

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

Dangers to God's People.

1. God's people are in danger when the period of active and special work is followed by a period of rest and ease. Peace has its perils, no less than war. "After the revival" is as important as during the revival.

2. God's people are in danger when parents cease to teach their children God's way. If the generation that followed Joshua had carefully trained their children in the knowledge of God, and in the memory of his mighty works, the great backsliding in the days of the Judges might have been averted.

3. God's people are in danger from the companionship of the world. The world's principles, aims, and standards are not those of God's people. When the Church begins to walk with the world it begins to follow the world, and to be corrupted by the world.

4. God's people are in danger when they lean on men instead of leaning on God. They looked to judges when, if they had clung to God, they would never have needed judges to deliver them.

5. God's people are in danger when they forget their promises and covenants of service, and live as though they had never made them.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

OFF the south-west coast of England, twelve miles from the entrance to Plymouth Sound, lies the Eddystone Rock, on which in former times countless vessels have perished. To prevent these disasters the first light-house was erected on the rock by a merchant in Queen Elizabeth's reign. For a time all went well; the light-house bravely weathered the furious storms that beat upon it, and many a vessel warned and guided by the friendly light reached the harbor in safety. But after the lapse of a few years the light-house gave way; the wild sea washed over it, and the terrible tale of wreck and loss of life began as before. Was the destructive force of storm and wave and treacherous rock to be triumphant? No: for another force had been roused to battle with them—a saving force—the force of human desire, energy, and skill. Before long another light-house crowned the place of danger. This lasted nearly fifty years, and then it was destroyed by fire, and the forces of destruction again worked their will. But was the compassion—the earnest desire to save life—to be in the end foiled? Not so. A third light-house, far more solidly and firmly built than those that had gone before, took their place, and there it has stood for more than a hundred years. The saving force has conquered.

The passage for our lesson to-day tells us a sad tale. It is a tale of a continually working and destructive force which spoiled and desolated the fair homes God had given to his people Israel in the land of Canaan. This was the force of sin and unbelief. It was constantly sweeping the Israelites from their safe moorings into the whirlpool of idolatry. We find them forsaking the God whom they had solemnly promised to serve and obey, and serv-

ing many "lords" (the meaning of "Baalim"). Some of the wicked rites and sacrifices practiced by the heathen nations of Canaan are described in *Psalm* 106. 37, 38. For these things the judgment of God had come upon the Canaanites, and now that his own people were falling into the same abominations his judgments came upon them also. Twice we are told that "the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel." Bondage and misery followed. And this not merely for a short time. What is related in the twenty-three verses we have to consider is a summary of the whole book of Judges, describing in brief the course of events for some hundreds of years. But there was another force meeting and wrestling with the force of evil—a saving force, which, not once, or twice, but time after time, brought deliverance. It was the force of divine compassion and love. We read that "the Lord raised up judges which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them;" "And when the Lord raised up judges the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge." The histories of a few of these deliverers are given us, but of others we know little or nothing. But what they effected was merely temporary. On the death of the judge each succeeding generation "returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers," and the last picture given us in the record is one of sin and sadness and failure.

Was, then, the force of evil to be finally triumphant after all? The means which had been used, to stem it were inadequate to hold the ground permanently. But the force of divine love was not yet exhausted. All through the Old Testament we see it still striving. And the story of the nation of Israel is not yet finished. But the imperfect and erring human deliverers, whose power was but partial and transitory, have been succeeded by a divine Saviour, against whom the whole force and fury of evil has been hurled in vain. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son," *Gal.* 4. 4.

The forces of evil—the destructive forces—are still working all around us. And worst of all is the treacherous rock, the "evil heart of unbelief," as our Golden Text tells us, whose tendency is always to "depart from the living God." But the deliverer is here. The light-house of mercy and safety is set up. The force of divine love is conqueror. No vessel whose course is guided by this ever-shining light can go astray. And where Christ is fully received the heart that was once evil and faithless becomes, like the Eddystone Rock, a place where the true light is exalted and manifested to the help and benefit of others round about.

The Lesson Council.

Question 20. How were the judges of Israel chosen?

At the suggestion of Jethro, judges were at first chosen by Moses, when overworked by his judicial duties. *Exod.* 18. 13-35. The judges mentioned in the book of that name were chosen of God directly, as in England to-day they are appointed, for the most part,