

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON IV.

Oct. 28, 1883.] [1 Sam. 10: 17-27.]

SAUL CHOSEN KING.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 18, 19.

17. And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord to Mizpeh:

18. And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you:

19. And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands.

20. And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

21. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken; and when they sought him, he could not be found.

22. Therefore they enquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come thither. And the Lord answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

23. And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

24. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

25. Then Samuel told the people, the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

26. And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

27. But the children of Bethle said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

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

TOPIC.—God the Ruler of Kings.

LESSON PLAN.—1. THE NATION ASSEMBLED, vs. 17-19. 2. THE KING CHOSEN, vs. 20-23. 3. THE PEOPLE REJOICING, vs. 24-27.

Time.—B.C. 1095. Place.—Mizpeh.

LESSON NOTES.

V. 17. MIZPEH—a city of Benjamin, about five miles from Jerusalem; a general gathering-place of the tribes. V. 18. I BROUGHT UP ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT—the Lord recounts his mercies to show their ingratitude. V. 19. REJECTED YOUR GOD—by this demand. Now therefore—since you have thus chosen to your own hurt, PRESENT YOURSELVES BEFORE THE LORD—they were about to make a solemn appeal to him, and were directed to give reverent attention. YOUR THOUSANDS—your families. Num. 1: 16; 10: 4; Josh. 22: 14. The same course was pursued in the detection of a criminal (Josh. 7: 16-18) and the selection of a king. Tribes, families and individuals were successively taken by lot. V. 21. HE COULD NOT BE FOUND—knowing what the result would be, with mingled feelings of modesty and fear he had concealed himself. V. 22. THE LORD ANSWERED—thus making it more apparent that Saul was the one divinely chosen. V. 23. HIGHER THAN ANY—tall of stature and noble in appearance, he answered, at least in body, to the primitive ideal of a king. V. 24. WHOM THE LORD HATH CHOSEN—the people had wickedly asked for a king, but the Lord had chosen him. GOD SAVE THE KING—the common salutation among the English people; the literal rendering of the Hebrew is given in the margin, "Let the king live." Thus they declared their allegiance. V. 25. THE MANNER OF THE KINGDOM—the divine authority for its institution, and the title of Saul to the crown. LAID IT UP—as the charter of the realm. BEFORE THE LORD—beside the copy of the law, near the ark of the covenant. V. 26. SAUL WENT HOME TO GIBEAH—his birthplace, and the seat of his government during the greater part of his reign. HEARTS GOD HAD TOUCHED—had been influenced to show themselves willing and faithful as his body-guard. V. 27. CHILDREN OF BETHLE—worthless, lawless people. HOLD HIS PEACE—showing self-control and wisdom.

TEACHINGS:

- 1. God shows great forbearance toward the erring.
2. He controls the conduct of men, whether they receive or reject his authority.
3. He disciplines them by letting them have their way.
4. He does not leave them utterly to the consequences of their folly.
5. When the ends of discipline are answered, he provides for them something better than they had desired.

LESSON V.

Nov. 4, 1883.] [1 Sam. 12: 13-25.]

SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 23-25.

13. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and behold, the Lord hath set a king over you.

14. If ye will fear the Lord, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the Lord your God.

15. But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers.

16. Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes.

17. Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king.

18. So Samuel called unto the Lord; and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.

19. And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.

20. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not; ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart;

21. And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.

22. For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.

23. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

24. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

25. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you."—1 SAM. 12: 24.

TOPIC.—The Duty of Serving God.

LESSON PLAN.—1. CONDITION OF BLESSING, vs. 13-15. 2. SIN RECALLED, vs. 16-19. 3. COURSE AND BLESSINGS, vs. 20-25.

Time.—About B.C. 1095. Place.—Gilgal.

INTRODUCTORY.

Saul, after he was chosen king, remained for a while at Gibeah. Nabash, king of the Ammonites, laid siege to Jabeshgilead. The elders asked for seven days' respite, and meanwhile sent messengers to their brethren imploring aid. Saul immediately collected a large army, took the Ammonites by surprise and defeated them. This success had an immediate effect upon the people. With one voice they hailed Saul as their deliverer. Samuel then ordered an assembly of the people at Gilgal to "renew the kingdom" (1 Sam. 11: 14). At this assembly Samuel delivered the farewell address from which our lesson is taken.

LESSON NOTES.

V. 13. THE LORD HATH SET A KING OVER YOU—the Lord had given him his authority. V. 14. IF YE WILL FEAR THE LORD—God's favor and blessing would be with both king and people as long as they were faithful to the Lord. FOLLOWING THE LORD—adhering to his worship and service. V. 15. IF YE WILL NOT OBEY—disobedience will be followed by judgments. V. 17. WHEAT HARVEST—the end of June or beginning of July, at which season it seldom rains in Palestine. V. 18. THE LORD SENT—in answer to Samuel's prayer, and in approval of what he had spoken. PAUSE—stick, the people confessed their sin, and asked Samuel to intercede for them. (See John 2: 1.) V. 20. FEAR NOT—he comforts them with the assurance of pardon. TURN NOT ASIDE—leave not the service of Jehovah. SERVE THE LORD—give him the full devotion of your heart and lives. V. 21. AFTER VAIN THINGS—false gods. V. 22. FOR HIS GREAT NAME'S SAKE—his own honor is pledged not to forsake them. V. 23. I WILL TEACH YOU—God's service is both right and good. Samuel sets before the people two motives for serving God: (1) gratitude for past mercies, and (2) fear of future judgments.

TEACHINGS:

- 1. Prosperity in sin is no security against against punishment.
2. Transgressors are in the greatest need of warning when they are successful in their undertakings.
3. God will glorify his own name in the salvation of his chosen people.
4. He will surely punish those who do wickedly.
5. The great things he has done for us should lead us to fear and serve him.

LESSON VI.

Nov. 11, 1883.] [1 Sam. 15: 12-26.]

SAUL REJECTED.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 24-26.

12. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

13. And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.

14. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15. And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?

18. And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners and the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

19. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?

20. And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal.

22. And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

24. And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

25. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord.

26. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee, for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice."—1 SAM. 15: 22.

TOPIC.—The Penalty of Disobedience.

LESSON PLAN.—1. SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE AND HYPOCRISY, vs. 12: 15. 2. HIS REPROOF AND DEFENCE, vs. 16-21. 3. HIS CONDEMNATION AND REJECTION, vs. 22-26.

Time.—B.C. 1079. Place.—Gilgal.

LESSON NOTES.

V. 12. CARMEL—about ten miles south-east from Hebron. A PLACE—a pillar which he had set up to his own honor. V. 13. I HAVE PERFORMED—he tries to cover his disobedience by falsehood. V. 14. SAMUEL SAID—the sheep and oxen betrayed Saul. V. 15. THEY—the people. He tried to shift the responsibility from himself to the people. TO SACRIFICE UNTO THE LORD THY GOD—with a show of generosity, he tried to screen them from blame by this pretext; V. 16. STAY—leave off these false pretences. THIS NIGHT—the night just past. V. 17. WHEN THOU WAST LITTLE—the Lord had raised him from a humble condition. V. 18. THE SINNERS THE AMALEKITES—these words give the reason why this people were to be destroyed. because they tried to destroy God's people. V. 20. I HAVE OBEYED—a vain attempt at self-justification. He did not deny that he himself had spared Agag, but tried to excuse the act by referring to the thoroughness with which he had executed the doom of destruction upon his people. V. 22. TO OBEY—no amount of costly offerings can release us from the duty of obeying God. V. 23. REBELLION—a disposition to act independently of the authority of Jehovah. WITCHCRAFT—rather, divination. Disobedience is a rejection of God, and "on a par" with appeal to false gods for guidance and approach to idols in worship. HE ALSO HATH REJECTED THEE—Saul had first rejected the Lord, and this is the doom pronounced upon him. V. 24. SAUL SAID UNTO SAMUEL—Saul could no longer deny or excuse his sin. He therefore confessed it, but in such a way as showed that his heart was unchanged. V. 25. PARDON MY SIN—he seems to have been in no arrears because Samuel was offended than because the Lord was angry with him.

TEACHINGS:

- 1. God requires of us absolute obedience.
2. Good words and intentions will not excuse a bad act.
3. The fear of man is no excuse for disobeying God.
4. Men often throw the blame of their evil deeds on others.
5. Sin blights our position and ruins our prospects.

DUST ON THE COVER.

A clergyman in Ireland was preaching to his congregation upon the text, "Search the Scriptures." In the course of his sermon, while admonishing his hearers of the guilt and danger of neglecting the Word of God, he quoted a passage of a divine, in which he speaks of the Bible as sometimes having enough dust upon its cover to admit of the brief but appalling scriptural expression, "damnation," being written legibly thereon.

A young lady, a member of the congregation, was struck by the peculiar force of the expression used, and spoke of it upon her return home. Her brother, a young man who had on that day causelessly absent himself from the public service of the sanctuary, overheard her, and it pleased God that the words—or rather the startling thought which they suggested—should go home like an arrow to his heart. He hurriedly withdrew to his chamber, took down his Bible from a shelf, and looked at it; there was dust upon the cover. With trembling finger he traced, half unconsciously, the appalling phrase which the preacher had used. There it stood, distinctly legible. He read it, he repeated it, he burst into a flood of tears; and falling upon his knees, with streaming eyes and heaving breast, he besought the God of whom that neglected Bible testifies, that He would mercifully pardon this grievous sin, and give him grace to neglect it no longer.

The seeds of consumption, unknown to himself and unsuspected by his relatives were lurking in that young man's constitution at the time destined to be speedily and fatally developed. And during the weary days and sleepless nights which were ere long appointed him, that heretofore neglected

Bible was his solace and his stay; and when death came, it found him bearing triumphant testimony to the blessed fact, that the God whom it reveals was his God, and the salvation which it promises his salvation—his joy and his portion for ever!—Friendly Greetings.

DO WHAT YOU ARE BID.

It is related of a man who stands very high in this country that once, when he was young and poor, seeking a situation in order to make a living, he went into a rich man's office and inquired if he wanted to hire a boy. The rich man, who was sitting at his desk, leaned back, looked at the weakly little child before him, and quizzically asked,

"Why, what can a little fellow like you do?"

"I can do what I am bid," was the reply promptly and respectfully yet decisively.

The man was so pleased with the boy's answer and manner that he hired him at once. The little fellow was diligent, honest, and faithful. In course of time he became a clerk, then book-keeper and partner, and is now rich and respected by all.

Boys, be willing to work, and to do what you are bid cheerfully and promptly. Be faithful and diligent too, and you, also will succeed in life.—Child's Paper.

NO TIME.

A man of business was so engrossed with his cares that he would not rest even on the Sabbath. Half of that day he spent over his accounts; the other half in a ride into the country. Monday morning found him unrefreshed, but still driving on after the world as fast as ever.

"Have you heard of the death of Mr. Danson?" asked one of the party at breakfast.

"No; is he dead? Well, it is very different with me; I am so engaged in business that I could not find time to die." Soon after, having passed into another room, he fell dead on the floor!

He must take time at last. There was no returning to his farm or his merchandise. His business he left behind him in the twinkling of an eye. But the great work of life was undone.—Friendly Greetings.

THE REV. RICHARD CECIL had a rich hearer who, when a young man, had solicited his advice, but had not for some time visited him. Mr. Cecil went to his house one day, and, after a friendly salutation, addressed him thus: "I understand you are very dangerously situated." Here he paused, and his friend replied, "I am not aware of it, sir." "I thought it probable you were not aware," said Cecil, "and therefore I have called to warn you. I hear you are getting rich; take care, for it is the road by which the devil leads thousands to destruction." This was spoken with such solemnity and earnestness that it made a deep and lasting impression.—Morning Star.

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