite, a member of the ancient and powerful race of the Khitti, of whom recently-deciphered Egyptian and Assyrian records speak. The descendants of Heth, the second son of Canaan, occupied Hebron in the time of Abraham. (Gen. xxiii., 7.) Esau married Hittite wives. (Gen. xxvi., 34.) The Hittites were driven out of Canaan by the Israelites. (Joshua iii., 10.) They then seem to have established a powerful empire to the north of Syria, the chief centres of which were Carchemish on the Euphrates and Kadesh on the Orontes. They were strong enough to threaten Assyria on the one hand and Egypt on the other. (1 Kings x., 29; 2 Kings vii., 6.) They seem to be referred to in the Odyssey as the Keti. Another Hittite, Ahimelech, was in David's service. (1 Sam. xxvi., 6.) (Page 56.)

V. 4. See Levit. xv., 18. She wished to avoid the consequences of her sin. (Levit. xx., 10)

V. 7. "Demanded." In Revised Version, "asked." Uriah apparently had a command in the army. "**Did**," in Revised Version, "fared."

V. 10. "Camest thou not?" In Revised Version, "Art thou not come." Was it zeal of service, or suspicion of his wife's unfaithfulness which led to Uriah's resolution?

V. 11. The war was the Lord's war, and the Ark was with the army as the symbol of His presence and favour. "**Tents**." In Revised Version, "**booths**," rough huts made out of the boughs of trees. "**By thy life and by the life of thy soul**"—the repetition strengthens the oath.

V. 14. In Homer's Iliad we read that Proetus sent Bellerophon to Jobates with his own death-warrant:—

. . . . "He sent him forth, with tokens charged
Of dire import, on folded tablets traced,
Poisoning the monarch's mind to work his death."

V. 16. "Joab observed the city," In Revised Version. "Kept watch upon," *i.e.* besieged.

V. 21. Jerubbesheth, Jerubbaal or Gideon. (Judges vi., 32, ix., 53.) Thebez, now Tubás, about ten miles north-east of Shechem.

Between verses 22 and 23 the Septuagint reads, "And David's anger was kindled against Joab, and he said to the messenger, Why did ye approach to the city?" &c.

V. 25. "Encourage thou him," literally "strengthen him." This last clause is addressed to the messenger himself. (Page 59.)

V. 27. Seven days was the usual period of mourning (Genesis i., 10; 1 Sam. xxxi., 13), but in special cases thirty days were observed. (Numb. xx., 29; Deut. xxxiv., 8.) In Bathsheba's case the period would likely be as short as possible, that the child might appear to be begotten in wedlock. But from the Theocratical point of view a moral judgment is passed upon the action, and we are prepared for the account of the various punishments of the sin which follow.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What city was besieged by Joab and with what result?
2. Whose daughter was Bathsheba? Who was her husband?
3. What do you know of the Hittites?
4. What message was sent by Joab to the King, and what was the King's reply.

REFERENCES.

V. 1, 1 Chron. xx.; v. 21, Judges ix., 53.

CHAPTER XII.

ANALYSIS.

Nathan's parable. David's confession. The child's death. Solomon's birth. The capture of Rabbah.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. A year had passed, the child had been born, before Nathan was sent to reprove David for his sin. The contrite sentiments of David after he was brought to realise his sin are expressed in the 32nd and 51st Psalms, which are justly reckoned two of the most precious in the whole Psalter, and which in every line show the bitter anguish of an awakened conscience.

For other parables in the Old Testament see Judges ix., 7-15; 2 Samuel xiv., 4-7; 1 Kings xx., 35-41; 2 Kings xiv., 9; and Isaiah v., 1, 2. By the one before us the meanness and selfishness of the King are strikingly brought out. (Page 61.)

V. 5. "Worthy to die," *lit.*, "a son of death."

V. 6. "Fourfold." The Septuagint reads "seven-fold" and the Chaldee, "forty-fold." "Four-fold" was the legal compensation. (Exodus xxii., 1, 37; Luke xix., 8.)

V. 7. Note the great courage of the prophets as God's messengers. Samuel rebuked Saul for disobedience; the prophet from Judah reprov'd Jeroboam for idolatry; Elijah pronounced sentence on Ahab for the murder of Naboth; Isaiah chid Ahaz for faithlessness; John the Baptist condemned Herod for his adultery. David's sin was aggravated—(1) by his ordination to the throne; (2) by the deliverance vouchsafed in his early life; (3) by the liberty which he had to marry the wives of

his predecessor; (4) by the fact that as King of all Israel and Judah he could easily and without blame have increased the number of his wives (1 Sam. viii., 16); (5) by the direct violation of two commandments in the Decalogue; (6) by the murder of Uriah which he planned; and (7) by employing the Ammonites, the enemies of God's people, as the instruments for the commission of that murder. No point is omitted that could help to bring out the heinousness of his sin.

V. 8. Only one wife (1 Sam. xiv., 50) and one concubine (2 Sam. iii., 7) of Saul's are mentioned. There is no proof that David availed himself of this liberty.

V. 10. The murder of Amnon (2 Sam. xiii., 28), the death of Absalom as a rebel (2 Sam. xviii., 14), and the death of Adonijah as a traitor (1 Kings ii., 25), were fulfilments of Nathan's prophecy. As Amnon could plead his father's example as an excuse for his lust, as Absalom's exile and rebellion and death were indirectly the consequence of Amnon's sin, and as Adonijah died for presuming to oppose Bathsheba's son—the connection of these with David's own sin can easily be traced.

V. 13. David's confession, unlike that of Saul, who wished only to save his reputation (1 Sam. xv., 24, 30), proceeded from a sense of guilt in the sight of God. God alone could inflict the punishment of death on the King. Nathan has authority for saying, "He will cause thy sin to pass over," *i.e.*, to vanish, be forgiven.

V. 14. It would now be unjust to divorce Bathsheba, but the enemies of Jehovah would mock (despise) if His chosen representative were allowed to break the law and sin so grievously with impunity.

V. 22. In Revised Version, "Who knoweth whether the Lord," &c.

V. 23. So, too, says Cato, in Cicero's "*De Senectute*" "O happy day, when I shall leave the wicked multitudes of earth and be reunited to the divine company and councils of souls who have quitted the earth before me. . . . I shall comfort myself with the persuasion that the interval between the departure of my friend and my own will not be long." (Page 64.)

V. 24. Solomon [*shelemah*], was given in anticipation of the **peace** promised to Israel in his reign, in contrast to his father's wars. (1 Chron. xxii., 9.) According to Josephus, Solomon was fourteen years of age at his accession. Being placed last in the list of Bathsheba's children (1 Chron. iii., 5), it is conjectured that Solomon was her youngest son. His name is mentioned here on account of its connection with what preceded, but it is not safe to dogmatise regarding the chronology of these events.

V. 25. It is generally believed that Nathan was Solomon's tutor. The Vulgate has here, "He committed him to the hand of Nathan."

V. 26. The narrative now returns to the point where it had been interrupted. The incident regarding Bathsheba is told to its close without reference to time. **Rabbah** was composed of a city and a citadel; Joab took the former, and David himself the latter. The lower city was on the banks of the Upper Jabbok, now *Ammân*. Some, following Josephus, read, "I have cut off the waters of the city." "Therefore, the acropolis or citadel being deprived of water, and unable to hold out long, come at once."

V. 28. So, as Curtius informs us, Artacacna was reserved by Craterus for Alexander himself. David gathered together all the men of war who had remained behind in the land, and took Rabbah.

V. 30. As the Hebrew talent was 3,000 shekels, *i.e.*, 100 lbs., either the weight of the king's crown is an exaggerated estimate or it was worn only for a few minutes at a time. It is more likely that *mishekelah* refers to the value and not to the weight.

V. 31. It is better to believe that David "made his prisoners labour at" hard servile employment, as is suggested in the margin of the Revised Version, than that literally he sawed them to pieces and burned them in brick-kilns. Such a barbarous practice as sawing with saws was not, indeed, unknown ("*Caligula medios serra dissecuit*"), and David may have put the Ammonites to death in the way described as an act of retaliation; but that he did so is not quite certain.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Write down Nathan's parable. What other parables are recorded in the Old Testament?
2. How was the prophecy "The sword shall never depart from thine house" fulfilled?
3. What is meant by Solomon, Jedidiah?
4. What was the issue of the war with the Ammonites?

REFERENCES.

V. 6. Exod. xxii, 1; v. 13. Rom. iv., 7; v. 14. Rom. ii, 24; v. 23. Job vii, 10; v. 26. 1 Chron., xx, 1; v. 30. 1 Chron. xx, 2.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANALYSIS.

Amnon's pretence of sickness. His outrage on Tamar. Absalom's revenge and flight. David's distress when the tidings were brought to him.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. Tamar and Absalom were the children of Maacah, daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. Amnon was the eldest son of David. His mother was Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess.

V. 3. Jonadab was the son of Shimeah, or Shammah (1 Sam. xvi., 9). He had a brother named Jonathan (2 Sam. xxi., 21.) (Page 67.)

V. 4. "Why, O son of the king, art thou so wasted morning by morning?"

V. 5. "Make." In Revised Version, "feign," to "see," to visit in sickness.

V. 8. "Flour" In the Revised Version, "dough."

V. 13. Marriage with half brothers was permitted in patriarchal times. (Gen. xx., 12.)

V. 16. "There is no cause." In Revised Version, "Not so, because this great wrong in putting me forth is worse than," &c.

V. 21. The Septuagint adds the words, "But he would not grieve the soul of Amnon, his son, because he was his first-born." David's indulgent treatment of his sons was a fruitful source of evil.

V. 22. "Neither good nor bad."—Does this mean "not a single word of any kind," his silence indicating deadly hatred and revenge, or that, in order to quiet

Amnon's suspicion, no allusion was made to this particular matter? We prefer the latter idea, as being more consistent with David's permission to Amnon to go to the festival at Baal-hazor.

V. 23. "**Baal-hazor,**" now, probably, *Tell Asur*, five miles north-east of Bethel. (Page 69.)

V. 25. "**Chargeable.**" In Revised Version, "burdensome."

V. 29. "**Mules**" were generally used for riding at this time by persons of distinction. (1 Kings i., 33, 38.)

V. 31. "**Tare.**" In Revised Version, "rent."

V. 34. Absalom had committed wilful murder, and could not therefore avail himself of one of the cities of refuge. So he fled to his grandfather's at Geshur.

V. 39. This verse, literally translated, would run, "This restrained David from going out to Absalom (or, against Absalom), for he had consoled," &c. Seeing David refused to see Absalom for two years after his return from exile, there is not much evidence that he longed earnestly for his recall.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Give a short account of the lives of Amnon and Absalom.
2. Explain "chargeable," "a garment of divers colours," "neither good nor bad."

REFERENCES.

V. 18. Ps. xlv., 14; v. 37. 2 Sam. ii., 3.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANALYSIS.

Joab's device to procure the recall of Absalom. Absalom's return to Jerusalem. Absalom's personal appearance and family. His reconciliation to David.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. "King's heart towards Absalom." This verse, like the preceding, admits of widely different explanations. Whether the king yearned for his son, or, from being indifferent, now really desired reconciliation, or still remained opposed to him and was averse to his recall from exile, cannot be determined. What need was there for Joab's subtle scheme if David desired Absalom's recall? We accept, though doubtfully, the rendering of the Authorised Version, which goes on the supposition that political and judicial reasons prevented David from yielding to the dictates of partiality and affection.

V. 2. "Tekoah," now Tekûa, a town situated on a hill about five miles south of Bethlehem. Ira, one of David's "mighty men," was born there. (2 Sam. xxiii, 26.) Rehoboam fortified it against invasion (2 Chron. xi, 6), and it was the birthplace of the prophet Amos (Amos i, 1). As Bethlehem was also Joab's native place, he would know this woman as bold, shrewd, and adroit. Probably the acted parable (like that in 1 Kings xx, 35-43), while so framed as to excite the King's feelings of compassion and affection and afford a public reason for the recall of Absalom, may have had its foundation in fact, the woman being selected because her circumstances closely resembled those which Joab wished

to represent. Her age and widow's garb, her mournful tale and earnest manner, combined to move powerfully the heart of the King. (Page 71.)

V. 4. "**Spake . . . and said**" should be "**came . . . and said.**" She "**fell on her face,**" this attitude, even to the extent of touching the ground with the forehead, being customary in Oriental countries when petitions are presented.

V. 7. While the relatives demanded blood-revenge in accordance with the Mosaic law (Numbers xxxv., 19; Deut. xix., 12, 13)—they were actuated by covetousness, and a desire to share the inheritance among themselves. "**Quench my coal,**" referring to the extinction of her family. By the precarious remains of live coal left amongst the embers light and comfort can be regained. The pardon of her son will rekindle her hopes of posterity.

V. 8. The homicide was committed in the heat of conflict; it was not premeditated murder. It was therefore in the power of the King to grant a free pardon.

V. 9. "If it be wrong not to carry out the blood-avenging, if not bringing the offender to punishment reflects on the administration of justice in the land, let me and my family bear the blame and the King and his throne be guiltless."

V. 11. The similitude was not too plain, lest the King should discern the intention of the woman before he had granted the pardon desired. But having brought the King to say definitely that no one should further molest her or demand her son for blood-revenge, and having obtained the royal oath to this effect, she proceeds to make pointed reference to David's relation to Absalom, apparently quite incidentally arguing from the case of her own son to that of Absalom.

V. 13. David's hostility against Absalom, the heir to the throne, was represented as being directed "against the people of God." "For the King doth speak," &c., *lit.*, "for in speaking this word the King is as a faulty man." The promise of protection for her son condemns his own conduct towards Absalom. "If there can be an exception to the general rule of punishment for murder, surely the King's own son should be forgiven, seeing there are the strongest reasons for it. If at the instance of a poor widow you are willing to forgive her son, is it consistent to refuse forgiveness to Absalom, whose restoration the whole nation is demanding?"

V. 14. "When we die it is as water which, when poured upon the ground, cannot be gathered up again; and, sooner or later, we must all die" (whether the woman here alludes to Amnon, Absalom, or David cannot be determined—probably to Amnon. "He is dead and cannot be recalled"); "but God does not take away life," even when, as in the case of the King himself, death is deserved for adultery and murder; "He (*velo yissa Elohim nephesh*) wills not the destruction of the soul; He spares and devises plans to bring the guilty to repentance and restoration. As His representative, should you not imitate Him in mercy as well as in justice, that the banished one be not always banished?"

V. 15. Having lodged a sharp thorn in David's heart, and not wishing to be too personal, she artfully returns to her own story.

V. 16. "The inheritance of God," *i.e.*, the nation of Israel. The death of her son would be excision from the Lord's people.

V. 17. "Let, I pray thee, the word of my lord the king be prompt, comforting (favourable), and assured; for he is

God's messenger and representative to hear with patience, and decide with justice and wisdom all manner of petitions." There is a skilful and striking mingling of flattery and boldness in the woman's discourse.

V. 20. Jacob had arranged this description so as, in Revised Version, "to change the face of the matter," *i.e.*, alter the aspect of the king's relations to his son, and effect a reconciliation. (Page 74.)

V. 26. The American Revisers read "And when he cut the hair of . . . he cut it; because it was . . . he cut it," which certainly gives better English. "**Two hundred shekels.**" The exact weight of the shekel is not known; it is supposed that two hundred would weigh about six pounds. The Nazarites wore long hair. (Numb. vi., 15.)

V. 32. Absalom's message to his father contained (*a*) a reproach for sending for him and yet not receiving him; (*b*) a repudiation of the indulgence shown in his recall; (*c*) a defiant challenge to prove that he was guilty of any crime which deserved such treatment.

V. 33. The obeisance of Absalom did not manifest penitence—it was the usual homage paid to the King.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Narrate the conversation between David and the woman of Tekoah. Explain the metaphors used.
2. How would you characterize the conduct of Absalom, and the conduct of his father respecting him?

REFERENCES.

- V. 7. Numb. xxxv., 19; v. 14. Job xxxiv., 15; v. 15. Josh. xx. 3; v. 30. Luke xv., 20.

CHAPTER XV.

ANALYSIS.

Absalom's conspiracy. The means adopted to seduce the people from their allegiance. David's flight from Jerusalem. The friendship of Ittai. Zadok and Abiathar sent back with the Ark. David's distress. Hushai sent to defeat Ahithophel.

CRITICAL NOTES.

Absalom was bold, ambitious, revengeful, vain of his personal accomplishments, and popular with the people on account of his personal attractions, plausible language, and gracious manner. Fearing his succession might be set aside, he now laid plans for a widespread revolt. He was of royal birth on the side both of father and of mother, and would despise Solomon on account of his mean birth on the mother's side, and his tender years.

V. 2. It was from the custom which prevailed in Eastern countries of monarchs sitting by a city gate to transact business, that the government of the Sultan in Turkey is called the "Sublime Porte," *i.e.*, the high gate, in allusion to the principal gate of the palace at Constantinople. "Controversy," suit or cause, as in verse 4.

V. 3. Absalom used the demagogue's arts, the patriot's arguments, and the king's prerogatives. He flattered the people, brought charges against the rulers, and decided the cases. So, in "King Richard II.," Bolingbroke is described by Shakespeare as courting the people:—

“He seemed to dive into their hearts
 With humble and familiar courtesy ;
 What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
 Wooing from craftsmen with the craft of smiles.”

V. 5. Absalom's fraternization was detestable, but it gained its end. *Solicitabat corda*, he deceived the hearts of the people; “and made them his own,” as the Septuagint has it. (Page 76.)

V. 7. “**Forty**,” is almost universally reckoned a corrupt reading. It should either be “four,” according to Josephus, or, according to two Hebrew MSS., “forty days.”

V. 8. “**Geshur**” was not in Syria but in the south of Canaan, near Edom; Syria is probably a transcriber's error.

V. 11. “Called.” In Revised Version, “invited.”

V. 12. **Giloh** was in the south of Hebron (Josh. xv., 51). The parallel between the treachery and suicide of Ahithophel and the treachery and suicide of Judas is very remarkable. (Ps. xli., 9; John xiii., 18).

V. 19. The Jews say that **Ittai** was the son of Achish, king of Gath, who was banished from his father's court on account of his attachment to David, and who, with six hundred men, embraced the Jewish religion and joined the service of the king. It is probable, however, that these six hundred Gittites were a different company from the six hundred Gittites, or Gibborim, mentioned in the preceding verse, who formed the king's bodyguard, and were composed of attached and well-tried warriors.

V. 21. Ittai's answer expresses unconditional devotion and fidelity for life and death. Compare Ruth's answer to her mother-in-law. (Ruth i., 16, 17.)

V. 23. Compare John xviii, 1, &c. The ravine of Kidron was on the east of Jerusalem, between the city and Mount Olivet. This sorrowful period in David's life was fruitful of

some most beautiful Psalms. The references in many cases are doubtful, and we cannot be quite certain of the date of composition, but the following with more or less probability have been assigned to this period: Psalms iii., iv., xxvi., xxvii., xxviii., xli., lv., lxii., lxix., cix., and cxliii.

V. 27. “**A seer,**” *i.e.*, a *see-er* or wise observer, not as usually, a prophet.

V. 28. “**The plain of the wilderness.**” In Revised Version, “the fords of the wilderness;” “**certify me,**” *i.e.*, send me certain information how matters are going in the city.

V. 30. “**The ascent of Olivet**” (Acts i., 12), *lit.*, the height of the olive trees, which rises on the east of Jerusalem above the Kidron valley, screening the city from the desert country beyond. (Page 79.)

V. 32. The road leading to Bahurim (2 Sam. iii., 16) seems to have been followed, instead of the southern road to Jericho. The Revised Version reads, “the top of the ascent where God was worshipped,” where was one of the high places or sanctuaries, but it is not clear that David himself had worshipped there. “**Archite,**” probably from being a native of Erik in Ephraim.

V. 34. Hushai’s statements were more politic than truthful. But such questionable actions, though involving deliberate falsehood and treachery, have been common in almost every age. Sir Samuel Morland, Secretary of State to Cromwell, in describing his betrayal of his master, says, “I called to remembrance Hushai’s behaviour towards Absalom, which I found not at all blamed in Holy Writ, and yet his was a larger step than mine.” He forgot that actions are frequently described historically in the Bible without either condemnation or commendation being expressed. (Page 80.)

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What methods did Absalom adopt to gain the affections of the people?
2. Who were Ittai, Ahithophel, Zadok, Jonathan, Ahimaaz, and the Gittites?
3. Trace the various incidents of David's flight.
4. How was Ahithophel's counsel frustrated?

REFERENCES.

V. 6, Rom. xvi., 18; v. 12, Psalms xli., 9; v. 37, 1 Chron. xxvii., 33

CHAPTER XVI.

ANALYSIS.

David met by Ziba and cursed by Shimei. Hushai offers his services to Absalom. Ahithophel's counsel.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. Ziba brought 200 cakes, 100 clusters of raisins, 100 of summer fruits, *i.e.* cucumbers, melons, or fig-cakes, and a skin of wine. He foresaw the result of the rebellion, and wished to secure the King's favour.

V. 4. Mephibosheth was innocent and loyal; Ziba was a traitor and calumniator. David should have reflected, and made enquiries, before so hastily believing the story of Ziba, and acting unjustly towards Mephibosheth. "I humbly beseech," &c. In Revised Version, "I do obeisance; let me find favour," &c.

V. 5. Regarding Shimei, see chap. xix., 16-23, and 1 Kings ii., 8, 9. (Page 81.)

V. 7. "Begone, begone, thou man of blood"—out from the kingdom into exile. So Charles Stuart was called by Cromwell's army, "that man of blood,—to account for the blood he had shed and the mischief he had done to the utmost against the Lord's cause and people in this poor nation."

V. 8. "Taken to thy mischief." In Revised Version, "taken in thine own mischief."

V. 9. Abishai wished to slay Saul (1 Sam. xxvi., 8) and to refuse Shimei's suit for pardon (2 Sam. xix., 21). He was like John and James on a certain occasion. (Luke ix., 54.) David answered as Christ did afterwards to Peter. (John xviii., 11.)

V. 10. "What have I to do with you?" *i.e.*, What have we in common? leave me alone," and then, as in Revised Version, "Because he curseth and because the Lord hath said." God permitted this cursing for the King's chastisement and humiliation. Charles Wesley thus paraphrases David's patience and answer:—

"Pure from the blood of Saul, in vain
He dares not to the charge reply :
Uriah's doth the charge maintain,
Uriah's doth against him cry !
Let Shimei curse: the rod he bears
For sins which mercy had forgiven ;
And in the wrongs of man reverts
The awful righteousness of heaven
Lord, I adore Thy righteous will
Through every instrument of ill
My Father's goodness see :
Accept the complicated wrong
Of Shimei's hand, and Shimei's tongue,
As kind rebukes from Thee."

God is sometimes said to do what He permits to be done, to command what He does not forbid. (Gen. xlv., 5 ; Acts ii., 23.)

V. 14. "Came weary."—The Revised Version suggests in the margin that this may refer to a place, "came to Ayêphim."

V. 16. "God save the king," *lit.*, "let the king live": *vivat rex.* (Page 77.)

V. 22. The punishment of such an atrocious sin as Absalom committed was death (Lev. xx., 11). His open defiance of the Divine law shows the character of the young man. He was profligate and reckless, to every good word and work reprobate. The literal fulfilment of Nathan's prediction is remarkable. (2 Sam. xii., 11.)

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Describe the conduct of Ziba and Shimei as narrated in this chapter.
2. Why did not David permit Abishai to avenge the insult offered to him?

REFERENCES.

V. 5. 1 Kings; ii., 8; v. 9. Exod. xxii., 28; v. 12. Ps. xxv., 18.

CHAPTER XVII.

ANALYSIS.

Ahithophel's counsel. Hushai defeats it. Word sent to David. Suicide of Ahitophel.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. Twelve thousand troops going against David in his totally unprepared state could easily have destroyed his

little army. If only David were secured, the submission of all would follow.

V. 7. "The counsel . . . is not good at this time. In Revised Version, "The counsel . . . this time is not good," *i.e.*, it is not so wise and prudent as it usually is.

V. 8. "A bear robbed of her whelps," in allusion to the remarkable maternal affection of the bear and her well-known ferocity when deprived of her cubs.

V. 13. Bring ropes to that city," *chabalim*—hence our English word "cable." We have here probably an exaggerated reference to a mode actually adopted in the siege of towns. Hooks or cranes were thrown upon the walls or battlements, with which, by means of attached ropes, they were sometimes pulled down piecemeal into the surrounding trench.

V. 17. "Enrogel," now called "The fountain of the Virgin," is in the valley of the Kidron and just outside the city on the south-east side. It was so named from *ein*, a well, and *regel*, the foot, because at that well fullers were accustomed to tread clothes with their feet. "**A wench,"** *shipchah*, a maid-servant. This 17th verse may be a part of Hushai's speech, as the Revised Version in the marginal note suggests. "Now Jonathan and AhimaaZ stay by Enrogel; so let the maid-servant go and tell them; and let them go and tell King David; for they may not be seen to come into the city."

V. 19. "Spread ground corn." In Revised Version, "Strewed bruised corn."

V. 20. The word *Michal*, translated "**brook,"** occurs nowhere else. It may have been some local name. Similar deceptions as that described were practised by Rahab (Josh. ii., 4) and by Michal. (1 Sam. xix., 12-17.)

V. 23. See Mat. xxvi., 5, and Acts i., 18. We have here the first deliberate suicide on record.

V. 25. **Joab** and **Amasa** were sisters' children, and both nephews of David. Who "**Nahash**" was, is not known. 1 Chron. ii., 16, informs us that Zeruah and Abigail were sisters of Jesse's sons—but possibly by a former husband of Jesse's wife, so that they would be only step-sisters to David.

V. 27. **Shobi** was probably a brother of Hanun (2 Sam. x., 1). **Machir**, a man of wealth and position, who had protected Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ix., 4). **Barzillai**. (See 2 Sam. xix., 31-40; Nehem. vii., 63.)

V. 28. "**Beds**," *i.e.*, skins of beasts, mats, and carpets. "**Basons**," *saphath*, wooden bowls to knead bread in and to eat out of. "**Earthen vessels**," *keeley yotser*, clay or metallic vessels for cooking in. "**Flour**," in Revised Version, "meal." "**Cheese of kine**," rather, perhaps, fat calves. These things were a very timely supply for David and his men.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Explain the metaphors in the speech of Hushai, the Archite.
2. What do you know of Ahithophel, Shobi, Machir, Barzillai, and Ahimaaz?

REFERENCES.

- V. 2. Deut. xxv., 18; v. 23. Matt. xxvii., 5; v. 25. 1 Chron. ii., 16; v. 27. 2 Sam. ix., 4; xii., 29, and 1 Kings ii., 7.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANALYSIS.

David reviews and arranges his troops. He gives command to spare Absalom. Absalom is defeated, killed, and buried. The distress of David when the tidings reach him.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. Some weeks probably elapsed before the army of David mustered and was organised. The military divisions corresponded originally to the civil divisions instituted by Moses. (Numb. xxxi., 14.)

V. 3. Omit "now." The particle *ata*, "now," has evidently been mistaken for the pronoun *ata*, "thou." The Hebrew text has "for now are there ten thousand such as we," *i.e.* they were now ten thousand strong, and did not require the presence of the King to inspire and encourage. In Revised Version, "better that thou be ready to succour us"—by sending reinforcements, and securing their retreat in case of a defeat.

V. 6. The wood or forest of **Ephraim**, was probably some portion of the great forest of Gilead on the east of the Jordan near Mahanaim, and was so called either because the Ephraimites had pasture grounds there, or from its connection with the slaughter of the Ephraimites by Jephthah. (Judges xii., 6.) (Page 87.)

V. 8. "The wood devoured." Whether this means that in the pursuit through the wood more were slain than

in actual battle, or, that the greater number who fell perished in the pits and morasses of the forest, or, as the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic Versions state, that they were devoured by wild beasts in the forest, cannot be determined; but the first is the most probable.

V. 9. Absalom was riding a mule—perhaps as a mark of royalty. (1 Kings i., 33, 38.) It is not likely, as is generally supposed, that Absalom was caught by the hair. It is more likely that his head and neck became wedged between the boughs by the rapid flight of the mule, and that he was unable to disentangle himself. If he wore his helmet in battle his hair could not be entangled.

V. 11. The value of a “**shekel**” at different times is not known. It weighed about half-an-ounce. The girdle or military belt was often highly ornamented and of costly material. Jonathan gave his to David as the highest pledge of friendship (1 Samuel xviii., 4), and as Homer tells us, Ajax for the same reason gave his to Hector.

V. 12. “**Beware,**” &c, in Hebrew, “have a care, whosever ye be, of the young man Absalom.”

V. 13. “**Wouldest have set thyself against me.**” In Revised Version, “wouldest have stood aloof.” It was a bad example to the soldiers when the commander-in-chief disobeyed the King’s order, but Joab was so unscrupulous that he would have left a subordinate to bear the punishment of disobedience without saying a word on his behalf.

V. 14. “**Darts,**” staves, the first weapon that came to hand. Before the man could tell Joab, and Joab could go to the place where Absalom was hanging, a considerable time must have elapsed. After being suspended so long, Absalom was probably already past recovery. If Joab really pierced “**the heart of Absalom,**” he was dead before his

men pierced him. Probably he only thrust the staves "into the midst of the body," leaving his men to give the *coup de grâce*. It was a base, disloyal, and cowardly action in the circumstances, but Absalom well merited death, for the murder of his brother Amnon, for exciting an insurrection in the state, for rebellion against his own father (Deut. xxi., 18, 21), and for his conduct with his father's concubines. (Lev. xviii., 29.) Joab satisfied his private revenge (2 Sam. xiv., 30), and he probably took credit to himself that he had effectually ended the rebellion and so served his country.

V. 17. It was, and still is, customary in the East for passers-by to cast stones on the graves of notorious malefactors. In the present case, casting stones symbolized the stoning which was the penalty of a rebel son, according to the law; the heap of stones was a memorial of the battle and a monument of shame over the rebel's grave. (Josh. vii., 26; viii., 29.) In many parts of Scotland, however, there are cairns, or heaps of stones, which are supposed to mark the burying-place of ancient heroes, and to cast another stone on the cairn was a way of showing admiration and respect. So that heaps of stones may perpetuate the memory of any event, whether good or bad.

V. 18. "The king's dale" is called in Gen. xiv., 17, "the vale of Shaveh." But its situation is now unknown. Josephus refers to a marble pillar about two furlongs from Jerusalem, which was called "**Absalom's pillar**," but which is now known to be a comparatively modern structure—"Absalom's **place**," *lit.*, Absalom's hand, or monument. "Exegi monumentum" (Horace). Absalom's three sons (2 Sam. xiv., 27) must have died young.

V. 21. "Cushi" probably obtained private information

from Joab regarding Absalom's death before it was publicly known. He was a "**Cushite**" or Ethiopian slave, and was sent because his death as the bearer of evil tidings to the King might be supposed to involve no great loss. It cannot, however, be positively known whether Joab refused to permit Ahimaaz to go with the tidings, because, literally, he had "no tidings ready" (v. 22), and did not know what had occurred, or because he wished to spare him the consequences of the king's displeasure.

6. 23. "**The way of the plain**" (*Kikkar*), the floor of the valley through which the Jordan runs.

V. 28. "**Sat between the two gates,**" *i.e.*, in the space between the inner and outer gates of the city gateway of Mahanaim. This was the king's headquarters.

V. 29. Is there peace to the young man Absalom? This was the utmost of the King's solitudes and well merited the reproof of Joab (2 Sam. xix., 5).

V. 33. This pathetic lamentation was "*Beni, Abshalom, beni! beni, Abshalom! Mi yitten mulhi ani tachteicha, Abshalom, beni! beni!*"

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. How did David arrange his forces, and under whose command?
2. Give a sketch of Absalom's life? Where and how did he die?
3. How were the tidings of Absalom's death carried to David?
4. Write out his words of bitter grief on the occasion.

REFERENCES.

V. 6, Josh. xvii., 18; Gen. xiv., 17.

CHAPTER XIX.

ANALYSIS.

Joab reproves David for his grief. Negotiations for David's restoration. Amasa to be captain instead of Joab. The King, returning, is met by representatives of Judah at Gilgal, by Shimei, by Mephibosheth, and by Barzillai. Contention between the men of Judah and the men of Israel.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 2. "**Victory**," *lit.*, salvation, deliverance from enemies.

V. 3. Instead of entering as a victorious host, they crept in unobserved in small groups, and as disgraced fugitives. (Page 91.)

V. 4. "**Covered his face**," a sign of extreme grief or shame; hence Isa. liii., 3, "he was as one hiding his face from us."

V. 5. "**Shamed the faces**" = destroyed the hopes.

V. 7. "**Speak comfortably**," *i.e.*, in a friendly and encouraging manner. "**Will not tarry one**," not a threat, but the indubitable result of the dissatisfaction in the army. It means, "will not stay." In Joab's address we discern intellectual acuteness and sound sense, but, at the same time, rudeness, hard-heartedness, resentment, and cruelty. The reproof was just, and the counsel wise, but the words were unnecessarily bitter, and the manner rough. Joab was a brave soldier, but a bad man, and a dangerous subject.

V. 8. "**Sat in the gate**," where causes were heard, and justice administered. "**For Israel**:" in Revised Version, "Now Israel," and beginning a new paragraph.

V. 9. "**Were at strife**," were disputing, casting reproaches at one another for their delay in bringing back

the King. The remembrance of David's heroic deeds in the past, and his present misfortunes and privations, awakened sympathy and rekindled loyalty. They felt they had not treated him with justice, far less kindness. (Page 92.)

V. 10. "Whom we anointed." This is the only reference to the anointing of Absalom.

V. 13. "Art thou not my bone and my flesh?" omitting the "of." Amasa was David's nephew. The phrase expresses close relationship in virtue of common descent.

V. 14. "Bowed the heart." Policy and magnanimity succeeded in melting the hearts of the people as one heart.

V. 15. "Gilgal," between Jericho and the Jordan, was the rendezvous for the representatives of Judah, who were sent to escort the King back to Jerusalem. Various occurrences at the crossing of the Jordan and on the way back are related.

V. 16. Shimei (2 Sam. xvi., 5) and **Ziba** (2 Sam. xvi., 3), had both guilty consciences. The former wished to obtain forgiveness for his insulting rudeness, and the latter wished to ward off the effect of the counter statements of Mephibosheth. Hence their display of special zeal in the King's recall. Ziba and his fifteen sons and twenty servants dashed impetuously into the river and crossed it, "went through the Jordan in presence of the King," as the Revised Version has it. (Page 94.)

V. 20. "The House of Joseph." The ten tribes as distinguished from Judah. Joseph inherited a double portion (Deut. xxi., 17,) by Jacob's adoption of his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, and these two tribes are frequently counted as one. The power of Ephraim (Gen. xlviii., 5, ;

Ps. lxxviii., 67, 68,) and the jealousy between that tribe and the tribe of Judah, are frequently alluded to. The predominant power of Ephraim led to the name "the house of Joseph" being given to the ten tribes, and to their prominence on many occasions.

V. 21. To "**curse**" the "**Lord's anointed**" was almost as heinous a sin as cursing the Lord Himself. (Exod. xxii., 28.)

V. 22. "**Adversaries,**" *Satan*, not so much by placing obstacles in his way, and opposing his true interests, as by drawing him away to evil.

V. 23. "**The king sware.**" But see his charge to Solomon. (1 Kings ii., 8.)

V. 25. "**When he was come to Jerusalem** to meet the king," implying that the meeting was in Jerusalem. The marginal reference of the Revised Version suggests the more probable rendering, "when Jerusalem" (*i.e.*, the inhabitants of Jerusalem) "was come to meet the king."

V. 27. "**As an angel of God,**" *i.e.*, wise to penetrate motives and discover hypocrisy.

V. 37. "**Chimham**" (1 Kings ii., 8). He and his brothers were specially recommended to Solomon's regard. And see Jer. xli., 17. Barzillai knew that "not many days of the years of his life remained," but he wisely availed himself of the King's kind offer on behalf of his son. (Page 95.)

V. 38. "**Whatsoever . . . require,**" &c. = whatever you impose I will grant.

V. 41. "**Stolen thee away,**" *i.e.*, brought thee home without our knowledge.

V. 42. "We did not do it from any selfish motive, but from loyal attachment to our king. We have not been fed by the royal bounty."

V. 43. It was natural at this crisis for Ephraim, speaking on behalf of the northern tribes, to assert a proportional claim. "We are ten tribes to one, and should have been consulted. We are the firstborn rather than ye," as the Septuagint has it. "Why, then, do you slight us, seeing we were the first to speak of bringing back the king?" The feeling of jealousy and bitterness here manifested subsequently led to the division of the nation into two kingdoms. (Page 96.)

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Mention the different persons or companies who met the King on his way back to Jerusalem.
2. What led to the controversy between the men of Israel and the men of Judah?
3. Who were Chimham, Barzillai, and Amasa?
4. Explain the phrases "sat in the gate," "shamed the faces," "bowed the heart;" and the word "adversaries," and tell the connection in which they are used.

REFERENCES.

V. 16. 1 Kings ii., 8; v. 21. Exod. xxii., 28; v. 35. Ps. xc., 10.

CHAPTER XX.

ANALYSIS.

The insurrection of Sheba. Amasa assembles the men of Judah. Abishai pursues Sheba. Joab murders Amasa. Death of Sheba. David's chief officers.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. Sheba must have been a man of considerable influence to be able to raise such an insurrection, but we

know nothing farther of him than that he traced his descent to Becher, the second son of Benjamin (Gen. xlvi., 21). "We of Israel are under no obligation to the house of David. We have nothing in common with him. To your tents. Depart to your homes." The latter phrase is an echo from the old tent-life in the wilderness (2 Sam. xviii., 17). But while a call to disperse and return home, it was also an invitation to join in rebellion. (1 Kings xii., 16.)

V. 2. "Clave unto their king," adhered to him, crowded more closely around him.

V. 3. After what had happened, David could neither retain them nor divorce them, so he maintained them apart, "in the widowhood of life," *i.e.*, during their lifetime.

V. 5. What made the task so difficult is not known. The people distrusted Amasa, or were half-hearted about David's restoration. Treacherous designs on the part of Amasa, and his natural lack of vigour, have also been assigned for the delay.

V. 6. "Escape" out of our sight, *lit.*, "take away our view."

V. 7. The royal bodyguard, the 600 Gibborim or mighty men, and Joab's immediate military followers, formed the troops at the King's disposal.

V. 8. "Gibeon" was an isolated rock of considerable size to the north-west of Jerusalem. Amasa had gone northwards from Judah into Benjamin and met the troops advancing to the north-west as he was returning.

"**And Joab's garment,**" &c. In Revised Version, "And Joab was girded with his apparel of war that he had put on," *i.e.*, his military garment, over which he had put the sword-girdle. The sword seemed to fall out so accidentally that no suspicion was excited when he lifted it up

and held it in his left hand. The murder of Amasa was a cleverly contrived and malicious act, the result of jealousy and desire of revenge. (Page 97.)

V. 10. “**The fifth rib,**” *chomesh*, any part of the abdominal regions. Hence Septuagint, “the groin;” the Targum, “the right side of the thigh.” The stroke was mortal—he did not require to repeat it; and then, without bestowing a moment’s notice on Amasa struggling in the agonies of death, he rushed on after Sheba.

V. 11. “**Favoureth Joab.**” “Joab is the only commander; let those who are loyal follow him.”

V. 14. “**Abel,**” *i.e.*, meadow, was near Beth-Maachah, in the tribe of Naphtali, and on the confines of Syria. “**Berites,**” some people in the north of Palestine, otherwise unknown. Perhaps, however, it should be as in the Septuagint and Vulgate, “and all the chosen men were gathered together,” *i.e.*, the young men from the extreme north joined those who assembled at Gibeon, and formed a large and united army under Joab.

V. 15. “A bank,” *sollah*. This may mean a battering engine, or a tower overlooking the walls. (2 Kings xix., 32.)

V. 18. “**Abel**” was probably famed for the wisdom of its inhabitants, and parties who had disputes appealed to their judgment—hence the proverb. The woman hints that a city of such reputation should not have been attacked, and its peaceable inhabitants besieged, before negotiations had been attempted to effect a settlement.

V. 19. The woman, speaking on behalf of the city, says she is loyal and peaceable, and this is a very metropolis, one of the chief cities of Israel. “**Swallow up the inheritance,**” *i.e.*, destroy the city belonging to the people whom the Lord had chosen.

V. 23. A similar list is given in 2 Sam. viii., 16-18, with such changes as had occurred between the establishment of the kingdom under David and his restoration.

V. 24. Joab retained his post. The King dared not call him to account for his murders without exposing himself and endangering the safety of the state. **Benaiah** was still captain of the king's bodyguard; **Adoram** (probably Adoniram, 1 Kings v., 14.) was now overseer of public works, and superintendent of the forced levies employed in them; Jehoshaphat, Zadok, and Abiathar still held their former positions; but **Sheva** was now Secretary of State, (unless this be another name for Seraiah,) and **Ira** was *Cohen le David*, domestic chaplain or confidential adviser of the King. (It is difficult to say whether this post was civil or ecclesiastical.)

The last years of David's life are veiled in almost complete silence, but they were probably years of peace and prosperity. A few interesting glimpses are given, especially of the closing scenes. Great quantities of gold, silver, cedar wood, stones, pearls and other materials required for the building and decoration of the Temple, were collected, and the wealthy Israelites were inspired by the King's example to contribute largely of their liberality for this purpose. (1 Chron. xxii., 1-4; xxix., 6-9.)

The dark clouds of David's life had broken away, and his sun was moving towards its setting in a clear heaven. At the very close, one short break disturbed the calm. It was occasioned by the attempt of Adonijah, who had been born in Hebron and who was considered the heir to the throne, to forestall Solomon, David's son by Bathsheba, to whom the succession had been promised. Adonijah resembled Absalom in personal attractions, in vanity and in ambition,

and his claims were supported by Joab, Abiathar, the king's guards, the captains of the army of Judah, and the sons of David as a body. But the counsels and energies of Zadok, Benaiah, Nathan, and others, defeated the hopes of Adonijah. By royal command, Solomon was publicly, and amid great rejoicing, proclaimed King, anointed with holy oil from the tabernacle at Gibeon, and seated on his father's throne. (1 Kings i.) David collected his failing energies for the purpose of addressing Solomon and the assembled tribes. He solemnly charged the people to support his son with the utmost zeal in the erection of the Temple; reminded Solomon in very touching terms of his duties; enjoined him to lead a holy life, as the only glory and safeguard of his throne, and pronounced upon all the priestly benediction in words of great tenderness and beauty. (1 Chron. xxviii, xxix.) Full plans of the Temple buildings, and the whole of the treasures which had been amassed for their construction, were formally handed over to his son. At the great coronation feast, at which all the representatives of the nation were present, Solomon was hailed as the king of the people's choice, and anointed a second time. Then the end of the long reign of forty years at length arrived, and David, "full of days, riches, and honour," "slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David." His arms, spears, shields of battle, and swords, including, doubtless, that of Goliath, were preserved for ages in the Temple as the sacred memorials of a great and good king, and of an era of national triumph and prosperity; and his sepulchre remained intact for many generations, guarded with jealous care and almost worshipped with superstitious reverence (Acts ii., 29) by his honoured and grateful countrymen. Who knows but that the very cave in which

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the dust of the patriarch David has lain buried for so many ages, and which the devastations of Hadrian's Roman soldiers have only covered over, may not soon be unveiled through the vigorous labours of modern exploration? Meanwhile, and more especially, it becomes us to imitate him who "served his own generation by the will of God." (Acts xiii., 36.)

[SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTERS.]

CHAPTER XXI.

ANALYSIS.

The three years' Famine. The execution of Saul's sons. Burial of the remains of Saul and his sons. Heroic exploits in the Philistine wars.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. "Then there was."—Rather, "and there was," no chronological connection with the foregoing narrative being intended. It has been thought that this event occurred after David had received tidings of Mephibosheth, and had taken him to his own table. (2 Sam. ix.) It is, however, impossible to determine the date. The famine was almost certainly the consequence of a failure in the winter rains on which both cornfields and pasturage depend. (1 Kings xviii., 2; Joel i., 8-20.) "**Inquired of the Lord.**"—In Revised Version, "sought the face of the Lord," to ascertain the cause of the judgment.

V. 2. Saul had shed the innocent blood of the Gibeonites but at what time we have no means of knowing. Unex-

piated blood defiled the land and called down vengeance. (Numb. xxxv., 33, 34.)

V. 2. "The Amorites." The Gibeonites were Hivites (Josh. ix., 3), and not Amorites, but this last name is frequently applied to the Canaanites in general (Gen. xv., 16), though it properly belongs only to those who had inhabited the mountainous country of Judah and Ephraim.

V. 3. "The atonement."—*i.e.* satisfaction, by which to appease the Lord's anger. The "atonement" is a covering, which hides the offence from the eyes of the offended party, and makes both at one, "of one mind," as the word means. (Page 100.)

V. 4. "Neither for us shalt thou kill."—In Revised Version, "neither is it for us to put any man to death." Money compensation for murder was forbidden by the Mosaic law. (Numb. xxxv., 31, 32.)

V. 6. "Gibeah of Saul," because that was the home of Saul's house, on which the blood-guiltiness rested. It was therefore the natural scene of the punishment.

V. 8. "Whom she brought up," in Revised Version, "whom she bare." *Yaledah* is the Hebrew word and means "bare." But it was Merab, not Michal, who was married to Adriel (1 Sam. xviii., 19). Either we must make this alteration or adopt the explanation of the Targum, "the five sons of Merab (whom Michal brought up), whom she bare to Adriel." "**The Meholathite**" of Abel—Meholah in Issachar. (1 Kings xix., 16.)

V. 9. "The beginning of barley harvest" was in Judæa in April.

V. 10. "Until water dropped," until the time of the autumnal rains in October. To become the prey of bird or beast was reckoned the depth of ignominy.

V. 12. "**Bethshan**," now Beisân, four miles west of the Jordan. (1 Sam. xxxi., 12.)

V. 14. "**Zelah**." A town of Benjamin. (Joshua xviii., 28.)

V. 15. This and the following verses were probably taken from a history of David's wars drawn up in the form of chronicles. It is evidently a fragment from some such work, and has no connection with the preceding narrative. As the **three** deeds described in the paragraph are attached in 1 Chron. xx., 4-8, to the history of the Ammonite-Syrian war (2 Sam. xii., 26-31), it probably belongs to that period. (Pages 51-54.) "**Went down**" from the high lands of Judah to the low country of Philistia,—the *Shephêlah*, or maritime plain.

V. 16. "**Ishbi-benob**."—*i.e.*, probably, "dweller on a height." He was of the progeny of the race of the giants of Canaan. (Numb. xiii., 22, 28; Joshua xv., 14.) *Ha-râphâh*, the giant, perhaps the proper name of the father of these four giants. Hence in Milton's "Samson Agonistes," *Harapha* of Gath is introduced—

" . . . Of stock renown'd,
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old,
That Kiriathaim held."

"**Three hundred shekels**." About nine pounds. "**A new sword**"—rather, "new armour."

V. 17. "**Quench not the light of Israel**." The lamp is the emblem of guidance, comfort and prosperity. Homer has—"I have neither been a light to Patroclus, nor to his companions, who have been slain by the noble Hector." David's sovereignty was the lamp which God's favour had lighted for the well-being of His people.

V. 18. The site of **Tob** is unknown, unless it be Gath, as in Septuagint, or Gezer, as in Chronicles. "**Sibbechai**," one of David's heroes (1 Chron. xi., 29), general of the eighth

division of the army. (1 Chron. xxvii., 11.) He belonged to **Hushah** in Judah.

V. 19. "**Elhanan**" (1 Chron. xx., 5) slew a giant named Goliath, like that other whom David slew. "**Brother of**" should be omitted. It is conjecturally inserted from the First Book of Chronicles.

V. 21. Compare with this the account of the Goliath mentioned in 1 Sam. xvii. We cannot profess to explain many of the difficulties presented in this chapter. The text appears to have been corrupted, perhaps through being carelessly transcribed. It is a strange thing that a famine of three years duration is not alluded to in the Books of Chronicles or Kings; that there is no reference elsewhere to Saul's attempt to exterminate the Gibeonites, which would have been an atrocious breach of good faith; and to the remarkable incidents connected therewith. That the heathen Gibeonites should bless the inheritance of the Lord; that seven innocent men should be hanged for a crime of their father, committed many years before, and that this should be a sacrifice required by God and well pleasing to him; that Rizpah should watch the bodies day and night for six months; that the bodies should be allowed to hang so long, breeding pestilence, and in open violation of the Divine law (Deut. xxi., 22, 23);—these, and other difficulties which naturally present themselves, awaken doubt whether there is entire freedom from textual corruption in this chapter of Holy Scripture. Michal never was the wife of Adriel and never had children; David slew Goliath and not Elhanan. These difficulties may be modified but they cannot be altogether removed.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Give an account of the famine mentioned in this chapter, its cause, consequences, and removal.

2. What do you know of the Gibeonites, of Jonathan, and of Ishbi-benob?

3. What is meant by atonement?

4. Mention some of the difficulties presented in this chapter.

REFERENCES.

V. 2. Josh. ix, 3-27; v. 6. 1 Sam. x., 24; v. 7. 1 Sam. xviii., 3; v. 12. 1 Sam. xxxi., 9-13; v. 17. Ps. cxxxii., 17; v. 18. 1 Chron. xx., 4-8.

CHAPTER XXII.

ANALYSIS.

David's Psalm of Praise for deliverance and other mercies: Invocation; cry for help in time of great peril and distress; the manifestation of Jehovah for the discomfiture of his enemies; deliverance obtained; his reward for integrity of life; the principle of the Divine Government; God's faithfulness attested by the Psalmist's experience; Jehovah praised as the Giver of victory; the Psalmist's enemies destroyed and his kingdom established; concluding doxology.

CRITICAL NOTES.

This beautiful hymn is substantially identical with Ps. xviii. It is difficult to say how the variations are to be accounted for, but the probability is that we have here the form in which the monarch sung it in his closet as a personal outburst of gratitude to God, while in the Psalter we have it revised and adapted to public worship, for the general use of the tribes.

It was probably written during the period of peace mentioned in chapter vii., 1, after the visit of Nathan with the message of perpetual sovereignty (apparently referred to in verse 51), but before the sins and sorrows of the Psalmist's later life. (Page 106.)

V. 1. The mention of **Saul** in the title does not indicate that the Psalm was composed in David's early life, but rather that, though many years had passed since his persecution by the son of Kish, the deliverances he then experienced had not faded from his memory, but still stood out before him as the greatest mercies he had ever received. Besides, the deliverance from Saul's power raised him to the throne of Israel.

V. 2. The Revised Version has "my deliverer, **even mine.**" There is a believing appropriation of God as his own God, defender and deliverer.

V. 3. The Psalmist endeavours to describe, from many sides, what God had been to him; and the figures under which God's help is presented are numerous and suggestive. God had been a protection from every kind of peril; a *selâ*, a **rock-cleft** where he could hide; a **fortress**, strong and safe, fortified by nature and art, which no enemy could reach; his *eli*, his strong God; his *tsuri*, inexhaustible source of goodness and strength; his buckler of defence; his horn of power and victory; &c.

Vs. 5 and 6. In Revised Version—

For the waves of death compassed me,
The floods of ungodliness made me afraid.
The cords of Sheol were round about me;
The snares of Death came upon me.

V. 8. The description of Jehovah's descent to the Psalmist's help is very sublime. It is borrowed probably

from the account of His appearance at Sinai (Exod. xix., 16-18). The Monarch of heaven is represented as angry; he prepares for war and his whole kingdom is in commotion. Universal nature feels the effects of His displeasure, and all its elements surround him as His attendants and the ministers of His vengeance. (Page 107.) One of the grandest things in the ancient classics is Hesiod's description of Jupiter fighting against the Titans, but it falls infinitely short of the Psalmist's description of the Divine warrior going forth to fight his battles.

8. Then the earth shook and trembled,
The foundations of heaven moved
And were shaken, because he was wroth.
9. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,
And fire out of his mouth devoured:
Coals were kindled by it.
10. He bowed the heavens also, and came down;
And thick darkness was under his feet.
11. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly:
Yea, he was seen upon the wings of the wind.
12. And he made darkness pavilions round about him;
Gathering of waters, thick clouds of the skies.
13. At the brightness before him
Coals of fire were kindled.
14. The Lord thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered his voice.
15. And he sent out arrows and scattered them;
Lightning, and discomfited them.
16. Then the channels of the sea appeared,
The foundations of the world were laid bare,
By the rebuke of the Lord
At the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

V. 9. "Smoke out of his nostrils." Rather, "into his nostrils a smoke," the nostrils dilated being a sign of angry passion. Out of the dilated nostrils heated breath proceeds.

The bold figure is suggested by the panting and snorting of an angry animal. Martial speaks of *fumantem nasum ursi*, the smoking nostril of an angry bear. "**Fire . . . devoured,**" *i.e.*, consuming fire issued. (Heb. xii., 29.) "**Coals,**" living coals from his mouth burned.

V. 10. God rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm. The **Cherub** is an emblem of the Divine presence, being especially employed to support the chariot of the Almighty when riding through the firmament of heaven. Hence Milton—

Forth rushed with whirlwind sound
The chariot of paternal Deity;
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
Itself instinct with spirit, but conveyed
By four cherubic shapes.

Cherubim guarded the gates of Paradise (Gen. iii., 24); with outstretched wings they are represented as covering the Ark of testimony, where God was specially present; and they frequently appear as the attendants of God. (Ezek. i., Isa. vi., Rev. iv.) The very words of the Hebrew seem to convey the sound of the rushing of the wind. "*Waiyede hhal canphey ruach*" (pronounced **ruagh**, Scotticè).

On cherub and on cherubim
Full royally he rode;
And on the wings of mighty winds
Came flying all abroad.

V. 12. God dwells in the thick **darkness**. (Deut. iv., 11, xvii., 2.) But bright lightning flashes burst forth from the dense lowering cloud. The storm followed the flash and the thunder peal. Thunder is the voice of God. (Job xxxvii., 2-5.)

V. 14. Here again the Hebrew words seem to give the very sound of the bursting and crashing of the thunder.

V. 16. See Exodus xv., 8; Ps. civ., 7; cvi., 9.

V. 17. Here begins the account of the **deliverance**. David's enemies were numerous, powerful, malicious, and cruel, but God saved him.

V. 19. "**They prevented me,**" *lit.* came upon me, met me with hostile intention. Hence Milton—

Half way he met

His daring foe, at this prevention more incens'd.

V. 20. Instead of being in **straits** and cooped up in covers, David was "brought forth into a **large place.**"

V. 21. There is a retributive element in God's moral government (Matt. vii, 2). In his public administration, so far as his subjects and enemies were concerned, David's conduct was distinguished by integrity and uprightness. Before God his character was far from perfect, but he had been condemned by men for many crimes of which he was innocent. And he believes that God in His providence will reward him for his uprightness. (1 Sam. xxvi., 23; 1 Kings xiv., 8.)

V. 26. Matt. v., 7-8. "With the perverse (*ikkesh*, crooked), thou wilt show thyself froward (*tith-patal*, ready to untwist or wrestle, trace him through his crooked fraudulent ways, and defeat them). (Rom. i., 28; Rev. xxii., 11.)

V. 29. The Psalmist here begins a second part of the description of the help vouchsafed, viz., in wars against external enemies. (1 Sam. xxx.; 2 Sam. v., 6.)

V. 31. As anchors and chains are tested, God's faithfulness had been tried,—put to the proof. **Buckler**, sure protection to all who take refuge in Him.

V. 32. In Revised Version—

32. For who is God (*El*) save the Lord?

And who is a rock save our God?

33. God is my strong fortress

And he guideth the perfect in his way.

V. 34. Swiftmess and surefootedness were indispensable qualifications in ancient warfare. Hence in Homer, "the swift-footed Achilles." "**High places,**" mountain strongholds.

V. 35. "**A bow of steel.**" Steel being unknown in the time of David, it should be "a bow of brass." None but Ulysses, Homer tells us, could bend his own bow.

V. 36. "**Gentleness**" (in Psalm xviii., 3-5, *anevateca*), humility, condescension, or discipline. The Vulgate reads, "Thy discipline itself shall teach me." A different word is used in 2 Sam., which more probably means "Thy answering," "thy gracious answers to my prayers."

V. 41. In Revised Version, "Thou hast also made mine enemies turn their backs unto me," *i.e.*, put them to flight.

V. 43. Thus were treated the Moabites, Ammonites, and people of Rabbah. (2 Samuel xii., 31).

V. 44. "**The strivings of my people,**" *i.e.*, civil wars and internal dissensions. It may, however, be translated "the wars of peoples," *i.e.*, wars carried on by Israel with foreign nations,—a reference which seems to maintain the continuity of the paragraph better than referring it to wars against external enemies. "**Head of the heathen,**" *rosh goyim*, governor of the nations. (2 Samuel viii., 1-14.)

V. 45. Yielded feigned obedience, unwilling homage.

V. 46. In Revised Version, "And shall come trembling out of their close places," out of their fastnesses, to surrender at discretion to the conqueror.

V. 47. On the ground of the deliverances he has experienced, David again, as in the beginning of the song, praises God, and adds a special vow of thanksgiving. He has adored the Divine faithfulness and condescension. He now adores the Divine eternity. God is a *living*,

continuing One, who had avenged his wrongs (1 Sam. xxiv., 15) and insults (1 Sam. xxv., 39), delivered him from all peril, and bestowed innumerable blessings.

V. 50. Not Israel only but all heathen nations would eventually participate in the blessings promised to David. The goodness of God would survive him and be continued to his posterity, and that (*ad-gl'am*) **for ever and more**, it will be extended through eternity.

Such is David's **epinikion**, his song of triumph after the conquest of his enemies. Of all the Psalms undoubtedly his it is the longest and most artistic, and it is also one of the most important in respect to the history of God's kingdom and salvation. The pillars on which this great royal ode rest are the two self-revelations of God to David, that determine his theocratic position, his call to the throne, and the promise of the everlasting duration of his kingdom. But the deliverances, blessings, and victories given to David prefigured God's mighty deeds in defence of the Kingdom of Grace and in the conquest of the heathen world by the spiritual weapon of His Word and Spirit. (Rom. xv., 9.) This is the glorious hymn of triumph to be sung by the Christian Church risen and victorious in her glorified Head. "The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and blessed be the God of the rock of my salvation." And as the true thanksgiving is thanksgiving, as the noblest doxology is a holy life, it becomes those who rejoice in such deliverances and such hopes to consecrate themselves to the Divine glory and the advancement of the Divine Kingdom.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. How may this Psalm be divided ?
2. Enumerate and explain the metaphors it contains.
3. To what scenes in his early life does the Psalmist appear to refer ?
4. Explain "he rode upon a cherub," "by my God have I leaped over a wall," "strangers shall fade away."

REFERENCES.

V. 2. Deut. xxxii., 4 ; v. 7. Ps. cxx., 1 ; v. 40. 1 Sam. xvii., 45 ; v. 41. 1 Chron. xviii., 13 ; v. 45. 1 Chron. xix., 19 ; v. 49. 2 Sam. xxi., 16, 17. v. 50. Rom. xv., 9.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ANALYSIS.

David's last words. The first three heroes. The water of the well at Bethlehem. Exploits of Abishai and Benaiah. The thirty heroes.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. Probably the "last words" mean the last poetical composition, or the last formal prophetic utterance—not necessarily the last words spoken. "Sweet psalmist of Israel," not only the finest poet Israel produced, but one whose psalms have been a treasury of experience, a handbook of devotion, a torch at which piety has been lighted, a well of living water for weary pilgrims Zionward in all subsequent times. His musical and poetical genius has soothed, charmed, and stimulated the spiritual Israel of God in every land.

V. 2. The importance of "David's last words" is self-evident, and the meaning and oracular brevity of the original are well brought out in the Revised Version.

2. The Spirit of the Lord spake by me
And his word was upon my tongue.
3. The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me :
One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God.
4. He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds ;
When the tender grass springeth out of the earth,
Through clear shining after rain.
5. Verily my house is not so with God ;
Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all things, and sure :
For it is all my salvation, and all my desire,
Although he maketh it not to grow.
6. But the ungodly shall be all of them as thorns to be thrust away,
For they cannot be taken with the hand :
7. But the man that toucheth them
Must be armed with iron and the staff of a spear ;
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place.

Moshel ba adam tsadik, lit. a ruler over men, a just one. Christ was a ruler (Micah v., 2) ; he was a just one (Isa. xi., 1-5 ; Jer. xxiii., 5).

Verses 3 and **4** are very obscure. The natural meaning is that adopted at page 110. Many, however, favour the following. The perpetuity of his kingdom David amplifies by a comparison to three natural things, which are very grateful to men, but not constant and stable. The sun rises and sets ; the morning may be clear, but clouds afterwards arise ; and the tender grass springs up, but afterwards withers. But not so, says he, is my kingdom before God ; it is flourishing like all these, but

perpetual, for He has made an everlasting covenant with me, disposed in all things, and well kept and preserved in that order. Although He doth not make all my deliverance and desire to grow, though some adversities befall me and my family; yet, **that** always remains which in the everlasting covenant is in all things orderly, arranged, and preserved.

V. 7. "Burned with fire." Matt. iii., 10, xiii., 30; Heb. vi., 8.

V. 8. According to the account in 1 Chronicles xi., the list of David's heroes belongs to the earlier part of his reign. (Page 103.) In Revised Version, "Josheb-basshebeth, a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite, against 800 slain at one time." But the margin says, "the verse is probably corrupt."

V. 9. Dodo or Dodai was the son of an Ahohite, *i.e.*, a descendant of Ahoa the son of Bela, Benjamin's eldest son. (1 Chron. viii., 4.)

V. 10. At the close of the massacre of the Christians of Mount Lebanon by the Druses in 1860, Sheikh Ali Amad's hand so clave to the handle of his sword that he could not open it until the muscles were relaxed by fomentation of hot water. "**Returned after him,**" *i.e.*, followed him.

V. 17. "Is not this," &c., in Revised Version, "Shall I drink the blood," &c. A similar incident is recorded of Alexander. When his army was greatly oppressed with heat and thirst, a soldier brought him a cup of water: he ordered it to be poured on the ground, saying, "I cannot bear to drink alone, while so many are in want; and this cup is too small to be divided among the whole." (Page 104.)

V. 20. "Two lion-like men of Moab," in Revised Version "Two sons of Ariel of Moab." The Targum has rendered it, "The two princes of Moab." (2 Sam. viii., 2.)

V. 21. "Goodly man," man of stature. He was 7 feet 6 inches high. ("Five cubits," 1 Chron. xi, 23.)

V. 23. "Set him over his guard," *i.e.* made him a member of his privy council; not, as some think, made him a guard or spy over the rest.

V. 24. Asahel, David's nephew, was one of "the thirty," of the *shalashim*. Some think this word signifies an office or particular description of men, and not a number. As there are 37 names in the list this is not improbable. Compare with the list in 1 Chron. xi, in which 16 additional names are given.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What names does David apply to himself in this chapter, and why?
2. Analyse "David's last words."
3. What is meant by the phrases "the Spirit of the Lord spake by me," "he hath made with me an everlasting covenant," "although he maketh it not to grow?"
4. On what occasion was David nearly slain, and by whom was he rescued?
5. How many names of "mighty men" are recorded, and how are they divided? Give an account of the exploits of any two of them.
6. For what did David long when he was in the wilderness, and how did he act when his wish was gratified?

REFERENCES.

V. 1. Ps. lxxxix., 20; v. 2. 2 Pet. i., 21; v. 3. Ps. xcii., 15; v. 10. 1 Chron. xi, 11; v. 39. 2 Sam. xi., 3.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ANALYSIS.

David tempted to number the people. The choice of three judgments as a punishment. The pestilence. An altar erected on the threshing floor of Araunah, which the King purchased.

CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. "Again." This is not a definite note of time. God did not compel David to sin (James i., 13), but, in order to test his character, He allowed the temptation to assail him. (Job i., 12; ii., 10.) Probably both the King and his subjects had become tempted by visions of worldly glory to forget that Israel was not to realise its vocation to the world in the guise of a conquering secular state, but as Jehovah's witness among the nations. If so, if pride was alienating the heart of King and people from their allegiance to Jehovah, a prompt chastisement was the truest mercy. But it was needful for an external visible manifestation of the sin to precede the judgment, in order to justify the Divine procedure. Compare the account in I Chron. xxi. (Page 101.)

V. 5. "The city that lieth in the midst of the river;" in Revised Version, "the city that is in the middle of the valley," or ravine of the Arnon. (Deut. ii., 36.) The ruins of **Ara-ar** on the northern edge of the **Wady Mojeb** mark the sight of Aroer "of Gad," rather, towards Gad. **Jazer**, a city captured by Israel from the Amorites (Numb. xxi., 32), rebuilt by the tribe of Gad (Numb. xxxii., 35), and allotted to the Levites. (Josh. xxi., 39.) It was about seven miles W.S.W. of Rabbah.

V. 8. The survey of all England in the time of William the Conqueror was begun in 1080 and completed in 1086. This of David took only nine months and twenty days, but it was merely a census of the people.

V. 11. Gad was David's companion in his wanderings. (1 Sam. xxii, 5.) He was a "seer," *chozeh*, a gazer. Probably Gad himself wrote this narrative. (1 Chron. xxix, 29.)

V. 13. "Seven years," in 1 Chron. and in Septuagint it is three. The similarity of the letters which represent the two numbers might easily cause a mistake. "Advise" = reflect.

V. 15. "The time appointed," probably the time for offering the evening sacrifice.

V. 16. "The threshing floor of Araunah," which was constructed on an eminence to catch the wind for winnowing the grain. It was on Mount Moriah, but the exact site is subject of debate. (Page 102.)

V. 23. This in Revised Version is, "All this, O king, doth Araunah give unto the king."

V. 24. "Fifty shekels of silver" = £6 13s. 4d. The reading in Chronicles, however, is 600 shekels of gold = £1,200 sterling.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What precept did David forget when he ordered the census?
2. How was he punished for numbering the people?
3. Who was Araunah, and what do you know regarding his threshing floor?
4. How many people perished by the plague?
5. How did Jerusalem escape?
6. Mention the great public calamities of David's reign.

REFERENCES.

- V. 1. 1 Chron. xxi, 1, &c.; v. 14. Ps. ciii, 8.

PERSONS MENTIONED.

- Abiathar**—One of the high priests during David's reign, and David's faithful friend and adviser. Through his son Jonathan he informed David of the events which were transpiring in Jerusalem at the time of Absalom's rebellion. He was dispossessed of the priesthood in Solomon's reign for having joined in Adonijah's rebellion (viii., 17 ; xx., 25).
- Abigail**—The wife of Nabal the Carmelite, and, after Nabal's death, the wife of David. **Abigail**, David's sister, and the mother of Amasa (xvii., 25).
- Abimelech**—The son of Gideon, on whose head a woman dropped a piece of a millstone (xi., 21 ; Judges ix., 53).
- Abinadab**—A Levite of Kirjath-jearim, in whose house the Ark remained for twenty years (vi., 3).
- Abishai**—One of David's nephews. He joined his brother Joab in the treacherous murder of Abner. He commanded half of the army of Israel against the Ammonites and defeated them. He wished to put Shimei to death for insulting the King. He saved David from the giant Ishbi-benob and slew three hundred men single-handed. He was brave, but violent and unscrupulous (ii., 18 ; xxiii., 18).
- Abner**—First cousin of Saul, and commander of his army. After the death of Saul he set Ishbosheth upon the throne. He killed Asahel in self-defence. He deserted to David's side after the accusation which Ishbosheth made against him. He was murdered by Joab. David and the people mourned and lamented (iii., 25-37).
- Absalom**—The second son of David, by Maacah, daughter of the king of Geshur. He slew his brother Amnon and fled to his grandfather's court, where he remained three years. After his reconciliation to his father he rebelled against him, won the hearts of the people, and set up his court in Jerusalem, from which his father had fled. He was caught in a spreading oak tree during the battle that ensued between the troops, and, contrary to David's orders, was slain by Joab as he hung suspended. He was buried beneath a heap of stones. He was possessed of great beauty, but was destitute of right principle.

Adino—The Ezrite, one of David's mighty men, who slew eight hundred at one time and was made chief of the captains for his bravery (xxiii., 8).

Adonijah—David's son by Haggith (1 Kings ii). Before his father's death he aimed at the throne, but when Solomon's succession was publicly announced, he took refuge at the altar and was pardoned. He was afterwards put to death by order of Solomon for asking permission to marry Abishag, one of his father's widows.

Adoram—Chief collector of the tribute during the latter part of David's reign. He was stoned to death in the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kings xii., 18). (xx., 24.)

Adriel—The husband of Saul's eldest daughter, whose five sons were hanged to expiate their grandfather's cruelty towards the Gibeonites (xxi., 8).

Ahimaaz—Son of Zadok the priest. He and Jonathan, the son of the other priest, informed the King of the counsel of Ahithophel and advised him to flee. They were concealed in a well at Bahurim during the search made by Absalom's men. Ahimaaz brought the first tidings of Absalom's defeat to David (xviii., 27).

Ahithophel—One of the counsellors of Israel during the reign of David. He joined Absalom in his rebellion, advised a rapid advance against David, and committed suicide when his advice was frustrated by Hushai (xv.-xvii).

Ahimelech—The father of Abiathar. He and his whole family, except Abiathar, were slain by the order of Saul for having befriended David (1 Sam. xxii., 18).

Ahinoam—The Jezreelitess whom David married. She was the mother of Amnon.

Aho—The son of Abinadab who with his brother Uzzah brought the Ark out of their father's house and placed it on the cart prepared for it (vi., 3).

Ahitub—The father of Zadok, the high priest (viii., 17).

Amasa—A nephew of David, whom Joab slew (xx., 12). (Page 189.)

Amnon—David's eldest son, who was assassinated by order of his brother Absalom (xiii.).

Araunah—The Jebusite who sold his threshing-floor to David for fifty shekels of silver (xxiv., 16).

Armoni—One of the sons of Saul, slain by Rizpah (xxi., 8).

- Asahel**—One of David's nephews who was slain by Abner after the battle of Gibeon (ii., 18).
- Baanah**—One of Ishbosheth's captains, who, with his brother Rechab, slew their master as he lay sleeping on his bed. He was slain by David's order for this crime (iv., 2).
- Barzillai**—A rich man of Gilead, who made provision for David when he was fleeing from Absalom, and whose son Chimham accompanied the King to Jerusalem on his restoration (xvii., 27; xix., 32; xxi., 8).
- Bathsheba**—The wife of Uriah the Hittite, whom David subsequently married. She was the mother of Solomon (xi).
- Benaiah**—One of David's heroes and captain of his body-guard (xxiii. 20-23).
- Cherethites and Pelethites**—The King's body guard (viii., 18). (Page 14.)
- Chileab**—David's second son, by Abigail.
- Chimham**—Barzillai's son (xix., 37-40).
- Cushi**—Joab's messenger, who informed the king of the defeat and death of Absalom (xviii., 21).
- Eleazar**—The second of David's mighty men (xxiii., 9, 10).
- Elhanan**—A Bethlehemite who slew the brother of Goliath (xxi., 19). Another Elhanan is mentioned (xxiii., 24).
- Eliada, Eliphalet, and Elishama**—Sons of David, born in Jerusalem (v., 16).
- Gad**—The prophet who gave David the choice between the three afflictions of famine, war, or pestilence, and who announced the command of God to erect an altar on the threshing-floor of Araunah (xxiv., 11).
- Hadadezer**—King of Zobah, whom David defeated with great slaughter (viii., 3-12; x., 16-19).
- Haggith**—One of David's wives and the mother of Adonijah (iii., 4).
- Hanun**—King of the Ammonites, who insulted David's ambassadors (x., 1-5).
- Hiram**—King of Tyre, David's friend (v., 11).
- Hushai**—David's counsellor, who counteracted the counsels of Ahithophel, and so gave the King time to arrange his forces (xv., 32).
- Ishbi-benob**—A giant who nearly slew David. He was slain by Abishai (xxi., 16). (Page 194.)
- Ishbosheth**—Fourth son of Saul. Abner took him under his protection after the battle of Gilboa, and made him king. He was murdered by Rechab and Baanah (iii., iv).

- Ithra**—The husband of Abigail, David's sister, and the father of Amasa.
- Ittai**—A Gittite, but a faithful and brave leader in David's army (xv., 19). (Page 173.)
- Joab**—David's nephew, and for many years commander-in-chief of his army. He led in the encounter with Ishbosheth's troops at Gideon (ii., 13.) He was the first to scale the walls at the siege of Jerusalem. He exercised great power over the King, and was prominent on various critical occasions. He was put to death in Solomon's reign for joining in Adonijah's rebellion. He was brave and skilful, but cruel and unscrupulous.
- Jaare-oregim**—The father of Elhanan (xxi., 19).
- Jehoiada**—The father of Benaiah (1 Chron. xii., 27).
- Jehoshaphat**—The recorder or annalist of the reigns of David and Solomon.
- Jonadab and Jonathan**—Sons of Shimeah, David's brother (xiii., 3 ; xxi., 21). The former was the friend and confidant of Amnon; the latter, a valiant soldier. **Jonathan**, Abiathar's son (xvii., 17).
- Jonathan**, Saul's son (i., 17.) and the father of Mephibosheth (ix.).
- Joram**—Son of Toi, king of Hamath and friend of David (viii., 10).
- Machir**—One who succoured David when he fled from Absalom (xvii., 27). He provided a home for Mephibosheth (ix., 5).
- Mephibosheth**—Jonathan's son, whom David befriended (ix., xix., 24).
- Mephibosheth**, son of Saul by Rizpah (xxi., 8).
- Micha**—Son of Mephibosheth (ix., 12).
- Michal**—Saul's daughter, whom David married (iii., 13).
- Nahash**—Sister to Zeruah, Joab's mother (xvii., 25). **Nahash**, a king of the Ammonites (x., 2).
- Nathan**—A prophet in the reigns of David and Solomon (xii.).
- Obed-edom**—The Gittite in whose house the Ark was placed after Uzzah was smitten (vi., 10).
- Phaltiel**—The husband of Michal, Saul's daughter, who followed her to Bahurim weeping when she was restored to David (iii., 16).
- Rechab**—The brother of Baanah and one of the murderers of Ishbosheth (iv., 2).
- Rizpah**—A concubine of Saul (iii., 7 ; xxi., 8-12).
- Saph**—A Philistine whom Sibbechai slew (xxi., 18).
- Seraiah or Sheva**—Secretary or scribe to David (viii., 17 ; xx., 25).
- Shammah**—One of David's three captains over the thirty (xxiii., 11).

- Sheba**—A Benjamite who raised the standard of rebellion (xx.).
(Page 187.)
- Shimeah**—Brother of David and father of Jonathan and Jonadab
(xxi., 21).
- Shobach**—The general of Hadarezer's army. He was slain at Helam.
(x. 18).
- Shobi**—One who with Machir and Barzillai befriended David (xvii., 27).
- Sibbechai**—One of David's guard and captain over 24,000 soldiers
(xxi., 18).
- Solomon**—David's son by Bathsheba and his successor in the govern-
ment (xii., 24).
- Talmai**—King of Geshur, father of Maacah, and grandfather of
Absalom.
- Tamar**—A daughter of David by Maacah (xiii., 1); a daughter of
Absalom (xiv., 27).
- Toi**—King of Hamath, the enemy of Hadadezer and the friend of
David (viii., 9).
- Uriah**—One of David's mighty men and the husband of Bathsheba.
He was in Joab's army at the siege of Rabbah when David coveted
his wife. Joab obeyed the King's instructions to bring about his
death in battle (xi.).
- Uzzah**—One of the drivers of the cart on which the Ark was conveyed
from Gibeah. Sudden death befel him, as the punishment of
taking hold of the Ark (vi., 7).
- Zadok**—One of the chief priests in the reign of David, who assisted
him on various important occasions (xv., 24; xix., 11).
- Ziba**—A servant of Saul, who was appointed by David to farm the
property of Mephibosheth, but who slandered his master to the
King (xvi.; xix., 24).
- Zeruiah**—The sister of David, and mother of Abishai, Joab, and
Asahel (ii., 18).

NATIONS MENTIONED.

- Amalekites**—Descendants of Amalek, a grandson of Esau. They
were a wandering tribe in the mountainous regions of South
Palestine (i., 1; viii., 12).

- Ammonites**—Descendants of Ben-ammi, the son of Lot. They lived east of the Jordan (x.; xii., 26).
- Canaanites**—Applied to the inhabitants of the northern part of the Jordan valley (xxiv., 7).
- Edomites**—The descendants of Esau. They inhabited the mountainous country south of Moab (viii., 14).
- Gibeonites**—The inhabitants of Gibeon, a Canaanite city six miles north of Jerusalem (xxi.).
- Hittites**—Descendants of Heth, Canaan's second son.
- Jebusites**—Descendants of the Jebusite, Canaan's third son. David drove them out of Jerusalem (v., 8).
- Moabites**—Descendants of Moab the son of Lot, who dwelt to the east and north of the Red Sea (viii., 2).
- Philistines**—The inhabitants of the rich plain of Philistia, in the south-west of Palestine. (Page 32.)
- Syrians**—The inhabitants of the countries to the north and north-east of the Israelites. They were broken up into several kingdoms.

PLACES MENTIONED.

- Abel Beth-maachah**—An important city in the extreme north of Palestine to which Sheba fled (xx., 15). (Page 189.)
- Adullam**—A cave near Bethlehem (xxiii., 13).
- Ammah**—A famous city of Gath (ii., 24).
- Aroer**—A town east of Jordan, in the tribe of Gad.
- Askelon**—A town of the Philistines on the Mediterranean Sea (i., 20).
- Baalhazor**—Near Ephraim, where Absalom had a sheep farm (xiii., 23).
- Baale-of-Judah (Baalah)**—Another name for Kirjath-jearim.
- Baalperizim**—A place where David defeated the Philistines and burned their images (v., 20).
- Bahurim**—A village near Jerusalem (iii., 16; xvi., 15; xvii., 18).
- Beeroth**—A town ten miles north of Jerusalem (iv., 2).
- Beersheba**—The most southern town in Palestine.
- Bethlehem**—A town six miles south of Jerusalem, where David was born (xxiii., 15).
- Berothai**—Acity of Zobah taken by David.
- Betah**—A city in Zobah from which David took much spoil (viii., 8).
- Beth-rehob (Rehob)**—A place in Syria whose inhabitants were hired to fight against David (x., 6).

- Beth-shan**—A city west of the Jordan, where the Philistines fastened the bodies of Saul and his three sons on the wall (1 Sam. xxxi., 10).
- Bithron**—A district on the east of the Jordan, through which Abner and his army went after the battle of Gibeon (ii., 29).
- Damascus**—An important Syrian city taken by David (viii., 6).
- Dan**—The most northern town of Palestine.
- Dan-jaan**—Probably Dan or haish.
- Enrogel**—(Page 178).
- Euphrates**—A river rising in the mountains of Armenia.
- Gath**—One of the five chief cities of the Philistines.
- Gazer, Gezer**—A town on the southern boundary of Ephraim.
- Geshur**—A small state in the north-east corner of Palestine over which Talmi ruled.
- Gibeah**—A town six miles north of Jerusalem.
- Gibeah**—The place where the Ark remained before it was conveyed to Jerusalem (xxi., 6).
- Gibeon**—A city of the Hivites, the inhabitants of which obtained by deceit a league with Joshua (ii., 13).
- Gilboa**—A mountain range on the eastern side of the plain of Esdraelon, over the city of Jezreel (i., 21).
- Gilead**—A mountainous district east of the Jordan, whose inhabitants submitted to Ishbosheth's rule (ii., 9).
- Gilgal**—A place near the Jordan, to which the men of Judah came before crossing the river to escort the King home (xix., 15).
- Giloh**—A town in the mountainous district of Judah, to which Ahithophel belonged (xv., 12).
- Gob**—The scene of two conflicts between David's mighty men and the Philistines (xxi., 18, 19).
- Hamath**—The chief city of Upper Syria, ruled over by Toi.
- Hebron**—A city twenty miles south of Jerusalem, where David reigned for seven and a half years (ii., 3). (Page 11.)
- Helam**—A place east of the Jordan, where Hadadezer assembled his troops and was defeated (x., 16).
- Helkath-hazzurim**—Near the pool of Gibeon, where Abner and his troops were defeated (ii., 16).
- Ishtob**—A Syrian territory north-east of Palestine (x., 8).
- Jabesh-gilead**—An important city beyond Jordan, the chief of the cities of Gilead (ii., 5).
- Jazer**—A town, east of Jordan in Gilead.

- Jericho**—A city twenty-six miles north-east of Jerusalem and six miles from the Jordan. (x., 5).
- Jerusalem**—The capital of Palestine, captured by David from the Jebusites (v., 6). (Page 29.)
- Kabzeel**—A city in the south of Judah, to which Jehoiada and Benaiah belonged (xxiii., 20).
- Kidron**—A brook between Jerusalem and Olivet (xv., 23).
- Kirjath-jearim**—One of the four cities of the Gibeonites, on the northern boundary of Judah, where the Ark remained for twenty years. (Page 35.)
- Lo-debar**—A town on the east of Jordan, the home of Machir.
- Maacah**—A small Syrian kingdom. (x., 8).
- Mahanaim**—A town on the east of Jordan, on the borders of Gad and Manasseh (ii., 12; xvii., 27).
- Medeba**—A portion of territory taken from Sihon and given to the tribe of Reuben.
- Methg-ammah**—A stronghold near Gath, taken by David (viii., 1).
- Millo**—A fortified part of ancient Jerusalem (v. 9).
- Moab**—A country east and north of the Red Sea.
- Olivet**—Part of a ridge of limestone hills, separated from Jerusalem by the valley of Jehoshaphat and the brook Kidron.
- Rabbah**—A strongly fortified city on the east of Jordan, the capital of the Ammonites. Taken by David's troops after a long siege.
- Rogelim**—The mountainous district east of the Jordan, where Barzillai lived (xvii., 27).
- Rephaim**—A valley in which David twice defeated the Philistines (v., 22; xxiii., 13).
- Sirah**—The well from which Abner was recalled by Joab (iii., 26).
- Tahtim-hodshi**—A place east of the Jordan (xxiv., 6).
- Tekoah**—Native place of Ira and residence of the "wise woman."
- Thebez**—A town thirteen miles from Shechem, where Abimelech was killed (Judg. ix., 50; 2 Sam. xi., 21).
- Tyre**—A great city and seaport on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It was Hiram's capital.
- Zelah**—The burial place of Saul's family in the tribe of Benjamin.
- Zidon**—A city on the Mediterranean coast north of Tyre.
- Ziklag**—The town given to David by Achish.
- Zobah**—A part of Syria extending east to the Euphrates.

GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. What are the principal contents of the Second Book of Samuel, and how may they be divided?
2. Analyse the elegies pronounced by David on the occasion of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan and of Abner?
3. How did David treat the family of Saul? Illustrate your answer by quoting as many instances as you can.
4. How long did David reign as King of Judah, and where? What are the probable dates of the chief events of his life?
5. Give a short account of the reign of Ishbosheth, mentioning the seat of his government and the name of his chief supporter. Tell the manner of his death and how it was avenged.
6. Relate the history of Abner, of Amasa, and of Absalom.
7. Describe the death of Asahel and the way in which it was avenged.
8. What was the cause of Mephibosheth's lameness? Mention David's conduct towards him, with the reason for it.
9. How was Jonadab related to David? What was his character, and on what occasions do we hear of him?
10. Mention any circumstances in the history which illustrate the character and disposition of Joab.
11. What was the first capital of David's kingdom? What city did he afterwards make the seat of his government, from whom did he conquer it, and how did he sanctify it?
12. Mention the chief wars and conquests of David. Define the extent of his kingdom, and show how far it corresponded with the original promise made to Abraham.
13. What occasioned the war with the Ammonites? What nations were then leagued against David? What was the issue?
14. How was David reprov'd for his sin in the matter of Uriah? What immediate punishment was inflicted upon him, and how did his sin affect the future fortunes of his house?
15. What became of the several members of David's family?
16. Who was Zeruiah? "These men the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me." Illustrate this statement from the deeds of these men, and state what were their several ends.

17. Tell what you know of the following persons:—Shimei, Barzillai, Ahithophel, Gad, Araunah, Nathan, Ziba, Chimham, and the woman of Tekoah.

18. Tell what you know of the following places:—Hebron, Jerusalem, Kirjath-jearim, Mahanaim, Bethlehem, and Rabbah.

19. What was the cause of the three years' famine, and how was the famine removed?

20. Wherein consisted David's sin in numbering the people? How was this sin punished, how did he show his piety in the choice of his punishment, and how was the punishment arrested?

21. Give an account of all that happened to the Ark of God during David's reign.

22. Contrast David's conduct towards Shimei with that of Abishai.

23. Compare the character, conduct, and kingdom of David with those of his predecessor Saul.

24. In what respects was David a type of Christ?

25. What preparations did David make for the Temple, and why was he not allowed to build it?

26. Explain the words and phrases:—Baal-perazim, Perez-uzzah, Jedediah, and Metheg-ammah, "fetch a compass," "measuring with a line," "this dead dog."

27. Give the names of David's principal officers of state and heroes.

28. What songs of David are recorded in this Book? Analyse that given in the twenty-second chapter, and write out his last words as given in the twenty-third.

29. What did David's three mighty men do for him, and how did he receive their action?

30. Illustrate by examples from this Book the character of David.

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