



LESSON,—SUNDAY, JULY 26, 1908.

Saul Rejected by the Lord.

I. Sam. xv., 13-28. Memory verse 22. Read I. Sam. xiii-xv.

Golden Text.

The Lord our God will we serve and his voice will we obey. Josh. xxiv., 24.

Home Readings.

Monday, July 20.—I. Sam. xiii., 1-14.
 Tuesday, July 21.—I. Sam. xiii., 15; xiv., 7.
 Wednesday, July 22.—I. Sam. xiv., 8-23.
 Thursday, July 23.—I. Sam. xiv., 24-35.
 Friday, July 24.—I. Sam. xiv., 36-52.
 Saturday, July 25.—I. Sam. xv., 1-15.
 Sunday, July 26.—I. Sam. xv., 16-35.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Do you remember how we spoke about a warning in our last Sunday's lesson? Who can tell me who gave the warning and who it was that needed warning? Yes, it was Samuel who warned Saul and the children of Israel not to be too sure that everything was all right now because Saul was made king. He told them that everything would be all right only if they obeyed God. In our lesson to-day we learn that Saul forgot that warning and so Samuel had to tell him that God was going to choose another king for the Israelites. You know the Israelites lived in a little land and all about them there were heathen nations, cruel people who often used to come and fight against the Hebrews, burn their houses and steal their crops. It was because of these enemies that they first wanted a king, and it was because of Saul's victory over some of their enemies that the people were so glad to have him for their king. In our lesson to-day Saul had been king for a number of years, we don't know how long, and his little boy Jonathan was grown up and was a prince whom the people loved very much. He was very sorry to see how the Philistines came and ill-treated the Israelites, and one day he couldn't bear it any longer. (This story of Jonathan's brave deed will probably be of greater interest to the children than any other part of the lesson, but it should only be used as an introduction. Show the children that self-will was the great sin that made God reject Saul, and try to make them see how self-will brings sorrow and unhappiness in their own homes to-day.

FOR THE SENIORS.

The revised version throws not a little light on rather a puzzling question by means of allowing the first verse of chapter 13 to read more as the original leaves it—'Saul was . . . years old,' the blank intimating that the writer not being sure of his figures intended to enter them later. It has often been wondered how Saul, the bashful young man who was crowned king, should have had a son old enough during the first year of his reign to be placed in command of part of the army, and also how Saul's character could have altered so remarkably in the space of a year or two. It is evident, however, that Saul had reigned for some time, that he had grown more and more to desire popular approval, and that the power to have his own way had made him impatient of restraint in any form. The story makes this all too plain, and that these rank weeds were spoiling an otherwise lovable character is also evident, in the character and loyal love of his son Jonathan, the applause and ready service of the people (I. Sam. xiv., 52), and the yearning love that Samuel evi-

dently bore him (Chap. xv., 11). Self-will and the love of popularity are two of the greatest evils to-day, and they spoil many a character quite as promising as was Saul's.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

Verse 3. Such wars, involving the innocent along with the guilty in a common destruction, are incompatible not only with the law of love, but with the idea of justice taught by the Gospel. How, it is asked, could they ever have been commanded by God? It is replied that God is the author of life and death, and that He has the right at any time to deprive any number of His creatures of life, whether by the natural instrumentality of pestilence or famine, or by the express employment of man as the instrument of destruction. But the difficulty still remains, how a nation could be convinced that it was to be the executioner of God's judgments, and how it could execute them in so terrible a way without injury to its moral consciousness. The solution is to be found in the defective oriental idea of justice. The destruction of a nation for the sin of its ancestors, or of a family for the offense of its heads, was a common oriental practice. It was not repugnant to the current sense of right. This indiscriminating kind of vengeance was due to the defective sense of human individuality, the want of a true perception of the rights and responsibilities of each man as an independent being. This feeling was, no doubt, shared by the Israelites. But with them such acts were expressly prohibited as a part of ordinary judicial procedure (Deut. xxiv., 16), and in this respect they were on a higher level than other oriental nations. But when God saw fit by the mouth of a prophet who was recognized as His accredited messenger to enjoin the execution of such a sentence, there was no moral resistance to it. It would be accepted without hesitation as coming from God, and executed without any violation of their sense of justice. Such commands were an 'accommodation' to the moral and religious state of the nation to which they were given. Revelation is progressive, and God's dealings with the chosen people, while designed to raise and elevate them, were necessarily conditioned by their moral state at any given period. It need hardly be said that such commands are inconceivable under the Gospel dispensation.—Kirkpatrick, in the 'Cambridge Bible.'

Verse 22. Schiller says that 'the first great law is to obey,' a thought expressed by Kipling in his 'Jungle Tales' in these forcible words:—

Now these are the laws of the Jungle, and many and mighty are they;

But the head and the hoof of the Law and the haunch and the hump is—Obey!

Sacrifice without obedience is sacrilege.—Dwight L. Moody.

Verse 21. It is hard to admit that we are wrong. How easy to say, 'the woman, the serpent, my temperament, my circumstances!' Few things more surely reveal our self-love and pride than this instinctive, automatic excuse-making. We thoroughly understand the lawyer who asked the question, 'And who is my neighbor?' wishing to 'justify himself.' There is little hope for our growth in virtue, unless we make up our minds frankly to admit the truth about ourselves, no matter how it hurts. No man can afford to play ostrich. Self-deception is seldom genuine, and conscious duplicity ruins. 'We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.' To acknowledge our mistakes is not only wise, and marks an advance in self-knowledge, but it means self-mastery, spiritual victory.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES.')

All the riches of these people, oxen, sheep, asses, and camels were to be destroyed. Why?

Because (1) This command was necessary in order to show that Israel was not making war for gain, but for righteousness and patriotism. The Israelites must not be tempted to make marauding excursions upon their neighbors, and by degrees be trained up as an ambitious and conquering people.—Millman. Such conduct would be utterly

opposed to the very purposes for which God had made Israel his people.

(2) Riches gained without earning them are a continual danger and corrupting influence. Witness what becomes of a gambler's gains. Witness the effect of such gains on the character.

'Saul was a man of unusual native power. His character is spoiled by a dominating selfishness. He might have become one of the masterful spirits of the world had he directed his abilities along the right lines.—Charles H. Morgan.

'We are not worse at once. The course of evil

Begins so slowly, and from such slight source, An infant's hand might stem its breach with clay.

But, let the stream get deeper, and philosophy,—

Ay, and religion, too,—shall strive in vain To turn the headlong current.'

'It is easy to hide from our own eyes the one or two small points (as we tell ourselves they are) in which we fail to obey; and we are apt to think that we have done very well if we have performed seven-eighths of "the commandment of Jehovah," and to expect him, like a good-tempered creditor, to be content with a fair dividend on the whole debt.'—'Sunday School Times.'

Bible References.

Isa. xxix., 13; Mark xii., 23; Amos v., 21-24; Isa. i., 10-17; Micah vi., 6-8; Hos. vi., 6; Jer. vii., 22, 23; I. John iii., 18; Matt. ix., 13; I. Cor. xiii., 1-3.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, July 26.—Topic—Home missions: The home-mission schoolhouse and what it does. II. Chron. xvii., 1-9.

C. E. Topic.

Monday, July 20.—Servants of sin. Rom. vi., 16.

Tuesday, July 21.—Free from sin. Rom. vi., 17, 18.

Wednesday, July 22.—Christ makes us free. Gal. v., 1.

Thursday, July 23.—The Lord's freeman. I. Cor. vii., 22, 23.

Friday, July 24.—Strong to resist. Eph. vi., 12, 13.

Saturday, July 25.—Be filled with the Spirit. Eph. v., 18.

Sunday, July 26.—Topic—How to keep free from bad habits. John viii., 31-36.

The Reward.

The earnest, studious, conscientious teacher is paid, and well paid, for his services. He derives a personal benefit in the way of an enlarged knowledge of Scripture. No person can take charge of a class, even of young children, and enter heartily into his work, devoting every week a certain amount of time to hard, close study of the lesson without deriving a rich benefit for himself. Such a person discovers something new in every lesson; he gains a deeper insight into the meaning of Scripture; he gleans new facts continually, so that week by week he enriches himself in the mind and heart. It has been our privilege to hear more than one teacher testify to the fact that every time they made a thorough preparation for the teaching of a lesson, they were conscious of deriving more benefit for themselves than any other member of the class. And this is the blessed experience of every teacher who conscientiously devotes time every week to painstaking preparation for the following Sunday's work. In preparing well to teach others we learn much ourselves.—S. S. Teacher.'

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