

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FOURTH QUARTER—STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.


OCTOBER, 1883.

NOTE.—The Scripture verses to be committed to memory are indicated by an index [88] at the side.
R.C. 1141.

LESSON I.—ELI'S DEATH.

Oct. 7.

1 Sam. 4. 10-18.



10 And the Philistines fought, and *a* Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent; and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

a Lev. 26 17; Deut. 28, 25; Psa. 78, 9, 62.
11 And *b* the ark of God was taken; *c* and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain

b Chap. 2. 32.—*c* Psa. 78. 64.
12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent, and *d* with earth upon his head.

d Josh. 7. 6; 2 Sam. 13, 19; 15. 32; Neh. 9. 1.
13 And when he came, lo, *e* Eli sat upon a seat by the way-side watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told *f* it, all the city cried out.

14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, *What meaneth the noise of this tumult?* And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

16 And the man said unto Eli, *I am* he that came out of the army, and *I fled* to-day out of the army. And he said, *f* What is there done, my son?

e Chap. 1. 9.—*f* 2 Sam. 1. 4.
17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died; for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The predictions of the youthful seer soon began its dark fulfilment, with fate bitter to the house of Eli and the land of Israel. The wave of Philistine invasion once more rolled from the shore up the mountain sides, and in the first battle, in the borders of Benjamin, four thousand of the Israelites fell. The warriors remembered how in other days the ark of the Lord had led the way in triumph, and they sent for it from its curtained Holy of Holies. With it went forth to battle the two wicked sons of Eli, while their venerable father, blind with age, sat trembling

upon his throne beside the forsaken tabernacle. But the outward symbol of God's presence was of no avail when the people no longer held him in their hearts, and in the second battle on the same field thirty thousand warriors were slain, the hosts of Israel were driven to utter rout, the wicked priests fell, and the holy ark itself was carried away in triumph among the spoils of victory. The darkest day in Israel's history had come, the time of "the captivity of the land," when the emblem of God's presence was in hostile hands. The sun was setting when a fugitive, breathless with long running, entered the walls of Shiloh. His torn garments and dust-bestrewn brow told the story of the disaster, and the loud wail of the people greeted his approach. The old priest by the gate of the tabernacle heard the cry, and with foreboding heart inquired its cause. The messenger was led into his presence, and, in response to the old man's question, briefly recounted the tale of woe, each successive sentence plunging the sword deeper into the heart of the ruler, the father, and the priest. When the words "the ark of God is taken," fell upon the ears of the aged man, he dropped fainting from his lofty seat, and fell to the ground dead! Thus in a day the hopes of Israel fell to the point of despair, and darkness spread its pall over the land.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 10. The Philistines. These were a powerful people of the maritime plain on the south-western border of Israel, inhabiting five large cities (of which Gaza was the most important) with the territory around them. They were the enemies and oppressors of Israel during most of the time of the Judges, were conquered by David, but not entirely subdued until three hundred years before Christ. They were descendants of Ham, and worshipped Dagon, the fish-god. The name Palestine is derived from the word Philistine. **Fought.** This was the second battle fought at Eben-ezer, an unknown place north or north-west of Jerusalem. A third battle on the same field was a victory for Israel. (See next lesson.) **Israel was smitten.** They had the ark of God with them, but it was of no avail when the love of God was no more in their hearts. 1. So the mere forms of Church order are of very little use without the Spirit in its members. **Every man into his tent.** That is, "every man to his home." In their land of permanent dwellings they still used the term to which their fathers had been accustomed