

23. Rebellion is as...witchcraft.

Perhaps an allusion to Saul's zeal in extirpating the crime of witchcraft; (chap. 28. 3), and a warning that his own sin was as great as that which he had condemned in others. Witchcraft was the dealing with evil spirits, either real or pretended; somewhat after the manner of so-called spiritualism at the present time, which invariably corrupts its votaries. Saul's disloyalty to the God of Israel was shown as clearly as if he had sought after idols. **Stubbornness.** Self-will shown in resistance to God's commands. **Rejected the...Lord.** Saul had deliberately set aside God's command, and thus shown himself unfit to accomplish his will for Israel. **Rejected thee.** He was set aside as God's representative, but not at once dethroned. 8. Only those who are willing to obey are fit to command.

24, 25. I have sinned.

No true repentance; no sense of sin; no desire for cleansing; but a lip-confession, which still seeks to blame others. **Feared the people.** No sincere penitent ever tries to excuse his sin by accusing others of sin. **Pardon my sin.** He asked Samuel's pardon, when he should have asked God's. **Turn again.** Show the outward signs of friendliness before the people by joining in the public services of worship.

26. I will not return. He spoke strongly with the outburst of indignation against guilt; but afterward reconsidered his determination, and for the sake of Saul's influence with the people, appeared by his side for that time as the last. **Thou hast rejected.** Saul's whole career showed this self-asserting, disloyal spirit; and for his heart of rebellion, and for this one act of disobedience, he was set aside by the Lord.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice. 1 Sam. 15. 22.

OUTLINE.

1. A Just Reproof, v. 12-19.
2. A Weak Excuse, v. 20, 21.
3. A Divine Rejection, v. 22, 23.
4. A Useless Regret, v. 24-26.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Saul rejected. 1 Sam. 15. 12-26.
 T. Saul's first disobedience. 1 Sam. 13. 5-14.
 W. Jonathan's exploit. 1 Sam. 14. 6-23.
 Th. Saul and Amalek. 1 Sam. 15. 1-11.
 F. Obedience of the heart. Deut. 11. 13-23.
 S. True righteousness. Rom. 10. 1-13.
 S. The obedient spirit. Psa. 119. 49-64.

Time.—B.C. 1079.

Place.—Gilgal in the Jordan valley.

Connecting Links.—1. Saul's unlawful sacrifice. 1 Sam. 13. 1-15. 2. Jonathan's exploit at Michmash. 1 Sam. 14. 1-46. 3. Saul's victories and his family. 1 Sam. 14. 47-52. 4. Saul's war against the Amalekites and disobedience to God's command. 1 Sam. 15. 1-11.

Explanations.

*—Saul rose early—*After a night of prayer for Saul, who had disobeyed God. *Saul came to Carmel—*A village west of the Dead Sea. *A place—*A monument in honour of his victory over the Amalekites. *Come down to Gilgal—*The military headquarters of the nation, in the Jordan valley. *I have performed*—His boasting of his work showed a conscience ill at ease. *Beating of the sheep—*God had commanded that everything belonging to the Amalekites should be destroyed. *The people spared—*Sinners often try to throw the guilt of their acts on others. *The Lord thy God—*As if Saul were more desirous of God's honour than Samuel. *Little in thine own sight—*Not expecting great position. *The sinners the Amalekites—*They were a very wicked people on the south, who had done great wrong to Israel in former times. *Fly upon the spoil—*Thus he had disobeyed God, and tried to enrich himself with the plunder. *As great delight in burnt-offerings—*These were the outward forms of religion, but obeying the voice of the Lord is its true essence. *Rebellion...witchcraft—*Or consulting with evil spirits against God's command. *Thou hast rejected—*The act seemed comparatively slight, but it showed a spirit of disobedience, and the spirit was judged by the prophet. *I have sinned—*His confession of sin was not deep enough to win God's favour. He still tried to blame the people for his own act. *Turn again with me—*Show an appearance of friendship.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 278, *New D. H.*

Sing to the great Jehovah's praise.

No. 293, *New D. H.*

Young soldiers of the Legion.

No. 298, *New D. H.*

Once more before we part.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. A Just Reproof, v. 12-19. What were the acts that caused the reproof? (Read verses 1-11). What did Samuel do in behalf of Saul before he reproved him? ver. 11. What did Saul say when he saw Samuel? How did this show a boastful spirit? What did Samuel say in answer? Upon whom did Saul lay the blame? What had God commanded Saul to do? What had he done?

2. A Weak Excuse, v. 20, 21. What was Saul's excuse? How did it show weakness? What is better than to make excuses for sin?

3. A Divine Rejection, v. 22, 23. What great truth did Samuel declare? (GOLDEN TEXT). What is the acceptable offering to God? Isa. 1. 16, 17. Of what sin did he say that Saul was guilty? What result of his sin came to Saul? Why was this right?

4. A Useless Regret, v. 24-26. What confession did Saul make? Was his confession of any avail to help him? What did he ask Samuel to do, and why? How should sin be confessed? Psa. 51. 2, 4.