

his return from the slaughter of the Amalekites, having spared their king and the valuable part of the spoil, in disobedience to God's express command. **Came to Carmel.** Not Mount Carmel by the Mediterranean, but a city in the mountains of Judah south of Hebron, now called *Kurmul*. **Set him up a place.** Rather, a trophy or monument, in honour of his victory. The word in the original means "a hand." **Gone about.....passed on.** Expressions which indicate a stately and pompous march. **Gone down.** From the mountains into the valley of the Jordan, a descent of 3,000 feet in 30 miles. **Gilgal.** The place where the fortified camp of Israel stood during the conquest under Joshua, and during the period of the Judges a sort of military capital for the nation. It was in the Jordan valley, near the head of the Dead Sea, and equally accessible to the tribes on both sides of the river.

**13. Saul said.** With an evident consciousness of guilt endeavouring to hide itself. **Blessed be thou.** An over-strained courtesy, as if by compliment to anticipate criticism. **I have performed.** He was endeavouring to hide his disobedience under the general measure of his obedience, as if obeying one command would cover a disobedience of another. **The commandment.** God had ordered the utter destruction of the Amalekites, because of their general wickedness, of their injury to Israel, (see Deut. 25. 18), and because the southern frontier was open to their ravages. The destruction was to be complete, and no plunder was allowed, since the cause was the Lord's, and not their own.

**14, 15. Samuel said.** He spoke as the messenger of the King of kings to the unfaithful servant. **What meaneth these.** The sound of the oxen and the sheep, was a sign that God's command had been violated. 1. The sinner's guilt is sure to find a voice to heaven. **Saul said.** His answer shows a mean, cringing spirit, ashamed to assume the responsibility of his act, and willing rather to admit himself no king, but the slave of his people. **The Amalekites.** A tribe of unknown origin, dwelling south of Israel, that had harassed the Israelites during their wandering in the wilderness, and, as a consequence, had been laid under the ban forever. The interests of the whole world, waiting as it was for a religion from Israel, made the preservation and purity of this one people an absolute necessity for the race. **The people spared.** 2. Sinners are ever prone to excuse themselves by criminalizing others. **The best.** A pretence of piety, which was but a cover for covetousness. **To sacrifice.** The sacrifice was accompanied with a feast upon the slain victims, in which the people shared, so that there was a selfish motive, even if Saul spoke the truth. **Thy God.** A word to propitiate Samuel, as especially God's servant. **We have utterly destroyed.** "They spared, we destroyed." It was the people who were responsible for the disobedience, the king who obeyed, in his account of the transaction.

**16, 17. Samuel said.** Stripping away the disguise of piety, and laying bare the true motive of Saul's conduct. **Stay.** As if the king were about to leave the place. **Lord hath said.** He had given the human view, now let him hear the divine. 3. Man's opinion of conduct is of very little account beside God's. **When thou wast little.** A contrast between his present boastful, arrogant spirit, and his earlier humility. **Made the head.** This elevation had come from the Lord's will, and in no sense by his own abilities. **Anointed thee.** A special honour, since the holy oil was that made by Moses in the wilderness, and had set him apart in a peculiar way as one consecrated.

**18, 19. On a journey.** On a war so easy as to become a mere triumphal march. **Utterly destroy.** The destruction of the idolatrous and abominably wicked tribes in and around Canaan was a necessity, if the world was ever to receive the Gospel. **The sinners.** Their crimes made the Amalekites fit only for the sword. **Be consumed.** It was not a war of ambition or for plunder; and Israel was but the officer executing sentence. **Fly upon the spoil.** The prophet saw the eagerness for plunder in the hearts of the king and the people, and how easily they had perverted a crusade into a raid. **Didst evil.** 4. There is equal crime in doing evil and leaving undone God's command.

**20. I have obeyed.** He recites the things done as his own, and refers to the things left undone as the people's. 5. Even disobedience can be made to wear the garb of loyalty. **Brought Agag.** Perhaps the hereditary title of Amalekite kings. Num. 24. 7. He was evidently brought to grace the triumph of the conqueror. **Utterly destroyed.** Yet not so utterly, but that they afterward smote Israel, and required the power of David to punish them. 1 Sam. 30.

**21. The people took.** Still trying to throw the blame on others. **The chief of the things, etc.** "The chief of the devoted things." As things devoted, they could not be properly sacrificed, because already God's property. 6. There is little merit in robbing from God and then giving back to him what is his own.

**22. Samuel said.** He spoke in the exalted thought of a seer, and in language which, like much of prophecy, is in poetical form: for verses 22 and 23 form in Hebrew four pairs of poetic lines. **Delight in burnt-offerings.** The forms of service were less acceptable to God than the reality of obedience. **Burnt-offering** here refers to the holocaust, or offering entirely consumed. **As in obeying.** The eternal principle of all moral duty to God is here presented. All the outward services were to be an aid to obedience, not a substitute for it. 7. Let no man think to deceive God with a show of worship while disobeying him in life.