

far apart. It would hardly seem that his authority extended far to the north. Perhaps they had sadly drifted away into idolatry there.

Ver. 17.—His return was to Ramah: he lived there; held "court" there; and had there an altar for public worship. We hear nothing of the Tabernacle. Samuel was the centre and leader of the religion of the nation.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. Sin, like the Philistines, will always oppose us; but, if we keep close by the sacrificial Lamb, it shall not overcome us. (Ver. 10.)
2. In every great revival, God's enemies become active. (Ver. 7.)
3. Danger brings the soul near to God. (Ver. 8.) And danger unites God's people.
4. It is sweet and profitable to look back to the Ebenezers we have set up!
5. The more we thankfully observe God's deliverances and mercies, the more such mercies will be granted us.
6. Successive steps:—Hearts returning—Baal left—holy convocation—fasting—prayer—help—victory—remembrance—peace—worship.

ISRAEL	CONFESSES.	EBENEZER.	HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US.
	FEARFUL.		
	SAVED.		

Oct. 21, }
1883.

ASKING FOR A KING.

{ 1 Sam. 8:
1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."—Ps. 118: 9.

CONNECTION.—About twenty more years had passed. It had been a time of peace and prosperity. Once the Israelites had proposed to Gideon (Judg. 8: 22) the idea of his being king, but he would not listen to it. Now again the thought took possession of the public mind, and a ready excuse was found in the [actually bad] conduct of Samuel's sons.

NOTES.—Beer-sheba: situated in the southern extremity of Palestine, in the tribe of Simeon, about twenty-five miles south-west of Hebron. Ramah: the residence of Samuel, five miles to the north of Jerusalem.

I. GOD REJECTED.—Ver. 1.—Samuel was old: we suppose about seventy. Made his sons judges: he needed help in his old age; but instead of searching out the best men for assistant judges, his partiality led him to appoint his sons.

Ver. 2.—They were judges in Beer-sheba: he appointed his sons Joel and Abiah to have jurisdiction at the extreme south of the land.

Ver. 3.—His sons walked not in his ways: he was a righteous judge; but his sons loved money, and received bribes from suitors, and gave corrupt judgment. And such conduct would soon become notorious. In Spain—I have it on excellent authority—it is a universal thing for a suitor in an important cause to give the judge a "gratification;" in plain words, a *bribe*. And generally the man who gives the largest bribe gains his case.

Ver. 4: 5.—Elders of Israel gathered: the elders seemed to be the hereditary chiefs or heads of families. These representative men came together, and came to Samuel. Thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: this was very true, and they should have asked him to have other judges appointed in place of his sons. Now make us a king: here their corrupt desires came out. They wanted to be like the nations around. The very plea

the sinner has for his impenitence: he "wants to be like other people."

Ver. 6.—The thing displeased Samuel: the good and aged judge was grieved, because he saw it was a weariness of being governed by God, and a desire to have the government pass over to a king. And Samuel prayed: the best thing he could do. He wanted to know what God thought about it. So with the Christian: he "goes and tells Jesus."

II. A KING GRANTED.—Ver. 7.—Hearken unto the voice of the people: the Lord intended they should have their own way in this matter; just as He often lets the sinner run his own way, to his own chastisement. They have not rejected thee: Samuel need not feel grief on his own account. He had never been Supreme Ruler. It was not *he* they were rejecting. So when a minister's words are despised: it is not the servant but the Master who is insulted. They have rejected me: instead of being thankful that they were unlike heathen nations, they desired to copy them. They wanted more of this world's splendour, and to obtain it they were willing to part with God's favour.

Ver. 8.—According to all the works, etc.: they, in this matter, have just done what they have continually—for ages—done ever since they were in Egypt: shown their rebellious heart. So do they also unto Thee: even as Moses had to bear with them (for when rebelling against God, they also rebelled against him), so also Samuel.

Ver. 9.—Hearken unto their voice: let them have a king. Show them the manner of the king: Samuel was to discharge his duty by showing them solemnly how wrong was their desire, and how much oppression and service would be put upon them by their kings: words which came true every day for many ages. (8: 10-18.)

Ver. 10.—Samuel told all the words: the Lord seemed to talk familiarly with Samuel; probably by an audible voice, while nothing appeared to the eye. And Samuel faithfully repeated to the people all that God had said. It ought to have changed their determination, but did not.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. A common sin of children is to despise parents: a common sin of parents is to over-indulge their children.
2. According to *Fuller*—A father's piety cannot be entailed: that is bad news for a man! But neither is the burden of his own sins hereditary: that is good news for the man's son!
3. If men want to do wrong, it is easy to find an excuse. (Ver. 3.)
4. The reason urged may be quite true as a matter of fact, and yet lame as a *reason*: e.g., Samuel's sons *were* corrupt; yet that was no reason for *rejecting God*!
5. It is a great comfort to the Christian whose good offices and counsels are rejected, that God feels the rejection, too, and sympathizes with him. (Ver. 8.)

KING OF KINGS REJECTED.
GOD INDIGNANT AT REBELLION.
NOTES ISRAEL'S INGRATITUDE.
GRANTS A KING.

Oct. 28, }
1883.

SAUL CHOSEN KING.

{ 1 Sam. 10:
17-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And all the people shouted and said, God save the king."—1 Sam. 10: 24.

INTRODUCTION.—In the providence of God, Saul was brought to Samuel's house; and, before he parted from