

THIRD SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—A praying mother, 1 Sam. 1: 21-28. Golden Text, 1 Sam 1: 28. Read the whole chapter.

Samuel's father's name was Elkanah, his mother's name Hannah. Both parents were pious, as is abundantly evident from the teaching of this narrative. Elkanah, his father, was a Levite of the family of Kohath. We know but little concerning him, indeed nothing more than is recorded here. Hannah, his mother, was a prophetic poet of a high order. Her hymn of thanksgiving (2nd ch.) belongs to the highest class of inspired poetry.

V. 21.—*Went up to Shiloh*. It was his custom. *All his house*. Like Joshua he served God with all his house. *The yearly sacrifice*. See Judges 21: 19; Luke 2: 41; 1 Sam. 20: 6. Probably the yearly sacrifice was offered at one of the three annual festivals, and though the males only were required to attend on these occasions, yet it seems that all the family attended at one of them. *His vow*. Not told what the vow was. But likely it referred to the birth of a son. The custom of vowing that if God would grant some favour, the recipient would give to his service some precious gift, was common to the Old Testament dispensation. Many texts be consulted on this subject.

V. 22.—Hannah gave her reasons for not accompanying her husband to Shiloh. She had resolved not to appear before the Lord till her child was not only old enough to go with her, but also to remain behind her. *Weaned*. Hebrew children were sometimes weaned at three years of age, sometimes at two. Probably Hannah clung to her son as long as she could consistently with what she felt to be her duty.

V. 23.—Elkanah agrees to his wife's proposal, adding "*the Lord establish His Word.*" but as no word or promise from God is recorded in reference to Samuel, there must have been some special communication that has not been recorded.

V. 24.—*Werned*, the child is taken to Shiloh. *Young*, likely between three and four. So young as to need careful attendance. *Three bullocks* for burnt offerings. See Josh. 6: 33-35. The burnt offering was always accompanied by an oblation. Numb. 28: 11, 12. For which purpose the *r* was provided; and for a drink offering, (Numb. 28: 14) hence the *See*. "The burnt offering represented the surrender of the person to God; the oblation of flour represented the dedication of the property; and the drink offering, the hearty joy with which the person and property were offered." These offerings were peculiarly appropriate when Elkanah and his wife were yielding to God that which was dearer than life and property—an only son.

V. 25.—*To Eli*, the High Priest.

Vs. 26-28.—Hannah's words to Eli as she gave her child up to the Lord.

As thy soul lieth, a strong asseveration. *I in the woman &c.*, Eli had forgotten her. She had not been in Shiloh for three or four years. *There* in the very place where some years before she had asked for the child she now gives to the Lord; and he is to be engaged in

the Lord's service all his life. A noble act of a noble woman. Future lessons will show us what came of it.

LESSONS.

1. Children are God's gift, and should be welcomed as Hannah welcomed Samuel.

2. Children may be pious from their infancy; they may be regenerated from the womb; they may grow up in the Church. And the children of believers ought to. The piety of Samuel was under God owing to the piety of his parents.

3. The best thing parents can do with their children is to give them to the Lord. Oh that there were many mothers to day like Hannah! The Church would soon see her laborers multiplied.

4. Let children be taken to the Lord's house.

5. Children may enter young upon the Lord's service, and spend all their days doing His will.

6. We may confidently expect that God will accept and save our children if we dedicate them to Him, and train them aright.

FOURTH SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The child Samuel*. 1 Sam. 3: 1-10. Golden Text, Luke 18: 17. Read chap. 2: 11, 18, 19, 26.

Seven or eight years have passed since the incidents of the last lesson occurred; and the child Samuel, or better the boy, was at this time probably 10 or 12 years old.

V. 1.—*Ministered*, doing what he could, lighting the lamps and opening the doors of the Tabernacle, (see V. 15) all under the direction of Eli. *The Word of the Lord, &c.* Communications through the prophets, priests, because rare. Seldom granted because of the sinfulness of the priests and people (see ch. 2: 12-36). *No open vision*. A vision was not common.

Vs. 2-6.—*Eli lived in the Tabernacle*: He was growing old. His sight was failing, and he was becoming feeble. He was evidently accustomed to call Samuel by night if he wanted anything. Hence Samuel's mistake in supposing that Eli called him at this time. Samuel also slept in the Tabernacle; and one night, towards morning, "Ere the lamp of God went out in the temple," the Lord called him, pronouncing his name with an audible voice. Samuel heard, but supposing it was Eli's voice, he arose and went to him. The Lord called again, and again Samuel arose and went to Eli, saying, "*thou didst call me.*" But Eli says, no, my son, I called thee not; lie down again.

V. 7.—*Not yet know the Lord*. The first clause of this verse is explained by the second. Samuel knew not the Lord in the way of receiving communications from him; for such communications were rare.

V. 8.—A third time Samuel is called, and a third time he rises and goes to Eli. And Eli now came to the conclusion that the Lord must have called the child. There was no other way of accounting for the strange occurrence. And Samuel's piety was such as to lend probability to the idea that God would communicate his will through him.