

July 26, 1903

LESSON IV.

SAUL REJECTED AS KING

1 Sam. 15: 13-23. Study vs. 10-31. Commit to memory vs. 20-22. Read 1 Sam., chs. 13-15.

13 And Sam'uel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD; I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

14 And Sam'uel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16 Then Sam'uel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Sam'uel said, I When thou wast little in thine own sight, *wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel*, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

18 And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

Revised Version—1 Though; 2 that which was; 3 devoted; 4 Omit which should have been utterly destroyed; 5 idolatry and teraphim.

GOLDEN TEXT

1 Sam. 15: 22. To obey is better than sacrifice.

DAILY READINGS

M.—1 Sam. 15: 1-12. Samuel's command, Saul rejected as king.
T.—1 Sam. 15: 13-23. Saul's bitterness.
W.—1 Sam. 15: 24-31. Previous disobedience.
Th.—1 Sam. 15: 32-41. Amalek condemned.
F.—Exod. 17: 8-16. Acceptable service.
S.—Prov. 21: 1-8. Better than sacrifice.

CATECHISM

Q. 87. What is *repentance unto life*?
A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience.

19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

20 And Saul said unto Sam'uel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought A'gag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

22 And Sam'uel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

TIME AND PLACE

About B.C. 1065; Gilgal in the Jordan valley near Jericho, the scene of the last lesson. Thus the rejection of Saul occurred at the place which, up to this time, had been for him associated with bright hopes and solemn warnings, chs. 11: 15; 13: 13, 14.

LESSON PLAN

I. A Searching Inquiry, 13-19.
By Samuel regarding the conduct of Saul.

II. A Poor Excuse, 20-21.
In which Saul laid blame on the people.

III. A Great Truth, 22-23.
That worship without obedience is worthless.

LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise, 527; 245; 18 (Ps. Sel.); 221; 232; 248.

EXPOSITION

Connecting Links—The main narrative of chs. 13 and 14 relates the incidents of the revolt of Israel against the Philistines, then at the height of their power. The story is interrupted to give an account of, (1) an interview between Samuel and Saul, in which the latter was informed of his rejection, 13: 10-15; (2) the disarmed condition of Israel, 13: 19-22. In ch. 14: 47-52 there is a summary account of Saul's wars and family. Ch. 15: 1-9 tells of Saul's campaign against the Amalekites, undertaken at the divine command, and his disobedience of God's instructions to destroy them and their possessions. In vs. 10-12 the Lord informs Samuel of his intention to remove Saul from the kingship, and Samuel goes to meet the king.

I. A Searching Inquiry, 13-19.

V. 13. *Samuel came to Saul.* The prophet shared the disappointment of the Lord at the failure of Saul as king, vs. 10, 11. The meeting of prophet and king took place at

Gilgal, the scene of Saul's joyful proclamation (ch. 11: 14, 15), and where he was now to hear the sentence of his removal. *Blessed be thou of the Lord*; originally a prayer, Gen. 14: 19. Saul felt that Samuel was angry with him, and tried to conciliate him with a friendly greeting. *I have performed the commandment of the Lord.* God thought differently—see v. 11. Saul was beginning to play the hypocrite, professing to have done the Lord's will, when he had really been gratifying his selfish desires.

Vs. 14-16. *What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep?* A sharp inquiry, cutting like a knife into Saul's statement. *And Saul said*; like Aaron (Ex. 32: 22), shirking his responsibility and laying the blame on the people. *The Amalekites*; a powerful tribe, perhaps descended from Amalek, grandson of Esau, Gen. 36: 16. (See also Light from the East.) They had opposed Israel in the wilderness (Ex. 17: 8-16; Num. 14: 45), and harassed them after the entrance into Canaan, Judges