

of a parrot or a sheep, but it does not suit the nature of a child of God. He ought to be able like Joshua to say, whatever others do, "As for me, I will serve the Lord".

Samuel...rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord, v. 21. A poor Highland woman once brought her trouble to the Earl of Huntley, chief of the Gordon clan. When she had told her tale, the nobleman asked her, "How is it that you do not see one of the factors about this?" She replied, "I went to wee Sandy Gordon and to muckle Sandy Gordon, and they wadna' help me, so I came to the great Gordon himself". It is our privilege to take all our troubles to the throne of the great God who made and governs all things.

The Lord said...make them a king, v. 22. Yes, we can have our own way, if we will have it. There is a point at which God withdraws His opposition. We can waste our lives and lose our souls, if we are bent on doing so. But how many and how strong are the barriers we must force our way through

To the Very
Throne

Fool!

before we can reach destruction! The loving persuasion of father, mother, teachers, ministers, friends, of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Right in our way, too, stands the cross of Christ. But we can trample upon it or find a way round it. Who would be such a fool?

Lesson Points

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D.

We cannot enter on any evil course without first trampling down the barriers erected by divine love. v. 10.

What the world takes from us is never returned. What we give to Christ comes back with a hundredfold increase. vs. 14, 15.

By our choices to-day we may be forging chains that will bind us to-morrow. vs. 16, 17.

Unless faith in God rules our lives, our prayers to Him cannot prevail. v. 18.

Sin's chief power over us lies in blinding us to its certain results. v. 19.

God often lets us have our own way, that we may learn its folly, and so be driven back to Himself. v. 22.

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of the Older Scholars and Bible Classes

By Rev. John H. MacVicar, B.A.

There was a certain reasonableness about this demand for a king. Consciously, or unconsciously, the people wanted, what all true patriots want, good government. But, on the other hand, they went about it in the wrong spirit.

1. *Dissatisfaction with existing conditions of government*, vs. 1-9. Civil rule of some kind is necessary, Rom. 13 : 1. Nor had the people all these years been without such rule; but, through one cause and another, government by judges had come into discredit. Good old Samuel's sons were so far from walking in his ways (v. 5), that they showed no competence whatever to take his place. They were too skilled in the corrupt practices, now called "graft" and "boodle". Their greed for "tainted wealth" showed itself in shameless readiness to take bribes

and pervert judgment, v. 3.

Such a state of things could not go on for ever. In one phase of it, this dissatisfaction of the people was a healthy thing. Even when it is not aroused by wholesome indignation at moral wrong-doing, dissatisfaction may prove an incentive towards higher attainment and achievement, Phil. 3 : 13, 14. It was so far good, that the people desired better rule; but they erred in seeking it in revolt against the direct authority of God, v. 7. They came with a demand, rather than a petition, v. 19. They brought their human programme, and insisted on exalting it above the divine programme for securing national prosperity and greatness, Deut. 28 : 1.

2. *Extravagant expectations regarding a particular form of government*, vs. 10-22. In order to open their eyes, a picture is drawn of a typical Oriental despot, with his troops of cavalry (v. 11), standing army (v. 12), retinue and household staff (v. 13), seizures of land and other property (v. 14), heavy taxation (v. 15), and pressed service, vs. 16, 17. The picture is softened, rather than