

was fatally wounded. However, he wished to make it appear that the enemy had not actually accomplished his death and asked his armorbearer to finish it. He would not do it because he was afraid. That did not mean that he was afraid of death as the next verse will show. But the whole situation was horrifying, and besides, he had the same feeling as David had, in that he hesitated to smite the Lord's anointed. Then Saul took a sword and fell upon it. This would be accomplished by standing the handle of the sword on the ground and then allowing the body of the man to slump down over it.

Verse 5. Let the reader take notice that the inspired writer tells us that the armorbearer *saw that Saul was dead*. No one can see something that does not exist. Yet the statement of inspiration is that the man saw that Saul was dead.

Verse 6. The statement of Saul's death is again repeated, and in connection with the death of the three sons of Saul, and his armorbearer. These facts will be useful in explaining some questions to come up in the next book.

Verse 7. The death of Saul and his sons caused such dismay among the Israelites that they fled from the cities of that section of the country. Then the Philistines came and occupied those cities.

Verse 8. After the day of battle the Philistines came to plunder the slain of their clothing and any other things of value to be found with them. In this action they found Saul and his three sons among the fallen ones.

Verse 9. The personal defeat of the king in battle would be a thing to cause great rejoicing among the victorious people. Therefore, the Philistines took the head of Saul and sent it and the armor of his body among their people. The victory was published in the house of their gods, which was a signal that they were mightier than the one whom Saul worshipped.

Verse 10. Ashtaroth was one of the female deities of those people and they had a temple erected for her worship. In this house they placed the armor of Saul as a trophy of war. Cities spoken of as fenced or walled meant the ones fortified. To fasten the body of the king of the Israelites to the wall of a city supposed to be prepared against the enemy would be a sort of "triumph," a gesture often resorted to in those days.

Verse 11. Jabesh-gilead was a city east of the Jordan and opposite of the site of the fatal battle between the Israelites and the Philistines. These inhabitants heard of the shameful treatment that had been accorded their fallen king and his sons.

Verses 12, 13. It was a night's journey from Jabesh-gilead to the place of the shameful treatment of Saul's body. The valiant or brave men of the city made this journey and recovered the bodies of Saul and his sons. They brought them back with them to Jabesh. The text here says that they burnt the bodies. The same event is recorded in 2 Chr. 16: 14, but there it says they made a great burning for them. Jer. 34: 5 speaks of burning odors for Zedekiah, and that is the meaning of the language in the verse here. This conclusion is justified by the language in the last verse which says that the bones were buried under a tree. The fast of seven days was one of the formalities used in ancient times in connection with periods of great grief.

2 SAMUEL 1

Verse 1. Chapter 30 of 1 Samuel gives the record of this slaughter, and it was going on while the Israelites were engaged with the Philistines in battle. This verse brings us two days later, and David has returned to his city, Ziklag.

Verse 2. On the third day after the battle came this man to David. The use of earth on the head and the rent clothes was a practice in the East, indicating great grief or anxiety. We shall learn that this man was pretending grief in this case. He also was feigning his respect for David when he fell to the earth.

Verses 3, 4. Upon inquiry, the young man related the fatal end of the battle between the Israelites and Philistines. He stated that Saul and Jonathan were dead. The inspired record says that Saul and all his sons were dead. So there was something questionable about the report to begin with.

Verses 5-7. Another inquiry brought from the man his story of Saul's calling on him as he "happened" to be passing. This word is in itself a strong indication that something was wrong in the whole story. The battle was in its decisive stage and very hot. It is not reasonable to believe that a casual passer-by could be thus engaged.

Verse 8. This verse contains one consistent link in the story. Saul did not want the uncircumcised Philistines to boast of his death (1 Sam. 31: 4), therefore he inquired the nationality of this young man coming up. There is a weak point, however, also in the story. He told Saul he was an Amalekite, and as such would be an uncircumcised man also; however, according to the narrative, Saul had no objection to this person.

Verse 9. It is possible this young man was near enough to hear the conversation of Saul with his armor-bearer, for the pretended one between him and this man was about the same as the inspired record given us as having actually taken place.

Verse 10. Critics of the Bible have charged that a contradiction exists here; that this verse does not agree with the record in 1 Samuel 31: 4, 5. Certainly, the two accounts disagree. But one of the reports was made by the inspired writer and the other by this unauthorized Amalekite. It is not the first time that the word of inspiration has been contradicted. When a person is charged with a serious deed of evil it is expected that some motive for such deed be indicated. There is plenty of motive in the case of this Amalekite. He knew that Saul was the personal enemy of David, and thought it would be a favor to him to receive the news of his death, first hand. And to show that his story was true he brought some trophies from his body. This is not a mere guess; Chapter 4: 10 sustains the conclusion. The thing the young man did not know was that David regarded Saul as the anointed king of God's people, and that no personal victory should be wished to be had over him.

Verses 11, 12. Although Saul was the personal enemy of David, still he was engaged in battle against the Lord's enemies and was killed therein. For this reason David and the men that were with him lamented greatly, and put on a fast for the rest of the day.

Verses 13, 14. This additional inquiry brought to David the nationality of the young man. Being an Amalekite he would not be in the regular enlistment of the army fighting against Saul, therefore, would have no right to attack the king as a soldier. The regard for Saul as the Lord's anointed caused David to be aroused against the man.

Verse 15. The natural question here might be, why did David have the right to order the slaying of this Amalekite? It should be remembered that while Saul was the anointed of the Lord, which means the one still in active service, yet David was the one anointed in prospect to take the place of Saul. (Chapter 16: 13.) This would make it right for him to execute this private for his unauthorized act.

Verse 16. *Blood be upon thy head.* This expression is used in very numerous places in the Bible. It is based on the idea of guilt. The mere fact of shedding blood was not illegal. If a man committed murder, then he must have his blood shed in punishment. (Gen. 9: 6.) But when one sheds blood illegally, then another must shed his blood in execution, and that is the same as putting his guilty blood on his own head, not on the head of an innocent person. Please observe, David did not admit that the young man actually had slain Saul. The act of slaying him was based on his own incriminating testimony and David did not have to reject it, especially when he took so much delight in reporting the said affair.

Verse 17. While Saul and his three sons were slain, this lamentation was over him and one of the sons. It was because Saul was the Lord's anointed and Jonathan was the personal friend of David. According to Strong, this kind of lamentation was a funeral dirge, accompanied by beating the breasts or instruments.

Verse 18. *The use of.* These words are not in the original. The R. V. has "the song of." Either expression could be correct. The inspired writer said that David bade them to teach the use of the bow to the children of Judah. Whether it was a song about the bow, in memory of what it had meant to David and Jonathan, or that they were to perpetuate the use of the bow in honor of their friendship; either would harmonize with the facts. Jonathan had been successful in his use of the bow against the enemy, also it had been used as the token of friendship in the escape from Saul. (1 Sam. 14: 45: 20; 35-40.) *Book of Jasher*. Smith's Bible Dictionary says this of the book: "It was probably written in verse; and it has been conjectured that it was a collection of ancient records of honored men or noble deeds. It is wholly lost." Occasionally the inspired writers have referred to works of

literature in circulation at the time. These books were of no authority, but often explained and corroborated the inspired statements. Another instance of this was the statement of Paul in Acts 17: 28. And such use of "outside reading matter," gives us an approved example of using works of uninspired men today when they help to throw light on the statements of Holy Writ.

Verse 19. It was no ordinary person who was slain. The king—the glory of Israel—was the one who fell. He fell from the highest place in the nation because he was king and therefore a man in the highest place.

Verse 20. Gath and Askelon were permanent cities of the Philistines. The language is a poetic expression of regret, and a wish that the sad news would not be scattered in these cities of the enemy. David had slain the Amalekite for rejoicing in the downfall of Saul and his son; for the same reason he shuddered at the thought of the daughters of the uncircumcised getting joy at Saul's downfall.

Verse 21. Since this is a song and figurative picture of the awful situation, David used terms that were not expected to have literal fulfillment. The speech of this verse is a poetic drawing of the humiliating condition over the beloved field, just as if nature itself was hanging its head in shame and refusing to function.

Verse 22. Jonathan and Saul were successful in their attacks upon the enemy. Even the mighty men among the enemy were not able to deprive them of prey. Naturally, we are to make an exception of their last battle in this statement of their success.

Verse 23. The question arises as to how this could be said of them in view of the things of which we have been reading. Well, the military operations of a man were the most outstanding ones of his life, especially the life of an official like Saul. And those operations, prominent though they were, did not actually occupy the major portion of their lives. Therefore, in spite of the events of the closing years, it still leaves sufficient time and opportunity for them to have been very congenial in their private lives and during most of the years. It was literally true that in their death they were not divided. They had certainly been fighting as comrades down to the very last, for they died together on the field of battle.

Verse 24. *Daughters of Israel* would refer to the women of the nation in general. Scarlet clothing with ornaments of precious metal had been provided by the king. For that reason his death would mean a great personal loss to them and call for weeping.

Verse 25. The *high places* was a term with the same significance as verse 19.

Verse 26. When David was ready to express his deepest feeling, he restricted his speech to Jonathan. *Passing*. There is no word in the original for this. The word *wonderful*, however, is from an original, which is *PALA*, and defined, "a primitive root; properly, perhaps, to separate, i.e. distinguish (literally or figuratively); by implication, difficult, wonderful."—Strong. The sentence means, the love of Jonathan was *equal* to that of women. The love of women is tender, personal, confiding, self-sacrificing, and clings to the object of the love amidst the most trying circumstances, and in spite of all opposition from flesh and blood relations.

Verse 27. This song of lamentation began and ended with the thought uppermost in the mind of David, the fall of the glory in Israel.

2 SAMUEL 2

Verse 1. For some time David has been living in Ziklag, a city of the Philistines that had been given to him by Achish, king of the Philistines. That had been a sort of internment for him and his family and some personal friends, because of the fear the Philistines had of having him in their army. Now the conditions have changed. Saul is dead, and the danger of personal violence to David from that source is gone. Perhaps now he should re-enter the territory of the Israelites. But the general state of affairs has been unsettled, and it was a question in his mind whether the way was open for him to venture forth. That is why he asked the question written in this verse. In answer to his second question David was told to go unto Hebron. This was a noted place in Old Testament times. It was the place where Abram dwelt after separating from Lot. (Gen. 13: 18). It is destined to be the home of David for a number of years.

Verses 2, 3. He had his two wives with him, Ahinoam and Abigail, and his men. They were the six hundred

that were with him in Ziklag. (1 Sam. 27: 2, 3).

Verse 4. We recall that David had been anointed to be the next king over the children of Israel, after Saul's reign ended. In the meantime the disturbed conditions coming up over Saul's wrong conduct had somewhat blocked the way for him to ascend the throne completely. The tribe of Judah, however, recognized his right and anointed him to be king over them. Having performed this honor for him, they informed him of the kindness shown to Saul's body by the men of Jabesh-gilead.

Verses 5, 6. David sent a message of appreciation and blessing to the men who had showed respect to Saul by burying his body. Not only the blessing of God was assured them, but he promised to return favors to them himself.

Verse 7. It is now necessary for them to take courage, seeing their master is dead. Furthermore, the house of Judah had anointed him king, which would indicate his opportunity for giving them assistance in whatever righteous acts they attempted.

Verse 8. Ner and Kish were brothers. (1 Chr. 9: 36). Abner was the son of Ner and Saul was the son of Kish. (1 Sam. 9: 1, 2). Therefore, Saul and Abner were first cousins, and Saul made Abner his commander-in-chief. And even after Saul was killed in battle, and David was the next lawful heir to the throne, Abner was set to continue the kingdom in the line of his relation and former master. To do this he took Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, and brought him over to Mahanaim. This was a city just east of the Jordan.

Verse 9. From Mahanaim, Ish-bosheth ruled over the territory of Gilead, a large territory east of the Jordan. The other towns mentioned in this verse were west of the Jordan. But he ruled over larger sections of the country, for specific mention is made of the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin, then of all Israel. This means that only the tribe of Judah recognized David at this time.

Verse 10. Ish-bosheth was the youngest son of Saul, but all of his brothers were dead, therefore, he would have been the rightful person to reign had not the Lord determined to take the kingdom away from his father's house and give it to David. Because of this plan of God, we must consider this

reign of Ish-bosheth as one of usurpation. He was strengthened for his action by Abner, the captain of the host under Saul. As long as he thought he could, he "pulled" for the only remaining son of his master. We shall learn, however, that the two-years' reign of this usurper was filled with unrest and the final overthrow of his supporter.

Verse 11. Notwithstanding the changing scenes in the opposition, David continued to have Hebron as his official headquarters for seven years and six months. He did not move it to Jerusalem until the opposition had been removed and all of the tribes were ready to recognize him as king.

Verses 12, 13. Abner was the commander-in-chief of Saul's forces, and Joab came into the same rank of service under David. As might be expected, these two were rivals. With a group of men each, they came to Gibeon and sat down on opposite sides of the pool at that place.

Verse 14. A contest was proposed by Abner to be acted on by men from each group. The word *play* is from *sachaq*, and defined, "A primitive root; to laugh (in pleasure or detraction); by implication, to play."—Strong. The word has been rendered in the A. V. by deride, have in derision, laugh, make merry, mock, play, rejoice, laugh to scorn, be in sport. It is the word for "sport" in Judg. 16: 25, where Samson was called to make sport for the Philistines. The statement under consideration here means that the young men were to act or perform, in physical contest, before their respective masters. The implied purpose of the contest was to decide the issues between the house of Saul and the house of David. Joab agreed to the proposition.

Verses 15, 16. Twelve men on each side engaged in the contest, man against man; forming twelve duels. The result was the mutual destruction of the duelists. The 24 men all died.

Verse 17. It would appear from the report of the contest just ended that nothing decisive was accomplished. The moral effect however, was great, for it weakened the forces of Abner and they were beaten by the servants of David.

Verse 18. Among the men with Joab at this time were his two brothers, Abishai and Ashabel. The roe is another name for roebuck. It was a

species of antelope, an animal that was very swift on foot.

Verse 19. These brothers took up the support of David against the house of Saul. Abner had fled after the affair of the twelve duels, and Asahel pursued him, not stopping nor turning out of the path of the pursuit one way or the other.

Verses 20, 21. Abner pretended to think Asahel only wished to procure his armor, and, in order to detract him from his real purpose, suggested that he turn aside and take the armor from one of the young men. But Asahel did not have the purpose in mind, therefore he continued his pursuit of Abner.

Verse 22. It is evident that Abner did not wish to slay Asahel, because of his respect for his brother Joab, notwithstanding the feud between them, but to stop his pursuit he threatened to slay him.

Verse 23. The two were very near finally in the chase, so that Abner made a sort of backward stroke with the spear in his hand and smote Asahel. *Fifth rib.* The second word has no original in the text. But the first one is from *CHOMESH*, and means "the abdomen." The spear was an offensive weapon and used for casting or throwing. It was the largest form of that class of weapons. Abner could thus so use it as here described as Asahel was in such close pursuit. It went through his body and came out at his back. His death was immediate and he was permitted to lie there for a time.

Verse 24. It would be natural for Joab and Abishai, brothers to Asahel, to go after Abner after he had slain Asahel. They did not overtake him personally, but reached a spot called "hill of Ammah" near Gibeon. It was evening when they arrived there.

Verse 25. Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin, therefore these Benjamites formed a troop of themselves under Abner and came to the top of this hill.

Verse 26. The two groups were in speaking distance of each other, Abner then called to Joab and intimated that unless he ordered his men to cease their pursuing of their brethren, the sword would bring them to a bitter end.

Verse 27. This must be understood in the light of v. 14. It is as if Joab said, "You are the one who started this, when you suggested that the

young men arise and play before us. Had it not been for that, the young men with me would have returned from the chase in the morning." The words *as God liveth* mean, as surely as that God lives.

Verse 28. While Joab charges Abner with being the cause of the conflict, yet he was willing to discontinue it. Therefore, he blew a trumpet as a means of giving orders to his men, and they ceased their activities.

Verse 29. After the difficulty was over, Abner and his men walked all night and came to Mahanaim, the headquarters that had been established for Ish-bosheth.

Verse 30. Joab likewise returned (to Hebron) and gathered his people together. When this was done, it was discovered that 19 of his men were missing, besides Asahel.

Verse 31. The loss sustained by David in this skirmish was light considering the number of slain on the other side. There were 360 of the Benjamites cut down, which means that the supporters of Saul's house suffered that loss, Saul being of Benjamin.

Verse 32. Before returning to Hebron as mentioned in v. 30, Joab and his men gave the body of Asahel respectful burial, in the sepulchre of his father. It was then morning by the time they arrived at Hebron.

2 SAMUEL 3

Verse 1. David was the rightful king, but Abner's attachment to the house of Saul caused him to hold out for Ish-bosheth, son of Saul, as long as possible. The contest finally began to prove one-sided, and the house of David was gaining.

Verses 2-5. Plurality of wives was suffered in those days. That is why it is common to read such family records as this. When the sons of a prominent man are named, their respective mothers will be named also. The two outstanding sons mentioned in this group are Amnon and Absalom. They are mentioned in that way here because of their connection with the bitter feud that afterwards came between Absalom and his father. Some special interest may be had in Adonijah also on account of his attempt to obtain the kingdom after his father.

Verse 6. As long as there appeared any chance of winning, Abner made strong efforts in the war on behalf of the house of Saul and against David.

In spite of these efforts, however, his side of the conflict began to weaken as was stated in v. 1.

Verse 7. For some reason unknown to us, the name of *Ish-bosheth* is not in the original text here. But we know he is the one meant because the other sons of Saul were dead at this time. Also, in the following verse the name is in the original, in direct connection with the same conversation. Rizpah was concubine to Saul and mother of two sons, (chapter 21: 8.) Mention was made in chapter 2: 10 of *Ish-bosheth* being the youngest son of Saul. That must be understood as applying to the sons in line as heirs to the throne. A concubine was a legal wife as far as moral consideration went, but she was not entitled to the same property and other rights. Therefore, in mentioning the sons of Saul, as king, the sons of his line only would be considered. Now Saul was dead at the time of this verse. We do not know what were all the circumstances connected with this affair between Abner and the concubine. Abner did not directly deny the charge, but implied that there was no fault or sin committed. We do not know whether he meant to deny any act of intimacy, or that any sin was committed in the act. Whatever was the true state of the case, Abner was very angry. It is possible that he "saw the handwriting" as to the future success of his contention against the house of David, and was wanting a "face-saving" pretext for changing his position. Such a thought is suggested by the facts stated in v. 1.

Verse 8. A part of Strong's definition of *dog* is, "a male prostitute." Abner asked him if he had such a low estimate of him that he might be compared to a male prostitute, in that he was intimate with the concubine of his master. Most of the verse recounts the services he has been rendering to *Ish-bosheth* on behalf of his father's cause. He has been kind to this son of Saul and has been acting against Judah, the domain of David, when it has been in his power to deliver him into the hand of David. The substance of the verse is an accusation against *Ish-bosheth* of gross ingratitude.

Verse 9. *So do God to Abner* means that God may do to Abner what is due *Ish-bosheth*. Abner would have expected such a fate were it not for the fact that he is going to cooperate with God in carrying out the oath sworn to

David. This is what he meant by the word *except*. That God would do this except, that is, were it not that I will do as God wants to have done, according to his oath to David.

Verse 10. In keeping with the oath mentioned in the preceding verse, Abner now threatened *Ish-bosheth* with the loss of his kingdom, by having it translated or transferred to David. *Dan to Beer-sheba*. These cities were at the northern and southern limits of the land of Palestine, and this use of the names came to be a figurative way of referring to the whole land.

Verse 11. Had the accusation that was made against Abner been untrue, it would have been an easy thing to have recalled it and apologized. On the other hand, had there been good evidence of its truth, *Ishbosheth* could easily have produced it; therefore, we are still left with some uncertainty on that point. But whether true or false, the threat made about the kingdom filled *Ishbosheth* with awe and rendered him speechless.

Verse 12. Abner now began to carry out his plan to translate the kingdom by offering to David a proposal of a league. He promised to bring all Israel to David as a condition of the league.

Verse 13. In 1 Sam. 25: 44 we learn that Saul had given his daughter Michal, who was David's wife, to Phaltiel. Saul's motive for it was evident, because she had previously shown her love for David. (1 Sam. 18: 28; 19: 12-17.) Upon the proposition of Abner, David saw an opportunity for recovering his stolen wife. He made that a condition for favoring the offer of Abner.

Verse 14. David accompanied his demand upon Abner with a like one upon *Ishbosheth*, the usurper of the throne left vacant by the death of Saul. In this demand David referred to the bargain by which he had procured Michal from her father.

Verses 15, 16. *Ish-bosheth* was in a position to do as David requested, and did so. At first thought we may feel sorry for the husband. Then, since the receiver of "stolen goods" is considered as guilty as the thief, our sympathy weakens.

Verses 17, 18. True to his agreement, Abner began contacting the leaders of Israel by reminding them of their former friendship for David, and of their desire for him to be their

king. The way is now open for them to have their wish if they will act.

Verse 19. The tribe of Benjamin did not adhere to David in the matter of Ishbosheth, for he was of that tribe. Yet, the term "Israel" as it is used here, and in many other places later in the Bible, means the tribes exclusive of Benjamin and Judah.

Verse 20. With a group of twenty men, Abner came to David at Hebron, evidently to close up the negotiations for the league proposed between them. They were received with some formality and David made a feast for them.

Verse 21. The agreement was now made orally, and Abner said he would go and gather together all Israel, to the end that a league between them and David could be made. With this understanding, David sent Abner away in *peace*, which means that they parted as friends in the same sense as people who have been at war will come together as friends.

Verses 22, 23. While these conversations were going on between David and Abner, Joab and the servants of David were away pursuing a troop. They returned with the spoils of their conquest, and learned about the transactions between David and Abner; that although the latter had been opposing David, now he is being treated as a friend.

Verses 24, 25. Joab complained to David because of what he had done. He represented Abner in the role of a spy, and intimated that David should have taken him in hand while he had the opportunity.

Verse 26. Unknown to David, Joab sent messengers who overtook Abner at a place called the well of Sirah, not far north of Hebron. They brought him back to Hebron.

Verse 27. *Quietly*. This is from a word that means privacy. Joab pretended that he had some private message to give him. *Fifth rib*. This means the abdomen. The reason he assigns for this murder is different from what he said to David. He there made it appear as if he thought Abner was a spy, now he says it was for the slaying of his brother. The fact is, he considered him as his personal rival for honor and took this means for removing him.

Verse 28. When David heard of the death of Abner he disclaimed all approval of the act, either on behalf of himself or the kingdom.

Verse 29. David placed the blame for Abner's death on Joab and called for the punishment to fall on him and his father's house. *Let there not fail* meant that there was never to be a time when the following misfortunes would not be present in his posterity. There was always to be some one with an issue (running sore), or leaning on a staff (meaning that he would be infirm), or fall by the sword, or lack bread.

Verse 30. We know from the account of the slaying of Abner that Abishai did not have any direct hand in the act; moreover, David mentions only Joab in his curse in v. 29. And yet it is the inspired writer who tells us that Joab and Abishai were guilty of the bloodshed. This must be understood on the principle that persons who are interested in, or approve of, an act are to be considered as partakers of it.

Verse 31. David directed Joab to participate in the funeral rites for Abner. The king personally followed the bier, or litter.

Verse 32. This mourning at the grave of Abner was a form of burial ceremony, and showed that some formalities were practiced in the disposal of the body in that day.

Verses 33, 34. This paragraph means that Abner was a brave man, but did not have a fair chance. He had not been handled as a man would be by dignified officers, who would put him in chains in a legal way; instead, he had been the victim of foul play.

Verse 35. So deep was David's grief for Abner that he fasted for the day, in spite of the fact his friends urged him to eat.

Verse 36. The people did not persist in their attempt to get David to eat. But when they realized his plan was to observe a fast of mourning they took a favorable attitude toward it, on the general basis that whatever the king did was proper.

Verse 37. There was evidence that David did not approve of the slaying of Abner, even though he was or had been his personal opponent. But it had been demonstrated all along that David wanted all things to be done in the regular and lawful manner.

Verse 38. This verse gives a favorite statement, often used today at the death of some very important man in the church or the state.

Verse 39. The word *hard* means se-

vere. These men were too severe, and their actions caused David to feel depressed or downcast.

2 SAMUEL 4

Verses 1-3. Although Abner had reversed his support of Ish-bosheth, the news of his death came as a shock. Abner had been in the services of Saul for some time and his death, especially in such an unlawful manner, caused Ishbosheth to be grieved. The death of Abner, and the revolution coming in the house of Saul, caused much unrest among the Israelites.

Verse 4. The writer goes back several years to explain the present physical condition of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. This disability will account for the comparative obscurity that surrounded this heir in the line of Saul, until the gratitude of David later brought him to view again. (chapter 9: 1, 13.)

Verses 5, 6. These two men are mentioned in v. 2. They thought it would be a praiseworthy deed if they destroyed as many as possible of the remaining seed of Saul, now that his cause has lost out in favor of David. And they made the mistake of thinking it would be acceptable to accomplish this deed by "fair means or foul." Ish-bosheth was already weakened and discouraged at the news of his father's death (v. 1), and now these murderers pretended they were coming to bring him some food. They came into his house while he was taking his noon rest in bed, and slew him by thrusting him through the abdomen.

Verse 7. These are further details of the murder and mutilation of this son of Saul. No man can be killed more than once, but the writer wishes us to have the full force of the vicious attitude of these former captains of Saul. The word for *smote* means to strike, without necessarily causing death. So these men smote Ish-bosheth, then thrust him through the abdomen, then severed his head from his body, then fled with the mutilated part. Since their master's house has been defeated, they want to be on the "winning side" by pretending to sympathize with the winner.

Verse 8. The idea these men had was that David would take it as a personal favor to have the head of this remaining heir to Saul's throne. The point in their speech that sets out what they thought would win the ap-

proval of David is expressed by the words, *thine enemy*. But they seemed not to know the spirit of David. He had always respected the lawful principles involved in any controversy, and had not wanted even Saul to be treated in any unmanly way. He therefore would not approve of any cowardly mistreatment of his family, especially when those members were righteous and harmless.

Verse 9. *As the Lord liveth*. This was a mild form of vow or oath. It meant that, as surely as the Lord lives, the things that will be said soon will be the truth.

Verse 10. The original account of this incident is in Chapter 1. The language here ignores the entire claim of the Amalekite for the slaying of Saul. The thing that aroused David was his attitude of pleasure at the death of Saul. Had the story he told been true, it would still have left the guilt of unlawful action upon him; therefore, whether true or false, the fact that he found pleasure in an unlawful act rendered him guilty.

Verse 11. To take pleasure in the death of Saul, as manifested by the Amalekite, was wrong, regardless of the fact that Saul had become sinful in his conduct as king. Then how much more wrong it is to find such pleasure at the death of a righteous man! And still more especially, when this death was caused by wicked men who took advantage of their victim. For such a deed these men deserved to be taken away in their own blood-guiltiness.

Verse 12. David did not make the execution personally, but called upon the young men whom he had in his employ to do the work. The bodies of the two murderers were mutilated, but not in as disgraceful a manner as they had done to Ish-bosheth. The mutilated parts were put up in a public place, while the head of their victim was given honorable burial.

2 SAMUEL 5

Verses 1, 2. The sincerity of these people might well be questioned. Not that they did not state the truth concerning the record of past conditions, for they did; but the question that may be asked is, why had they not recognized the right of David to be king instead of following the son of Saul. However, it is so evident now that David will be the recognized ruler

that about all of the forces will want to serve him.

Verse 3. These elders of Israel were the leading men of the tribes and were in a position to represent the people. They anointed David king over Israel. This did not mean that he had never been anointed before, for we know that Samuel had done that. The thought is, they took that means of formally recognizing him as their king.

Verse 4. This short verse is informative in that it gives us the entire age of David, and the portion of his life which he spent as king. It will be understood that it is a statement made by the inspired writer in advance of the actual years of his life. At the present time David is 37.

Verse 5. This tabulates the places and divisions of David's reign. The 7 years of his reign while in Hebron included only the tribe of Judah, because at that time the other tribes were following Abner in the attempt to preserve the kingdom of Saul.

Verse 6. Jerusalem is to be the capital city of the Israelite nation hereafter. Now that David is approaching it to take rightful possession as king, he finds a group of people occupying it called Jebusites. They have been there for centuries. It is to be expected that they will object to David's entrance into the city as it will mean their ejection. But they make a sort of offer of admitting him to the city, and place it on the condition that he was to remove such conditions among the people as blindness and other physical disability. The text says *thinking*, David could not come in. The margin renders it "saying," and the lexicon gives the same. Either would be correct. The inspired writer would know what they were thinking, even though they had not expressed themselves in words. The situation shows that they counted on the generosity of David to permit them to remain undisturbed, and yet that would constitute a bar against his entering into the city according to their arbitrary stipulation.

Verse 7. The chronological place for this verse is after v. 8, and is introduced here as a conclusion to the events of v. 6. Zion was a fortification in the southwest part of the city. David took it and it became his headquarters. It also came to be called the city of David and will figure often and with importance in the history.

Verse 8. After the Jebusites made the challenge-like stipulation mentioned in v. 6, David disdained attacking them personally. Instead, he called upon his service men to make the attack. *He shall be chief and captain.* These words are not in the original, and have been ignored in the R. V. The statement of David was really an instruction to his men as to how and where to make the attack. *Hated.* This means that David hated them in the sense of their being his enemies regarding his lawful authority there. The word *wherefore* is rendered in the margin as "because." The last part of the verse would properly be constructed to read, "Because they said, that on account of the blind and lame, David will not be able to enter the city." And we should understand them to have in mind the stipulation which these persons had made (without any authority) to David. The thing that was overlooked was the fact that David never accepted the condition, therefore, it would not constitute any barrier to his entrance.

Verse 9. Millo was a rampart surrounding this hill called Zion. It had existed before the time we have been studying about, but had fallen somewhat in decay. David now repaired it. As it surrounded the hill we can understand the words here, "from Millo and inward."

Verse 10. Most of the opposition that had come from the house of Saul was now removed, and David grew in influence and favor of God and man.

Verses 11, 12. Tyre was a small, but important kingdom bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. That is, Tyre was a principal city of the kingdom known as Phoenicia. This kingdom was on friendly terms with Israel at this time and the king, Hiram, showed his friendship by furnishing materials for a house to be occupied by the King of Israel. This act of friendship on the part of a neighboring power, together with other favorable conditions, assured David that his kingdom was destined to be a great power.

Verses 13-16. The chief interest we have in this paragraph is connected with two of the sons of David, Nathan and Solomon. They were full brothers, being sons of David by Bathsheba, according to 1 Chr. 3: 5. One of the important facts regarding these full brothers was that each was an ancestor of Christ. (Matt. 1: 6; Luke 3: 31).

Verse 17. The old enemies of the

Israelites, the Philistines, heard of the coming into power of David, the successor to Saul, and came up to *seek* him. That word is from an original that means to search out or spy on. Upon hearing of it, David went into his *hold*, which means his fort within Millo.

Verse 18. The valley of Rephaim was not far from Jerusalem, and the Philistines encamped in great numbers in this place, thus forming a menace to David.

Verse 19. David inquired for advice about attacking them. He was told to do so, and that he would be victorious over the enemy.

Verse 20. Baal-perazim was a spot within the valley mentioned above. At this place David joined the battle with the Philistines and defeated them. He gave the Lord the glory for this victory.

Verse 21. The heathen peoples of that age and country worshipped small gods that they carried with them. In this battle they had to leave these images, and David and his men disposed of them, that is, they took charge of them. The word *burned* is from *NASA* and defined in the margin "took them away." The lexicon agrees with it, for Strong defines the word, "to lift." It has been rendered in the A. V. by *bear* 156 times, *carry* 25, *lift* 137, and many others. They were taken as spoils of war, and valued on account of the precious metals and other useful materials of which they were made.

Verses 22-25. The Philistines were not willing yet to give up the conflict, and came up again and occupied a position similar to the previous one. David inquired if he should again make an attack directly as before. God told him not to do that, but to make a semicircle and come up behind them. There is some uncertainty with the dictionaries as to the meaning of the name for these trees. What is pretty certain is that the leaves of the trees were very sensitive to the slightest breeze, and God decided to use the method described to notify David when to make the attack. It is another instance that should remind us of Heb. 1: 1. The battle was again successful for the Israelites, and the slaughter of the Philistines extended from Geba to Gazer, which were towns in this area comprehended by the valley of Rephaim.

2 SAMUEL 6

Verse 1. The word *chosen* means the select rank from the standpoint of usefulness in general, not especially from the standpoint of war. The service at hand was not one that necessarily called for military operations; it had to do with the ark.

Verse 2. Baale is the same as Kirjath-jearim, the place where the ark has been for some time. (1 Sam. 7: 2). David was at Jerusalem, and the statement means that he took these chosen men with him and went to Baale, and *from* there went to bring up (to Jerusalem) the ark. This verse is another link in the chain of the ark, and the reference should be made to v. 11. The two cherubims were on the ark and the Lord's name was represented between these images at the service of the high priest.

Verse 3. Ex. 25: 14, 15, shows that the ark was to be carried by hand, and the staves were provided for that purpose; therefore it was unlawful to place it on a cart to be moved. In moving the sacred vessel in this way a great danger of experiencing the wrath of God was present.

Verse 4. The antecedent of *it* is the cart, last word in v. 3. It is stated that *it* accompanied ("with" in the margin) the ark. One of the men, Ahio, went before the ark. That indicates that the other man, Uzzah, walked beside it.

Verse 5. David is known to students of the Bible as the great musician. As the ark was being borne along to the resting place provided, he was celebrating the occasion with these instruments.

Verse 6. It is a common idea that Uzzah was punished for touching the ark, he not being a priest; it is an erroneous idea, for no one was permitted to touch it. (Num. 4: 15). The staves were to be used for moving it. Uzzah was cut down for the simple act of touching the sacred vessel. A good motive is frequently offered to justify something that is otherwise questionable. This affair about Uzzah shows such reasoning to be wrong. The oxen "stumbled" (marginal reading) and the ark seemed to be in danger of being damaged, which would have been a tragedy. Notwithstanding, it was a sin to touch it.

Verse 7. The word *anger* is a proper translation. One definition in the lexicon for the original is "ire." The mar-

gin gives "rashness" for *error*, and the lexicon supports the rendition. Uzzah was prompted by his interest in the ark, and failed to consider what it would mean to touch it. His death by it proves that the presence of a sacred object will not protect one in a sinful act.

Verse 8. The word *displeased* is from the same original as *grieved* in 1 Sam. 15: 11, and *breach* is defined "a break, literal or figurative."—Strong. David was grieved because God had broken his favor toward Uzzah.

Verses 9, 10. David was overawed by the death of Uzzah, and hesitated about bringing the ark to his own headquarters in Jerusalem. Instead, he took it to the house of Obed-edom. It is significant that it was *carried*, which was the lawful manner for moving it.

Verse 11. This is another link in the chain of the ark. The reference is to v. 12. Obed-edom was a Levite and a friend of the Lord's people. The ark was in his house three months and treated with respect; as a result, the blessing of God came to him.

Verse 12. At this place make a reference to v. 17 for the ark. After three months, during which time the ark was in the house of this Levite, David went to complete his original purpose to bring it to Jerusalem.

Verse 13. This procession was one accompanied with joyfulness, and the gratitude of David was expressed by sacrificing oxen and other animals.

Verse 14. Dancing was practiced by men and women in old times as an expression of joy and gladness. There is no evidence, however, that the sexes danced together. An *ephod* was a girdle, similar to an article worn by the priests. David was wearing the ordinary loose skirt common to the men of that age, and the only thing to hold it down and near the body was this *ephod*.

Verse 15. The procession with the ark continued, accompanied with shouts and other exhibitions of gladness.

Verse 16. The action of dancing in the kind of garment David wore caused some exposure. Michal saw this and *despised* him in her heart. The word means she held him in low esteem.

Verse 17. This is another link in the chain for the ark, and the reference is to 15: 24. The *tabernacle* was a tent which David had provided for the housing of the ark. It was pitched in

that part of Jerusalem called Zion. (1 Chr. 16: 1; 1 Ki. 8: 1.) The tabernacle that Moses built had been captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4), and was now at Gibeon. (1 Chr. 21: 29.) The ark, however, had been rescued by the Israelites, but had no satisfactory place of shelter; David, therefore, had provided this tent.

Verses 18, 19. When the ceremonies for the ark were over, David pronounced a blessing on the people. It would come from God. Then he bestowed personal favors on them in the form of the necessities of life. After this they returned to their homes.

Verse 20. The kindly feeling of David for his household would have been shown next, but Michal gave him an unfavorable greeting. The form of speech which she used is called irony. We know not whether she was actually humiliated by his conduct before the maidens, or was jealous of his apparent happiness in their midst. We are certain, however, that her attitude was wrong with regard to David.

Verse 21. This means his dancing was *before the Lord*, and not with any regard for the maidens present. He put a "sting" in his speech by saying the Lord had chosen him *before her father*. The first word is not in the original, but the context justifies its use. It does not mean before in point of time, for that would not have been true. It means that David was regarded higher than Saul, and more worthy of being king over Israel. (1 Sam. 13: 14.) For that reason he would play (joyously perform) before the Lord.

Verse 22. *Vile* and *base* do not mean bad morally. Michal had accused him of abasing himself before the maidens. His meaning is, if playing before the Lord constituted baseness, then he would do more of it; and his actions would be so evidently justified that he would be approved by these very maidens whom she represented as being displeased. Such a result would prove them to be more deserving of his regard than his wife would be.

Verse 23. Because of this behaviour of Michal, David did not cohabit with her afterward. *Had no child* means that she had none after this. The statement has no bearing on the question as to whether she had borne children previously.

2 SAMUEL 7

Verse 1. This rest from his enemies means only a lull in war activities; David will have many battles to wage.

Verse 2. We should distinguish between Nathan the prophet and David's son with the same name. From Samuel onward there was almost always a national prophet (Acts 3: 24) who served as an inspired teacher or interpreter of the law. David was concerned about the disregard for the ark. He was living in a home made of cedar (5: 11), while the ark had nothing better than curtains (tent Ch. 6: 17).

Verse 3. This assurance was given because of the general idea that God favored David, not that Nathan had as yet inspired information on the subject at hand.

Verse 4. That night the Lord spoke to Nathan. Prophets and other special spokesmen of God were inspired only when there was something for them to speak or write. Now, the Lord had a message to give David by Nathan.

Verses 5, 6. This paragraph indicates that David was more concerned than God about a house for Him.

Verse 7. The same idea is continued. The Lord has not complained about not having a house, why should David be so concerned?

Verse 8. The humble background of David's life, followed by his exaltation to the throne of Israel, is the subject of this paragraph.

Verses 9, 10. God assured David of continued favor for himself and the people. Furthermore, he was given the promise that the people of his kingdom would some day have a place of relief, and not be afflicted by their enemies as before.

Verse 11. The pronoun *thee* is variously related as to antecedents. The first instance refers to Israel, the second to David personally, and the third to him and the people combined.

Verse 12. This promise of the perpetuity of his kingdom was to be fulfilled through his own son.

Verse 13. There was no wrong in the idea of a house, for David's son was to be permitted to build one, and his kingdom was to be established *for ever*, or age-lasting.

Verse 14. This punishment with *the rod of men* was fulfilled in 1 Ki. 11: 14, and in other similar instances.

Verse 15. Saul was finally rejected and ignored completely, and suffered to come to a violent death (1 Sam. 28: 6; 31: 6), while Solomon enjoyed the leniency of God, even after his many sins. (1 Ki. 11: 13, 39.)

Verses 16, 17. Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin. Because of his sins, the throne was not only taken out of his family, but from his tribe. David was of the tribe of Judah, and as long as the kingdom existed, its kings were from that tribe.

Verse 18. These promises deeply affected David, and he entered the tent containing the ark and spoke to the Lord about his feelings.

Verse 19. The thing that especially impressed him was God's assurance for his house in the distant future.

Verses 20, 21. A sense of his inability fully to express himself was admitted. He then relied on the Lord's power to read the mind, and to see the regard therein existing for the divine purposes.

Verse 22. Not only did David confess that God is great, but also that he is without an equal.

Verse 23. God is great as a divine individual, but his people also is great. The greatness of this people was due to the might of God as demonstrated in the redemption of it from another strong nation. This was done in spite of the heathen gods.

Verse 24. This recognizes the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham in Gen. 12: 2.

Verse 25. This is not a doubt of God's faithfulness; it is a form of expression just the opposite. It means that David fully expected God to carry out his covenant.

Verse 26. In those days of rival gods, it was significant that Israel was ruled by the Lord of hosts. Before such a God, David wished his house to be established.

Verse 27. God's promise to build a house for David's people encouraged him to offer this prayer.

Verses 28, 29. It is interesting to note that David was not concerned about himself only. He was more thoughtful of the welfare of his people who composed the nation of the Lord.

2 SAMUEL 8

Verse 1. *Metheg-ammah*. This is from a word defined by Strong, "bit of the metropolis, an epithet of Gath."

Smith's Bible Dictionary defines it, "the bridle of the mother city—namely, of Gath, the chief town of the Philistines." The statement is a figure of speech. Taking of the chief city, thus getting control, is like getting control of a beast by taking his bridle.

Verse 2. *Measured* is from MADAD and defined, "a primitive root; properly to stretch; by implication to measure (as if by stretching a line); figuratively, to be extended."—Strong. *Line*. This is from CHEREL and defined, "a rope (as twisted), especially a measuring line; by implication, a district or inheritance (as measured); or a noose (as of cords); figuratively, a company (as if tied together)."—Strong. David had so completely subjugated the Philistines that he could dispose of them as he saw fit. Using the line or rope as a gauge, he divided them into two groups; the number counted off by two lengths of the line into one, and those of one length into another. Then he cast them down on the ground, or compelled them to lie down. This was a performance corresponding to that when an officer orders a man to "throw up your hands." When this had been completed he slew the larger group, and kept the other for servants.

Verses 3, 4. Gen. 15:18 gives the promise made to Abraham that his seed should possess the territory extending to the river Euphrates. This accounts for the words *his border*. In attacking the men named he was taking possession of land already his by divine right. It had been unlawfully occupied, however, by these heathen people, therefore he had to recover it. To hough the horses means to cut the tendon just under the hock joint, which would disable them for service.

Verse 5. It would be usual for the heathen kings to sympathize with each other. That is why the Syrians tried to help Hadadezer. Their effort, however, was defeated.

Verse 6. A garrison is a military post, or stationary headquarters for defense. The first success over the Syrians needed to be safeguarded against future uprising, and these garrisons were for that purpose. *Syria of Damascus* is so worded to distinguish it from the country beyond the Euphrates, which was also called Syria sometimes. *Brought gifts* means they formally recognized the authority of David.

Verses 7, 8. These metals were taken as spoils of war, and appropriated to the service of God.

Verses 9, 10. Toi, king of Hamath, had been at war with Hadadezer, and the enmity still existed between them. The victory of David over this foe was in his favor; therefore, Toi sent his son to congratulate David. Furthermore, he followed the custom of sending gifts as tokens of friendship, and in recognition of the dignity of David.

Verses 11, 12. These gifts were added to others that had been received from the various nations as formal "presents," likewise, those taken as spoils of war.

Verse 13. The Syrians were a powerful and dreaded people, and David's success over them got him a name among the people. *Valley of salt*. The works of reference are not definite as to the location of this valley. It seems to be not far south of the Dead Sea, perhaps a flat stretch of land somewhat lower than the immediate surroundings.

Verse 14. The establishment of garrisons (military posts) in a country is evidence of the subjugation of the country; and such was the condition in this place. Since the Edomites descended from Esau (Gen. 36:9), this is a fulfillment of Gen. 25:23; 27:29.

Verse 15. *Judgment*. This is from MISHPAT and defined, "properly a verdict (favorable or unfavorable) pronounced judicially, especially a sentence or formal decree."—Strong. *Justice*. This is from TSEDAQAH, and defined, "righteous (abstractly), subjectively (rectitude), objectively (justice), morally (virtue) or, figuratively (prosperity)."—Strong. The verse means that David rendered his decisions according to righteous principles.

Verses 16-18. This may well be called David's cabinet. Most of the terms are self-explanatory; the last one, however, does not denote any authority. The marginal rendering properly gives us "princes."

2 SAMUEL 9

Verses 1-4. David had made a league with Jonathan that pertained to the descendants of his father's house. (1 Sam. 20:14-16.) It was this league that prompted the inquiry described. The investigation brought a servant named Ziba to David for more direct information, who cited him to a son of Jonathan's, then living in the house

of Machir. He was a ward of that place, due to an injury received when five years old. (Ch. 4: 4.) Not being able-bodied, it was a real favor to be cared for as David wished to do.

Verses 5, 6. The name of this son of Jonathan's was Mephibosheth, and David had him brought to him. Upon their meeting, Mephibosheth performed the usual courtesy of that age by complete prostration of the body toward the ground.

Verse 7. David did not merely promise kindness to Mephibosheth, but told him the motive; that it was for the sake of his father, Jonathan.

Verse 8. *Dead dog*. These come from the usual originals for such terms, and are not given any special definition for the present use. The conclusion is therefore, that it is just an emphatic expression of humility and unworthiness, but used figuratively.

Verse 9. Calling Ziba to him again, David told him of his disposition of Saul's property that had come down to Jonathan; that it all was to belong to Mephibosheth.

Verse 10. The next command was for Ziba and his family group to till the land for the son of Jonathan, and bring the products in for his credit. Notwithstanding all such provision, Mephibosheth was to be a special guest at the table of David.

Verse 11. Ziba promptly agreed to comply with the instructions of the king, and was again told that Mephibosheth would be treated as one of the king's sons.

Verses 12, 13. The son of Jonathan also had a family group of some extent, and had need of household support. That accounted for his need of the land products which were to be administered by the servants of Ziba, by his directions. All this time, however, Mephibosheth received his personal care as a royal guest at the table of David. In this whole transaction of David's we have a worthy example of gratitude.

2 SAMUEL 10

Verses 1, 2. Gratitude again prompted David to act. The objective was to show kindness to Hanun, king of the Ammonites and son of Nahash, former king. This kindness was in return for some favor he had received from his father. David sent by his servants to

offer condolences to Hanun on the recent death of his father.

Verse 3. The good intentions of David were misjudged by the princes of Hanun. They caused him to believe that the men were spies.

Verse 4. Hanun did not do them any bodily injury, but greatly abased them by mutilating their beards and clothing.

Verse 5. It would have been the work of only a few hours to restore the clothing, while a much longer time would be required for the beards to grow. David, therefore, gave them permission to tarry at Jericho until their beards grew.

Verse 6. *Stank* is from a word that is defined, "became offensive." In times of national unrest, to regard a nation as an offense is about equal to expectation of war. On this basis, the Ammonites concluded to secure an ally against David. They hired the Syrians to help them.

Verse 7. When soldiers are hired to fight in an army of a foreign commander, they are called mercenaries. Such an action is equivalent to a declaration of war. David so interpreted it, and sent his commander-in-chief of the field, Joab, with the best of his fighting men.

Verse 8. The Ammonites and Syrians arranged themselves as distinct units in the field, but prepared to fight together against Joab.

Verses 9, 10. Seeing the formation of his enemy, Joab did a like maneuver. He chose a detachment of the best men to serve under him against the Syrians, and placed the rest under his brother Abishai to meet the Ammonites.

Verse 11. Joab instructed his brother that if either division were failing in the battle, the other should come to his rescue.

Verse 12. Joab encouraged Abishai to trust in the Lord for the proper outcome.

Verse 13. The Syrians did not put up any fight, but fled at the approach of Joab.

Verse 14. The desertion of the Syrians disheartened the forces under Abishai, and they likewise fled.

Verses 15, 16. The Syrians decided to attempt recovery of their lost "honor." They allied themselves with Hadarezer, the man who had been defeated by David. (Ch. 8: 3, 4.)

Verses 17, 18. This alliance did the Syrians no good for they were again beaten before David, who had taken active command.

Verse 19. The servants of Hadarezer now realized that Israel was too strong for them, and came to peace terms. This put an end to the attempts of the Syrians to help the Ammonites.

2 SAMUEL 11

Verse 1. *Expired* is from a word defined "a recurrence." The wording means "at the return of the year," and applies to the time of year when it was usual to begin another campaign of war. David sent Joab, his military leader, out to war against the Ammonites, while he remained at Jerusalem. The army laid siege against Rabbah, an important, walled city of the Ammonites.

Verse 2. While the siege of Rabbah was being conducted, a sad affair occurred in Jerusalem. David was on the roof of his house, a place so used in old times, as the houses had flat roofs. (Deut. 22: 8; Josh. 2: 6; Judg. 16: 27; 2 Sam. 18: 24; Matt. 24: 17.) From there he saw a woman washing herself. The context shows that she was taking a general bath, although the original word does not always require that meaning. She exposed her body for it says she was *very beautiful to look upon*. This indicates that the appeal to one's eyes was the thing considered. The mere sight of a woman bathing her hands or face would excite no passion. We must conclude, therefore, the statement means a general exposure. Since David was in a place where he had right to be, and where it was customary for men to be, we would have to conclude that Bath-sheba was careless in selecting a place to bathe. Two wrongs, however, do not make one right, and the sin of David was so great that no mention was made of her mistake.

Verse 3. Upon inquiry, David learned the identity of the woman. Her husband was one of the vallant soldiers, then in service in the war against the Ammonites, and her name was Bath-sheba. She was alone, therefore, and her husband was some distance from home. She had a form that made great sex appeal, and David had beheld it.

Verse 4. Using his power as king, he sent for the woman and committed adultery with her. *For she was purified*. The R. V. renders this the same

as the A. V., while the marginal rendering is, "and when she had purified herself," etc. The word *uncleanness* is from TUMAH, and Strong defines it, "religious impurity." The law considered a woman ceremonially and religiously unclean after her periodical function. (Lev. 15: 19-24); also, after intimate relations with a man. (Lev. 15: 18.) In the case at hand either rendering could be correct. If the one in the common text be accepted, it means that David would be free to be intimate with her as far as Lev. 15: 24 was concerned. If the one in the margin be accepted, it means that Lev. 15: 18 was obeyed.

Verse 5. When Bath-sheba knew of her condition she informed David of it. This is one case of conception that would not have occurred had mankind always been unclothed. See comments on Gen. 3: 16.

Verse 6. David was in supreme authority, and his order for the recall of Uriah was obeyed.

Verse 7. Upon arrival of Uriah, David pretended to be concerned about the progress of the war. Some such motive was necessary, he thought, for recalling Uriah, else he would have suspected some improper one, and that would have defeated the real purpose for his presence. This inquiry as to the war, therefore, was insincere.

Verse 8. David wished to escape responsibility for the child expected by Bath-sheba; for this reason he gave Uriah "leave of absence," that he might enjoy the comforts of home and the pleasures of married life. *Mess of meat*. The last word is not in the original, and the word for *mess* is defined in part, "a present." David wanted to make a very friendly feeling in the mind of Uriah, and this was just a token of his good will. If he can induce him to dismiss the cares of war for a little while, and go into the company of his wife from whom he has been separated, the way will be clear to place the paternity of the child on him.

Verse 9. Uriah was not in the frame of mind to carry out David's plans. Instead, he passed the night in company with the king's servants, near the royal house.

Verse 10. David was told of Uriah's actions, and again pretended to be concerned about his comfort. He did so by reminding him that he had been on a journey.

Verse 11. Like a true soldier, Uriah was concerned more for the success of the Lord's cause, than for his personal pleasure. This was especially so when he remembered that Joab and the ark were out in the field of battle. Under such conditions he could not conscientiously relax to indulge in the pleasures of home life.

Verse 12. Seeing his first plan did not work, David thought of another. He will let a day and night go by, which will permit the military ardor to cool off, perhaps, and also his natural desire for his wife may assert itself.

Verse 13. It is known that when a man is under the influence of intoxication, his lower or animal desires are often more urgent; likewise, his finer qualities are dulled. Now then, if Uriah can be made drunk, he may take up the king's offer and go home. This plan, however, did not succeed.

Verse 14. One more plan remained for getting Uriah out of the way. It is remarkable to note the confidence David had in the faithfulness of Uriah. The very letter that was to be his death warrant was entrusted to him for transmission.

Verse 15. There is no evidence that Joab knew the purpose of David in all this. Perhaps Uriah has offended the king, but he did not have the heart to execute him directly. At any rate, he knew it was David's will that Uriah must die.

Verses 16, 17. In obedience to the commands of his superior, Joab put Uriah in a place of greatest danger. The result was according to plans; Uriah was killed.

Verses 18-21. This message of Joab could be more easily understood if we knew he was aware of David's plans. In any case, he wanted to prepare the messenger with the means of quieting the king. He was to finish the conversation with the good news (to David) of the death of Uriah.

Verses 22-24. There is no indication that the messenger had to do anything to calm David. The whole report went through without interruption.

Verse 25. This again shows the pretense that David has been carrying on throughout the affair. He knew that Joab did not need any consolation, but the messenger must not be "let in" on the scheme, hence this speech.

Verse 26. Like a true wife, Bathsheba mourned the death of her brave

husband. There is no evidence that she knew of his visit to the king.

Verse 27. This verse as a whole covers several months but begins immediately after the way was open for David's scheme. In this affair he was guilty of four distinct sins; adultery (v. 4); hypocrisy (v. 7, 8); alcoholism (v. 13); and murder (v. 15).

2 SAMUEL 12

Verses 1-4. Nathan the prophet is meant; he was national prophet in place of Samuel. This indirect approach to David was to cause him to realize the magnitude of his sin by viewing it with an unprejudiced mind. The parable uses him as the rich man, Uriah the poor. The many flocks refers to David's numerous wives, the one ewe lamb to Bath-sheba, Uriah's only wife. With this setup in mind, the application of the parable to the facts is easy.

Verse 5. *As the Lord liveth* is a Biblical expression used frequently and means, "as surely as the Lord liveth." David has no doubt that the guilty man should die.

Verse 6. Not only should the man die, but his property should be seized to repay, fourfold, the wrong done. Since the poor man's life was not taken, the death sentence for the rich man was because he *had no pity*, and the property assessment was for taking that of the poor man.

Verse 7. There was nothing indefinite in the accusation that Nathan made. *Thou art the man*. The most important favors that had been given him were first mentioned. They consisted of his being delivered from Saul, and his elevation to the throne.

Verse 8. *Thy master's wives*. There is no evidence that David was ever intimate with a wife of Saul's, nor was he ever accused of irregularity along that line, except in the case of Bath-sheba. But the house of Saul had been turned over to him. That would include the women subjects of the realm, among whom he had found his wives. Nathan told him that any further need with which he had not been supplied, would have been given him when such need became evident.

Verse 9. *Wherefore* means "why?" *Despised* means to belittle or treat with disrespect. *Commandment* is in the singular form, but David had disobeyed three of the ten; the one against coveting a neighbor's wife;

against adultery; and against murder. The means of getting Uriah killed was indirect, but the charge of murder was direct. That proves that one is responsible for the result of any plot he may form.

Verse 10. One item of punishment that was to come upon David was the presence of the sword in unfriendly use.

Verse 11. Another was to be a violation of his marriage rights, which occurred through his own son. (Ch. 16: 22.)

Verse 12. *Thou didst it secretly.* The last word is from an original that means "under cover." The idea is that, while various ones knew of some things being done, they did not know "what it was all about."

Verse 13. David's confession was clean cut. No attempt to explain or justify the act. No reference to some others who had "done as bad, or worse." *I have sinned against the Lord.* This did not ignore the rights of Uriah and his wife, but all sins, regardless of any man affected, are primarily against God. This spirit of penitence is doubtless the reason for saying David was a man after God's own heart. (1 Sam. 13: 14.) In return for his confession, Nathan told him that his life would be spared.

Verse 14. Although David received the mercy of God as to his life, he must suffer the loss of the child. The purpose for this was to hush the blasphemies of the enemies. Had he been permitted to escape all punishment, after committing such a grievous sin, they would have said it was because he was a "favorite," and was to be shielded in wrong.

Verse 15. After Nathan went home, the Lord brought a severe sickness on the babe. This seems strange to us, but God's ways are not ours. While it appears as an unjust treatment of the babe, we may consider it a blessing in disguise. The bodily suffering will be comparatively brief, while a life of uncertain experiences would be long. He would frequently be confronted with the shameful story of his birth. Instead of such a regrettable situation, he will be permitted, after a short period of physical suffering, to pass into that state of happiness that awaits all who die in the Lord.

Verse 16. "While there is life there is hope" is a familiar saying, and it seems to have been the thought of

David. Nathan had told him the child would die. However, he knew that God was merciful, and perhaps he would "repent him of the evil" he thought to do, as he had done on many occasions. Fasting and prostrating oneself on the ground was a form of devotion used in times of great distress or desire.

Verse 17. The word *elders* does not have any official meaning unless the context requires it. As used here it has the ordinary meaning of the older persons of his household. Not being affected personally by the state of things, they could realize that David was neglecting his own body to no benefit of the child. But their attempts to get him to eat with them failed.

Verse 18. After a period of seven days, the child died. During this time David had refused to eat. The servants, however, misunderstood the state of his mind. They thought he was giving way to morbid grief; that was a mistake as verse 22 shows.

Verse 19. It is sometimes difficult to account for the shortsightedness of people. The servants wished to keep knowledge of the child's death from David. Yet, the very thing that would surely arouse his suspicions was what they did. Had they gone about their duties in the regular manner, he would not have been prompted to make the inquiry. They would have been compelled, however, sooner or later to tell him. Therefore, their conduct can be explained only by considering the awe, common to humanity, when in the presence of death.

Verses 20, 21. David's conduct, upon learning of the child's death, puzzled the servants. In verse 17 he resisted all efforts to get him to eat. Now that his grief (in their view) was greater than ever, why does he relax and call for food? In their confusion they asked him for an explanation.

Verse 22. His answer was consistent with the faith and practice of a servant of God. For further comments see verses 16, 18.

Verse 23. If it is true that "while there is life, there is hope," it is likewise true that death will end that hope. The original decree of God stood, hence there is no occasion for continued fasting. Such devotions were in order as long as the mercy of God was pending, but that mercy was not expected to bring the child back from the dead. *I shall go to him.* This

shows David believed there was something in a human being more than the body. He still had the child's body and did not expect it to leave the earth. Moreover, since he expressed hope of going to the child, it meant he believed in another life after the one on earth was over.

Verse 24. The abruptness in the change of subject from the preceding verse is apparent only. The fact that this one verse reaches to the birth of another son shows it to be a concise statement, and allows for respectful waiting after the period of mourning, before engaging in the relaxation and pleasure of home life. It was during that period that David was comforting his wife. All of this shows another fine quality of his character. He treated her with tender consideration, and did not rush her into the obligations of married life until she had been comforted, and in the frame of mind, therefore, to cooperate with her husband normally. After this another son was born and was named Solomon, which means *peace*. That was appropriate; he never had a war and thus was a "man of peace" with regard to his official life. *The Lord loved him*. In a sense the Lord loves everybody; therefore, something special is meant. This son was destined to succeed to his father's throne, and go through his reign without any war. This will make him a type of the only begotten Son of God, who will be the *Prince of Peace*. For these reasons he also will be permitted to build the temple, to be a type of the glorious church, the spiritual temple of God.

Verse 25. This is related to the preceding verse. Since God had special reasons for loving Solomon, he added a significant name to him, *Jedidiah*, which is defined by Strong, "beloved of Jah; *Jedidiah*, a name of Solomon." He (the Lord) sent word by Nathan the prophet, telling David of this additional name he had given the new son. However, he was never referred to again by that name. It seems to have been used on this occasion merely as an expression of good will, and to cheer David and his wife.

Verse 26. In 11: 1, 25 we read that David sent Joab to take this city, while he remained at Jerusalem. The initial siege and conquest took place.

Verse 27. But Joab took only that part of the city called *city of waters*. Smith's Bible Dictionary explains this as follows: "The lower town, so called

from its containing the perennial stream which rises in and flows through it." The citadel of the place remained to be taken.

Verse 28. Joab was willing to let his king and superior have the honor of the conquest, and accordingly sent word to him.

Verse 29. David acted on the suggestion, and completed the subjection of Rabbah.

Verse 30. Since he was king as well as warrior, it was befitting that he place this costly crown on his own head.

Verse 31. The words *under* and *through* are not in the original. *Brick-kiln* is from a word that means brick-mould. The verse means David made them work with the implements, and at brickmaking.

2 SAMUEL 13

Verse 1. It is the ordinary thing for members of a family to love each other, so the statement has some special meaning as regards Amnon. The word is from *AHAB* which Strong defines, "A primitive root; to have affection for (sexually or otherwise):" The context shows it means sexually.

Verse 2. Amnon's passion for his (half) sister was so great that he was in distress; to the extent that it affected his bodily appearance. The word *hard* is from *PALA* and defined in part, "great, difficult, wonderful,"—Strong. The meaning is that she was a virgin, and beautiful. That roused his feeling all the more, and suggested the unusual pleasure it would be to be intimate with her. He did not see any way, however, to obtain his desire.

Verses 3, 4. This friend observed the emaciation of Amnon and thought it strange. Being the king's son, having the benefit of the royal fare, there should be no reason for the condition. Upon inquiry, Amnon told him he was lovesick for Tamar. Of course, Jonadab understood that he was despairing of finding an opportunity for getting possession of the damsel, long enough to obtain his desires.

Verse 5. This shows the power of suggestion. Jonadab knew that if he would present the idea to Amnon, his craving for his sister would lead him on with the plan.

Verse 6. Amnon pretended he was sick, physically. In that condition his appetite would be weak and need some special inducement to prompt him to

eat. It is always desirable that the sick members of a family be able to take nourishment. Therefore, Amnon took advantage of such a sentiment, and asked that his sister be permitted to prepare him some food, in his sight.

Verse 7. The request of Amnon seemed reasonable, so the king instructed Tamar to serve her brother.

Verses 8, 9. The damsel did as instructed. That is, she was in the house, others being there also. But her work in preparing the cakes was in plain view of Amnon, even though not in the immediate room where he was lying. When they were ready to be served he refused to receive them as yet. Instead, he gave orders that all the men leave.

Verse 10. Complete privacy was now had. He directed her to come to his bedside and feed the cakes to him with her hand. She started to serve him as ordered.

Verse 11. This action brought her within arm's reach of this passionate man. Taking hold of her, he asked her to have intimate relations with him.

Verses 12, 13. She did not express any personal objection to him, but tried to show him the wrong of such a thing as he requested, and that it would bring shame on them both. Furthermore, she suggested that he ask the king for the lawful possession of her; that he would not be denied. There was nothing irregular in this suggestion since they were half brother and sister only, and such relatives married without criticism.

Verse 14. Amnon's real motive now expressed itself through his superior strength.

Verse 15. Love that is based on the coarser passion, only, is fickle; it will vanish when that passion is gratified. The moral reaction of the affair is perfectly logical. If a man does not love a woman because of *all* her qualities, but on the sensual basis only, when that is satisfied there is nothing of interest left. The alternative is sure to be the opposite of love. He ordered Tamar to leave.

Verse 16. *There is no cause.* Her meaning was that he had no reason for expelling her. The only honorable thing for him to do was to retain her and give her all the moral protection possible. Had his passion been associated with other considerations than sensuality, he would gladly have

shielded her, as Shechem offered to do for Dinah. (Gen. 34: 3, 4.) That is why Tamar complained that the last wrong was greater.

Verse 17. She evidently was hesitant about leaving; he therefore ordered her to be put out by force and the door fastened against her.

Verse 18. Up to this event Tamar wore a garment that was a badge of virginity.

Verse 19. That garment would now be inappropriate, because she was no longer a virgin, although not by her own fault. She cancelled that badge by tearing it. *Crying* is from ZEAQAH which Strong defines, "a shriek or outcry." It shows she was not merely weeping as the term generally signifies, but was making a sound that indicated some terrible thing had happened to her.

Verse 20. Absalom knew the use and significance of the peculiar garment Tamar had been wearing. He saw it rent, which meant her virginity had been violated, and at once suspected Amnon. The necessary inference is that his condition of body had finally caught his attention and that of others, and the explanation of it had become known. By "putting two and two together," Absalom was able to name the guilty man. For her sake, he tried to make the situation look not too bad, since it was her brother who had been with her. As additional comfort he took her into his own home.

Verses 21, 22. Both David and Absalom detested this deed, and it might have been possible that both could have worked together in punishing Amnon, and not to have become so estranged as they did. But when Absalom "took the law into his own hands," as we shall soon see, it started a bitter feud that was never quieted until David stood at the bier of his beloved, but wayward son.

Verses 23, 24. Two years passed by and all that time Absalom was plotting to have Amnon killed. (v. 22.) The opportunity came, but he must be cautious not to rouse the suspicion of his father. Some distance from Jerusalem he had some sheep and the season for shearing had arrived. Such an occasion was often made into a time of festivity. On that pretense he invited his father, with his servants, to go with him. The invitation was general in order to hide his true motive.

Verse 25. David objected to going because of the charge it would cause. Amnon even insisted on his father's going, but we are sure he was not sincere. The purpose he had in mind would have been hindered had his father been present. That kind of conversation, however, deceived him, and paved the way for the next suggestion.

Verses 26, 27. If the king declined to go, why not let his brother go? There seemed to be little reason for even that burden. But he was urgent and the king permitted all his sons to go.

Verse 28. Drinking wine was a common practice on special occasions. *Merry with wine* refers to a state of mild intoxication in which the victim feels good, and unsuspecting of any danger. Under that condition it would be easy to get advantage of him. The assassins were to use the occasion for killing Amnon on Absalom's order. They were incited to the awful deed by the implied taunt of being lacking in valor.

Verse 29. The murder of Amnon frightened the other sons of David, and they fled.

Verse 30. While they were en route, the report reached David that all his sons had been killed. We do not know who was responsible for the false report, but the absence of the brothers, from both the place of the shearing and the king's house, would lend plausibility to it.

Verse 31. The king rent his garments, which was a custom on occasions of grief.

Verses 32, 33. Jonadab was the man who made the suggestion to Amnon that led to the whole situation. (v. 5.) Naturally, he had been observant of the events that followed, and was able to inform the king as to who was dead, also the motive for the slaying. With this he offered consolation to David.

Verse 34. Absalom fled, and many of the people with him.

Verses 35, 36. The sons of the king naturally did not follow their brother Absalom; they were too much frightened. But they came back to Jerusalem. As they approached the city, Jonadab saw them and called attention of David, confirming the statement he made in v. 33. When they arrived in the presence of the king, all of them mourned together.

Verses 37, 38. This flight was an admission of guilt. He knew that his father would resent the deed, and therefore would likely punish him. So here is when the bitter feud began, mentioned earlier in the chapter. This absence from Jerusalem lasted 3 years.

Verse 39. David was comforted or reconciled to the death of Amnon. Now he became concerned about his absent son, Absalom. Notwithstanding his great crime, he longed to have him return.

2 SAMUEL 14

Verse 1. Sometimes a man's official dignity conflicts with his personal or sentimental inclinations. David realized that Absalom had killed his brother treacherously, and that the least that should be done to him was to keep him away from Jerusalem. At the same time, his love for his son was active, urging him in the direction of mercy. This accounts for the last verse of the preceding chapter, and the first in this.

Verse 2. Joab sensed the situation; that David's heart really would favor the return of Absalom, while the thought of justice caused him to withhold any offers of leniency. He concluded a plan to break down official "pride" and permit mercy to have some consideration. For this purpose he contacted a woman of Tekoah who seemed to be shrewd, and had her put on the disguise of a woman in mourning over some grief of long ago.

Verse 3. Joab made the story and the woman delivered it to David.

Verse 4. She followed the custom of respectful posture, and called for help.

Verse 5. Not only her posture, but her distressed appeal caused the king to ask what ailed her. The answer, that she was a widow, and that her husband was dead, was not merely for emphasis. She might have been separated from her husband. In that case she would have been a widow in effect. At the same time, were the husband living, it would have left the possibility of reconciliation and help.

Verse 6. The sons in the story refer to Absalom and Amnon.

Verse 7. There has been no statement to the effect that any general clamor had been made for the punishment of Absalom; but in the absence of some action of David encouraging him to return, it was represented that he was virtually a fugitive from his father's house.

Verse 8. David attempted to dismiss the woman by a general or indefinite promise.

Verse 9. She said this to impress the king with the seriousness of the situation. She also implied that the king had some doubts of the importance of the case. As a form of vow and to show her good faith in the matter, she was willing to stake the peace of her household on the truthfulness of her claim.

Verse 10. Seeing the woman was not satisfied with the promise stated in v. 8, he strengthened his assurance of personal protection for her, expecting this to satisfy her and cause her to go on to her own home.

Verse 11. This is more along the same line, only more specific and urgent. The king repeated his assurance of protection for her son.

Verse 12. The woman was now ready to introduce the real purpose of her story, which she intended to do gradually. Before going further, however, she tested out the king's patience by asking permission to speak another word.

Verse 13. This is a virtual accusation of inconsistency against the king. She blamed him with faulty speech in that he did not carry out the same in action. This was the first direct reference to his *banished* son.

Verse 14. Without doing as God would wish, there would be no hope of recovering from the situation of sadness caused by the absence of the son. It would be as hopeless as the natural recovery of water spilled on the ground. But the "impossible" can be accomplished, even, in the present sad affair, if David will use his power, under God, for recovering the son now banished through fear of his father.

Verses 15-17. She seems to have dropped the actual subject of the banished son of the king, and gone back to the story. But she did this so that the king would see what it was to which he had committed himself. She had so impressed him with the justice of her complaint that he bound himself to assist her. After getting him to commit himself to an imaginary case, then presenting the true one, which was the same in principle as the imaginary one—after all this, she hoped to persuade David to act on behalf of Absalom.

Verse 18. The king now saw the point. He committed her to answer a

question before she knew what it was about.

Verse 19. David suspected Joab of being the author of the story which the woman had told. He made a direct question to her regarding it. *As thy soul liveth* means, "as sure as thou livest." *None can turn*, etc., means there is no way of evading the question. She answered, therefore, not only that Joab was with her, but also had put the words in her mouth.

Verse 20. This goes one step farther than the preceding verse, and states the motive for the whole scheme.

Verse 21. Some time between the preceding verse and this, David had called Joab into his presence. Up to the present, no mention of the name of Absalom had been done. But the application of the story was so obvious that no pretense could be used to hide it. The king, therefore, instructed Joab to bring Absalom home.

Verse 22. Gratitude, expressed both by word and action, forms the subject here.

Verse 23. The permission of David, expressed in v. 21, allowed only of *bringing Absalom again*. Accordingly, Joab brought him to Jerusalem only.

Verse 24. The leniency of the king seemed to have been "held up," and his sense of dignity again asserted itself, for he refused to see his son after permitting him to return to the city. That would appear as a compromise between his paternal affection and his royal dignity.

Verse 25. The beauty of Absalom is applied to his entire body, from head to foot. That would indicate the writer was speaking of the perfection of his form, rather than the show of his countenance.

Verse 26. *Polled* means to cut the hair. It was not customary for men to have their hair long. This is indicated by the regulations of the Nazarite vow. The chief item of that vow was that the one making it would not cut his hair for the term of the vow. (Num. 6: 5; Judg. 13: 5; 1 Sam. 1: 11.) We should conclude, therefore, that the case of Absalom was an exception. For some reason he chose to depart from the common practice of men, and to let his hair grow long, in keeping with his quality of *beauty*. However, since the growth was unusual in weight, he cut it once a year for comfort.

Verse 27. The record does not say, but it is reasonable to conclude that he called the daughter Tamar in affectionate memory of his sister, who had been the unhappy occasion of his troubles.

Verse 28. These two years was the period Absalom had spent in his own house, during which he did not see his father's face.

Verse 29. The enforced separation from his father's face was made to appear the real source of his dissatisfaction. His true motive, though, was to get in better position for carrying out his plan of rebellion against the kingdom of his father. This will appear evident in the next chapter. He planned to be admitted to the presence of the king, and for that purpose sent for Joab. But he did not respond.

Verses 30, 31. Absalom caused the grain of Joab's field to be fired in order to force his attention. He got it, and was asked his reason for having the grain fired.

Verse 32. Having secured the attention of Joab, he told him he might as well have remained at Geshur, if he could not see the king, after being brought to the royal city. He proposed being brought before his father, and agreed beforehand to "take his medicine," whatever the king had against him.

Verse 33. The message was relayed to David who called for Absalom. Coming to his father, he performed the usual eastern custom of respect and bowed before the king, who kissed his son. There seemed to be a reconciliation, but the events soon to follow will prove his actions to have been a preparation for attack on the kingdom.

2 SAMUEL 15

Verse 1. After having effected an apparent peace with his father, Absalom waited a while, then began to lay his plans for a conspiracy.

Verse 2. The important cities were walled as a fortification against unfriendly strangers. That made it necessary to enter them through the gate. And that fact made it possible, also, to contact any person expected to enter the city. Naturally, there would be an almost daily appearance of citizens, coming with some sort of grievance or dispute, to have it settled by the king. But it would not be supposed that he could personally conduct all the cases brought up; deputies were

appointed to handle the less important ones. This was according to an arrangement in the time of Moses. (Ex. 18: 23-26; Deut. 1: 9-16.) Absalom took advantage of this to make personal approach to the people. He manifested much interest in them, asking even about what particular cities they represented.

Verse 3. He next pretended to agree with the complainants, but deplored the lack of proper ones to hear their cause. He did not directly accuse the king of any injustice; only deplored the shortage of proper men to act under him. That, of course, would open the way for a suggestion.

Verse 4. He did not pretend that he wanted to be king; he asked only that he might be judge. If that were the case he would decide all their personal disputes justly.

Verse 5. When a man did the act of obsequiousness (formal courtesy) toward Absalom, he did not merely "return the salute," but condescended to contact him with a hand clasp and a kiss.

Verse 6. By such unusual acts of friendliness it was natural that he would capture the affections of the people. That is the meaning of *stole the hearts of the people*.

Verses 7-9. *After forty years*. It would be unreasonable to apply this term as counted from the time Absalom fled, or to his return, for we know he would not have waited that long to act on his plot. Neither could it be dated from the actual taking of the throne by his father; it had not been that long since. Therefore, it must mean forty years from the anointing of David at Bethlehem. Whether Absalom made the vow as declared to his father we do not know. It seemed plausible, however, and furnished a pious motive for requesting the royal consent to his absence. Such a plan would prevent any suspicions over his journey out over the dominions of his father.

Verse 10. Under cover of this pretended religious action, Absalom sent spies with instructions to acclaim him king in Hebron. It will be recalled that his father began his royal career in this place. (Ch. 2: 11.) Should any questioning arise prior to his reaching the city where he was to be acclaimed, it could be explained by David's permission for Absalom to go there on account of the vow.

Verse 11. These men were invited

to go. *Simplicity* means innocence. The whole passage means the men did not know what was going on. They thought they were merely going along with Absalom on a friendly journey.

Verse 12. The general uprising was becoming more apparent; it now included even Ahithophel, David's advisor, and that while he was engaged in the sacrifices.

Verse 13. News of the conspiracy was brought to David. It was not a hired uprising; it was based on an affectionate attachment to Absalom.

Verse 14. David realized the seriousness of the situation. As long as Absalom only had to be reckoned with, he could stand his ground, but a general conspiracy, and one backed by love for the leading conspirator, could result in nothing short of the destruction of the present king. He advised his servants, therefore, that they should flee for their lives.

Verse 15. The servants declared they would support David in whatsoever he wished.

Verse 16. Concubines had about the same moral status as wives in ancient times; they differed chiefly as to property rights, but they were considered as partners of their master's bed in the same sense as wives.

Verse 17. *All the people*. This could not mean that the entire population left the city; but all of the people that fled were following David. They paused when they reached a place far enough away to be safe from attack.

Verse 18. These people formed a bodyguard for the king.

Verses 19, 20. David referred to Absalom as *king*. We know that he was a conspirator and not entitled to the name, but his father recognized that he was now great in the eyes of the people. He would not antagonize them unnecessarily. Besides, he was his beloved and spoiled son. Ittai was a slave, lately come into the service of David, and was offered release from the present adventure.

Verses 21, 22. As surely as that the Lord and David were living beings, so that sure was Ittai that he would not desert his master. Seeing his determination, David permitted him to continue with him.

Verse 23. This was a pitiable and disgraceful flight. They crossed a small stream that flowed near Jerusalem, and were started on their way toward the wilderness.

Verse 24. In the panic of fear they had started to take the ark for assistance. This is another link in the chain for the ark. The reference is to v. 29.

Verses 25, 26. David "came to himself" and ordered the ark taken back to its rightful place. He reasoned that if his lot was to be favored by the Lord, he would not need to rely on some special use of the sacred vessel; and if he should, it ought to be left in its proper place.

Verse 27. *Seer* was the same as prophet or teacher. The priests occupied that position after the death of Moses. (Lev. 10: 11; Deut. 17, 9; Mal. 2: 7.)

Verse 28. This was in keeping with the idea David expressed in the preceding verse. Since the priests were scriptural consultants, he was to pause at his present place of hiding until further word from them.

Verse 29. The priests obeyed and carried the ark back to Jerusalem. It remained there as long as we have any history of it. The link of the chain refers to 1 Ki. 6: 19.

Verse 30. *Head covered*. This referred to some form of veil or shield for the face, in token of the feeling of defeat and shame. Removing the sandals was for the same reason. The whole situation was shameful.

Verse 31. Counselors were men close to kings and other important leaders. They served as personal advisers. Ahithophel was one of such servants. He was joined to Absalom in the conspiracy, presumably to advise him in his actions. It was logical, therefore, that David would pray to have his counsel turned into foolishness. That would defeat the interests of Absalom.

Verse 32. The *mount* is Olivet. (v. 30.) Hushai was one of the counselors, and will figure prominently in the affair of Absalom and David. He was a friend of David and expressed sincere grief over the distressful condition.

Verse 33. This speech to Hushai would seem to be an ungracious attitude toward a friend. The verses to follow will explain.

Verse 34. He was to return to Jerusalem and pretend to be a friend to Absalom. He was to address him as *king*, and declare his faithfulness to him as he had been to his father. This plan was to counteract the influence of Ahithophel.

Verse 35. Hushai was to spy on the king, Absalom, then communicate with the priests.

Verses 36, 37. These priests each had a son. They were to act as messengers. When they had any instructions for David, these sons were to take them.

2 SAMUEL 16

Verse 1. David passed on beyond Olivet. This servant met him with equipment and provisions for the journey.

Verse 2. David was informed of the purpose of these things.

Verses 3, 4. Ziba had been the servant of Saul. (Ch. 9: 2.) *Master's son*, therefore, would be Mephibosheth. Upon David's question, Ziba told him that Mephibosheth was abiding in the city in the hope that the kingdom (that should have fallen to his father, Jonathan), would soon be restored. That would put Mephibosheth in the position of a conspirator against David. As to the truth of the report of Ziba's, see Ch. 19: 24-29. At present, however, David believed the story, and in recognition of his faithfulness, promised him all the property that should have come to Mephibosheth.

Verse 5. Bahurim was a place not far from Olivet. Shimei was sympathetic for the house of Saul, whose kingdom had been lost to David. It is understandable, therefore, why he cursed him. The word is from an original that means, "to make light."

Verse 6. Casting stones in this ineffective manner was on the same plane as his belittling language. But the strong bodyguard around David protected him.

Verse 7. *Come out, come out*. The R. V. renders this, "Begone, begone," and the lexicons agree. It was just more contemptible language, coupled with his slanderous epithet *debat*, which meant a very wicked person.

Verse 8. Shimei taunted David about his present condition of defeat. Although Absalom never had shown any sympathy for Saul, this wicked man was taking delight in the present rebellion against the king. He had the insolence to charge the Lord with helping Absalom, and that in revenge for his opposition against Saul. The history will show this entire speech of Shimei to be false.

Verse 9. *Dead dog* was an expression of utter contempt. In the fiery

zeal of devotion, Abishai proposed to slay Shimei. It was somewhat like the spirit manifested by Peter. (John 18: 10.)

Verse 10. *What have I to do with you* means, "I hardly know what to do with you." Perhaps the discipline was necessary for David. At any rate, that was the view he seemed to take of it. Later, Shimei made full confession for his sin and was pardoned.

Verse 11. David expressed no surprise at the unfriendly disposition of Shimei, when his own flesh and blood relative sought his life.

Verse 12. He took about the same attitude toward Shimei as he did toward Saul, when he was persecuting him. (1 Sam. 26: 9-11.)

Verse 13. This was more of his contemptible conduct. *Cast dust* is rendered in the margin by, "dusted him with dust." It would remind one of the actions of children.

Verse 14. No definite spot has been designated, referred to by *there*. It means, that when David and his men became weary in their enforced travel, they refreshed themselves there. It was no great distance from Jerusalem.

Verse 15. About this time Absalom entered Jerusalem, accompanied with the people and Ahithophel. This man, it will be remembered, was one of the counselors employed in those days by kings and other dignitaries. He had been in that service to Saul; now he is serving Absalom in that capacity.

Verse 16. Hushai carried out the request of his friend, David to go to Jerusalem and offer his services to Absalom; pretending to be converted over to his side of the controversy. *God save the king*. The proper noun is not in the original, and the second word is from an original that means "live." The expression could properly be rendered, "Long live the king."

Verse 17. Absalom chided him for his desertion. If he was his friend, why did he not accompany him before?

Verse 18. The explanation was very plausible. He would wish to be peaceable, and not be against the public opinion; especially when that is in harmony with the Lord's choice. Now that the choice has been made, he was ready to line up.

Verse 19. The speech of the preceding verse was not supposed to disagree with his conduct. If he had been with David for the reasons named, by

the same token he would serve Absalom, since he was a son. For the present, the explanation seemed to satisfy Absalom. The whole story sums up to the idea that he formerly believed David to have been the Lord's choice; now it is evident that a change has been decreed. The son of the former choice has taken his place, and is now in the capital city, and the people are standing by him. Therefore, Hushai, like a faithful citizen, is there, ready to serve the new king. The reader will recognize all this as a piece of shrewd strategy, conceived by David. Absalom was satisfied with the explanation and accepted the services of Hushai as personal adviser, the same as Ahithophel.

Verses 20-22. Ahithophel was asked to give advice against David. The purpose was to make it evident to the people that a breach had come between Absalom and his father. The reason for wanting such an impression was that, since Absalom was then in actual possession of the capital, and no prospect of serving both him and his father, it would be wise to stick with the victor. The first piece of advice was to be an act of disrespect for David, in being intimate with his concubines. The tent was set up on the roof of the house. Such places were commonly used, but not for the purposes of housing. This tent, therefore, would attract attention and provoke inquiry. The answer would be given, and the people all would see the tent and know for what it was used. That is the meaning of the words, "in the sight of this sun," (Ch. 12: 11), and *in the sight of all Israel* here.

Verse 23. The counsel of Ahithophel was regarded as reliable by all the people of those days, including David and Absalom. *Oracle of God* means, Word of God. Since God frequently used these counselors, their opinion was not far from the truth.

2 SAMUEL 17

Verse 1. We should keep in mind that two recognized counselors, Hushai and Ahithophel, were in the service of Absalom. Each was regarded as trustworthy. Consequently, each will be consulted. The first to advise was Ahithophel, and he asked for an army of twelve thousand chosen men.

Verse 2. With this force he would attack David while weak and unprepared for resistance, and smite the king only.

Verse 3. *Bring back* all the people did not mean he would have the people in a body with him. But it would bring all the people over to Absalom's side when they saw their former king, David, had been killed. The defeat of David would be equivalent to the personal capture of all the people.

Verses 4, 5. The proposal was agreeable to Absalom and the leading men of the people. However, as there were two personal counselors, the suggestion was taken under advisement, and consultation to be had with the other.

Verse 6, 7. Hushai was very respectful toward Ahithophel. He did not belittle his advice as not having any merit; only that it was not good *at this time*. We recall that the specific purpose David had in sending him into the service of Absalom was to counteract the counsel of Ahithophel. (Ch. 15: 34.) That service was to be accomplished soon. If this counsel of Ahithophel be adopted it would leave Absalom out of the battle. He would still be safe in his fortified city, while his men would be taking all the risks of the encounter. That would be unfortunate since he, personally, was chiefly responsible for the whole conspiracy.

Verses 8-10. All that Hushai said in this paragraph was true in theory. But some of the facts were beside the issue. Regardless of all consideration of David's shrewdness in evading an army, and of his spirit of desperation, the speech was intended as a foundation for his main objective which follows.

Verse 11. This comprises the vital difference between the counsel of Hushai and Ahithophel. The latter would have left Absalom, the "public enemy number 1," in a safe place, and endangered David only, the rightful ruler. The former would expose this conspirator to the dangers of war, while the king would be in some safe place, according to the last clause of verse 8.

Verse 12. This action of the great crowd was to be in the nature of a dragnet. Although David would be in hiding, this would find him. *As the dew falleth on the ground*. This referred to the general but unheralded manner of the approach of the army.

Verse 13. The same dragnet could find him if he were hiding in some city. Without taking the time and effort to search out all the lurking

places possible in the city, such a vast army could make a wholesale destruction which would be sure to include him.

Verse 14. There was a general approval of the counsel of Hushai. *Good counsel of Ahithophel* means it would have been good for Absalom. That is why God took a hand in the matter and had it counteracted by the advice of Hushai.

Verse 15. The priests were the proper ones to contact for information for the lawful ruler. This also was according to instructions of David to Hushai. (Ch. 15: 35, 36.)

Verse 16. Having advised Absalom to go out with a throng of people, he sent word of warning to David to move on out of the endangered territory.

Verse 17. Jonathan and Ahimaaz, sons of the priests, were to be the messengers for the priests, and were given the duty of taking the warning of Hushai to David. But they had been hiding by En-rogel, a spring not far from Jerusalem. It was necessary, therefore, that some neutral person take the message to them, and they to David. The person who did that was called a *wench*. That is from *SHIPCHAH* and defined by Strong, "a female slave (as a member of the household)"

Verse 18. Before they reached David, the messengers were seen by a lad, who told Absalom. That made it necessary for them to seek hiding, as Absalom went out after them. They came to Bahurim, a village near Jerusalem. There they found a friendly family who took them in. This *well* is from a word that means pit. The *court* was a yard round the house, forming part of the premises.

Verse 19. *The thing was not known* means the camouflage had the desired effect.

Verse 20. This is another instance of falsehood that is recorded without criticism by the writer. Again, we should remember the condition was a military one; and in such cases it is the common practice to deceive the enemy. After all, what is called strategy is usually the same as camouflage; and that is falsehood acted out.

Verse 21. As soon as the danger was past, the messengers came out of the pit and resumed their journey. Coming to David, they delivered the

warning sent by the priests. *Water*, of course, meant the Jordan River.

Verse 22. The "promised land," as we have seen, (Gen. 15: 18), included all the territory east as far as the Euphrates. But the Jordan was the eastern border of Canaan, which was the principal portion of the whole territory as pertained to the descendants of Abraham. By passing over Jordan, therefore, David practically fled from his dominions. In royal language, such an act is regarded as abandoning, for the present, one's territory to the invader.

Verse 23. *Order* is from *TSAAH*, and one word in Strong's definition is, "enjoin." That agrees with the rendering in the margin which says, "Gave charge concerning his house." *Hanged* is from *CHANAQ* and defined in part, "to choke oneself to death."—Strong. It is the word for *strangled* in Nahum 2: 12. Ahithophel could not have expected any material gain had his counsel been followed. We must conclude, therefore, that his act was prompted by disappointed pride; and it verifies Proverbs 16: 18.

Verse 24. Absalom and all the men of war crossed over Jordan in pursuit of David, who had taken refuge in Mahanaim.

Verse 25. *Instead of Joab* does not mean that Absalom set him aside in favor of Amasa. Chapter 18: 2 shows that David had Joab with him. So the phrase means that Amasa was made captain, since Joab was not with the forces of Absalom.

Verse 26. Gilead was a term that included a considerable territory east of the Jordan and reaching to the Arabian desert; from Bashan on the north to the land of Moab on the south. It is referred to also by the terms "Mount Gilead," (Gen. 31: 25), and "the land of Gilead," (Num. 32: 1). In this territory both David and Absalom were stationed at the time of our story.

Verses 27-29. This paragraph describes the reception given David when he fled to Mahanaim. It proved the loyalty of those inhabitants to the throne of the rightful ruler.

2 SAMUEL 18

Verse 1. David was a systematic warrior; he now organized his forces for the conflict he knew was on hands.

Verse 2. Like a good organizer, David put his forces into three groups,

with a commander over each. They were to be superior to the *captains* mentioned in verse 1. He proposed, also, to go in person into the field of battle. That showed his personal valor, but it would have been contrary to the plan counseled by Hushai. (Ch. 17: 15, 16.)

Verse 3. The people thought that prudence was better than valor, and protested his proposal. *Worth ten thousand* of us meant from a military standpoint. *Succor us out of the city* means that he could help them better by sending reinforcements from the city, while they were fighting for him on the outside.

Verse 4. David agreed to the advice of his people; we are sure the Lord had a hand in it. Mahanaim was a walled city, which means one fortified, or else he would not have sought refuge there. He stood at the gate and personally oversaw the filing out of the forces to enter the field of battle.

Verse 5. The charge that David gave concerning Absalom was overheard by the people. It could not have added any special incentive for action to hear such a speech from their king, for whose sake mainly they were to fight. All people know that the leader of a conspiracy is justly chargeable with the situation, and should not be shown any favor. The fact, therefore, that they fought faithfully, in spite of the "setback," proved the sturdy character of the soldiers. Such an injunction can be understood only on the basis of paternal love for a child, though one who is personally unworthy.

Verse 6. *Wood of Ephraim*. We know that the general territory of Ephraim was all west of the Jordan, while this battle was fought east of it. Young explains it thus: "Perhaps it was so named from the tribe of Ephraim's being the chief sufferers in this battle. See also Judges 12: 4."

Verses 7, 8. *Wood* is from YAAH and part of Strong's definition is, "a copse of bushes; hence a forest." Moffatt renders the word, "jungle." *Devoured* is from AKAL and defined, "A primitive root; to eat (literally or figuratively)" —Strong. The meaning is clear. It was such a dense forest, with undergrowth like a jungle, that it contributed to the defeat of the forces, by hindering their movements.

Verse 9. Absalom now came into the immediate presence of David's forces.

It was natural that the action became more heated. In the encounter the mule on which Absalom was riding plunged into the bushy growth of a great oak tree. The beast was in a forward movement; and when Absalom's head became entangled in the thick growth of the tree it held him fast, while the beast went out from under him.

Verse 10. *Hanged*. This term usually is thought to mean that one has been killed; but Strong uses the word "suspend" in his definition of the original. That agrees with the following verses that show he was not dead.

Verse 11. Joab's attitude was more consistent with all the situation than was David's. This was being conducted by authority of the king, and Absalom was the ringleader of the conspiracy. It was foolish and inconsistent, therefore, to show any military leniency to him.

Verse 12. The speech of this man might be taken to mean that he was as solely influenced by sentiment for David. The next verse, however, will show that he was not.

Verse 13. *Falsehood* is from an original word that means, being untrue; and as used in this case it meant he would not be true to his own interests had he slain Absalom. David had given charge that Absalom was to be spared. Hence, if the man had taken advantage of Absalom's predicament, he would have endangered his own life. This shows his real motive in sparing him. He imagined that Joab also would have criticized him. That idea, however, was a mistake.

Verse 14. *I may not tarry thus with thee*. This means Joab did not have any time to waste on this man. He seemed provoked because a good opportunity had been let pass. He then thrust three darts into the body of Absalom while it was suspended in the tree.

Verse 15. The darts used by Joab did not produce instant death. Then ten attendants gathered round the wounded man, still alive, and hanging in the tree. *Smote* is from a word that means to strike, and the effects were to complete the attack made by Joab. That is why the verse concludes with the words *slew him*.

Verse 16. The death of the leader put an end to the conspiracy. Joab, therefore, signalled to his men to return from the chase.

Verse 17. David never saw the face of Absalom after he left Jerusalem with the pretended purpose of paying his vow. (Ch. 15:7-9.) The men with Joab buried Absalom in the jungle where he died. They piled stones over his grave. The same was done in the case of Achan. (Josh. 7:26.) It was a custom of those days, expressive of contempt.

Verse 18. Ch. 14:27 shows that Absalom had sons. This statement, therefore, means either that the pillar was erected before the birth of any of them, or, he was doubtful of their being interested enough to attend to it.

Verse 19. Ahimaaz was one of the men who had been sent by the priests to warn David of danger. It was natural for him to think the death of Absalom, the arch enemy, would be good news.

Verse 20. Joab wished to observe a "period of mourning" over the death of a prominent man; prominent because of being the king's son. He knew the spirit of David, and suspected what would be his reaction at the news. For that reason he would defer the report a day. But some of his purpose is hard to understand. He told Ahimaaz not to go, and immediately told another to go. Doubtless he saw the eagerness with which Ahimaaz proposed telling David of the death of his son, and thought it well to slow him down.

Verse 21. Cushai was an Ethiopian in attendance on Joab. He was told to go and report what he had seen.

Verse 22. Ahimaaz repeated his request, only that he might run *after* Cushai. The first reason Joab gave against his going could not be used again, seeing he had just let the Cushite go; so another must be given. This time he said he did not have any tidings *ready*. If the Cushite reaches David first, which would occur if he made the same speed as made by Ahimaaz, he would tell the news. That would leave no news for him.

Verse 23. Notwithstanding, Ahimaaz insisted on being permitted to go. As the Cushite had the "start," Joab gave permission for him to go. He took another route and outran the Cushite.

Verses 24, 25. David was sitting between the gates, awaiting any report that might be brought. For a better view, the watchman went to the top of the wall. He informed the king

that a man was running, and alone. That indicated he was a messenger.

Verse 26. Seeing another man running alone, the watchman shouted word to the porter, which was the gatekeeper, and he relayed it to David. His comment was that this man also was a messenger, as he was alone and running.

Verse 27. Ahimaaz was a good man, as David commented. It was true, also, that he was bringing good tidings. However, David wished to have the news good from the military standpoint, yet leave his beloved son unharmed.

Verses 28, 29. Ahimaaz evidently "saw the point" in the actions of Joab, and decided he would not break the news too suddenly. *All is well* was true, considering the main objective of the battle; the enemies had been overthrown. Upon specific inquiry about Absalom, Ahimaaz gave an evasive answer. The things he said were true, but not all of the truth.

Verses 30, 31. David wished more definite information. Perhaps the next messenger will have it, so Ahimaaz was dismissed. Cushai gave about the same general report as that of Ahimaaz. Both these messengers manifested much tenderness for David, in that they were hesitant about telling him what they felt sure would shock him.

Verse 32. The natural love of a father for even a wayward son, explains the attitude of David in this affair; otherwise we would be severe in our criticisms. A whole kingdom had been troubled with rebellion, and that, too, the kingdom of God's people. The leader of the rebellion had to be stopped or it would go on. In spite of these truths, David was concerned over the personal safety of this very conspirator. Cushai was still modest in his manner of answering the question which the king had asked for the second time. Now the truth must all be given him, only it was couched in as mild a speech as possible, to give him the facts. He had just been told (v. 28) that his enemies were slain; now he was told that his son was in the same condition.

Verse 33. This pathetic verse is a true picture of a doting father, stricken with grief over the death of a favored son. Had he let the subject remain in that status, no criticisms would be offered. He did not do that, as will be seen in the next chapter.

2 SAMUEL 19

Verses 1, 2. The grief of David was so excessive that it spread a pall of gloom over the people. The overthrow of the conspiracy, which ought to have brought a spirit of serious rejoicing, was turned into a season of general mourning by the conduct of David.

Verse 3. This undue grief of the king so intimidated the people they were made to act as if they were cowards, running from battle.

Verse 4. Joab was a mighty man, in ability and judgment. He knew the temperament of David; also, he had always wielded a strong influence over him. He, therefore, saw in his conduct, an instance of miserable, inconsistent grief.

Verses 5, 6. This rebuke was just; it exposed the shameful behaviour of David. Logically, it meant that he would not have mourned over the death of all his servants, if only his unworthy son had escaped.

Verse 7. *Speak comfortably* means to have a heart-to-heart talk; show a cheery spirit instead of so much gloom. The main objective of the battle had been attained; he should rejoice with the people, therefore, notwithstanding his personal grief. Joab asserted that if he did not do as suggested, all of the people would forsake him immediately, and leave him to pass the night alone.

Verse 8. The gate of the city was the most public place. A person seeking privacy would not go to that spot. Hence, this action was a reversal of what he had been doing, and showed he was accepting the advice of Joab, as he generally did. (Ch. 14: 19-21.) This movement recalled the people, who had fled in their fear and dismay.

Verses 9, 10. *The people* refers to those in Jerusalem and the nation in general. They were the ones who had accepted Absalom, not those now with David in the flight from the capital. Those folks now realized their mistake, and wished for the return of their rightful ruler. However, as it frequently occurs, each man looked to another for action in a matter that was a mutual duty. Such is the significance of the last sentence of this paragraph.

Verses 11, 12. This clamor came to the ears of David, which prompted him to take some action. But, although he was entitled to the throne, he was

not disposed to attempt returning until the way was opened by those stationed near the capital. The priests had remained in the city as sentinels, ready to furnish information for David as occasion permitted. Now it was proper that they contact the elders, those of age and influence, and chide them for not being the most forward in bringing the king home.

Verse 13. Amasa was related to David by blood. (Ch. 17: 25; 1 Chr. 2: 15, 16.) He had served Absalom in the rebellion. Now that the rebellion had been put down, David was ready to "forgive and forget," and make him the captain of the army in place of Joab. He had two motives for this; one was in reprisal against Joab for personally smiting Absalom; the other, to induce him to use his influence in bringing the lawful king home.

Verse 14. Amasa *bowed the heart*, which means he inclined the minds of the men of Judah in favor of the request of David. They sent word, therefore, for the king and all his servants to return.

Verse 15. Leaving Mahanaim, where he had been taking refuge since fleeing his throne (Ch. 17: 24), David began his return and came to the Jordan, opposite Gilgal. To this place the representatives of Judah came in order to conduct him respectfully over.

Verse 16. Shimei was the man who cursed David (Ch. 16: 5, etc.) when he was fleeing. The fortunes have turned and he was eager to restore himself to the favor of the king. He hastened, therefore, to go forth to meet him.

Verse 17. To make a show of good faith, Shimei influenced Ziba, a former servant of Saul, with a thousand men, to come with him on this journey of recognition for the returning monarch.

Verse 18. *Ferry boat* is from ABARAH and defined, "a crossing-place."—Strong. There was no boat, according to the original, but a ford, that permitted a crossing on foot. The men mentioned in the preceding verse went over Jordan at this place to escort David and his group. As the king reached the western bank of Jordan, Shimei prostrated himself before him.

Verses 19, 20. There was no attempt at excuse for his past conduct; he frankly admitted his sin. As a token of the fervor of his repentance he was foremost in going to meet the king. *House of Joseph*. Chapter 16: 5 shows

he was of the tribe of Benjamin. The phrase, therefore, was used figuratively of the people of Israel, and in respect for the cherished memory of Joseph. See Ex. 1: 8; Ps. 80: 1; Amos 6: 6; Zech. 10: 6.

Verse 21. Abishai recalled the conduct of Shimei and doubtless was suspicious as to the sincerity of his confession. His suggestion was to slay him for *this*, which meant his previous action of contempt.

Verse 22. *What have I to do with you* means, "I hardly know what to do with you." David, however, did not offer any logical reason for his rebuke of Abishai; he only mentioned that he was again *king over Israel*. That is, he was so joyful over his return to favor of the people that he felt gracious unto all, regardless of their merit.

Verse 23. This verse is in agreement with the sentiment of the preceding one. However, in the time to come, when David's sense of justice moved him, he took the same view of Shimei's guilt as expressed by Abishai. (1 Ki. 2: 8, 9.)

Verses 24-28. In connection with this paragraph, the reader is requested to see Ch. 16: 1-4, and comments. The story of Mephibosheth given in this paragraph at hand seems plausible; and David did not wholly disbelieve it. However, he was just at the moment more interested in the good turn of affairs in his kingdom, than in some personal grievance. He decided on what could be termed a compromise, named in the following verse.

Verse 29. David was tired of the controversy between Mephibosheth and Ziba; besides, he was in a conciliatory frame of mind over his return to favor, and disposed to favor everybody. He therefore told the two men to divide the inheritance that was at first allotted to Ziba.

Verse 30. Mephibosheth was not interested in the land. To be restored to the favor of the king, and to know that the peace also had come to the kingdom, was enough to make him happy.

Verses 31, 32. When David and his men took refuge in Mahanaim, they had need of material support; Barzillai furnished it. Now that David was able to leave the place in peace, he came down to "see him off" in good will.

Verse 33. David was grateful for his former support, and offered to "return

the favor" by taking him to Jerusalem to be a royal guest.

Verses 34-37. Barzillai had not come for the purpose of being repaid. Besides, he was so old and infirm that he could not enjoy such luxuries were he to go. Not only so, but he would be a burden on David without being of any benefit; for all these reasons he respectfully declined the offer. He did not want to appear unappreciative of his offered kindness, so made the suggestion that Chimham go. This was probably a son of Barzillai (1 Ki. 2: 7), and one who took the contributions of necessities to David.

Verse 38. David accepted the offer and agreed to give kindness to Chimham, according to whatever Barzillai would request.

Verse 39. After this friendly conversation, which took place at the western shore of the Jordan, David kissed Barzillai good-by and he returned to his home.

Verse 40. Judah and Israel are mentioned as separate groups in this and some following verses. See 1 Samuel 11: 8 for comments.

Verse 41. Envy is bitter sentiment. Now that David was returning in triumph from exile, the group that had a direct hand in escorting him was envied by the other.

Verse 42. The capital was Jerusalem and in possession of Judah. The king, also, was of the tribe of Judah. It was a matter of course, that these people would furnish the escort. They intimated that the other group suspected them of "graft" as a motive for their activity, which they specifically denied.

Verse 43. *Ten parts*. In addition to the comments at 1 Sam. 11: 8, the reader may see 1 Ki. 11: 31 which reveals the number of tribes that was grouped as Israel. The point of the argument in the present instance is at the fact of having the majority. That has always been a popular argument; but it is a misleading one. The majority was wrong in the days of the flood (Gen. 6: 8); and in Sodom (Gen. 18: 32); and will be wrong at the day of judgment. (Matt. 7: 13, 14.) *Despise* means to belittle or slight. It should be noted, also, that it was advice these people wished to give, not action. Frequently, those who are the most eager to give advice are the least willing to do anything. *Fiercer* is from QASHAH, and defined by Strong,

"A primitive root; properly to be dense, i. e. tough or severe." Young defines it "sharper," and Moffatt gives "heated." The thought is, that the men of Judah being in the right, logically their words had more point.

2 SAMUEL 20

Verses 1, 2. There *happened* or *chanced* to be, etc. *Belial* is a descriptive word in the Old Testament, meaning very base and wicked. The term *Israel* was not used in this place as it was in Ch. 19: 40. It referred to the nation as a whole as opposed to David's family personally. But since he was of the tribe of Judah, all the other tribes followed in the revolt, headed by this wicked man. His movement, though extensive at the first, was soon put down. (v. 22.)

Verse 3. Chapter 16: 22 shows the unfaithfulness of these concubines. That circumstance was a fulfillment of a prediction (Ch. 12: 11), and was a punishment on David for his sin with Bath-sheba. If God uses an agency to carry out a penalty against an individual, he also will penalize that agency for any unrighteous motive it may manifest in the affair. *In ward* means they were put under guard, not necessarily in a guardhouse. *Went not in unto them* means he did not have intimate relations with them. They had been unfaithful to him and he punished them in this manner. *Living in widowhood* means they were denied the privileges of concubines (equivalent to those of wives, morally), and thus compelled to live as widows.

Verse 4. David gave orders to Amasa, looking to the putting down of the rebellion of Sheba. He was charged with the work, which was in harmony with the promise made him (Ch. 19: 13). The limit set for his commission was three days.

Verse 5. The time limit expired but Amasa did not return.

Verse 6. Since Amasa did not appear, David became concerned about the activity of Sheba. Abishai was then instructed to take forces, composed of the servants of the king, and go to intercept the conspirator.

Verse 7. It should be remembered that Joab had been replaced by Amasa. Abishai was Joab's brother, and when this order was given to him, the men of Joab overheard, and went out voluntarily to join in the chase.

Verse 8. They overtook Amasa at

Gibeon. Joab had armed himself with a sword; it was concealed about his garments, with the intent to use it at a proper opportunity. The sword, however, accidentally fell out and was exposed to Amasa. That made it necessary to act at once, but some pretense was necessary for getting near him.

Verse 9. Joab addressed Amasa as *brother*, which was a term with wide meaning, including anyone supposed to be a friend. Taking Amasa by the beard was a gesture of friendliness, but done to bring his face near enough to kiss. The special motive Joab had was to prevent him from seeing the sword in his left hand.

Verse 10. *Fifth rib* means the abdomen: "See Ch. 2: 23 for comments on this term. *Struck him not again* means he was so skillful with the sword that one stroke was fatal. Jealousy over being supplanted by Amasa doubtless was the motive for the deed. With the rival out of the way, the two brothers pursued after Sheba.

Verse 11. The murder of Amasa left Joab in his former position as leader over the soldiers; it also gave boldness to his friends, hence the call was made for men to "take their stand," which was the significance of coupling the names of David and Joab. Naturally, if they stand with them, they will follow after Joab in the present conflict.

Verses 12, 13. A man dying from a fatal wound would be a gruesome sight, but the curiosity of human beings is so great that such a scene was enough to halt a pursuit after a conspirator. Seeing this, the man removed Amasa out of sight, and the people resumed their trailing after Joab, to capture Sheba.

Verse 14. He was not received as generally as expected, for he had to go from place to place, while the citizens pursued him.

Verse 15. Sheba took refuge in Abel, a city in northern Palestine. Joab brought his forces and prepared to lay siege. The *bank* was a ridge of earth, and it *stood in the trench*, which means it was as high as the outer wall of the city, the word *trench* meaning wall. From this mound of earth, Joab and his men began battering the wall with the hope of undermining it.

Verses 16, 17. There was a prudent woman in the city who asked for the privilege of speaking to Joab; it was granted her.

Verse 18. The woman then referred to some popular practice of the people seeking advice in cases of dispute; they would come to this city now being besieged by Joab's forces. By this speech she implied that it would still be well for him to listen to counsel offered to him here.

Verse 19. The woman next complained that she, a *mother in Israel*, was about to be destroyed with the city, although she was peaceable. *Inheritance of the Lord* means that the city had been given to the people by the Lord, and it should not now be destroyed without cause.

Verses 20, 21. Joab denied any intention of a general destruction. He explained that he sought only the man now taking refuge in the city, who had rebelled against the king. Assurance was given her that if this man were delivered up, the siege would be lifted. The woman promised that the man's head would be thrown over the wall. She knew that some time would be necessary for obtaining action from the citizens, therefore she set the date for the deliverance of the man wanted to be on the morrow.

Verse 22. The simple statement that the woman went unto the people in her wisdom is explained by the thing that immediately happened. The head of Sheba was thrown over to Joab, and he, true to his promise, withdrew with his forces from the city and returned to Jerusalem.

Verses 23-26. This paragraph is a repetition of Ch. 8:16-18, there designated in the comments, "David's cabinet." Such an arrangement is necessary for good government. The *host* means the military, and Joab had that charge. The Cherethites and Pelethites formed the bodyguard for the king. *Tribute* is from *mic* and defined, "properly a burden (as causing to faint), i. e. a tax in the form of forced labor."—Strong. It referred to the matter of exacting manual labor from men taken in war, and others falling into servitude under the king. Adoram had charge of the bureau. The *recorder* and the *scribe* had work much alike. About all the difference was, the former was more like that of a secretary, handling the transient and personal items pertaining to the king, while the latter had to do with the more permanent records for the kingdom. Zadok and Abiathar were officers in the religious activities about the altar and tabernacle. *Chief ruler*. The

second word is not in the original. The first is from *KOHEN* and defined, "literally one officiating, a priest; also (by courtesy) an acting priest (although a layman)."—Strong. The regular priests, Zadok and Abiathar, are already named in this paragraph. We therefore would understand this last named man to have been a sort of valet to the king. The mixed group named in this paragraph is to be understood from the nature of the Mosaic system; it was one that combined civil and religious government.

2 SAMUEL 21

Verse 1. This does not teach that an innocent son might be punished for the sins of his father. Ex. 20:5 clearly states that the children who hate the Lord will be punished; that they will be punished with similar treatment to that having been imposed on their wicked father. Saul had murdered the Gibeonites, thus breaking the oath that Joshua had made with them. Saul was dead, but this verse describes his descendants as a *bloody house*. We do not have the particulars of their actions; it is enough to know the Lord said these descendants composed a *bloody house*. This connected them in guilt with their fathers, and made them the victims of just vengeance of God.

Verse 2. Joshua 9 gives account of the league formed with the Gibeonites. It was obtained by fraud, but, having been made, the children of Israel were bound by it. Saul disregarded it and thought to show his zeal for God's people by slaying the Gibeonites. Such an act was counted illegal by the Lord.

Verse 3. David offered to make amends for the wrong done, and asked the Gibeonites to state their demands.

Verses 4-6. They said they did not require the death of *any man in Israel*. Since the sons of Saul were Israelites, we would question the meaning of their expression. The comments on v. 1 will help to explain. Since innocent persons should not be punished for the sins of others, it would not be just to select victims from the general public of the Israelites; they should be taken from the descendants of Saul since they were a *bloody house*.

Verse 7. Oaths were regarded sacred, and for that reason David spared Mephibosheth from the punishment. He was a son of Jonathan and thus of the second generation from Saul; the decree in Ex. 20:5 reached to the

fourth. This man, therefore, was a part of the *bloody house* of Saul, but escaped the penalty about to be inflicted, through the oath made with Jonathan.

Verse 8. Proper nouns were sometimes used indefinitely in old times. In 1 Samuel 18: 17-19 we may see that Merab, not Michal, was the mother of these five sons. But she had been suggested as a substitute for Michal to become the wife of David; that doubtless accounts for the exchange of names in this verse. The fact that seems clear is, that all of the seven (completeness) selected as victims of the punishment were grandsons of Saul.

Verse 9. If these men were hanged, why say they *fell*? The word has a figurative as well as literal meaning. Deut. 21: 23 gives the law requiring that dead bodies be taken down from the tree of execution on the day of death. When that was done, these men were represented as having fallen to the ground. This execution took place in the beginning of barley harvest, which came in the spring.

Verse 10. The law stipulated that the burial of a man dying on a tree must take place the same day; but the decree was not concerned especially with the fact of the burial; the main thing was that his body must not remain on the tree over night. The bodies of these men when taken down from the trees were not buried; they were laid on the ground, exposed to view. The mother of two of them, prompted by parental love, watched over them. With only some sackcloth for bedding, and the rock for a bedstead, she kept night-and-day vigil, being alert to keep the birds and beasts from making food of them. The barley harvest came in the spring months. Rainfall was seasonal in Palestine, the "early rain" coming in the fall and the "latter rain" in the spring. Between these rainy seasons there were several months of dry weather. Rizpah kept up her watch for all of this period. It is difficult to describe fully such an exhibition of devotion to one's offspring, and this mother has been celebrated in history and song.

Verse 11. This verse merely states that David learned of the deed of Rizpah; it does not give us any date. Between it and the next verse there must have been a considerable space of time, for v. 10 declares that Rizpah continued her watch until the rain

began to fall, which was in the end of the season.

Verses 12-14. Sometime in the autumn David got the bones of Saul and Jonathan, together with those of the men who had been hanged, and buried them in the family sepulchre. After this, God reversed the stricken condition of the land.

Verses 15-22. This paragraph covers some of David's military exploits at various times. *War again, after this*, and such like expressions, found strewn in the passage, shows the writer was concerned more with the outstanding nature of some of the deeds than with the particular dates. David was unafraid of the men of giant proportions when they were arrayed against the Lord's army. His own men plead with him (v. 17) not to risk his life; that his guidance for the soldiers was of more value than the death of a few individual ruffians. He had, before this, been appealed to along this line. (Ch. 18: 3.)

2 SAMUEL 22

Verse 1. This chapter is practically the same as Psalms 18. A brief comment will be made at that place, but the chapter will be considered in detail here since the occasions of its composition are so near in date to that now connected with the history. David's victories over Saul, his personal and official enemy, together with those over his enemies in general, gave the incentive for this *song* or psalm.

Verse 2. Most of the terms used in this chapter pertain to war and other conditions of danger. Some of them are figurative and others literal. A rock signifies a solid basis; a fortress is a protected hiding place; and a deliverer is one who helps another escape his enemy. David ascribes all these to the Lord.

Verse 3. With such a Being for a rock he would trust the keeping of his interests. A shield is part of the protective armor of a soldier. *Horn* in figurative language means power. *High tower* refers to the places used in warfare for protection, also for look-out purposes.

Verse 4. Salvation will come from God if he is called upon; faith in him is necessary to obtain his help.

Verse 5. David had not died, but the danger of death had beset him in waves. *Ungodly* is from the word elsewhere rendered Belial in the Old Testament.

Verse 6. *Sorrows* is from a word that means literally a rope or strong cord. *Prevented* means to precede. *Hell* is from *sheol* and is rendered grave, hell, pit. The verse means that wherever David turned his attention he faced threat of violent death.

Verse 7. When human help seems useless it is well to call on the Lord. David did so and God heard him *out of his temple*. The last word is from an original that means palace. The thought is that God's place of abode is not too high nor far away to be reached by the prayers of the righteous.

Verse 8. The mighty voice of Jehovah overcame the attacks of the wicked.

Verse 9. As fire is used in destroying objectionable things, so God's power over sinful forces is compared to that element.

Verse 10. All the parts of the universe are subject to the might of God. He is able to overcome all forces of darkness.

Verse 11. A *cherub* is an imaginary creature of exalted flight; the wind would ordinarily be an element outside the power of man. But God is able to surmount all obstacles and bring them under his control.

Verse 12. *Pavilions* means a housing place, and God is able to subjugate the works of darkness to his use; also, the waters of oppression are made subject to God.

Verse 13. *Coals* of fire would indicate more life than a mere flame or flash. The force of God's brightness is compared to coals.

Verse 14. The elements of mighty storms are used to illustrate the power of God's voice.

Verse 15. The pronoun *them* refers to the various evil beings and things already mentioned in this chapter. God's figurative arrows had scattered these evil forces.

Verse 16. God's superiority over all things else is the thought most prominent in this verse. The channels or bed of the sea, and the foundations or strength of the world's inhabitants, were tamed by the Lord's rebuke. *Nostrils* is rendered "anger" in the margin, and the lexicon agrees. It means the things referred to are brought into subjection by the Lord's (righteous) anger.

Verse 17. *Waters* in figurative language means the floods of tribulations. God delivered David from such waters.

Verse 18. Human strength cannot endure the hatred of wicked enemies; but the help from the Lord will deliver the righteous from all evil.

Verse 19. These evil forces prevented David in that they tried to interfere with his service to God. This was done at a time of calamity, just when he needed help the most; the Lord gave him that help.

Verse 20. *Large place* refers to the bountifulness of the Lord's provisions. This idea is given much attention in the New Testament. See 1 Pe. 1: 2; 4: 10; Jude 2.

Verses 21, 22. David does not mean to boast of his goodness. The thought is that God would not have favored him had he not been a righteous man.

Verse 23. *Judgments* and *statutes*. There is not much practical difference in the meaning of these words, but there is a technical distinction. The first is from *mishpat* and defined, "properly a verdict (favorable or unfavorable) pronounced judicially, especially a sentence or formal decree (human or divine law, individual or collective), including the act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty."—Strong. The second is from *chok* and defined, "An enactment; hence an appointment (of time, space, quantity, labor or usage)."—Strong. To sum up, the first means laws brought about by some emergency or specific circumstance, while the second means those laws that were decreed regardless of special conditions.

Verses 24, 25. See the comments at verses 21, 22.

Verse 26. It is literally true that God is merciful to only those who are merciful to others. See Matt. 5: 7. God is upright, however, at all times, whether man is or not. But a wicked man will regard him in an unfavorable light, because he is judging others by himself.

Verse 27. This verse is explained by the closing sentence of preceding paragraph.

Verse 28. *Save* and *upon* are used as opposites. The afflicted will be favored of God, but the haughty will receive the frown of his eyes.

Verse 29. In figurative language a lamp refers to enlightenment, and guidance through the darkness of human uncertainty.

Verse 30. David was a man of war and frequently encountered the troops

of the enemy. He also had to attack the cities that were walled against him. Such experiences gave him the basis for figurative reference to God's help as a faithful ally.

Verse 31. The special thought here is the condition on which God will help man. It is that he put his trust in the Lord.

Verse 32. The heathen worshipped many gods, but with David there was but one and that was the *Lord*, a word which Strong defines, "self-Existent or Eternal." The gods of the heathen were artificial, or were demons, and neither existed by their own power.

Verse 33. The margin gives "rid-deth" for *maketh*. It means that, by ridding the pathway of life of unsurmountable barriers, it makes it perfect.

Verse 34. The hind is an animal very swift of feet. David means he was able to outrun his enemies, and mount to places above them.

Verse 35. The success which David had in war was due to the help of God. The enemies of him were those of God, hence the divine assistance was given.

Verse 36. *Gentleness* is from a word meaning condescension. When God looked down in pity on David, it caused him to react favorably and reach upward toward the higher plane of life. Such a life constitutes true greatness.

Verse 37. *Enlarge* means to broaden, and *steps* means the place for walking. The verse means that God made plenty of room for David to walk, that he might not slip.

Verses 38-40. The outstanding strain running through this chapter, as well as through much of David's writing, is his success in battle. That included both his personal and official enemies. It is noteworthy that he always ascribed it to the Lord.

Verse 41. Most warfare in ancient times was with the sword; in the attacks it was desired to behead the antagonist. That accounts for the repeated mention of the neck.

Verse 42. God will not assist those who fight against his people; therefore, it would be in vain for them to look for help from the Lord.

Verse 43. This verse adds no new fact; it is a description of the completeness of victory over the foes.

Verse 44. In one verse David remembers his difficulties with both his

own relatives (Absalom), and the heathen or people of foreign blood.

Verses 45, 46. This is the same as the closing part of preceding verse.

Verse 47. *The Lord liveth*. This is not merely an assertion that the Lord was not dead. It has the strength of continuous existence; He is self-existent. For that reason he is a suitable Being to rest on as firm and solid rock.

Verses 48, 49. Vengeance is right when it is *God that avengeth*. This is taught in Romans 12: 19.

Verse 50. *Heathen* is from *gor*, and Strong defines it, "a foreign nation; hence a gentile; also (figuratively) a troop of animals, or a flight of locusts." In the A. V. it is translated by *Gentile*, heathen, nations, people. It thus has a wide scope of meanings, and expresses the great extent of David's power.

Verse 51. A tower was much used anciently as a shelter from an attacking army. The word, therefore, came to be used figuratively of the special help from God in times of danger. It was most evident when *his anointed* was in danger.

2 SAMUEL 23

Verse 1. Chronologically, this chapter should be the last one of the book. But we have noted other places where strict order was not observed by the inspired writers. The original for *last* does not require the strictest sense; it means the words of David that were written in the latter days of his life. *Raised up on high* refers to his place as king over God's people, and the exaltation brought to him through divine favor. *Sweet psalmist of Israel*. The second word does not mean David personally; it means psalms that were used by the children of Israel in praise of him. The thought is along the same line as the statements just preceding it. The word is from *ZEMIR*, and defined by "a song to be accompanied with musical instruments."—Strong. David was held in such favor by the people that they celebrated him in their sweet ("pleasant") musical exercises.

Verse 2. This verse means that David spoke by inspiration.

Verse 3. *Must be* should be understood to mean that David believed God to be the kind of ruler described. We note that God is also designated a rock. It means the government for Israel was on a firm foundation.

Verse 4. A cloudless day following a refreshing rain is used to compare the glory of God.

Verse 5. The meaning of this verse is a little dim on account of the indirect form of language. David considers his house is secure through the favor of God, although it would not have been so without divine help.

Verse 6. *Belial* means very wicked characters, and such had long been a threat to the peace of David. The Lord had enabled him to overcome all such persons, since human power could not have done so.

Verse 7. In the previous verse the evil characters were likened to thorns. To cast such things into the fire would require use of a staff or iron. The assistance given by the Lord constituted that implement.

Verse 8. David was a man of great talents and accomplished much in his lifetime. But he depended not only on God for assurance of success; he brought into his service the men of outstanding ability. For a reason not given, the men were grouped in threes, and several verses are devoted to naming these trios. Not all of the three will be named, but the principal man will be, and in some cases the unusual deed of the same will be stated. In the present one, the slaying of 800 men was the feat.

Verses 9, 10. *Hand clave unto the sword*. This was because he had been so constantly engaged with the use of it that a sort of cramp seized it and resisted the attempt to open it to release the weapon. After he had slain the vast horde of Philistines, the people reaped the results by coming on and taking the spoil.

Verses 11, 12. *Lentils* were a podded vegetable like the modern beans; they were very desirable food. The Philistines planned to get the product on the ground and thus deprive the Israelites of their rights, who fled on account of the great number of the foe. Shammah, by the help of the Lord, defeated the purpose of the Philistines.

Verses 13, 14. According to the marginal reading, three men were over thirty. These verses are another instance of the unchronological manner of some parts of the Bible. In 1 Sam. 22: 1 we may read of this cave as being a hiding place for David. It is here given along with a general account of his life. The *hold* evidently

was near Bethlehem from the following verse.

Verses 15, 16. David called for water to drink from the well near Bethlehem. To get it, the Philistines would have to be encountered, since they had possession of the well. The three men mentioned in verse 13 undertook the feat, and secured the water. But instead of drinking it, David poured it on the ground.

Verse 17. It is difficult to understand David's actions here. The men had already taken the risk of their lives and were safe back in their headquarters. The water would be no benefit if spilled on the ground. However, the circumstance serves to show us the kindly feeling David had for others.

Verses 18, 19. Differences in rank were recognized in those times as well as in the present. As a reward for his valor, Abishai was exalted above the others of the trio. He had slain three hundred men.

Verse 20. *Lionlike* is defined, "heroic." It means they were unusually strong and active. *Time of snow* is incidental, explaining why the lion was taking refuge in the pit. But the fact of the lion's being in the pit makes the encounter appear as one of extraordinary hazard.

Verse 21. A staff was a lighter weapon than a spear. The greatness of this feat was in the fact of disarming the Egyptian and slaying him with his own weapon.

Verses 22, 23. Honor to whom it is due entitled Benaliah to the present report, but he must not be thought to equal, in rank, another trio in David's service.

Verses 24-39. All of these men attached to David in service for the kingdom were outstanding. Special mention, however, should be made of Asahel because of his relation to Joab, the commander-in-chief; and of Uriah because of the affair with Bathsheba.

2 SAMUEL 24

Verse 1. One rule for interpreting language is to explain the more difficult passages by the simpler ones. This verse has an indefinite use of the pronoun *he*. Apparently, the antecedent is *Lord*, but the context will not agree with such conclusion. If the same incident can be found elsewhere in the scriptures, perhaps it will state it in more direct form. We have just that

thing in 1 Chr. 21: 1. In that place we have Satan mentioned as the one who moved David to number the people. Taking the two passages together we get the thought. The antecedent of *he* is Satan, implied. Just why the pronoun is given in the present verse instead of the noun, we do not know. It is not the only place in the Bible where a pronoun is used with the noun not named. See "his" for the Lord in John 7: 38, and "he" (first instance) for God or Christ in 1 John 5: 16. The word *moved* is from *cwmn* and defined, "properly to prick, i. e. (figuratively) stimulate; by implication to seduce."—Strong. The word has been rendered in the A. V. by entice, move, persuade, provoke, set on, stir up, take away. A question arising might be, why would Satan wish to persuade David to do this. The answer is to be seen in his main characteristic. In 1 Tim. 3: 6 we learn that the devil was condemned for his pride. And the connection shows the motive of David in numbering Israel was pride. And his pride over numerical strength caused him to neglect an important item of the law. See comments at verse 15.

Verse 2. *That I may know the number.* This is what reveals the motive; not that the people might be encouraged by their strength, but for David's satisfaction in knowing the number. It was somewhat like a miser counting his gold; not to see if he is able to make a purchase (he seldom does that), but just for the pleasure of knowing how much he has.

Verse 3. Joab protested the order of the king, and his use of the word *delight* confirms the comments in the preceding verse as to pride.

Verse 4. While it was against Joab's judgment to number the people, he was an obedient subject of the king, and complied with the order.

Verses 5-8. This shows the thoroughness of the work; the important parts of the territory were covered. It was not done in undue haste, either, for almost ten months was used.

Verse 9. A difference occurs between the numbers here and the corresponding account in 1 Chr. 21: 5. In some instances, differences in numbers are accounted for by the method of expressing numerals in ancient times, which was by letters. When manuscripts got worn it was easy for a transcriber (who was not an inspired man) to misread one letter for an-

other. No attention was paid to that subject by writers and speakers in the Bible, because mere numeral discrepancies are unimportant, usually. In the case at hand, however, there is another explanation. In 1 Chr. 21: 5 mention is made of the omission of the tribes of Benjamin and Levi. Although that fact is mentioned in this place, where the number given is the larger one, it should be considered in the account in 2 Samuel, where the smaller number is given. It seems that Joab obeyed the king's order in the main, but finally became provoked at the whole project, and left off two tribes in his return. The larger account includes all the tribes; but when he came to deliver the report to David, he gave the number, less those of the two tribes.

Verse 10. True to his characteristic temperament, David repented of his wrong and made free confession.

Verses 11, 12. There was generally a national prophet in service in the times of which we are studying, such as Samuel, Nathan, Gad, etc. God sent the prophet (called a seer), to tell David the divine message. The mercy of the Lord is seen in that he leaves it somewhat to him as to what punishment is to be inflicted.

Verse 13. The three things from which he must choose are famine (shortage in natural products), be chased by the enemy (human chastisement), and pestilence (miraculous afflictions).

Verse 14. David concluded that he would rather fall into the hands of God.

Verse 15. This pestilence was in accordance with Ex. 30: 12. It will help in this place to quote Josephus who certainly understood the law of his own people. "Now King David was desirous to know how many ten thousands there were of the people, but forgot the commands of Moses, who told them beforehand, that if the multitude were numbered, they should pay half a shekel to God for every head. Accordingly, the king commanded Joab, the captain of his host, to go and number the whole multitude." Antiquities, 7-13-1. Pride is always wrong; in this case it brought a distinctly evil result. In his eagerness to gratify his feeling, David neglected to observe the requirements of the law.

Verses 16, 17. The actions of these verses were done simultaneously. God repented him of the evil (determined

to *change* the conditions) because of his great mercy. He told the angel to stay his hand because the people had been punished enough. At the same time, David was moved with compassion for his people, whom he called sheep. Taking all the blame on himself, he asked God to let the punishment fall on him and his house. There is no evidence that such a change was made.

Verse 18. The actual atonement was made by the physical affliction. David was not permitted to assume that, but was required to perform a ceremonial service to God, to clear his personal guilt. He was commanded to build an altar and offer sacrifices. The place was designed for the service. David was not a priest; not even of the priestly tribe. Confusion sometimes occurs on this subject; it is supposed that a priest only could lawfully offer a sacrifice. It is true that all sacrifices offered on the brazen altar as part of the regular Mosaic system, had to be handled by the priest. But the particular ceremony that a priest only could perform, at any time or place, was the burning of incense. (1 Chr. 23:13; 2 Chr. 26:16-18.)

Verses 19, 20. In obedience to the prophet, David went to see Araamah. Their meeting was agreeable and the king was paid the homage due him.

Verse 21. Araamah was told what was wanted of him, and the use to be made of it. He was told that it was to be sold to David.

Verses 22, 23. Araamah was friendly toward the proposition, even offering all for David's use free of charge.

Verses 24, 25. In refusing to accept the property free, David gave us an excellent lesson on the subject of sacrifices. To offer to the Lord something that cost the giver nothing would not be a sacrifice at all. That principle is taught throughout the whole Bible. Christians are commanded to give out of their property. (1 Cor. 16:2.) If we do not give up something of value, and that could have been used ourselves, we have not made any sacrifice. Jesus gave his life for us, and his Father before him had given him up to the sinful world, as "his unspeakable gift." (2 Cor. 9:15.)

1 KINGS 1

Verse 1. *Stricken in years.* The first word is from the Hebrew *bo*, and defined, "a primitive root; to go or

come (in a wide variety of applications)."—Strong. It is rendered "to come in" 1200 times in the A. V. Thus it has no meaning pertaining to the condition of the thing or person spoken of. What may follow its use must determine the condition. The term means only that David had come into years. The same could be said of Moses who was 120 at death and in his full vigor. Likewise, Abraham was at least 137 when he begat six sons. The last part of the verse was needed to tell us of David's condition. We are not told in any place why he became so infirm and lived to be only 70. (2 Sam. 5:4.)

Verse 2. *Stand before the king* means to be always "in waiting" for his service. *Cherish* is from *CAKAN* and defined, "a primitive root; to be familiar with; by implication to minister to, be serviceable to, to cherish, be customary."—Strong. With such a relationship established under the practice of those times, this virgin would be permitted to occupy the same bed with the king, in order to give him the warmth of her body.

Verses 3, 4. The damsel secured ministered to the king in his infirmity. *King knew her* not means that he did not have the intimacy pertaining to husband and wife.

Verse 5. The death of David was evidently near, and another king will take his place. Haggith was one of his wives and Adonijah was her son. (2 Sam. 3:4.) He thought he could get his father's place and prepared to do so.

Verse 6. This explains the vanity of the young man. He was a "spoiled" child; had never been denied any request of his father. He was half brother to Absalom, another son indulged to his father's sorrow. Parents should consider the evil results of being over indulgent toward their children.

Verse 7. Almost every man, though unworthy, will have a following, and Adonijah was supported in his conspiracy. He won over Joab, David's commander-in-chief, and Abiathar, one of the priests.

Verse 8. Another priest, Zadok, Nathan the prophet, and most of the important other men, remained true to David. The condition of the king, however, would seem to give Adonijah opportunity for working up sentiment for his scheme.

Verse 9. Conspirators often like to