

words is sad, and the separation is regarded as a great catastrophe.

20.—Study the career and character of Jeroboam, 1 Kings 11: 26. An astute and useful man, he was quick to learn. He rose rapidly in the employ of Solomon because of his native ability. He made himself indispensable. Rising thus quickly from the humble ranks he lacked moral strength. Rich in ability, he was poor in character. His sin was lack of conviction, while policy was his dominant principle. 1 Kings 12: 25. He had watched over the Ephraimites in their labors, and seeing the germs of revolt he ingratiated himself with the common people by his affable manners; and in their need of a king all eyes turned to him. Jeroboam is the type of many a man in the world to-day, quick, shrewd, and successful, as the world calls success, but without principle and moral courage, and therefore a failure in God's sight.

21.—The king makes an attempt to put down the rebellion, but is prevented by the prophet who speaks for God.

22.—History of Shemaiah. One of the minor characters in the Bible, who appears for a moment and then passes, as ships pass in the night. These short studies of character are very interesting (cf Epaphroditus, Mnason, etc). Enough is given to furnish a key of his nature, the man of God, a title full of meaning in O. T. 2 Chron. 12: 5 and 15. It is often found in 2 Kings (cf 1 Tim. 6. 11).

23. *Remnant of the people.*—Those who belonged to the north yet had possessions in the south, and who identified themselves with Judah. The tie of property was stronger than the tie of nationality.

24.—The prophet makes for peace. He seems to say. "How unedifying would the sight be, brother fighting brother, when there were plenty of other enemies to defeat; besides, the Lord had done it and they need not expect to conquer him."

25.—Jeroboam, the castle-builder, fortifies his capital Shechem. This town occupied a romantic situation, with historic Ebal on one side and Gerizim of sacred memory on the other side. Gen. 12: 6; 33: 18; Dt. 27: 12. The town at present is called Nablus and is the seat of government of the Province. Penuel, a fort on the eastern border of the land, and of strategic importance.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS.

1. A lesson from history.

God is the maker of history. The division of the kingdom is from the Lord. This is the Bible view of all events. History is God's conversation. His acts are his revelation. The ordinary view of nature, history, and human life, is, that all things happen by natural laws which are of the earth. An army is defeated, and the difficulty is said to be solved when we know that one army was weaker or less equipped than its opponent.

But in the background is the Lord God. He is as it were the atmosphere for all events. There is a council in heaven where are decided the ups and downs of nations. He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth. He setteth up one and putteth down another (cf Prov. 21: 1). The Lord is the real originator of the division, and the cause of this action is the sin of Solomon who had gone after idols. The external unity was of little value since the unity of worship was broken; and he who had formed the one nation was now the cause of its division. The one guarantee for the continuance of national prosperity is righteousness. It alone exalteth a nation.

This lesson may well be applied to our time, and the scholars impressed with the truth that amid all the events of to-day, social, political, national, individual, the final arbiter is God. Let this lesson in O. T. history be modernized to our own days. In the division of the kingdom we see the real currents below the surface, and they make for God and righteousness. They who oppose God's way will find that he is the stronger of the two (cf Is. 31: 2). After Moscow, Napoleon is reported to have exclaimed "The Almighty is too strong for me."

(2.) A lesson from individual life.

While God makes all history, yet each man is allowed to work out his own salvation or ruin. He is free. We see Rehoboam fall by his own folly. He is the foolish son of a wise father. Wrongly trained by Solomon, he had been brought up in the seclusion of the court, and had none of the healthful influences that come from mingling with the people. This isolation had made him imagine that the poor, the working people, whom he saw, were worthless. He knew little of men; the fault of exclusiveness. This led him to overestimate the power