God called the nearest angels who dwell with Him above : The tenderest one was Pity, the dearest one was Love.

"Arise," He said "Iny angels! a wail of we and sin Steals through the gates of heaven, and saddens all within.

" My harps take up a mornful strain that from a lost world swells.

The smoke of torment clouds the light, and blights the asphodels.

"Fly downward to that under world. and on its souls of pain. Let Love drop smiles of sunshine, and Pity, tears like rain."

Two faces bowed before the throne, veiled in their golden hair; Pour white wings lessened slowly down the dark abyss of air.

The way was strange, the flight was long; at last the angels came. Where swung a lost and nether world. red-wrapped in rayless flame.

There Pity, shuddering wept; but Love with faith too strong for fear. Took heart from God's Almightiness, and smiled a smile of cheer.

And lo; that tear of Pity, quenched the flame whereon it fell. And with the sunshine of that smile, hope came with man to dwell.

Two unveiled faces full of joy looked upward to the Throne. Four white wings folded at the feet of Him who sat thereon!

And deeper that the sound of seas, more soft than falling flake, Amidst the hush of wing and song the Voice Eternal spake:

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"Welcome, my angels! ye have brought a ho.ier joy to heaven; Henceforth its sweetest song shall be the song of sin forgiven."

JOHN G. WHITTIER

BEREAN NOTES.

Jan. 2.] LESSON I. SAUL REJECTED. [B. C. 1079.] [1. SAM. 15. 10-23.

HOME READINGS. MONDAY-1 Sam. 15. 10-23, TUESDAY-1 Sam. 8. 1-22. WEDNESDAY-1 Sam. 9. 15.24. THUESDAY-1 Sam. 10. 19-25. FRIDAY-1 Sam. 15. 1-9. SATURDAY-John 11. 45-54. SUNDAY-1 Sam. 15. 24 35.

TOPIC: Blessings forfeited by the Sin of Man. GOLDEN TEXT: Wheel Le would have tute for obedience. He was sinning in orinnerited the blessing, he was rejected. der that he might thereby serve God! Heb. 12. 17.

TOPICAL OUTLINE.

1. Sorrow over Sin, v. 10, 11. Concealment of Sin, v. 12-15. 3. Reproof for Sin, v. 16-19. 4. Rejection for Sin, v. 20-23.

Where in this lesson do we learn-

1. That God demands perfect obedience? 2. That sin cannot be concealed?

3. That sin will certainly be punished? DOCTRINE: The sinfulness of sin. Rom. 7. 13; 1 John 3. 8.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The Introductory Note of this lesson in The Berean Question Book sufficiently connects it with our previous studies in the Old Testament. We come now to consider Saul Rejected. What is said in our GOLDEN TEXT of Esau became true of Saul: "When he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected." See verses following the lesson. The general TOPIC here illustrated is: "Blessings forfeited by the Sin of Man." The phases specially illustrated in this lesson, and common to all classes of sinning in some degree, are set forth as follows in the OUTLINE: 1. Sorrow over Sin: 2. Concealment of Sin; 3. Reproof for Sin; 4. Rejection for Sin. At this opening of the new year let every teacher encourage the committing to memory of SELECTED VERSES, and all other important parts of each lesson. Example, as well as precept, is needed in

By D. A. WHEDON, D.D.

SAUL had at the time of the events in the lesson been king of Israel about sixteen years. When the people demanded a human king, God, though disapproving their plan, claimed the right of his selection. He was to be both God's representative and servant, governing the nation in obedience to himself, the real King. Early in his reign he was put to the test. Samuel predicted his going to Gilgal, where he would meet him and offer saerifice, and at the same time give him instructions. See chap. 10. 8. Saul, frightened by the Philistines and the desertion of his people, took the matter into his own hands, and offered the sacrifice before Samuel's arrival, thus disobeying God. See chap. 13, 8-14. The pronounced penalty was the ending of his dynasty with

himself Now once more God tests Saul. The Amalekites had attacked Israel in Rephidim four hundred years before, to defeat. God's plans for his people. See Exod. 17. all their possessions. Saul was simply might have a king for a slave, and enrichin the judgment day. Gen. 3, 17; Num 32, 23; Job 14. 1; Ezek. 18. 4; Rom. 6.

God announced to Samuel the result. IT REPENTETH ME, said Jehovah; that is. I repent. God sorrows over Saul's sin because of itself, because it shows that he cannot be trusted, and because of its consequences. He sorrows over all sin. His repentence is that change of feeling and purpose which precede a change in his course of action. Until now he has stood by Saul personally, but he will do so no longer. Ver. 29 is not a contradiction. but simply assures Saul that the present decree is irrevocable, for God does not REPENT or change as fickle man does. The reason for the rejection of Saul is given: it is a double reason. It was his duty to follow where and as God should point the way, but he TURNED BACK : he ought to have done what God commanded, but HE HATH NOT PERFORMED. This was his sin : he neglected to do. And this is the great sin of multitudes. Men will ask if sparing Agag and a few cattle was a great affair, and inquire wherein was its great evil: God's answer is that it was disobedience to himself, which, indeed, is the essence of all sin. Samuel sorrowed too, and in pure sympathy with the sorrow of his God. As two grieved souls com-

mune together, so the prophet poured out

his burdened soul ALL NIGHT. Good men every where and always should mourn

for sin, for it is wrong in itself, offensive

and insolent to God, and ruinous to the

sinner. Only "fools make a mock at sin."

1. Sorrow over sin. By vision or dream

2. Concealment of sin. Saul, returning from his southern campaign, came to CARMEL, not the celebrated mount, but a place six miles south of Hebron, SET UP A PLACE, that is, a monument of some kind, probably in the form of an elevated hand. (as the word means,) to commemorate his victory, and then PASSED ON to Gilgal, near Jericho. It was a sad place to the doomed king, (chap. 13. 14,) and about to become doubly sad. Here Samuel found him ready with his lying report-I HAVE PERFORMED THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD. God had said the contrary Ver. 11. If this was hypocrisy, he did not deceive God's prophet or the prophet's God. BLEATING SHEEP and LOWING OXEN were a testimony against him. His wretched excuse that THE PEOPLE SPARED them was senseless, if not false, for if true he should have restrained them. That they were reserved for sacrifice was no apology for disobedience and no substi-

3. Reproof for sin. LITTLE. See his own confession in chap. 9. 21. God made him all he was, gave him all the power he had, and finally set him upon a certain work with explicit instructions to utterly destroy a nation of sinners whose cup of iniquity was full, in execution of the just decree of a righteous Judge. It was God's contest on which he was sent, which he was to wage in God's way. How terrible the threefold indictment verse of 19. DIDST NOT OBEY, FLY UPON THE SPOIL, declaring the eagerness for plunder, and DIDST EVIL IN God's SIGHT. God saw the act and knew the motive.

4. Rejection for sin. Yet Saul is not condemned without a hearing. What can he say but to confess? He denies the accusation and tries to give another turn to the facts. He has OBEYED; he did go as he was SENT; he UTTERLY DESTROYED the Amalekites—only he made Agag captive, and the people (not he) took the best of the spoil for sacrifice. Was this stunidity, or conscienceless hardihood, or moral blindness? Yet do not sinners reason in like ways to-day in defense of Newest & most Fashionable Styles. their sins or in palliation of their guilt? God had, indeed, enjoined sacrifices, but as helps to, and not substitutes for obedience. But they must be rightly obtained. Gifts of money obtained by fraud cannot justify the fraud. No religious rite is of equal worth with moral conduct. Saul's conduct therefore is pronounced as bad as WITCHCRAFT and IDOLATRY, both of which are in rebellion against God. The sentence of rejection then falls on Saul's guilty ears. He was not deposed. but remained on the throne for some years, during which God was training David for his high place. Yet from that day Samuel never sought him, or acknowledged him as king, and God held intercoarse with him no more. He went from Important bad to worse until he fell a suicide. Yet had he chosen to repent his soul might have been saved.

Lessons. 1. Sin is exceedingly sinful God's holy law is the standard of conduct and the test of character. Every departure from it is sin, and every sin is vile before God. Deut. 8.7: 1 John 3.4. 2. Sin is The Pupils' Everybodys' very deceitful, blinding the eyes, dulling the conscience, and perverting the reason. often making evil appear as good and 8-16, and Deut. 25, 17-19. The hour is good as evil. Gen. 6, 5; Isa. 1, 2-4; Matt. come for their utter extermination with 15; 19; Rom. 3. 9-19. 3. The forfeitures of sin are fearful. It robs us of peace, of the minister of Jehovah, and was to exe. God's love, and of heaven. It destroys cute his mission in Jehovah's way. Here our power for doing good. It prevents again he failed, sparing Agag that he God's using us as he otherwise might. It procures an eternal rejection from Christ

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