

At last it was taken to the house of Abinadab in Kirjath-jearim, where it remained for many years; but no special religious services were held in connection with it. The oppression of the Philistines continued, and then the people began to turn to God, ch. 7 : 2.

1. *Samuel's call for repentance*, vs. 3, 4. Nothing is said about his work during the intervening years, except his visits in the interests of justice, ch. 7 : 15-17. He carried on his work of education, warning, teaching. It took a long time to prepare for an assembly, and when the time was opportune he moved. We can hardly over-estimate the influence of such a man (ch. 12 : 1-5) in bringing about a great reformation. Note the declaration made : (1) There must be repentance, that is, turning from sin to God. (2) Putting away idols. (3) Deliverance from the Philistines, if the people obeyed. The people were sincere, and the assembly was called.

2. *The public meeting*, vs. 5, 6. This took place at Mizpeh, a hill near Ramah. It became the rallying point of a new national life. Note the character of the services: Samuel's intercession (compare Abraham, Gen. 18 : 22-33; Elijah, 1 Kgs. 18 : 36-42; Ezra 9 : 5-15); symbolic consecration; fasting; confession. In this way Samuel began his public work as reformer.

3. *The overthrow of the Philistines*, vs. 7-14. The Philistines rightly regarded this new movement in Israel with suspicion, and their lords (ch. 6 : 16, 17) at once rushed to the attack. It seemed a favorable time, as the Israelites were not specially prepared for battle. Study the attitude of Israel : their dependence on Samuel's intercession with God; and their presenting of a sin offering. Note the divine interposition, which resulted in the complete defeat of the enemy, deliverance from the Philistines, and the restoration of Israel's territory.

4. *Samuel's public career*. He at once raised a memorial of the great victory. He continued his work in the interests of justice, and made the religious life prominent. He was a military and civil ruler, until Saul became king, when he laid down the office of judge. He was a great man, unselfish,

patriotic, spiritual. Review his career. The Golden Text is secret of his life. It is also a universal condition of the highest life. The whole year's study makes prominent the necessity of faith in God.

### For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

The review of the previous Lesson carries back to God's terrible judgment against the house of Eli. It also gives us a glimpse of the boy Samuel grown to be a man, and God's honored prophet. Bring out afresh the characteristics of the boy Samuel, so ready to listen to God and so brave to do as God commands. These are the foundations of the Samuel of to-day's Lesson.

We pass on twenty years. Did the disaster befall Eli and his house? It is a sad story; but the main points should be asked for : the battle with the Philistines, the taking of the ark of God, the death of Eli's two sons, and then of Eli himself (ch. 4).

The travels of the ark take up chs. 5, 6. There is no blessing to those who dishonor God's house or worship. The Philistines finally bring it to Beth-shemesh, a border town, and ask the Israelites to send for it, which they gladly do.

*The ark at Kirjath-jearim*. It was a sad time for God's people ; like the days of persecution, when our forefathers were driven out of their churches, and compelled to worship on the open moors. Have the class turn to Ps. 132, vs. 3-5, which depict the sad solicitude for the ark of the Lord. "Fields of the wood" (v. 6 of the same Psalm) refers to the stay of the ark at Kirjath-jearim, (meaning, "city of the woods").

*A word of cheer*, v. 3. To what sort of people do we go in our time of trouble? Usually, to those who love and serve God. Have the class note that it is Samuel the servant of the Lord, who is the first to speak the word of hope. Explain "strange gods", Ashtaroth and Baalim of v. 4. What does Samuel summon the people to do? How to show their genuineness? What is the promise? Show the connection between sincerity and good acts, and between these and God's blessing.

*The prayer of the righteous*, v. 5. The Geography Lesson tells about Mizpeh, the