

quered. And the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines—The territory adjacent to these cities. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites—"The highlanders." On the west of Jordan they lived chiefly in the mountainous country of Judah and Ephraim (Num. 13: 29; Josh. 10: 5); east of Jordan they occupied the high plateau of rich pasture-land between the Jabbok and the Arnon, from which they had expelled the Moabites (Num. 21: 13, 26) and were in their turn dispossessed by the Israelites. In the

Egyptian inscriptions the Amorites give their name to the whole country of Canaan, and in several passages of the Old Testament the name appears to be used loosely of the original inhabitants in general. Possibly this is the case here. (Kirkpatrick). (Judges 1: 34, 35).

15. And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.—In his old age Samuel made his sons judges (ch. 8: 1), and Saul was elected king a considerable time before Samuel's death, but up to the end of his life he was held in the highest reverence and there was practically no limit to his authority.

## PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *God pardons the penitent.* When the Israelites began to feel their need of God's pardon and presence so that they "lamented after" him (vs. 2) he was ready to meet them with a message of love and promise of deliverance. The condition of Israel had been very deplorable. They had fallen in with the wicked customs and idolatry of the nations around, the ark was almost forgotten at Kirjath-jearim, the sanctuary at Shiloh was neglected, and Samuel seemed to preach for twenty years in vain. Yet the moment the people desired to return to the Lord he was found waiting to receive them. Is it not mean and unworthy, as well as wicked, to withhold our love and obedience from such a gracious God?

2. *We should ask others to pray for us.* Samuel had been praying for the people all these twenty years and their reformation now was the answer. So he felt sure that God would not refuse what he might further ask. It is a great help to us to try and do what is right when we know that others remember us in their prayers. Parents, teachers, pastors, friends are asking that we be kept from harm and all evil. If others are so anxious about us we ought to be anxious about ourselves. If God will hear the prayers of others for us, he will all the more readily answer our own.

3. *We should not forget God's answers to prayer.* It is a good thing to reflect upon the answers which God has already sent to our prayers. Every morning that we waken refreshed from sleep we should feel as if he had given back to us the life we entrusted to his keeping when we retired to rest. Every day that he keeps us from harm he has answered our morning prayer. Think of how many things you have wished for and have obtained and how often God gave you far beyond what you expected. Even when you did not get what you desired you are able to see that God gave you something far better and only kept back what you would now be sorry to have.

4. *He will help us in the future as effectually as he has in the past.* This was not the first time by any means that God had delivered Israel. He threw down the walls of Jericho for them, lengthened the day at Beth-horon

so that their victory might be complete, scattered the Midianites before the torches and trumpets of Gideon's three hundred. God's past mercies are a guarantee that he has blessings still in store for us. Every wonderful preservation that we have experienced assures us that we need fear no evil for God is with us when we trust ourselves to his care and in our hearts lean on him.

5. *How much the happiness of a country depends upon its rulers.* We read not long ago that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and now Samuel's influence prevails with them and they continue loyal to Jehovah. Rulers have much to do with the religious character of a people. Let our members of parliament, our magistrates and others who occupy influential positions be men who fear God and are sincere Christians and the whole nation will feel the power of their lives. What a blessing it has been to the British Empire and to the world that a woman like Queen Victoria has occupied such an exalted position so long.

## ADDED POINTS.

1. There is no true repentance if we are not willing to "put away the strange gods."

2. We should "prepare our hearts" if we are to render acceptable service.

3. Assemblies for public worship "where prayer is wont to be made" are helpful to penitence and confirmation of good resolves.

4. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

5. There is One Intercessor, Jesus Christ, whom the Father heareth always.

6. Prayers are not answered, often because we do not expect an answer.

7. If we want help against the Lord's enemies we must be on the Lord's side. Then we need fear none.

8. Unless we are willing to have a blessing, God will not force it upon us, no matter how much our friends may plead with him.

9. It is good to keep memorials of God's mercies. They make us humble and thankful.