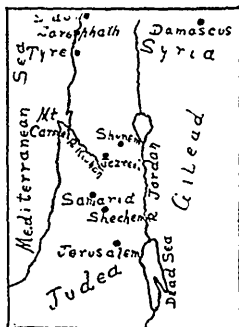


been recalled to become the spokesman of the people in their dealings with Rehoboam (see vs. 2, 3). The king answered the people roughly; thinking, perhaps, that he could easily put down with a strong hand any insurrection.

III. THE LORD'S CONTROL.—15, 16. Harkened not unto the people; but refused their demands. **The cause was from the Lord;** Rev. Ver., "it was a thing brought about of the Lord". Rehoboam, while he acted of his own free will, simply carried out God's purpose. The whole nation had followed Solomon in sinning against God (see ch. 11 : 8), and the Lord punished it by permitting it to be separated into two parts, so preventing it from recaching the greatness it might have won undivided. **Establish his word,** etc. (Rev. Ver.); that is, the prophecy of Ahijah (see on v. 12). **All Israel;** that is, the ten Northern tribes. **What portion have we in David?** "What have we to do with David's breed, Rehoboam, or David's tribe, Judah?" **To your tents, O Israel:** a signal of revolt. Back to your homes and prepare for war! **Now see to thine own house, David.** Look after your own tribe of Judah, Rehoboam; it is all that is left to you.

Vs. 17-24 tell of Rehoboam's attempt to stop the revolt by persuasion, of his flight to Jerusalem and of his raising an army to subdue the rebellious Northern tribes, which was, however, disbanded at the Lord's command through the prophet Shemaiah.

THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON



SHECHEM is beautifully situated, overlooking a valley bearing the same name. This valley pierces the Central Range of mountains running from north to south through Palestine, and at the eastern end it lies between the two famous peaks, Ebal to the north and Gerizim to the south. The city itself was situated on the lower slopes of Gerizim, not far from the modern town of Nāblus. It occupied a central position on the highland road from north to south, and from it there was easy communication both to the Mediterranean westward and the Jordan valley and the regions beyond the Jordan eastward.

LESSON QUESTIONS

Where did the people of Israel assemble? For what purpose? What did they demand of Rehoboam? How long did Rehoboam delay his answer?

6, 7 Whom did Rehoboam first consult? What was their advice? What did they mean by it? How did the king treat it? Where is the Messiah called "Counselor"? (Isa. 9 : 6.)

8-11 What advice did the young men give? What was the "yoke" which Solomon had laid upon Israel? What does Jesus say of His yoke? (Matt. 11 : 30.)

12-14 Who was Jeroboam? What prophecy had been made concerning him? By whom? What answer did Rehoboam give to the people? Where does Paul speak of the "meekness and gentleness" of Christ? (2 Cor. 10 : 1.)

15, 16 Who brought all this about? What was the Lord's purpose? Show that those who crucified Jesus carried out the purpose of God. (Acts 2 : 23.) What tribes remained loyal to Rehoboam?

FOR DISCUSSION

1. The power of a gentle answer.
2. God's purpose and men's actions.

A LESSON FOR LIFE

Sometimes a thief creeps by night into a house, and opens the door to a band of helpers. So one sin, however small it may seem, that finds its way into the life, is sure to bring others after it. Then soon or late the suffering and the shame follow, which are the certain results of sin. No warning is wiser or more loving than that which bids us be on the guard against the admission of the slightest sin, and so avoid its sad consequences.

Prove from Scripture—*That we should be gentle.*

Shorter Catechism—Ques. 82. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God? A. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.

The Question on Missions—(CANADIAN PROBLEMS: January, The Home Mission Problem.)—1. What is the work of Home Missions? To provide for the preaching of the gospel in districts where the people are few and scattered. The General Assembly's Home Mission Committee cares for 739 mission fields, with, 1,390 mission stations.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, Ps. Sel. 16 (Supplemental Lesson); 474; 320; 89 (Ps. Sel.); 524 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY); 476. (These hymns may be practised at home during the week.)

FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS

1. What did the people demand of Rehoboam?
2. How did he treat their demands?
3. Describe the results of his conduct.