

The Quiet Hour.

Samuel's Farewell Address.

S. S. Lesson, 1 Sam. 12: 13-25, July 19, 1903

GOLDEN TEXT—Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart. 1 Sam. 12: 24.
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Connecting Links—The invasion of Gilead and the siege of Jabesh by Nahash, the Ammonite king, after the election described in last lesson, gave Saul an early opportunity of proving his courage and capacity, ch. 11: 1-3. He raised an army and wrought a great deliverance for the people of Jabesh. In the hour of victory he showed his greatness by rejecting the proposal to put to death those who (ch. 10: 27) had spoken contemptuously of himself, ch. 11: 12, 13. Then Samuel calls the people to renew the kingdom and consecrate the king at a religious festival, ch. 11: 14, 15. The lesson is a part of Samuel's address on that occasion. In vs. 1-12 Samuel gives an account of his own career, of God's dealings and of the people's unfaithfulness.

I. Samuel's Counsel, 13-15.

v. 13. Now therefore behold the king. The people had just been reminded of their demand for a king to deliver them, instead of trusting in God, v. 12. Now that the king has been appointed, Samuel shows what is expected of both king and people. Whom ye have chosen. This was the human side of Saul's selection as king. Behold, the Lord hath set a king over you. This was the divine side. The Lord had directed and over-ruled the wishes of the people for the fulfilment of His own purpose. Samuel reminds his hearers, that though they had now a king, God is still the supreme ruler, to whom king and people alike owe obedience.

Vs. 14, 15. If ye will fear the Lord. The ordinary Version makes this verse give four conditions of prosperity, namely: (1) fear the Lord; (2) serve Him; (3) obey His voice; (4) not rebel, while *then* introduces the promise depending on these conditions. The Rev. Ver. translates the latter part of the verse, thus "and both ye and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of the Lord your God." This makes a fifth condition of prosperity. According to this translation Samuel leaves the promise to be supplied by some such words as, "It shall be well with you." (Compare Ex 32: 32; Luke 19: 42) But if ye will not obey. Two only of the conditions of prosperity given in v. 13 are repeated here, but they are the most important. Indeed, obedience includes them all. Then shall the hand of the Lord be against you; as unfaithfully as it would be for them, if they obeyed. No one can break His laws without suffering for so doing. As it was against your fathers. In v. 9 Samuel had rehearsed the history of the nation's forsaking of God for idols, and their punishment by being given over into the hands of the surrounding heathen nations.

II. Samuel's Authority, 16-18.

Vs. 16-18. Now therefore. The people had failed to learn the Lord's power and claims from the life and teachings of Samuel. They were now to be convinced by an outward miracle. But it is nobler to find divine power in a righteous life and faithful preaching, like that of Samuel, than in thunder out of a clear sky. Wheat harvest; May or June, the hottest period of the year. Usually no rain falls from the cessation of the spring

showers about the end of April until October or November. "Rain in harvest" served as a figure for what is out of place or contrary to rule, Prov. 26: 1. Thunder and rain, "Thunder" is literally "voices." (See Ps. 18: 13; 29: 3.) That your wickedness is great. Like all the miracles of the Bible, this one was intended to teach a moral lesson. And all the people greatly feared the Lord. (Compare Ex. 9: 28; 19: 16.) Fear of this kind needs to be turned into real reverence and unswerving loyalty. And Samuel. He was coupled with God as was Moses, Ex. 14: 31: The unexpected rain was a "sign" attesting the truth of his words and their divine authority.

III. Samuel's Promise, 19-23.

Vs. 19, 20. Pray for thy servants. Compare the request of Pharaoh (Ex. 9: 28) and of the Israelites (Ex. 20: 19) to Moses. Added unto all our sins this evil. They confess their past sins, and also admit that the demand for a king had been sinful. Fear not. Samuel believes in a merciful God, and teaches that sinners need not despair, if they are really penitent and seek mercy with a sincere heart, 1 John 1: 9. Serve the Lord. They must "do works meet for repentance," Acts 26: 20. With all your heart. The first mark of true service is heartiness, earnestness, enthusiasm, Mark 12: 30. Turn not aside; a second mark. Our service should be single. God will not share our hearts with any idol, Matt. 6: 24.

Vs. 21-23. Vain things; literally, "nothings." The same word is applied to idols Isa. 41: 29 (translated "confusion") and idol makers, Isa. 44: 9 (translated "vanity"). (See also 1 Cor. 8: 4) For; introducing encouragements to the service of the Lord. The first of these is that they can count on His help. Will not forsake His people; a most gracious and loving assurance. (Compare Heb. 13: 5) For his great name's sake; the chief reason for the assurance. The reputation of God would suffer if He should forsake His own. (Compare Ex. 32: 12; Josh. 7: 9; Ezek. 20: 9, 14, 22; Rom. 11: 1, 2) It hath pleased the Lord. For God's free choice of His people see Deut. 7: 6-11. Having once made this choice, He will not go back on it, Jas. 1: 17. As for me; a second encouragement. Samuel promises to help the people by his prayers and teaching. God forbid; literally "far be it from me." To pray for you; the first way in which Samuel promises to give help. For other instances of his prayers, see chs. 7: 5; 8: 6; 15: 11. His power as an intercessor is referred to in Ps. 99: 6; Jer. 15: 1. It was the work of the prophet to speak to God on behalf of the people, as well as to the people on God's behalf. I will teach you; a second way in which Samuel will help. He may cease to rule, but he will continue to instruct. He will still be able to help the nation he loves and has served so well.

IV. Samuel's Appeal, 24, 25.

V. 24. Only fear the Lord; a different kind of fear from that of vs. 18, 20. That is the fear felt by a slave towards a harsh master, or by an enemy towards a powerful foe. This is the loving dread which a true child has of offending his father. Serve him in truth; a third mark of acceptable service, to be added to those of vs. 20, 21. For consider. The first motive to obedience is gratitude. How great things he hath done

for you. This appeals to Canadians as much as it could ever have done to the ancient Israelites.

V. 25. Ye shall be consumed; the stern law of sowing and reaping, Gal. 6: 7, 8. The word here translated "consumed" is rendered by "perish" in ch. 26: 10; 27: 1, and is used in these latter passages of being slain in battle. Perhaps this verse looks forward to Saul's death on Mount Gilboa (ch. 31: 1-4) after the defeat of his army.

Bible Study, One Verse at a Time.

[CONT.]

No. 12.

Psalms 103: 12.

BY MRS. ANNA ROSS.

—"So far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us."

Here is the key to this mystery of infinite mercy in a Holy God toward those who have earned for themselves the wages of sin instead.

The Psalmist has stood in the great Day of Atonement, and has seen the high priest lay his hand on the head of the live goat, and put all the iniquities of Israel upon him. Then he has watched the sin-burdened animal led away into the wilderness, bearing, according to the word of the living God who cannot lie, the sins of the people into a land not inhabited. He has grasped God's idea, that that which had been thus removed was *gone*, and he sings out another song of the infinite: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed." How far is the east from the west? Will figures give it? So far hath He removed. When will the east meet the west? Then and not till then, shall my removed transgressions meet me.

Did the Psalmist understand that his transgressions were removed from him by being laid actually upon the head of his Lord? that the wages these transgressions had earned for him were withheld from him only because they were paid in full into the quivering heart of the great Substitute? "Which things the angels then desired to look into" but they "were hidden," "God having prepared some better thing for us."

Had he understood that the actual removal of these transgressions were to be accomplished by the God of Moses coming down Himself as the Son of man, and bowing His own head to the hand that "laid on Him the iniquity of us all," what would have been his song of adoring love and gratitude there? Had he understood before him as we have, in light whereby he could read it, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities," what words could have set forth the response of her soul to that?

Where are our songs, though we know these things? God forgive us and stretch out his hand of infinite mercy to meet our need. We have *lost sight of the glory of the cross*, and small wonder that our love is cold, our prayers are feeble, and our struggling to bring the world to Christ has "wrought no deliverance in the earth."

* The following paragraph from the London Presbyterian cannot fail to be of interest to readers of the DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN: "At a meeting of the United Free Church Presbytery of Haddington and Dunbar, the Rev. Dr. J. D. Robertson, Abbey Church, North Berwick, intimated his acceptance of the Chair of Apologetics in Knox College, in succession to the late Professor Halliday Douglas."