

What She Lacked.

MISS PUSSY sat on the lowest bough
Of a waving hickory-tree,
Whispering softly, "I'll have you now,
You gay little robin, you'll see!
The old hen watches her chicks thirteen,
And has such a fearful way
Of flying at one, that I haven't seen
A bit of fresh meat to-day."

But Master Robin twitters away,
As she stealthily creeps along,
Joining in as the thrush and jay
Chirrup a morning song,
Glancing sidewise once and again
Out of his saucy eye,
As if to say, "You will catch me, then?
Well, madam, suppose you try!"

"I have four legs," said Pussy Cat,
"And you, sir, have only two;
I have sharp claws, depend on that,
And they'll get the better of you;
I'm stronger too than a dozen birds—
Look now!" and she quickly springs;
But the robin laughed as he soared away,
"Ha! ha! but you have no wings!"

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

B.C. 1427] LESSON VIII. [Nov. 25

THE COVENANT RENEWED

Josh. 24. 19-28. Memory verses, 26-28

GOLDEN TEXT.

The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. Josh. 24. 24.

OUTLINE.

1. The Choice.
2. The Record.

TIME.—1427 B.C.

PLACE.—Shechem.

CONNECTING LINKS.—The two and half tribes withdraw to their possessions over the river. In fear that in later days there may come separation in spirit between them and their western brethren, they built an altar of witness to the oneness of God and the unity of his people. The rumor heard in the west of an altar, other than the one at Shiloh, caused an invasion by Phinehas and the princes to avenge the impiety. The explanation of their purpose in building was received, and no blood was shed. The years passed away. Joshua was an old man. Conscious of approaching death, he gathered the tribes at Shechem and spoke words of counsel, and made once more a solemn covenant. Our lesson tells the story.

EXPLANATIONS.—*Ye cannot serve*—That is, if you follow the leading of your natural heart. *He will not forgive*—If you remain impenitent and incorrigible. *Serve strange gods*—Or worship idols; perhaps alluding to the images which they appear to have had at all times in their history among them. *Joshua wrote these words*—That is, the history of this whole occurrence. *A great stone*—A monument, or stone pillar, as a witness or memorial. A custom always practised among all nations. *The sanctuary of the Lord*—Some think the tabernacle had been brought to Shechem for this occasion; others think it means any holy place, made so by the circumstances of the time.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. *The Choice.*
What expression of the people caused Joshua to speak as in ver. 19? see ver. 16-18.
Is it true that men cannot serve God because he is holy?
What is there in the very nature of idolatry that is debasing?
Is there any suggestion in these verses that God is close at hand, watching his people?
What other Scripture teachings substantiate this thought? Prov. 15. 3; Zech. 4. 10.
What was the second response of the people to Joshua?
How many times were the warning and the promise repeated?
Why was Joshua so anxious to make this choice impressive?
2. *The Record.*
What further means did he take to make the choice binding and memorable?

Whose example was he following in what he now did? Exod. 21
Where was it that all this occurred?
What traces of the beginnings of our Bible can be found here?
What does ver. 27 mean? It says the stone heard; is that true?
What had he once before told them was the value of the pillar of stone? Josh. 4. 21-24.
What was the one sin that Joshua seemed to dread for his people?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Learn this for the deliberate, wilful sinner there is no forgiveness.
Learn this for the broken-hearted, contrite sinner there is plenteous mercy.
Notice the value of a pledge, ver. 27. It was to be a help to keep them from denying God.
God had done great things for them. He has done greater things for us.
They had a fragment of a Bible. We have the whole.
They promised freely to obey at hearing one word from Joshua. You have had preaching and teaching all your life, and have never promised. Will you not promise now?

HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Compare the covenant of Joshua with the covenant of Moses, and with the acts of Samuel in 1 Sam. chap. 7.
2. As a preparation for study read the whole 24th chap. of Joshua.
3. Find all the allusions to "strange gods" in connection with the early history of Israel and their ancestors. Deut. 32. 17; Josh. 24. 14; Gen. 35. 2; Psa. 106. 37
4. Write a brief story of Joshua's life.
5. Give fifteen minutes each day of the week to the study of this lesson.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What was Joshua's last service with his people? Making a covenant with God. 2. What did he promise for himself and his house? "We will serve the Lord" 3. What did the people promise? "The Lord our God will we," etc. 4. How did Joshua help them to remember the scene? He wrote the words in a book. 5. What was his last recorded official act? Erecting a stone of witness. 6. What was the purpose of it? That they might not deny God.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The covenant.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

9. What is this sinfulness commonly called.
Original sin; being that from which actual transgressions proceed.
10. What is the misery of the state into which man fell?
All mankind, being born in sin, and following the desires of their own hearts, are liable to the miseries of this life, to bodily death, and to the pains of hell hereafter.
Ephesians ii. 3; Galatians iii. 10; Romans vi. 23.

B.C. 1425] LESSON IX. [Dec. 2

ISRAEL UNDER JUDGES.

Judg. 2. 11-23. Memory verses, 11, 12

GOLDEN TEXT.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Heb. 3. 12.

OUTLINE.

1. Forsaking God.
2. Forsaken by God.

TIME.—1425 B.C.

PLACE.—No special place is designated in this lesson, which is simply descriptive of their social, political, and religious condition.

CONNECTING LINKS.—Joshua had died, and the new nation, with no appointed leader, but under the direct government of God, had begun its life. A few incidents of the times are given in chapter 1 of this book, and in the verses which precede the lesson. The lesson itself is its own best commentary.

EXPLANATIONS.—*Did evil in the sight of the Lord*—This is the regular phrase for lapsing into idolatry. *Provoked the Lord to a-ger*—Not such anger as men feel in passion, but righteous indignation against sin. *The hands of spoilers*—Marauding bands of robbers who robbed their fields of crops at harvest, and carried the people away for slaves. *He sold them*—God allowed them to be sold as described. *Raised up judges*—By a judge we always understand the presiding officer in a court of law. But here the term means a leader who assumed all the functions of

direction and government in emergencies, and yet without pomp, equipage, or emolument of office. They were inspired for the purpose. *It repented the Lord*—Or, the Lord repented. Looked at from the human side God seems to change, but it is man that changes, and God's uniform way of treating the righteous follows the change.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. *Forsaking God.*
What great national calamity had come upon Israel since the scenes of the last lesson? Judg. 24. 29.
What was the cause of the wickedness described in this lesson? ver. 10.
How could the statement of the verse be true?
What were the sins against which they had been repeatedly warned?
What is shown by the history as to the value of promises and memorial monuments.
What was the character of the worship of Baal and Ashtaroth?
What made it easy to fall into these sins?
Are there other ways of "forsaking God" than these here mentioned?
How do men nowadays forsake God?
2. *Forsaken by God.*
What had God said by Moses and by Joshua would happen if Israel did evil? Du. 4. 25, 26; Josh. 24. 20.
How did God show them he had forsaken them?
What were the names of the hostile peoples round about to whom they were delivered? chap. 3. 1, 3.
Was there any relief found for them?
Give the names of the judges whom God raised up. Chaps. 3. 9, 15, 31; 4. 4; 6. 11, 12; 9. 22; 10. 1, 3; 11. 6; 12. 8, 11, 13; 16. 30, 31.
What was the general history of the people for three hundred years? Judg. 21. 25.
Do men to-day suffer the penalty of their misdeeds?
What was the great lesson that God was teaching the world by these punishments?
What was the warning which the apostles in their teaching constantly gave. Heb. 3. 12.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Forgetfulness is a great cause of sin. Israel forgot their own history. Forgetting God they forsook him. As they forgot, so we do many times. As they forsook him, so we do. We forget him when we disobey our parents, when we give up church-going, when we love the follies of the world, when we break the Sabbath, when we desire to be rich more than to be right, when we are at all dishonest.
God will surely forsake us as he did them unless we repent.

HINTS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. These verses are an epitome of the history of these people for three hundred years. The next three lessons are only incidents of the years. Each teacher and scholar should read the whole book of Judges carefully.
2. Study and carefully learn all that you can find about the worship of Baal and Astart. Any Bible dictionary will help you.
3. See from the Bible how many times the people began to worship Baal. Search Num. 22. 41; Judg. 8. 33; 1 Kings 16. 32; 18. 26; 2 Kings 17. 16; 19. 18; 21. 3; Jer. 2. 8; 7. 9; 12. 16; 19. 5; 23. 13; Hos. 2. 8, etc.
4. Write a practical lesson about God's long suffering and forbearance.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. After Joshua's death how did the people of Israel act? They forgot God and did evil. 2. How did they do evil? They worshipped heathen gods. 3. What was the result of their evil? They were bitterly punished by the Lord. 4. How did God even then show his mercy and love for them? He raised up deliverers for them. 5. What warning did the apostle give the church many centuries afterward? "Take heed, brethren," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The punishment of sin.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

11. But are all mankind, being born in sin, born without hope?
No; for a Saviour was provided from the beginning, and all that come into the world receive his grace and his spirit.
Genesis iii. 15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

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