

the sons had heaped up a burden of iniquity on the family which they represented in the holy office. So, often, the persistent sin of representative members of a household brings irreparable loss and shame upon the whole house. **Shall not be purged.** Hebrew: "Shall not ever itself." The crying offense belonged to the class of presumptuous sins for which the law of sacrifices provided no atonement. See Num. 15. 27-31. **With sacrifice nor offering.** That is, neither by blood-sacrifices nor vegetable offerings. **For ever.** Compare the same expression in verse 13. The meaning is that the judgment is irreversible and perpetual.

This account of Samuel's call furnishes the following subjects for devout meditation:

1. The beautiful innocence and simplicity of consecrated childhood.
2. The word of divine revelation precious because of its scarcity.
3. The house of God the fitting place for receiving special revelations.
4. The tender condescension of God in repeated calls to such as fail to comprehend.
5. The variety of the manifestations of God.
6. The irrevocable doom of incorrigible sinners.

### An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

We may distinguish between three ways of hearing. There is first the mere outward hearing, without taking in the full significance of what is heard. You may hear a knock at your closed door; and a voice addressing you; you go to the door and ask, "What is it?" You are not yet aware what the speaker would convey to you, but you hear and heed. Next comes the inward hearing, the mind perceiving and taking in the meaning of the speech heard. You find out who it is that addresses you, and what he wants; you hear and understand. Then comes the active hearing, the will responding to the thing heard, and guiding the conduct in accordance with it. You find that something is wanted or required of you, and you immediately set about it. You hear and do.

Our lesson to-day is about a hearer, and in it we shall find these three kinds of hearing exemplified.

In the forefront of the picture given us in the passage stands the child Samuel—brought up in the temple of God, brought up in the service of God, brought up in the knowledge of God, and yet not acquainted with him personally (ver. 7), like so many young people around us. In the background stands Eli, the aged priest, old in the service and in the knowledge of God, yet an unsatisfactory servant because an unsatisfactory hearer. Eli had heard the voice of God. He was not like his sons who "knew not the Lord." He could speak of him to the woman who prayed in her sorrow (chap. 1. 17). He could speak of him to his rebellious sons (chap. 2. 25). But his hearing did not rule his will and guide his conduct, or his sons would early have been restrained, and the honor of God's house and service (ver. 17) guarded. Even the express message brought to him by the prophet (chap. 2. 27) seems to have had no outward effect at all. Eli heard with the outward ear and with the understanding as well, but the active hearing and obeying did not follow, save in a very small degree.

When the voice of God, calling "Samuel, Samuel," first fell on the ear of the child and woke him from his sleep it was to him little more than an outward sound. He supposed it to be the voice of his fatherly master and teacher, Eli, and hastened to answer it accordingly. He was a faithful and obedient hearer as far as his knowledge

went. He heard and heeded. And when at the third call he returned the answer that Eli had put into his lips it was no mere form of words. Our Golden Text, "Speak, for thy servant heareth," was truth with Samuel. And then God spoke to his understanding, and he knew that he was listening to a message of the Lord and took in its significance. He heard and understood.

It was a sad message, a message of judgment upon the unfaithful hearer that fell upon his ear, and it must have been terrible indeed to the affectionate child. But this child was called to be a prophet of the Lord, and he was to begin by making experience of what that calling involved, and of the responsibility of those who are set high in God's service. He had to learn the strict obedience God required, and to be tested whether he would obey at all costs.

He learned the lesson, and he stood the test. He "feared to show Eli the vision;" he may have dreaded the old man's reproof, as he no doubt dreaded wounding him. To take to his master and friend such a message as he had heard must have been a severe trial; yet when questioned he told him all, and "hid nothing from him" (ver. 27). He thus proved himself a true hearer in the third and highest sense, that is, one of those who "hear the word of God and keep it."

There are abundance of hearers in the first sense; a goodly number of hearers in the second sense. Which of us are hearers in the third sense—not merely hearing and heeding, hearing and understanding, but, like Samuel, hearing and doing?

### Cambridge Notes.

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[These notes are based on the Revised Version.]

GENERAL NOTE.—The margin of the Rev. Ver. (which is as before the only version used here) contains so many references to the LXX. (Septuagint) that a word of explanation seems needed. The earliest copies of the Hebrew Bible extant are less than one thousand years old. The Greek translation, called the LXX., from a legend ascribing it to seventy authors, was made between 250 and 150 B. C., and though often uncritical and generally bald, is of the utmost importance for the text, as well as for the fact that it was the Bible of the New Testament writers and of our Lord himself. The *Antiquities* of Josephus (first century A. D.) are very helpful in detecting errors of transcription in the historical books. Finally, Jerome's great work, the Latin Vulgate, is a witness to the text in the fourth century. To a certain extent conjecture has to be called in, especially in cases where a clear improvement comes by discarding the traditional vowel points added to the consonants of the text. Obviously it is a method that needs the utmost caution.

The books of Samuel and Kings belong to the prophetic class, contrasted with the priestly Book of Chronicles. This means that the documents and traditions which underlie the narrative were edited by members of the order of prophets, now first starting into prominence. The Chronicles give us bare history, selected and arranged by men interested mainly in the outward ceremonial of the Jewish Church. But the unknown authors of Samuel and Kings write with a deeper purpose, that shown by the Christian prophets in their use of history (Acts 7. 13), revealing God's will to men in the present by showing its operation in the past. The order of prophets, as a continuous institution, was founded by the great man who links together the theocracy and the monarchy. There had been prophets before, notably Moses, but what had become rare in the troubled times