

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 8.]

MAY, 1875.

[No. 5.

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THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL BANNER

It is designed to afford aid to Sunday-School Teachers and Heads of Families in the religious training of the young, and to excite throughout the country a deeper interest in Sunday-School work.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOLUME VIII.]

MAY, 1875.

[No. 5.

The Voice in the Twilight.

I was sitting alone toward the twilight,
With spirit troubled and vexed ;
With thoughts that were morbid and gloomy,
And faith that was sadly perplexed.

Some homely work I was doing,
For the child of my love and care ;
Some stitches half-wearily setting,
In the endless need of repair.

But my thoughts were about the "building,"
The work some day to be tried ;
And that only the gold and the silver,
And the precious stones should abide.

And remembering my own poor efforts,
The wretched work I had done ;
And even when trying most truly,
The meagre success I had won.

"It is nothing but hay, wood, and stubble,"
I said, "It will all be burned ;
This useless fruit of the talents,
One day to be returned.

Much have I wanted to serve Him,
And sometimes I know I have tried ;
But I'm sure when he sees such building,
He never will let it abide."

Just then as I turned the garment,
That no rent should be left behind ;
My eye caught an odd little bungle,
Of mending and patchwork combined.

My heart grew suddenly tender,
And something blinded my eyes ;
With one of those sweet intuitions,
That sometimes make us so wise.

Dear child, she wanted to help me ;
I knew 'twas the best she could do ;
But Oh ! what a botch she had made it,
The grey mismatching the blue.

And yet—can you understand it ?
With a tender smile and a tear,
And a half-compassionate yearning,
I felt her grown more dear.

Then a sweet voice broke the silence,
And the dear Lord said to me :—
"Art thou tenderer for the little child
Than I am tender for thee ?"

Then straightway I knew his meaning,
So full of compassion and love ;
And my faith came back to its Refuge,
Like the glad returning dove.

For I thought when the Master Builder
Comes down, His temple to view ;
To see what rents must be mended,
And what must be buidied anew ;—

Perhaps as He looks o'er the building,
He will bring my work to the light ;
And seeing the marring and bungling,
And how far it all is from right ;—

He will feel as I felt for my darling,
And will say as I said for her,—
"Dear child, she wanted to help me,
And love for me was the spur.

And for the real love that is in it,
The work shall seem perfect as mine;
And because it was willing service,
I will crown it with plaudit divine."

And there in the deepening twilight,
I seemed to be grasping a Hand;
And to feel a strong love constrain me,
Stronger than any command.

Then I knew by the thrill of sweetness,
'Twas the Hand of the Blessed One,
Which would tenderly guide and hold us,
Till all the labour is done.

So my thoughts are nevermore gloomy;
My faith is no longer dim;
But my heart is strong and restful,
And mine eyes are unto Him.



An Unstudied Bible.

The Rev. Henry M. Parsons, of Boston, urges the formation of classes for the study of the Bible which shall include the whole congregation as well as the children.

His first position is that, in order to secure the study of the Bible, the Sabbath-school must be raised to a more commanding and important rank among Church services. It should be regarded as a place, not for the children only, but also for the Church and congregation. Ministers who think the Sabbath-school a good institution, but who do not themselves work in it because they have a throne from which to address and teach the people, should be the leaders of, and teachers in this service. All the members of the Church should be enlisted, and sufficient time should be given to it so that it should become a meeting of worship as well as of study. Inasmuch as the experiences of others confirm that of Mr. Parsons, we are warranted in saying that ministers generally will find that their "throne" will never be securely established until it is moved into the Sunday-school. They must secure the allegiance of the children or else they will be without the fealty of the next generation of adults.

"Our Christian congregations to-day," he says, "know as little, in many cases, about vital truths of the Bible, about its history and leading facts, as the heathen."

As we have stated and shown, Mr. Parsons is in a position to know whereof he affirms. He has been on terms of intimacy with the ignorance of his congregations, instead of being, like most clergymen, at long range with it; has taught them, instead of merely preaching at them. One might as well try to dispel darkness with a rushlight as to overcome this ignorance merely by pulpit homilies. Patient study only will do it, and that will never come about of itself. The ministers must become teachers, and then their congregations will soon be walking in the noonday of gospel light, instead of merely watching a torch waving at them from the pulpit while they themselves sit in great darkness.

"We need this service to qualify the people to be intelligent hearers of preaching." That is very true, and at the same time it might come to pass that there would be less desire for preaching that is simply oratorically and rhetorically fine. The pews, too, might not be quite so well satisfied with mere moral essays and goodish platitudes, and would see how much was gospel. Our friend will see that intelligence has its dangers.

It is the way for the pastor to learn "the current religious thought of the people." The pulpit alone is too far removed for close inspection. In the cross-examinations that take place in a class, hearts are laid bare, whose pulsations of doubt and fear would never otherwise be suspected. The class is the place for such revelations, because the members of it come to it for the healing of their diseases, of whatsoever sort they may be.

"It becomes fruitful in furnishing the Church members with Christian thoughts, themes, and models from the Bible." Their experiences are fresh; their ideas do not come at second-hand; they are independent, self-helpful, have a feeling of property in their own ideas, and walk by the light of the Word, instead of the pulpit or their religious newspaper.

"It enlarges the pastor's field of influence, power, and usefulness." In other words, he is the commander who drills, fights, eats, and bivouacs with his men, instead of only seeing them on parade, after mounting his best charger and putting on his best uniform.

"It develops the talents and gifts of the Church, thereby increasing the number of Church laborers." Mr. Moody says that the general idea of the Church is that of a hospital where one can go in and be nursed and coddled. The number of those whose conscience-obligations make them attend church, Sabbath-school, and prayer-meeting and engage in the work of the church outside is astonishingly small, as any one can see by a week's observation. The hive is wrongly constituted somehow, for the drones outnumber the workers. And yet Christianity lays its commands to work authoritatively on all its followers. Laziness and it mix no better than oil and water. How, then, is this inaction to be remedied? The answer is plain enough. Let the Word of God quicken the dead conscience to a new life. No other way has ever been found.

"But this service," he says, "is demanded especially by the increasing assaults of infidelity upon the Sabbath, the Church, and the Bible. Something must be done soon. The enemy is coming in upon the Churches themselves, as a tide. It will not do to stay behind the fortifications of the Reformation, and say "these be our defences." Men do not want argument now—they want *life!* The education of the day in its underlying philosophy is largely Pagan, and the only remedy is the philosophy of the Bible, communicated by the Holy Ghost to the mind and heart, through faith in Jesus Christ! We are driven even again to find the charter of our freedom, in Christ—and to defend it by the sword of the Spirit? Hence the need of beginning throughout the rank and file of the sacramental host, this sword-practice! Not a formal, or intellectual, or professional holding of truths will do this. But the personal and heart reception by *faith* of Jesus, the living Word through the written Word—alone will fit us to cope with the foes now arising against the kingdom of God—and in his name, to be victorious over them.—*National S. S. Teacher.*



"God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work."

Parents in the Sunday School.

WE incline to the opinion that there ought to be more parents employed as teachers in the place of many that are young, thoughtless, and, perhaps, totally unfit for the work. Especially in regard to the smaller scholars, when the mind is so pliable and easily led astray. How can a young, inexperienced person teach those quick, restless, impressive little souls the solemn truths of God's Word as well as the mother, who knows so well how to sympathize with this one, coax that one, stroke the head and draw the hand of another one into her own, wipe the tear that would come on that little curly-haired boy's cheek because he couldn't answer the question asked? Who is so capable of wise counsel to those sharp, energetic, mischievous boys in that class over there in that corner, as the father, who has been a boy once himself, and has some boys of his own? What the most of our classes need is teachers of warm hearts, sympathetic natures, wise heads, experienced judgments, and the love of souls. Who, then, can be better qualified for such important positions, than the fathers and mothers of the land, who have had their hearts made tender, and their judgments more mature by a group of rollicking, loving children around their own fireside, over whom they have watched during many sleepless nights and days when disease struck down their olive plants? And, perhaps, over yonder in the cemetery is a grassy mound, and a white tablet at its with an inscription upon it, "To the memory of——." Do not chide the tears; let them come. Your heart is growing more tender by the trial. God is fitting you for your work of sympathy and tenderness for others. Yes, mother dear, go and teach *my* children the way of life; you are the very one, because your heart is warm and tender, your tones of voice are mellowed by suffering, and your love is stronger for your experience.

Come, father, come and talk to *my* boys about Jesus and the way of life. They will listen to you, because you know how to treat boys, and how to help them. You are strong, and yet tender, and we need your help.—*S. S. Times.*

The Sunday School Banner.

TORONTO, MAY, 1875.

Communications on Sunday School Topics invited. Address all communications, Editor S. S. BANNER, Toronto.

IN consequence of this number of the BANNER containing the LESSONS for five Sundays, a large number of interesting selections have been crowded out.

How to Study the Lessons.

THE great object of the International Lesson Scheme is to make such selections from both the Old Testament and the New, as will in seven years cover the entire narrative portion of Holy Scripture, so that the generation of Sunday-school scholars passing through the schools in that time may have a tolerably clear conception of the Bible as a whole, of the general outline of Scripture history, and of the relations of its different parts, especially of the Old Testament to the New. It would be highly desirable if the whole Bible could be carefully studied in that period; but in the limited time allotted to the subject, only fifty-two hours a year, this is impossible. A considerable portion of Scripture has therefore to be passed over. But it will commend itself to every one, that it is better to take the principal events through the entire narrative, even though there may be gaps between, rather than to confine the study to one or two particular portions for the whole of the period.

Now what we are anxious to impress upon teachers and scholars is the importance of bridging over the gaps between the lessons, by at least a brief study of the intervening portions. This will make

the lessons not isolated studies, but parts of a continuous whole. One of the best helps for this purpose that we know is the Berean Question Book, published by Nelson & Phillips, New York, and for sale by S. Rose, Toronto. Every teacher should have it. It costs only 15 cents, and is an admirable supplement to the BANNER. In it the links between the lessons are marked for home studies, so that the student's knowledge of Bible history may be one unbroken and indissoluble chain.

Another important object is to have connected views of Scripture chronology and geography. Without clear conceptions of these the student's knowledge of the subject will always be vague and misty. Those who have never tried it will be surprised what interest and clearness of understanding is added to the reading of the Bible, or indeed, of any book, by reading it map in hand, and following all the geographical changes of the narrative. The consulting of a Bible Dictionary, (Angus's is a good one, or Whitney's) for a description of the place, or thing, or manners, or customs alluded to, will heighten the interest.

A biographical study of the writers of the different books of Scripture should also be added. One should know the time in which, the circumstances under which, and the purpose for which they wrote. Gilfillan's Bards of the Bible, though faulty in style, made a very vivid impression on the writer many years ago, and gave many new conceptions of the grandeur and variety, yet unity and harmony of the sacred book. The Companion to the Bible, published by the London Tract Society, is simpler in style, cheap, and every way excellent for this purpose.

It should be the ambition of every Sunday-school teacher to collect a small Biblical library composed of the best books

on the study of the Scriptures. Books are the cheapest things we can buy, especially such books as these, embodying the labour, research and best thoughts of the most distinguished scholars and divines in the world; and which are not intended to be cast aside, but carefully studied and read again and again.

Bible dictionaries and hand-books are among the most important of these, and Kitto's, Smith's, Angus's, or Whitney's will meet the varied necessities and means of almost every reader. Dr. Smith's Old and New Testament History will be found very valuable.

For illustrations of fulfilled prophecy Dr. Cooke's recent work, reviewed among our book notices, will be found very instructive, while for vivid portraiture of the scenes of the life of our Lord, we know nothing comparable to Dr. Farrar's *Life of Christ*. For illustrations of the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles, Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul* is a perfect mine of information. It is also one of the cheapest, as well as one of the most interesting books ever published, consisting of two large 8vo books, making about 1050 pages, with seventeen maps—several of a large size, eighty-two engravings, copious notes, and full index, well bound in cloth, in one volume, for \$2.50.

While every help that will throw light upon the Word of God is valuable, the great essential to successful study or teaching is a heart filled with His love and burning with eagerness to bring souls to Christ. Without these, all the aids of learning are vain and profitless. With them and nothing but the Word of God and prayerful meditation thereon one may be abundantly furnished and prepared for being a successful teacher. Let not those, whose engrossing cares or duties or circum-

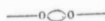
scribed means and opportunities for study prevent them from making use of the aids above mentioned repine or be discouraged. You may ask and receive the wisdom that cometh from above and may all be taught of God and the Holy Spirit, without whose aid all else is of little worth. But those who have the time and opportunity cannot confer upon themselves a greater benefit or pleasure than this careful preparation; nor can they become too thoroughly furnished for the important work in which they are engaged; nor need they to fear that they can ever exhaust the glorious theme—the study of the oracles of God.



Public Bible Class.

We are glad to copy the following notice from a Toronto daily paper, in the hope, that other cities will copy the example here given. "Prof. Cavan's Bible Class, which has been substituted for the Y. M. C. A. noon prayer-meeting on Saturday's to give opportunity for those engaged in Sunday School work to study the lesson, met on Saturday, under the tuition of Prof. Cavan, of Knox College. About a hundred persons were present—for the most part superintendents and teachers. Nearly all took notes, more or less fully, of the Professor's remarks. The lesson was Joshua xxii, 21-27. Necessarily, from the connection of the narrative, the whole chapter came under review. The exercise was not catechetical, but consisted of a continuous exposition, in the course of which the Professor pointed out the main points in the lesson, and the truths to be specially inculcated in teaching it. Prof. Cavan is an able and clear expounder of the Scriptures and such hints on teaching as were given by him cannot fail to be highly useful to all engaged in Sunday

School work. Before the dismissal of the class discussion was had as to the hour of meeting. Noon seemed to be an inconvenient part of the day for most of the attendants. It was ultimately resolved to hold the class from four to five on Saturday afternoons."



S. S. Entertainment at Richmond Street Church, Toronto.

WE had the pleasure on Friday Evening, the 9th ult., of being present at what we consider a model entertainment, given by the teachers of the Richmond Street Sunday-school in this city to the elder scholars and a large number of invited guests. After a very elegant and tasteful repast, a hour or more was spent in agreeable social intercourse. Our friend, the Rev. J. Doel, presided at a galvanic battery and administered galvanic shocks to any extent to those fond of that sensation. Mr. Morphy and other kind friends had provided a graphoscope, stereoscope, and a thaumascope, with a large number of beautiful pictures for inspection by means of these instruments. The guests seemed thoroughly to enjoy themselves; the energetic and courteous superintendent, Mr. Pearson; the teachers, both ladies and gentlemen; and the Rev. Mr. Jeffrey, the pastor of the church using every effort to make the entertainment agreeable. We think that such gatherings might with great advantage be multiplied. The parents and friends of the children have thus an opportunity to be acquainted with each other and with the teachers, and enjoy such social gathering better than formal tea-meeting when the time is largely occupied by set speeches, which impose the restraint of silence on all except the appointed speakers. People for the most

part like to do their own speech making better than having it done for them, and in our large city churches such gatherings may be made a means of grace, by bringing into more intimate Christian fellowship those who might otherwise be comparatively strangers. The latter part of the evening was occupied by a short programme of readings, singing, instrumental music, and a short address of wise and loving religious counsel by the respected pastor, Mr. Jeffrey.

On the previous evening an entertainment was given to the children, embracing several of the features above mentioned, with the addition of a magic lantern exhibition which was immensely popular with the little folks.

Book Notices.

Business Success: What it is and How to Secure it. A Lecture delivered before the Toronto Young Men's Christian Association by JOHN MACDONALD. Toronto: Adam, Stevenson & Co. S. Rose. 12mo. pp. 70.

We wish that a copy of this book could be placed in the hands of every young man in the Dominion, convinced that it would greatly aid in the formation of a noble type of Christian manhood, and lead, it may be, not a few to attain similar success to that of its author.

It abounds in practical wisdom, based upon long experience, wide observation, and thoughtful reflection. Mr. Macdonald has signally illustrated commercial success in his own career, and here points out its essential elements for the guidance of the young men of this Dominion. He exhibits the dignity, nay, grandeur, of Christian commercial life; and shows how true success is based upon the firm foundation of inflexible integrity of character—a high-souled honour that scorns anything that is mean or questionable, even to gain an apparent advantage.

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The Canadian Methodist Pulpit: A Collection of Original Sermons from Living Ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada. Rev. SAMUEL G. PHILLIPS, Editor. Toronto: S. Rose. 12mo. pp. xvii-419. \$1.50.

The idea of such a representative volume as this was very happily conceived by Mr. Phillips, and he has been successful in procuring an admirable series of contributions. The first sermon is one on Broken Cisterns, by that prince of pulpit orators, W. Morley Panshon. Like apples of gold in pictures of silver are his great thoughts couched in such brilliant setting. Then follow two by the honoured President of the General Conference; one a memorial sermon on the death of late Rev. W. L. Thornton, M. A., President of the Canadian Conference in 1864; the other on Christians on Earth and in Heaven. They both show that the bow of the venerable Nestor of Canadian Methodism still abides in strength, as when in youthful prime he sent the arrows of the Gospel into the hearts of the King's enemies.

The Rev. John Borland contributes an admirable sermon on Christian Perfection as illustrated in the character of St. Paul. Mr. Borland discusses this cardinal topic of Wesleyan theology in his own eminently judicious manner. Angels studying Redemption is the subject of the next, by the Rev. W. Stephenson. It is in his ornate style, and is characterized by polished diction and poetical conception—one of his best efforts. Our dear Father Carroll, the beloved of all the churches, gives a sermon of the grand old Methodist ring, on the Essentials of Religious Prosperity—short, but making up for its brevity by its strength.

But we cannot stop to characterize each discourse. The other contributors are Revs. W. Galbraith on the Glorious Ascension and Triumphant Reign of Christ; H. Bland, on the Custody of the Heart; W. S. Blackstock, on Christ our Passover; J. Graham, on Battle for the Gospel Faith; C. Fish, on Manna; W. J. Hunter, on the Family of God; the late Dr. Freshman, on the Christian Sabbath; Prof. Raynar, on Knowledge is Life; J. Rev., on the Impartiality of God's Love; L.

Hooker on the Mission of Jesus; E. A. Stafford, on Glorifying in Religion; C. S. Eby, on the Gospel View of Tribulation; Dr. Douglas—his grand Round Lake Camp Meeting Sermon—on the Power of the Gospel; W. Williams and D. Savage, of New Connexion Conference, on the Spiritual Life, and A Church Order—a Means Not an End, respectively; E. B. Ryckman, of the Dundas Collegiate Institute, on the Power of Christ, the Missionary's Strength; and Henry Pope, Junior, President of the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Conference, on Preaching Christ. The volume closes with the soul-stirring address of the Rev. A. Sutherland, delivered at the last Hamilton Conference, on some distinctive features of Wesleyan theology.

A Survey of the Unity, Harmony, and Growing Evidence of the Sacred Truth. By WILLIAM COOKE, D. D. London: Hamilton & Adams. Toronto: S. Rose. pp. xii-603 12mo. \$2.

The central idea of Dr. Cooke's book is, that the Bible is not a collection of disconnected parts, but that it possesses an essential unity; that, to use his own words, "one grand purpose pervades the whole volume of Revelation—namely, the Salvation of man through Jesus Christ;" and that the evidence of this Divine truth is cumulative, that is, constantly unfolding and growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect day when all men shall recognize its effulgence, and rejoice in its blessed illumination.

But this book is not an abstract argument. It traces the unfolding of this evidence from age to age, and illustrates it by concrete examples. The latest discoveries of Layard, Smith, Botta, Rawlinson, and recent travellers and explorers in Bible lands are laid under tribute, as well as a wide range of critical and exegetical reading. Indeed, in this single volume is embodied the substance of many large and costly books. The important subject of Biblical chronology is carefully examined, and the Usherian scheme, or that of the Hebrew text, we think, successfully maintained. The chapter on the External Evidence of the Deluge confirms by a striking concensus of ancient authors and late dis-

coveries, including the remarkable account of it recently found at Nineveh by Mr. George Smith, the narrative of Scripture.

This is emphatically a book for the times. In an age when the spirit of scepticism pervades the very air we breathe, the vindication of the historic accuracy of the Holy Scriptures cannot but be of the highest service. Here the honest doubter may find the solution of many of his difficulties, and the believer, puzzled by the carping criticisms of infidelity, may have his faith confirmed by the evidences adduced of the Divine inspiration of these sacred records.

The manner of treatment is as admirable as the matter. Dr. Cooke is master of a chaste and polished style, often rising into eloquence in the discussion of these august themes. Its effect is heightened by his apt quotations of Scripture, closely reasoned argument, and striking citations from writers ancient and modern. It will prove as interesting to the lay reader as to the minister, and we cordially commend it to the study of Sunday School Teachers and all who wish to be thoroughly grounded in the historical as well as the internal evidence of the truth of God's Holy Word.

Communications.

SELECTION OF LIBRARY BOOKS.

OUR system of examination of Library Books is as follows:—

The Library Committee selects a number of volumes at once, say 300, and forwards them to ministers who have agreed to read these books, and report on their suitability or otherwise—each reader having from one to four books. When read, a printed form of certificate is filled up, signed, and forwarded to the Secretary, which sets forth that the book, or books, having been carefully read, are, in the opinion of the reader, either suitable or otherwise, and for what reasons.

These certificates are duly filed, and entered in the books of the Secretary, in such a way that every book can be at once traced to the reader and his opinion ascertained at any time. After having examined existing libraries, and selected the best works now published, it will be very

easy to correspond with the leading publishing houses, and obtain new works as soon as issued, and have them immediately examined, and, if suitable, added to our catalogue. A large number of books have been rejected as unsuitable for our schools. A list of such books will be kept at the Book Room, and they will not be offered for sale on the authority of the Committee. A. A.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FESTIVAL— METROPOLITAN CHURCH.

THROUGH the generosity of J. Paterson, Esq., superintendent of the school; and E. Gurney, Esq., assistant, the scholars, officers and teachers, and a few friends enjoyed a very pleasant evening on Friday the 9th instant. At half-past six about six hundred scholars sat down to a sumptuous repast in the lecture room of the church, and considering the number, the behaviour was exceedingly good. Perhaps this was owing to the arrangement of the scholars—a row of boys facing a row of girls. After tea the company repaired to the church, where a few appropriate recitations were given, interspersed with singing. After a few words of counsel by the pastor, Rev. J. Potts, and before retiring, each scholar was presented with a paper bag containing an orange and a quantity of sweetmeats. This appeared to gladden the hearts of the children more than anything else, as was evinced by the shouts of joy which came from all sides as they wended their way homeward.

It is gratifying to know that this School is gradually increasing in numbers and interest. There is now an average attendance of about 40 officers and teachers, and 400 scholars. The School subscribes for 200 copies of the *Advocate* and 40 numbers of the *Banner*. The International Series of Lessons is used, and our own Catechisms regularly taught. Last year there were upwards of 100 scholars who were members of the Church, and this year it is expected that the number will be greatly increased. A weekly prayer meeting for the scholars is held at the close of the school, and it is delightful to hear the large number of youthful voices engaged in this exercise. COM.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD YEAR—1875—MAY.

SECOND QUARTER: LESSONS IN OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

SUNDAY, MAY 2, 1875.

LESSON V.—THE DEATH OF SAMSON. Judges
16. 25-31.

Berean Notes.

Leader. 25 And it came to pass when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport; and they set him between the pillars.

School. 26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

L. 27 Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

S. 28 And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

L. 29 And Sampson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and upon which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

S. 30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein.

L. 30 So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

S. 31 Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

HOME READINGS.

Mon. Judg. 16. 11-31. Thurs. Judg. 16. 1-20.
Tues. Judg. 14. Fri. Eccles. 7. 1-12.
Wed. Judg. 15. Sat. Luke 18. 1-14.
Sabbath. Matthew 21. 33-54.

TOPIC:—*Earnest Deeds of a Hero.*

GOLDEN TEXT:—*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed; Prov. 13. 20.*

OUTLINE:—1. *Sport for the Captors*, v. 25, 27; Mark 6. 23, 24; 2 Tim. 2. 26.
2. *Supplication for Strength*, v. 26, 28; Jer. 15. 15; Acts 4. 29.
3. *Slain among his Foes*, v. 29. 30; Acts 7. 59, 60; John 19. 30.
4. *Sepulchre with his Family*, v. 31; Gen. 49. 29, 30; Ruth 1. 17.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

Behold the strength of the physical man in the service of a God of justice! Samson should have been governed by a nobler aim. A wiser use of his powers would have made his life worthier and his death more truly heroic. Still we see in him the heroic element. We may legitimately speak of his deeds as (in the language of our TOPIC) *Earnest deeds of a hero*. But they remind us the more forcibly, as we review his life, that, in the language of the GOLDEN TEXT: *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.* Prov. 13. 20. Study the facts suggested by the OUTLINE: 1. SPORT FOR THE CAPTORS; 2. SUPPLICATION FOR STRENGTH; 3. SLAIN AMONG HIS FOES; 4. SEPULCHRE WITH HIS FAMILY. From the whole history of the man we learn the DOCTRINE SUGGESTED: *Retributive justice*. To Samson, the servant, and to the Philistines, the foes of the Lord, the Lord was just. What each sowed he reaped. As then, so now.

LESSON HYMN.—Tune: "Silver Street." S. M.

Servant of God, well done!
Rest from thy lov'd employ;
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter thy Mast'r's joy!

The voice at midnight came ;
 He started up to hear ;
 A mortal arrow pierced his frame ;
 He fell, but felt no fear.

The pains of death are past,
 Labour and sorrow cease,
 And life's long warfare closed at last,
 His soul is found in peace.

Soldier of Christ, well done !
 Praise be thy new employ ;
 And, while eternal ages run,
 Rest in thy Saviour's joy !

QUESTIONS, etc.

Recite TITLE. Look carefully over chapters 14, 15 and 16, that you may learn about the life of Samson. Recite TOPIC. Why may we call Samson "a hero?" Recite GOLDEN TEXT.

1. *Sport for the captors.* v. 25, 27.
 Who were the captors of Samson? v. 21.
 How did they treat their captive? v. 21.
 What great jubilee did they hold on account of his capture? [See v. 23, 24, 27.]
 Why was Samson called to the jubilee? v. 25.
 What is meant by "he made them sport?"
 Of what other great captive mentioned in Scripture was sport made?
 For whose sake did Samson suffer this?
 For whose sake was Jesus mocked?
2. *Supplication for strength.* v. 26, 28.
 What did Samson ask of the lad who led him? v. 26.
 What did he ask of God? v. 28.
 Why did God answer this prayer?
 How must we treat our enemies? [See Matt. 5, 44.]

[Recite Jesus' dying prayer: Luke 23, 34.]

3. *Slain among his foes.* v. 29, 30.
 How many foes were around Samson? v. 27.
 Read the account of the terrible end, v. 29, 30.
 [Recite John 19, 30.]
4. *Sequelure with his family.* v. 31.
 Give the particulars of Samson's burial, v. 31.
 Give some particulars of Jesus' burial.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That our Golden Text is true?
2. That a pure heart is better than a strong body?
3. That merry-making runs easily into sin?
4. That he who prays should work?
5. That God is tender to his people, but terrible to his foes?

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

6. *What doth your baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, oblige you to do?*

My baptism in the name of the the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, obliges me first to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; secondly, that I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and, thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life.

OUTLINES, NOTES, AND LESSONS.

1. REVIEW OF JUDGES.

1. *Othniel*; 2. *Ehud*; 3. *Deborah*; 4. *Gideon*; 5. *Abimelech*. [About 1209-1206 B.C.] A son of Gideon. He assumed for the first time the title of king. He put all the sons of Gideon to death except JOTHAM, the youngest, and made himself king. Read the story of Abimelech and the beautiful parable by Jotham in Judges 9. It is a stirring chapter. 6. *Tola*; 7. *Jair*; 8. *Jephthah*. Here, too, is a wonderful character of lowly birth. Called to be the leader of the people, he made assault on the Ammonites and routed them. Read the 11th and 12th chapters of Judges. You will find in the 11th chapter the melancholy story of "Jephthah's daughter," full of power and of pathos. Jephthah's rule lasted six years. 9. *Ibzan*; 10. *Eton*; 11. *Adon*; 12. SAMSON.

2. THE STORY OF SAMSON. (1) IT IS FOUND in Judges—chapters 13 to 16. (2) IT BEGINS with the story of ISRAEL'S DECELENSION. "Israel did evil." Judges 13, 1. The Lord brings them into bondage again. This time into the hands of the Philistines. Judges 13, 1.

3. SAMSON'S HOME AND PARENTS AND BIRTH. His tribe—DAN. His birth-place ZORAH—now Sorah—about twenty-three miles south-east from Joppa.

..... "The village of *Sarah* stands about 1,150 feet above the sea, and is situated on the southern end of the hill crest overlooking the valley of the same name. On the opposite side of the valley, low down, is the river *Aia Sheun*, (the ancient *Bethshemesh*). . . . Looking across the valley to the opposite crest we can see the ruin of *Tibneh*, (the Ancient *Tinnath*), where dwelt Samson's betrothed; it is 740 feet above the sea, and, therefore, not in the plains, as some writers have stated. Samson in going down to it would descend 700 feet into the valley, and then ascend 350

feet to Timnath. It is apparent from the sacred narrative (Judges 15) that the corn was growing in the valley as it does at present, with the vineyards and olives lining the side of the hills; for we are told that the Philistines *came up* to Timnath and burnt Samson's wife and her father with fire."—*Capt. Warren*.

Samson's father, MANOAH, (rest), whose wife received an angel's visit announcing the birth of a son and commanding that he be brought up a *Nazarite*. (See Num. 6. 2-21; Judges 13. 3-5.) The woman told her husband, (vers. 6, 7), and Manoah prayed (ver. 8) a sweet and beautiful and fitting prayer. The prayer was answered. The angel of the Lord came and told them about the child, and performed a wonderful miracle, (vers. 9-21.) The mother showed good sense in an argument with her husband, (vers. 22, 23.) The child was born and grew, and the Lord blessed him, and the spirit of the Lord began to move him, (vers. 24, 25.) He was born about 1161 B.C., died 1120 B.C.

4. THE NAME SAMSON means "little son," or "sonlike." According to Josephus it meant "strong."

5. INTERESTING INCIDENTS IN SAMSON'S LIFE. (1) His proposal to marry a Philistine girl, (Judges 14. 1-4.) (2) His encounter with the young lion, (vers. 5-9.) (3) The wedding feast and the famous riddle, (vers. 10-14), and the trouble that came of it, (vers. 15-20.) (4) His visit to his wife, and the terrible punishment he inflicted by the foxes and firebrands on the Philistines, (Judges 15. 1-5.) (5) His victory over the Philistines when they attempted to arrest him, (vers. 9-19.) (6) His visit to Gaza and his carrying away of its gates, (Judges 16. 1-3.) (7) His fatal love for Delilah in the valley of *Sorek*, through which he became a blind, shorn, wretched captive in Gaza, (vers. 4-21.)

6. SAMSON'S DEATH. THEIR HEARTS, v. r. 25, that is, of "the lords," ver. 33, and of the "people," ver. 24, idolaters all met to worship Dagon. MERRY—jolly with drink and feasting. SPORT—a mirth made up of mockery. A blind foe shorn of his power will be a good thing to see. Sport means "dance." Perhaps determined to make him dance. He came. They enjoyed the scene. No fear of the mighty man now. A LAD (ver. 26), led him. FEEL THE PILLARS....LEAN. Dis-

sembling weariness and weakness, perhaps. HOUSE FULL, ver. 27. A feast. A carnival. A holiday. Above and below the house crowded. About the ROOF, see Deut. 22. 8; Luke 23, 42. CALLED UNTO THE LORD. Long forgotten, sought at last. TWO petitions: RE-MEMBER.... STRENGTHEN. TWO PILLARS.

.....Dr. Thompson thinks the temple was built on the side of one of the steep declivities near to Gaza. The breaking of the two central pillars would permit the whole structure to break in and to tumble down the hill.

.....In 1863 we saw the two pillars in the Mosque El-Arsa, in Jerusalem, which are so close together that it is with difficulty a large man can get between them.

.....July 21, 1864, one of the granite pillars supporting the dome of the Church of the Transfiguration, in St. Peter-burg, broke, and the house fell on a great crowd of people.

WITH ALL HIS MIGHT. God's blessing on the effort. MORE THAN....HE SLEW IN HIS LIFE. See Judges 14. 19, (thirty men.) See chap. 15. 15, (1,000 men.) See also Judges 15. 8. HIS BRETHREN—that is, near relatives. ZORAH AND ESHTAOL. In the tribe of Dan.

7. LESSONS FROM SAMSON'S LIFE AND DEATH.

(1) See in it: 1. A scene of *dissipation*, vers. 25, 27. 2. A scene of *humiliation*, vers. 25-27. 3. A scene of *determination*, vers. 28, 29. 4. A scene of *desolation*, ver. 30.

(2) See in it: 1. God's *mercy* to Israel; 2. God's *wrath* against the Philistines; 3. God's *mingled mercy and wrath* toward Samson; 4. God's *law* concerning lust and its doom.

(3) See in it: 1. The *weakness* of the strongest, (Samson a slave to lust;) 2. The *strength* of the weakest, (Samson in prayer, vers. 28-30.)

(4) See in it: 1. A symbol of Israel's *opportunities*; 2. A symbol of Israel's *unfaithfulness*; 3. A symbol of Israel's *evil alliance*; 4. A symbol of Israel's *sufferings*; 5. A symbol of Israel's *repentance*.

(5) See in it: 1. That the measure of a man's strength is not in his physical qualities; 2. That the shortest way to ruin is the disregard of true social relations and duties; 3. That God's people have no right to play or parley with God's enemies; 4. That the violation of the Nazarites' vow (the vow of consecration)

brings ruin to the apostate; 5. That the secret of a Christian's strength cannot remain with the man who violates the law of Christian purity.

(6) See in his last prayer, (as implied, at least :) 1. A *public confession* of his God; 2. A *penitent confession* of his sins; 3. A *perfect consecration* of himself to God.

(7) See, in a dim outline-shadow, the one who gave his life to destroy Satan and to save Israel. As Bishop Hall says: "So didst thou, O blessed Saviour, our better Samson, conquer in dying; and triumphing upon the chariot of the cross, didst lead captivity captive; the law, sin, death, hell, had never been vanquished but by thy death. All our life, liberty, and glory, spring out of thy most precious blood."

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY EUGENE STOCK, ESQ.

It is impossible to teach on Samson's death without dwelling first upon his life. And there is no life in all Scripture so perplexing. To find the key to it we must consider:—

(a) *Samson's commission.* God raised him up for a special purpose, namely, to deliver Israel from the bondage of the Philistines. It was for this that his great strength was given him. It was for this that, as we are told, (chap. 13. 25; 14. 6, 19; 15. 14,) "the spirit of the Lord came upon him."

(b) *Samson's character.* Here is the puzzle: was he a true servant of God? How could he be when he was so manifestly the slave of sin? And yet if he were not, would he have been mentioned among the heroes of faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews? Of course we must not judge a wild warrior of the period of the Judges by a Christian standard; but still Samson falls far below Joshua or Gideon. The fact is that he is a *mixed* character. We must regard him as a servant of God at bottom, hating the Philistines as God's enemies, willing to risk his life for God's people, acknowledging God's hand in his victories and resorting to him in his extremities, (see especially chap. 15. 18,) and probably showing himself an upright judge during those "twenty years," (chap. 15. 20,) of which we are told nothing. Yet with all this we see in him a wilfulness, a self-pleasing, a cruel and capricious use, for his own purposes,

of the strength which was God's gift, which quite spoil his character; above all, we see his self-indulgent habits leading him, strangely enough, to consort in sin with those who were themselves Philistines, and drawing him further and further from God, until he was only "scarcely saved"—"saved so as by fire."

But Samson's character and history might well be used for a whole series of Sunday-school lessons, for he is the type of many a boy—and many a girl, too—vigorous, impetuous, wilful, "lusty, and strong," (as the Psalmist calls it,) whose very faults we are apt to admire, whose energy may be of the greatest use in God's work, but who falls an easy victim to the allurements of temptation. And as we have but one lesson on the subject, every teacher should both strive and pray that it may be specially blessed to such scholars.

In coming to our immediate subject, Samson's death, it is essential that we thoroughly understand all that led to it. To this end let us examine the connection of his strength with his long hair.

1. *Why did his strength lie in his long hair?* The answer will be found by a reference to chap. 13. 5; 16. 17; Num. 6. 5; 1 Sam. 1. 11. The long hair was the symbol of his Nazarite vow, that is, of his special dedication to God's service. There was no magical power in the hair itself, but it was what our English Prayer-book calls "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," like water in baptism, like bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. Therefore the strength, though bodily, was not of the body, but of the spirit.

2. *Why did the loss of his hair involve the loss of his strength?* Of course it need not have done so, but it pleased God to use the symbol as visibly expressing the reality. Samson sinned; by sin he cut himself off from God; and God might justly have at once recalled his gift. But he did not: (see chap. 16. 9, 12, 14, until Samson *openly* apostatized by suffering the sacred symbol to be taken from him, (which he virtually did by not guarding it sufficiently.) And then those significant words, "He *wist not* that the Lord had departed from him," show that he had already departed so far from God that he felt no difference when God departed from him. Nor would some of us.

3. *Why did the growth of his hair in prison imply the revival of his strength?* It may be

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said that the hair grew naturally. Yes; but why, then, should it be specially mentioned in ver. 22? Clearly the growth coincided with the turning of the fallen champion's heart to God; and it is very likely that as, with a blind man's keen sense of touch, his fingers day by day traced the gradual growth of the symbolic locks, the memories of his youth revived, the vows of his consecration were renewed; and thus God actually used the natural lengthening of the hair as a means for restoring his wandering sheep.

Then came the great opportunity. Once more might he "deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines," destroying God's enemies by one grand effort. But to do so he must sacrifice his own life. What of that? He "counted not his life dear unto himself;" feeling bitterly that he had failed to live for God, he resolved to die for God. No doubt even here we see the mixed character of the man: he cannot forget those "two eyes." Still it was a great act of faith. It alone gave him a title to a place in Heb. 11. And by it he became a most striking type of the great Deliverer to come, who, "through death destroyed him that had the power of death, and delivered them who were subject to bondage." (Heb. 2. 14.)

The Golden Text says, "A companion of fools shall be destroyed." Will the fact of a "companion of fools" like Samson being (as we believe) spiritually saved mar the force of this text for our scholars? Not so. Think what Samson did lose: liberty, his eyes, honor and power, friends and country; and he never regained them. If ever a man learned the truth of Jer. 2. 19, that it is "an evil and a bitter thing" to forsake God, Samson did. He just escaped being finally lost, God mercifully accepting his bitter repentance. Do we wish to be only saved like that?

For Senior Scholars.

I.—THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. FALLS OF THE MIGHTY. Dan 4. 29-33; 5. 1, 31; Matt. 26. 69-75; Luke 10. 18; Rev. 20. 10.
2. ILL-TIMED SPORT. Exod. 32. 5; 1 Cor. 10. 7; Matt. 22. 5; Mark 5. 40; Luke 23. 34-37.
3. PRAYER IN EMERGENCIES. James 5. 13;

2 Kings 19. 19; 2 Chron. 20. 11, 12; Psa. 17. 8, 9; 107. 6, 12, 19, 28.

4. GOD'S ANSWER. Gen. 18. 32; 1 Sam. 1. 27; Psa. 18. 6; Matt. 7. 7; James 5. 16-18.

5. DYING TO DESTROY OTHERS. Dan. 3. 22; Jonah 4. 1, 2; Matt. 23. 13-15; John 8. 44.

6. DYING TO SAVE OTHERS. John 15. 13; 10. 11, 15; Rom. 5. 7, 8; Eph. 5. 2; 1 John 3. 16.

7. DUST TO DUST. Gen. 3. 19; Job. 21. 23; 34. 15; Psa. 104. 29; Heb. 9. 27.

2.—SEED-THOUGHTS.

BY L. D. BARRONS, D.D.

1. For what purpose was Samson raised up? (See chap. 13.)
2. What qualification did God give him for that special work?
3. What influence did his physical ability have on his moral character?
4. Was this a necessary result?
5. What were the particular sins of Samson?
6. Into what punishment or suffering did these sins lead him?
7. Did he accomplish what he was raised up for?
8. Does God fulfil his purposes and prophecies by wicked men?
9. If so, do they receive reward for it?
10. Does God ever punish the instruments of his own work? If so, why?

3. DOCTRINE.

"Retributive Justice." Esther 5. 13, 14; 7. 10; 2 Chron. 20. 35-37; Isa. 57. 17.

The Primary Class.

BY L. J. RIDER.

How many days has it been since I told you the story of Gideon's army? "Last Sunday." Yes, but how many days ago was that? Now, who remembers best the story I told seven days ago? (Proceed to call out the review lesson.)

Did you ever see a lion? (Describe.) Lions don't live in this country; but if they did, do you know any man so strong that he could kill

one if he had neither gun nor club? Our lesson to-day is about one of the Israelites named Samson—a very strong man. (Teacher may tell such exploits of Samson as time and the interest in the class may permit. Now the Lord had told Samson never to have his hair cut; if he did he would be weak, like other men. Samson ought never to have told of this, but one day he was tempted and teased by a wicked woman, and he told her at last his secret.

This woman had his hair cut off when he was asleep, and then she called the Philistines to come and take him. Samson awakened and thought he was as strong as ever; but he soon found out the dreadful truth—*his strength was gone!* The Philistines took him, fettered his feet, put out his eyes, and shut him up in prison.

But Samson lived to do one thing more for his people. Not long afterward the Philistines made a great feast in one of their temples and sent for poor blind Samson out of the prison, that they might laugh and make sport of him. Samson came, but while they were making sport he was thinking of their cruelty in putting out his eyes, and fearing what they might do to the Israelites now he could no longer fight for them.

He had repented of his sin, and God had forgiven him, and now he asked the Lord to strengthen him "only this once," and taking hold of the two principal pillars on which the temple rested, (explain,) "he bowed himself" upon them with all his might, pulled them out, and down came the house, killing thousands of the enemies of God's people. Samson was killed with them, but he did more for his people in his death than in his life, for they were so terror-stricken that they did not trouble the Israelites for many years afterward.

Now, children, I want you to try and think what we ought to learn from this story. (If the class hesitates help them by suggesting.) Who gives our strength of mind and body? Who can take it away? Is it safe to disobey God? But if we sin will God forgive? For whose sake?

Whisper-Song.

God is gracious to his saints,
Hearing ever their complaints.
God is dreadful to his foes,
All their ways he overthrows.

SUNDAY, MAY 9, 1875.

LESSON VI.—RUTH AND NAOMI. Ruth 1.
16-22.

Berean Notes.

Leader. 16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

School. 17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

L. 18 When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

S. 19 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?

L. 20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

S. 21 I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

L. 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab:

S. And they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

HOME READINGS.

Mon. Ruth i. 16-22. Th. Ruth iv. 1-17.

Tu. Ruth i. 1-15. Fr. Matt. ii. 1-10.

Wed. Ruth ii. 1-17. Sat. Mark x. 17-30.

Sabbath. Rom. viii. 28-30.

TOPIC—*Earnest Devotion of a Daughter.*

GOLDEN TEXT—*Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.* Ruth 1. 16.

OUTLINE—1. *Ruth's Appeal*, v. 16-18; 2 Kings 2. 2; Luke 24. 29.

2. *Bethlehem's Greeting*, v. 19; Matt. 21. 10; Lam. 2. 15.

3. *Naomi's Response*, v. 20-22; Job. 1. 21; 1 T m. 6. 7.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

Behold the strength of devotion in a daughter! See the strength of love and of self-sacrifice; as our TOPIC has it, the *Earnest Devotion of a Daughter*. Devotion to her mother, and to her mother's people, and to her mother's God. See GOLDEN TEXT: "*Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.*" Ruth 1. 16. OUTLINE: 1. RUTH'S APPEAL 2. BETHLEHEM'S GREETING; 3. NAOMI'S RESPONSE. The whole beautifully illustrating the DOCTRINE: *The Compensations of Providence.*

LESSON HYMN.—Tune: "Christmas." C. M.

In all my Lord's appointed ways
My journey I'll pursue;
"Hinder me not," ye much-loved saints,
For I must go with you.

Through floods and flames if Jesus lead,
I'll follow where he goes;
"Hinder me not," shall be my cry,
Though earth and hell oppose.

QUESTIONS:

Recite TITLE.

Read carefully v. 1-5, and tell who these women, Ruth and Naomi, were.

Recite TOPIC, GOLDEN TEXT, and OUTLINE.

1. *Ruth's appeal*, v. 16-18.

What appeal of Ruth to Naomi is found in v. 16?

Why did Ruth make this appeal? [Scholars please look carefully over v. 6-15 and be ready in a few words to answer this question.]

How many resolutions does Ruth express in v. 16, 17?

Explain each of them briefly.

Who was the God of Naomi?

Why is Ruth's resolution one which is good for all persons?

What did Naomi see in Ruth, which caused her to cease speaking? v. 18.

What is meant by "steadfastly minded?" [Read Luke 9. 62; 1 Cor. 15. 58.]

What did Ruth leave when she went with Naomi? See v. 4, 8.

What spirit does this show?

In what things should we imitate it?

2. *Bethlehem's greeting*, v. 19.

To what place did Ruth and Naomi go?

How long since Naomi had left there? v. 4. What is meant by "all the city was moved about them?"

Why did they ask, "Is this Naomi?" ["Naomi" means "pleasantness."]

Why does this greeting from old friends of Naomi make Ruth's devotion more beautiful?

3. *Naomi's response*, v. 20-22.

What response did Naomi make? v. 20, 21. ["Mara" means "bitterness."]

What four things does she say God had done to her? v. 20, 21.

Name some other Scripture characters whom God afflicted.

Why does God afflict his children?

What does v. 22 tell of these women?

Look through the chapters which follow and tell briefly what became of them.

What does all this teach us about God's care of his children?

What lesson may we here learn—

1. On religion in the family?
2. On resoluteness in religion?
3. On the sources of prosperity and adversity?
4. On God's fatherly care?

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

7. *Why was the sacrament of the Lord's supper ordained?*

The sacrament of the Lord's supper was ordained for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.

OUTLINES, NOTES AND LESSONS.

1. NAMES. ELIM-ELECH—God the King. Naomi—my delight, my pleasure, or my pleasantness. Orpah—a forelock, or a fawn. Ruth, plural form of *Reu*—a friend. Bethlehem—house of bread. Mara—bitterness. Mahlon (ver. 2)—sickly. Chilion (ver. 2)—a pining. *Entreat me not*—"be not against me;" Hebrew—to strike, push—to assail with petitions, etc. *Steadfastly-minded*—strengthened herself. See Acts 2. 42; Eph. 6. 10.

..... PRELIMINARY. 1. The teacher should read and encourage the class to read, (at home,) the whole book of Ruth. 2. Remember that social customs greatly differ in this country and Palestine, in this age and the age when Ruth lived. A woman

may not do, without severe censure, to-day what would have been legally right and customary among the best of people in the time of Ruth. 3. The old law of the Jews rendered it proper for Ruth to ask Boaz to marry her. 4. The plan adopted was proper enough in view of the high standing of Boaz and the purity of Ruth. 5. Call the attention of the class to the exceeding beauty of this book of Ruth. Its pictures are very life-like.

...QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS. By seeing that you can answer the following you will know whether or not you have the facts of this subject in hand. Who was Elimelech? His home? Change of residence? Cause of it? Wife's name? Sons' names? Their wives? The triple bereavement in Moab? News from Bethlehem? (ver. 6.) The return commenced? Orpah's conduct? Ruth's resolve? What question did the Bethlehemites ask? Naomi's answer? Time of year when Ruth reached Bethlehem? (ver. 6.) The name of Naomi's kinsman? What favours did he show Ruth? What plan did Naomi propose? With what success did Ruth adopt it? What relation between Ruth and Jesus?

2. EXPOSITORY. ENTREAT ME NOT ver. 16. See arguments by which Naomi entreated Ruth: (1) Her mother's house, ver. 8; (2) A husband to be found, ver. 9; (3) The kiss of farewell, ver. 9; (4) The folly of hoping for anything with her, ver. 11-13; (5) Entreated by her sister-in-law's example, ver. 15; (6) Appeal by allusion to her "people" and "gods," ver. 15.

..... See Elisha following Elijah. 2 Kings 2. 2-6. See Levi. Luke 5. 27, 28. See Simon Peter and the disciples following the incarnate Jesus. John 6. 67. 68. See Paul following the exalted Jesus. Phil. 3, 13, 14.

..... Contrast between Ruth and the rich young man. Matt. 19. 16-22.

Why did Naomi urge Ruth to return? Probably to test her faith and desire. She did not want an unwilling companion. THE LORD DO SO, ver. 17. Jehovah. The name of Israel's God whom Ruth knew and served, and in whose providence she believed. BETHLEHEM. Six miles south of Jerusalem. Famed in the history of Jacob, David and Jesus. Ruth and Naomi travelled from beyond the Dead sea in Moab—perhaps one hundred miles. CITY WAS MOVED., ver. 19. Prominent family. Uneventful days broken in upon by every little local item of interest. NOT NAOMI—pleasantness, but MARA, bitterness. Once Naomi. Now Mara. Such changes occur in families. FULL. With family and means. EMPTY.

So she felt now, but she was rich in having such a daughter as Ruth. So the Messiah himself should come from this Moabitish maiden! BARLEY HARVEST. In March or April.

3. OUTLINES AND LESSONS.

1. See: (1) A fragment of family history. (2) Lights and shadows in family history. (3) God's hand in family history.

2. See: (1) A necessary choice, ver. 8, 9. (2) A wise choice, ver. 10. (3) A temporary choice, ver. 10, 14, 15. (4) A religious choice, ver. 16. (5) A comprehensive choice, ver. 16, 17. (6) A final choice, ver. 18.

3. See in RUTH: (1) Womanly devotion. (2) Womanly courage. (3) Womanly purity. (4) Womanly perseverance.

4. Learn from ORPAH: (1) Following for a time. (2) Feelingly following, ver. 14. (3) Finally forsaking.

5. Learn from NAOMI: (1) A recognition of God's hand in the affairs of life. (2) A character full of excellence, since it so won the hearts of her daughters-in-law. (3) A wholesome, practical sense which put the burden of choice upon her daughters.

6. The typical teaching of this whole subject: "Elim-lech (which signifies God the King) being dead, Naomi (my delight, my pleasure) becomes a widow, and eventually loses her children also. She typifies the Jewish nation, who, having lost her God, is like a widow, and has no heir. Yet there shall be a remnant, destitute of all right to the promises, (and, therefore, prefigured historically by a stranger,) who will be received in grace, (similarly to the Gentiles and the Church,) who will faithfully and heartily identify itself with desolate Israel."
—Darby.

English Teacher's Notes.

It is unnecessary to say a word on so simple and familiar a narrative as this. Let us come to the application at once.

It may be taken in two ways. We may contrast Orpah and Ruth; or, dwelling on Ruth's love for Naomi, we may show one means by which those who are "strangers and foreigners" may be brought to become "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God."

I. Orpah and Ruth were alike up to a certain point, and there they separate. Let us see in what respects they were alike:—

1. Both belonged to a heathen nation; both therefore were outside the covenant of God.

2. Both had come, by their marriage with the sons of Eim-elech, into a certain connection with God's people.

3. For both, this merely earthly connection came to an end; and then both had to decide, each for herself, to which people she would belong.

4. Both at first *intended* to unite themselves to Israel. Ver. 7, "They went on the way to return unto the land of Judah." Ver. 10, "They said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people."

5. Both were distressed at the idea of remaining behind in Moab. See vers. 9, 14.

But here the resemblance ends. The decisive moment came and they took different directions.

It does not seem that this is to be accounted for by one loving Naomi more than the other. True, even if we take it so, the spiritual lesson is not lost, for the case may be stated thus: Ruth's love was strong enough to make her "forget her own people, and her father's house," (Psa. 45. 10,) while Orpah's love only retained its power so long as she could have both Naomi and Moab at the same time. But it is clear that religion had something to do with the decision on either side. Not only does Ruth say, "Thy God shall be my God," but Boaz afterward speaks to her of the "Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." (Chap. 2. 12.) For that Orpah was not prepared.

Now we are all like Orpah and Ruth in their points of resemblance. (1) We are by nature "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise," Eph. 2. 12. (2) We have a certain outward connection with God's people (born in Christian land, baptized, church-goers, etc.) (3) This outward connection is not enough; each individual must decide for himself. (4) We all *intend* to be God's people. (5) The idea of *never* being saved is distressing to us all.

And we have a like decision to make. Will we have this world with its chances of pleasure and advancement, (see vers. 9, 11-13.) or will we be content to give up those chances, and, like Moses, choose "affliction with the people of God?" Observe that Ruth could not foresee what was in store for her. She knew she was to live

with a poor widow, and she began her new life by going out to glean a few ears of corn for their subsistence. And we know that, in the case of many of our scholars, the temporal outlook of the two opposite courses is just as strongly contrasted.

The narrative will give us an opportunity of warning against two common deceptions:—

1. Some say, It is true, I have not decided for God, and cannot just now; but, then, neither have I decided for the world: I have not gone back as Orpah did. But observe, Orpah's decision did not involve any going back at all. They were *still in Moab*; so that *not going on* was equivalent to remaining behind. Orpah might have stood still on the spot weeping and looking wistfully after the retreating figures of her sister and mother-in-law; but that would have been just as plain a decision for Moab and against God. And, unless we have already returned to God, we are still away from him. *No going away* is needed. To stay where and as we are is to decide against his service.

2. Some do weep over their condition of distance and alienation from God, and do wish they could join their happier friends who have chosen the better part; and somehow they comfort themselves in their weeping and wishing, as if *that* would save them. Did the young ruler's being "very sorrowful" make him a disciple? God's Word is very plain. It is not "He that weepeth over his sins," but "whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Prov. 28. 13)

II. A few lines must suffice for the other line of application. Love for Naomi was the salvation of Ruth. He who belongs to the Israel of God should use the love his friends and relations have for him, saying to them "Come with us, and we will do thee good." Here is a lesson for teachers. Their scholars often love *them*: does this lead the scholars to love *their God*?

In one respect we must not imitate Naomi. She *dissuaded* her daughters-in-law from accompanying her. She meant it kindly; but she forgot the supreme blessedness of belonging to God's people, and thought only of their trials. We know both; but let our appeal to those who hesitate be, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8. 18.)

For Senior Scholars.

I. THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. WOMAN'S DEVOTION. Acts 9. 39; Matt. 27. 55; Mark 12. 43. 44; Luke 4. 1, 10.
2. CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP. 2 Sam. 1. 26; Prov. 17. 17; 1 Pet. 3. 8, 9; 2 Tim. 1. 16; Philemon 7.
3. STEADFAST UNTO THE END. Matt. 10. 22; John 13. 1; 2 Tim. 4. 6-8; Heb. 12. 1.
4. CHANGES OF FORTUNES. Job 1. 13-19; Psa. 73. 18-20; Jer. 17. 11; Luke 12. 20; 16. 25.
5. THE BLESSINGS OF AFFLICTION. Deut. 8. 2; Psa. 119. 67, 71; Prov. 3. 11, 12; Rom. 5. 3; 1 Pet. 1. 7.
6. "THEY CAME TO BETHLEHEM." Gen. 48. 7; 1 Sam. 16. 4, Luke 2. 4, 15; Matt. 2. 8.
7. GOD OVER ALL. Psa. 104. 14; Matt. 5. 45; 10. 29, 30; Rom. 8. 28; 11. 36.

2. SEED-THOUGHTS.

1. Can any selfishness be discovered in Naomi's request?
2. Why did Ruth persist in returning with her to Bethlehem?
3. How many considerations did Ruth recognize as involved in her well-settled choice?
4. What quality of character in Ruth induced Naomi to yield to her?
5. In what was Ruth an example to all who embrace religion?
6. Can any selfish motive be traced to Ruth?
7. What sort of a future had she reason to expect?
8. If parents and children love, and are true to each other, what usually results from it?
9. In this case what marked honor did God attach to it?
10. Is there anything to fear in following a present, evident course of duty?
11. In what respects do the circumstances, the choice and the future of Ruth resemble Christian experience?

3. DOCTRINE.

"The compensations of Providence." Isa. 54. 7, 8; 61. 7; James 4. 10; Job 42. 12.

The Primary Class.

Let the teacher point on the map to the relative positions of Bethlehem and the land of Moab, somewhere in which Naomi and her husband and her two children went to live. It

will probably fix their attention if you give them the names of these people, and get the names from them in return. What was the man's name? [Elimelech.] What was the woman's name? [Naomi.] What were the names of their two sons? [Mahlon and Chilion.] What were the names of the wives of these sons? [Orpah and Ruth.] Naomi's husband died, and after they had been there ten years her two sons died, and thus she was left all alone. For this reason she wanted to go back to her friends in Bethlehem. She started on the way, and her two daughters-in-law started to go with her. What were their names? She urged them to go back but they said to her, "Surely we will return with thee unto thy people." This was certainly very noble in them, to be willing to leave their own home to go among strangers. Naomi still urged them to go back, and let her go to Bethlehem alone; and one of them went back. What was her name? The other, whose name was . . . would not go back. What she said to Naomi is in the first verse of this beautiful lesson. Let us see how many different things she said. We will put them on the blackboard and number them. [Here put on the board as the scholars answer, or if they cannot answer, tell them and write as you speak, abbreviating the words, as follows: 1. Ent.; 2. Whither; 3. Where; 4. Thy P.; 5. Thy G.; 6. Diest; 7. Buried; 8. The Lord do so. Then give them a short drill, pointing to the numbers and abbreviations, and getting their answers. Next rub out the abbreviations, leaving only the numerals, and then question. Finally, rub out the numerals, and see if they cannot give you the whole verse.] These two good women started on their journey. They must have travelled from thirty to forty miles. By and by they came to Bethlehem. What did Naomi's old friends say? [Is this Naomi?] What did she want them to call her now? [Mara.] What does the word Mara mean? [Pleasant.] What does the word Mara mean? [Bitter.] Why did she wish her name changed from Pleasant to Bitter? What had happened to her while she was ten years away from Bethlehem? Poor woman! her heart was so full of sorrow because of her troubles that she wished her name to be changed. Once "full," now "empty." Once "Pleasant," now "Bitter."

This lesson may be used to illustrate, 1. Family love: parents for children, and children

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for parents. 2. The fact that we have in God our greatest and best friend in time of trouble.

WHISPER-SONG.

Ask me not
To leave thee—No,
Where thou goest
I will go,
I will gladly
Follow thee,
And thy God
My God shall be.

SUNDAY, MAY 16, 1875.

LESSON VII.—A PRAYING MOTHER. 1 Sam. 1. 21-28.

Berean Notes.

Reader. 21 And the man Elkanah, and a' his house, went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

School. 22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever.

L. 23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

S. 24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh; and the child was young.

L. 25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

S. 26 And she said, O my Lord, as thy soul liveth, my Lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord.

L. 27 For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him;

S. 28 Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshiped the Lord there.

HOME READINGS.

M. 1 Sam. 1. 21-28. *Th.* Deut. 16. 5-17.

Tu. 1 Sam. 1. 9-18. *F.* Luke 1. 57-69.

W. 1 Sam. 2. 1-11. *S.* Psalm 127.

Sabbath. Prov. 31. 10-31.

TOPIC:—Earnest Devotion of a Mother.

GOLDEN TEXT:—*I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord.* 1 Sam. 1. 28.

OUTLINE:—1. *A Mother's Covenant*, v. 12-23; 1 Sam. 1. 11; Lev. 12. 6-8.

2. *A Mother's Consecration*, v. 24-28; Luke 2. 22; 2 Tim. 1. 5.

LESSON HYMN.—*Tune: "Siloam." C. M.*

When children give their hearts to God,
'Tis pleasing in his eyes;
A flower, when offered in the bud,
Is no vain sacrifice.

It saves us from unnumbered snares
To mind religion young;
Grace will preserve our following years,
And make our virtue strong.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

Behold the strength of a mother's love to the Lord! The TOPIC states it: *Earnest devotion of a mother*; expressed so beautifully in the GOLDEN TEXT: *I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord.* 1 Sam. 1. 28. The OUTLINE is full of practical suggestion: 1. *A Mother's Covenant*; 2. *A Mother's Consecration*. And with full force comes home to us the DOCTRINE: *The consecration of children*. Consecrated mothers—consecrated children.

QUESTIONS, etc.

Recite TITLE and TOPIC.

What was the name of the mother here mentioned?

What was the name of her husband, and of her son?

Recite her words, which form our GOLDEN TEXT.

Recite the OUTLINE.

1. *A mother's covenant*, v. 21, 23.

What is a "covenant"?

What covenant did Hannah make? v. 22.

At what time was this covenant to be carried out? v. 22.

Why did she wait until he was weaned?

What is meant by his *appearing before the Lord*?

[See Num. 3. 13; Exod. 22. 29.]

What is meant by his *abiding there forever*?

How would a pious mother in this day covenant with God about her child?

What would she promise?
 Why are such covenants pleasing to God?
 How may we learn from v. 1 that Samuel's father was a good man?
 How did this father speak about the mother's covenant? v. 23.

What may we learn from this about pious fathers and mothers?

2. *A mother's consecration*, v 24-28.

What is meant by "consecration"?

What consecration did Hannah make? v. 24, 28.

What is meant by "the house of the Lord"?

[ANS.—It was the tabernacle of the congregation which had been set up at Shiloh. See Josh. 18. 1.

Where may we now make our consecrations?
 Who was Eli, to whom she brought the child? chap. 1. 9.

What offerings did she make? v. 24, 25.

Of what does she remind Eli in v. 26? [Compare chap. 1. 12, 13.

How does v. 27 show that Hannah was a *praying mother*?

How does it show she was a grateful mother?
 How does v. 28 show that she was a faithful mother?

Where in this lesson do we find a good example—

1. For conduct at home?
2. For heads of families?
3. For all who covenant with the Lord?
4. For young children?

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

8. *What is the outward part or sign of the Lord's supper?*

The outward part or sign of the Lord's supper is bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received.

1 Corinthians xi. 21-26. The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying,—This do,—in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

ELKANAH. A Kohathite Levite. Name means "Whom God created." Lived in *Ramathaim-Zophim*. Not located in Ephraim, hence he was called an Ephrathite. A pious man. Perhaps a man of wealth. WENT UP to Shiloh. ALL HIS HOUSE. Males required to go. All might go. See Jesus, Joseph and Mary. Luke 2. 22-40. VOW. Some special vow to God. THE CHILD, ver. 22, which had been given to Hannah, his wife, in

answer to prayer. [Read carefully 1 SAM. 1. 1-20.] ESTABLISH HIS WORD. A word of promise not recorded, but which had probably been given. THREE BULLOCKS, etc. A full equipment for sacrifice. EPHAH, a measure containing, according to the Rabbin, a little over four gallons; according to Josephus, a little over eight. BOTTLE OF WINE. A skin of wine. The Arabs keep water, milk, liquors, etc., in bottles made of goat-skins, which are drawn from the animal with the bodies uncut. The cut parts at the head, feet, tail, etc., are then sewed or tied up, making a tight bag or bottle. Greeks, Romans and Egyptians all used such vessels, which are mentioned by Homer, Athenæus and Virgil. Similar vessels are now used in Spain and are called *barrachos*. SLEW A BULLOCK. Symbol of a perfect consecration. SHE SAID, ver. 26-28. The whole story in short compass. Deeds are weightier than words. HE WGS SHIPPED, ver. 28. Hebrew—"howed down." Samuel worshipped God, little child though he was. Probably he was both mature and devout.

OUTLINES AND LESSONS.

1. SEE IN ELKANAH: (1) The religious spirit; (2) The loving spirit; (3) The sacrificing spirit.

2. SEE IN HANNAH: (1) The *praying* mother; (2) The *grateful* mother; (3) The *faithful* mother; (4) The *missionary* mother.

3. SEE IN SAMUEL: (1) The child of God weaned from the strongest earthly love—a mother; (2) The child of God brought to God, ver. 28; (3) The child of God given to God (4) The child of God abiding forever before God, ver. 22, 28.

4. LEARN: (1) To bring up the whole family in the services of religion; (2) To train them to give the best things of property and personal power to the Lord; (3) To pay our vows unto God; (4) That many *times* a mother's duty for God is best done AT HOME, ver. 22. (5) That a child should be trained from the very beginning of his existence for the service of God; (6) Good mothers are better than the best "nurses;" (7) That few words suffice to accompany the offerings of the heart to God, ver. 26-28; (8) That children *lent to the Lord* are longest owned in the best sense by their parents. [Think of Hannah's joy when she heard of the "word of the Lord" in the temple at Shiloh. 1 Sam. 3. 20, 21.]

This spots in The bo eminent presents religiou tendenc manifest we get Sam. 2 rebuke sign of coun eng d Still, w and in tokens instance iniquity Elijah who ha And no amo us from ordinan men, (neglect But, self, th may be I. W in the ourselv 1. T imitate ings no because that sh given h who ha might ten son Jacob, least c counsel things never I 2. S did the So says your re 4. 6.) if such

English Teacher's Notes.

This chapter, and the book of Ruth, are bright spots in the history of Israel about this time. The book of Judges, notwithstanding some eminent examples of faith and godly courage, presents on the whole a dark picture of the religious condition of the people; and that the tendency was to get worse and not better is manifest from the shocking iniquities of which we get a glimpse in the chapter following. (1 Sam. 2.) Indeed, even in our passage, Eli's rebuke to Hannah, in ver. 14, is a significant sign of the state of things, when the high-priest could conceive the possibility of a woman being engaged in worship while she was "drunken." Still, we do see in the story of Boaz and Ruth, and in the habits of Elkanah and his household, tokens of better things. We have in both instances of godliness in the midst of prevailing iniquity, similar to that of which God spoke to Elijah when he referred to the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

And Elkanah's example teaches us (1) That no amount of sin in those about us need prevent us from serving God, and (2) That even if the ordinances of religion be administered by bad men, (like the sons of Eli,) that is no reason for neglecting them.

But, coming to the "praying mother" herself, there are three lines of application which may be suggested for this lesson:—

I. We can take Hannah simply as an example in the matter of prayer. We can apply it to ourselves in six respects.

1. The first point is *not* one in which we can imitate her. Her prayer was prompted by feelings not right in themselves. She was so sad because certain blessings had been denied her, that she forgot what great blessings God had given her. It was not every woman in Israel who had a good husband, like Elkanah; and he might well say, "Am I not better to thee than ten sons?" Let us, on the other hand, feel like Jacob, (Gen. 32. 10.) "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies." Let us obey the counsel of Heb. 13. 5. "Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

2. Still Hannah, having the strong desire, did the right thing with it. She took it to God. So says St. Paul to us, "In every thing . . . let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. 4. 6.) Only we must be willing to be refused, if such be his will.

3. Though it was an earthly blessing Hannah asked for, yet she vowed to give it back to God. Her son should not be a rich farmer, like Boaz, or a great warrior, like Joshua; but be consecrated to God's service in his temple. And to this end she had to part with her child at a tender age. Her: was a great sacrifice. When we ask God for temporal mercies, have we the like resolve about them?

4. Hannah prayed in her heart even when the services and feasts going on around might have distracted her. Can we lift up our hearts to God in a crowd?

5. When Hannah was observed she was not ashamed to avow that she was praying. Here is a lesson for many Sunday-school scholars. Even if they prayed they would not like others to know they prayed.

6. When Hannah's prayer was granted she did not forget to thank God. See her song of praise in chap. 2. How few praises go up to God compared to the prayers that are offered! Again hear St. Paul, "In every thing give thanks." (1 Thess. 5. 18.)

II. We can dwell on Hannah as a praying mother, and speak to our scholars about their mothers.

But here comes a difficulty. It is to be feared that the great majority of the mothers of our scholars are not praying mothers. The consideration, indeed, must often suggest caution in our teaching about home influence. But in this case, without addressing or referring to individual scholars, we can speak in some such terms as these: "If you have a praying mother do you value her? If you *had* one *would* you value her? Or, does one of you resent his mother's warnings, and say, Why can't she leave me alone? and another congratulate himself on having a mother who lets him do as he likes?"

We who accept and practise infant baptism can apply this subject still further. "Our mothers did do for us what Hannah did for little Samuel. They dedicated us to God while we were yet young. Do you wish your mother had *not*? What would you think of Samuel if we found that he had refused the happy lot to which his mother had appointed him?"

It need scarcely be said that the above applies equally to fathers; so that motherless children need not lose the teachings of this lesson.

III. In some senior classes it may be possible, and desirable, to add a few words about the

scholars being themselves parents by and by. "You may be fathers, or mothers. When you have children, don't forget to be both *praying* parents and *praising* parents."

For Senior Scholars.

I. THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. CHILDREN A GIFT OF GOD. Gen. 33. 5; Psa. 127. 3; Gen. 48. 9.

2. CHILDREN GIVEN TO GOD. Mark 10. 13-17; Heb. 11. 23; 1 Sam. 1. 28.

3. GOD'S LOVE FOR CHILDREN. Prov. 8. 17; Acts 2. 39; Matt. 18. 1-4.

4. EARLY PIETY REQUIRED. Eccles. 12. 1; Deut. 30. 2; Prov. 22. 6; Lam. 3. 27.

5. EARLY PIETY ILLUSTRATED. Gen. 22. 9; 27. 13; 1 Sam. 2. 26; 1 Kings 18. 12; Luke 2. 50.

6. A MOTHER'S PRAYERS. 1 Sam. 1. 12, 13; Matt. 15. 22.

7. A MOTHER'S MINISTRY. Prov. 4. 3; 2 Tim. 1. 5; Luke 2. 19; Prov. 31. 28; Isa. 66. 13.

2. SEED THOUGHTS.

1. What character did Elkanah exhibit in v. 21?

2. What will be the *habits* of a good man's house or family?

3. Have we any indication what Elkanah's *vow* was?

4. What vow did the father (as well as the mother) of this child of prayer and promise *probably* make?

5. Did the mother feel at liberty to carry Samuel to Shiloh for consecration and then *remove* him? (See v. 11.)

6. Why, then, did she propose not to carry him up till he was *weaned*?

7. If the time of weaning, as is supposed, was three years or upward, could he be employed about the tabernacle service in any way? (See chap. 3. 15.)

8. What *word* or promise of God is alluded to in v. 28?

9. Did Eli speak to Hannah in v. 17 as a *prophet* and *promise* her?

10. In what way did Hannah fulfil her *pledge*?

11. Are the children of *good* parents, or the children of *promise*, sure to turn out well unless properly treated?

12. In what sense does the mother use the word *lent* in v. 28?

3. DOCTRINE.

"The Consecration of Children." Mark 10.

16; Judges 13. 9; Gen. 17. 18; 2 Tim. 1. 5; 1 Sam. 1. 27.

LITTLE
IVES
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LORD.

The Primary Class.

BY LUCY J. RIDER.

This lesson must speak its most peculiar and tender meaning to the hearts of parents, but the picture of Samuel in the "temple" (tabernacle at this time) cannot fail to interest children also. Describe the tabernacle at Shiloh, (which locate,) and draw a simple plan of it, showing the ark, altar, curtains, etc. (See Bible Dictionary, or Webster's Unabridged, for illustration.) Speak of the custom of going to the tabernacle to worship yearly, (literally from year to year,) at the religious feasts; (Deut. 16. 16)—the custom of dedicating the first-born to the Lord, (Exod. 22. 29,) and the peculiar consecration of the Nazarite, shown by the flowing hair and restricted diet. Vow of a Nazarite was usually limited, but from his birth Samuel was consecrated. Draw a vivid word-picture of Samuel, three years old, (illustrate by your class—most of them are older than that,) taken up to Shiloh and given to the service of the Lord—assisting in the tabernacle, and aiding Eli, now a very old man. Apply the lesson by speaking of God's houses now—His little servants, and how they may work for Him everywhere, impressing a lesson of veneration for old age.

WHISPER-SONG.

Lord, we come like Samuel
In thy temple now to dwell.
All our service thine shall be,
Thou hast bid us come to thee.

SUNDAY, MAY 23, 1875.

LESSON VIII.—THE CHILD SAMUEL. 1 Sam. 3. 1-10.

Berean Notes.

Leader. 1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

School. 2 And it came to pass at that time,

when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see ;

L. 3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep ;

S. 4 That the Lord called Samuel : and he answered, Here am I.

L. 5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou alledst me. And he said, I called not ; lie down again.

S. 6 And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son ; lie down again.

L. 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.

S. 8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou didst call me.

L. 8 And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.

S. 9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down again : and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord ; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

L. 10 And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel.

S. 11 Then Samuel answered, Speak ; for thy servant heareth.

HOME READINGS.

M. 1 Sam. 3. 1-18. *Th.* Matt. 18. 1-14.
Tu. Luke 2. 41-52. *F.* Prov. 1. 1-25.
W. Gen. 22. 1-14. *S.* Eccles. 12.
Sabbath. 2 Tim. 1. 1-13.

TOPIC:—*Earnest Piety of a Child.*

GOLDEN TEXT:—*Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.* Luke 18. 17.

OUTLINE:—1. *The Child Serving God*, v. 1 : 1 Sam. 2. 18, 19 ; Luke 2. 49.
2. *The Child Called of God*, v. 2-8 ; Acts 2. 39 ; Heb. 5. 4.
3. *The Child Communing with God*, v. 9-10 ; Jer. 1. 6-7 ; 1 John 1. 3.

LESSON HYMN.—Tune : "Martyn." 7s D.

Jesus, merciful and mild,
Lead me as a helpless child :
On no other arm but thine
Would my weary soul recline ;

Thou art ready to forgive,
Thou canst bid the sinner live—
Guide the wanderer day by day,
In the straight and narrow way.

Thou canst fit me by thy grace
For the heavenly dwelling-place ;
All thy promises are sure,
Ever shall thy love endure ;
Then what more could I desire,
How to greater bliss aspire ?
All I need, in thee I see,
Thou art all in all to me.

I. GENERAL STATEMENT.

Behold the strength of a child's character born of a godly mother, and consecrated to a godly service ! The lesson illustrates the TOPIC : *Earnest Piety of a child*, reminding us of the words of Jesus in the GOLDEN TEXT : " *Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.*" Luke 18. 17. In the OUTLINE we have : 1. *The Child Serving God* ; 2. *The Child Called of God* ; 3. *The Child Communing with God*. The DOCTRINE suggests : *The calls of God.*

QUESTIONS, etc.

Recite, TITLE, TOPIC, GOLDEN TEXT, and OUTLINE.

1. *The child serving God*, v. 1.

What is meant in v. 1 by "ministered unto the Lord?"

How old do you suppose Samuel then was ?

How early may we begin to serve God ?

2. *The child called of God*, v. 2-8.

[The scene in which Samuel was called is beautifully described in v. 2, 3. Let each scholar read it at home and it may well be read in the class.]

Give the facts of each call to Samuel.

What shows us that Samuel was obedient ?

What two things are told of Samuel in v. 7 ?

What does each mean ?

Why are they mentioned here ?

Why did not Eli know sooner that God had called the child ?

What persons does God now call ?

How does he call ?

How should we answer ?

3. *The child communing with God*, v. 9, 10.

What good advice did Eli give Samuel ?

How did Samuel probably feel as he "went and lay down in his place?"

What did the Lord then do? v. 10.
 How did Samuel answer?
 How have you answered the calls of Jesus?
 Ware in this lesson do we see—

1. The advantage of having pious instruction
2. The advantage of heeding pious instruction

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

9. *What is the thing signified by this outward sign?*

The thing signified by the outward sign of bread and wine in the Lord's supper, is the body and blood of Christ, which are spiritually taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper, to the strengthening and refreshing of their souls.

OUTLINES, NOTES, AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE MINISTERING CHILD. (1) The place of his ministering—God's tabernacle; (2) The object of his ministering—God himself; (3) The nature of his ministering—attendance upon God's priest—Eli. 1 Sam. 3, 3, 14; Matt. 20, 28. (4) The result of his ministering—communion with God.

EXPOSITORY. WORD OF THE LORD PRECIOUS, ver. 1. Rare to have a direct revelation then. **NO OPEN VISION.** No sensible or visible manifestation. The Shekinah neither visible nor vocal now. **ELI,** ver. 2, **LAI D DOWN** on his couch to sleep, (he was old and his **EYES DIM**.) Was there also a spiritual dimness of vision in Eli? No "open vision?" **LAMP OF GOD,** v. 3. One might spiritualize this, but the meaning is that it was very early in the morning, before dawn. See Exod. 27, 20. **ARK OF GOD,** that is, adjoining the holiest of all in the holy place. **SAMUEL LAID DOWN.** Weary. Sweet sleep! **LORD CALLED,** ver. 4. Audible voice. Gen. 22, 11, 12. A "precious" word even then. Here was fine gold that Samuel did not yet appreciate. **RAN. Prompt obedience; TO ELI,** his master. **LAY DOWN**—he obeyed again—coming and going at the bidding of his chief. **YET AGAIN,** ver. 6. The mercy-seat beneath the cherubim begins again to echo with celestial revelations. **DID NOT YET KNOW.** Was an obedient child and servant, but had not heard the prophet's call. He had not heard a direct revelation from God. **ELI PERCEIVED,** v. 8. He knew the ways of the Lord and the purity of the child and his singular history. He gave

Samuel advice: **GO . . . LIE DOWN . . . SAY: SP AK, LORD . . . THY SERVANT.** A good thing for a child to be. **SAMUEL ANSWERED,** ver. 20. Just imagine the dear child's throbbing heart there in the sacredness and darkness of the tabernacle hearing the voice of his God!

LESSONS AND OUTLINES. 1. The young are called of God to serve God. Prov. 8, 17; Eccl. 12, 1; Acts 2, 39; Luke 18, 17.

2. There have been illustrations of this call. Josiah, 2 Chron. 34, 1-3; Timothy, 2 Tim. 3, 15; Jesus, Luke 2, 42, 52.

3. Peculiarities of Samuel's call:—

- (1) As to the *time* of it—in his youth.
- (2) As to the *place* of it—in God's house.
- (3) As to the *directness* of it—to him personally.
- (4) As to the *object* of it—to make him a prophet.
- (5) As to his *preparation* for it—a servant in the tabernacle.
- (6) As to the *earnestness* of it—three times.
- (7) As to his *misinterpretation* of it—thought it was Eli.
- (8) As to Eli's *explanation* of it.
- (9) As to Eli's *directions* concerning it, v. 9.

4. Peculiarities of Samuel's response:—

- (1) *Promptly.* (3) *Reverently,* ver. 10.
- (2) *Repeatedly.* (4) *Obediently,* ver. 18.

5. **LEARN.** (1) That little children may serve God; (2) That obedience to the calls of our superiors may be obedience to the calls of God; (3) That the way to direct a child is to bid him wait for and answer the call of God—not ourselves to attempt to do the work of God for him.

..... A child gave her teacher a rose-bud. She said: "I give you a bud because it will be fresh and beautiful longer than a full-blown rose."

..... Before a ship leaves port she takes on board a little box with a glass cover, underneath which is a broad face, something like the face of a clock; only instead of hours and minutes it has the various points of the wind described on it. That is to direct sailors on their voyage; and if they are wise they will not leave the harbour until that is on board.—*English Magazine.*

English Teacher's Notes.

HERE is another of those familiar subjects which it is so hard to invest with any fresh interest, especially for elder scholars. Perhaps

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this may be accomplished by dwelling less on the simple fact of God calling Samuel while yet a child, and more on the special work to which he was called. Every child knows the story down to verse 10, but the rest of the chapter is not quite so familiar. Still, let us glance at the simpler teachings of the call itself first.

I. *God called Samuel as a young child.*

Now there are many who give implicit credence to this narrative, and yet cannot bring themselves to believe that God calls children now. Do teachers themselves believe it? Are they not too apt to look upon their work as merely preparatory, a sowing of the seed which, perhaps, others may reap by and by? Preparatory it is, certainly; but *merely* so, it is not. We hear much of the duty of seeking the "conversion" of our scholars; and it is quite true that the majority of them have so far gone astray that there must be a turning round again, a *conversion*, if they are to come to Christ. But why should not both effort and prayer be made that the child may be led to hear and obey God's call *from the first*, that is, with the first dawning of consciousness and of responsibility, so that "conversion," in the strict sense of the term, should never be necessary at all?

At what age does the Evil One begin to influence a child's heart? We cannot fix an exact period, but none of us doubts that he is busily at work *from the first*, and often the results are only too quickly manifest. But is not the heart open to the influences of the Holy Ghost just as soon as it is to the influences of the devil? If so, and we cannot question it, then we may press God's call on the youngest.

There is another motive for doing so. *Death* comes to children of all ages. Now we should probably all agree in placing the period of *such* responsibility as would involve the *loss of the soul* much later than that of the first consciousness of right and wrong. It may be difficult to justify this logically, but the case is one in which our instinct is more to be trusted than our logic. Still, in our uncertainty on this momentous matter, can we too earnestly seek to make the salvation of the youngest an assured fact?

These thoughts may incite the teacher to greater pains that this lesson be not merely a pretty story, but really a solemn and yet loving call; that by his mouth God may say to his individual scholars, "William, William," "Mary, Mary," as distinctly as he said "Samuel, Samuel," that night in the temple.

And by what motives can we urge the children to listen and respond to the call? Here are three:—

1. It is a *happy thing* to be called early, when we are going, for instance, on some pleasant journey. I do not know how it may be in America; but in England when we, in the dense and smoky cities, take our Sunday-school scholars out for a day into the green fields, they are all up with the lark. No lying in bed *that day*! And Tennyson is right when, in the *May-Queen*, he makes the happy queen-designate say, "Call me early, mother dear." Well, the Christian life is the happiest life: do you not want to be called *early* for it?

2. To hear and obey God's call early is *the safest way*. Why? (a) Because by and by his voice may be drowned in the world's voice. (b) Because he may cease to call if we refuse to listen. (c) Because we know not when *that other call* may be heard, "*Come to judgment!*"

3. To hear and obey the call early *pleases God*. (See Prov. 8. 17.) Suppose some one asked you for some fresh and sweet flowers, and you kept them yourself till they were faded and withered, and then offered them—how unkind: how insulting! and, if he who asked was your greatest benefactor, how miserably ungrateful! But that is just what those do who think of giving their hearts to God when they grow old.

II. *To what work did God call the child Samuel?*

First, to be the bearer of painful news to Eli. Can we not imagine the boy rising in the morning with the dreadful secret upon him, going about his little morning duties with a heavy heart, and a face looking as if he had grown old in a night? No wonder Eli marked it, and perceived that some terrible thing had to be told him, (ver. 17.) And observe Samuel's right and kind feeling in "fearing" to tell it, and yet his brave simplicity in telling it "every whit" when desired. What a model for boys and girls! How unlike both the cringing flatterer and the malicious tell-tale! It may be that the very first thing God calls us to do for him may be a hard and painful thing; but upon our doing *that* may depend how he employs us afterward.

And then he was called to be the prophet and judge of the people in a time of unexampled difficulty and discouragement. If we could have cast our eyes over the land at that time to find a likely person to be a ruler and deliverer of Israel, would not the very last we should have thought of have been the little boy who trimmed the tem-

ple lamps? God *may* have a great work for any one of us—who can tell? But of this we may be sure, that he has *some* work for us. Let our cry be first, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," and then, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

For Senior Scholars.

1. THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. MINISTERING CHILDREN. 1 Sam. 3. 1; Dan. 1. 3, 6; 2 Kings 5. 1-4; Matt. 18. 1-3; 2 Chron. 34. 1, 2; Luke 2. 46, 47.

2. THE PRECIOUS WORD. Psa. 119, 54, 97, 103, 127; 19. 7, 8, 10; John 17. 17.

3. THE LORD'S CALLS. Gen. 3. 8-10; Isa. 45. 22; 1 Tim. 6. 12.

4. THE LORD'S CALL REFUSED. John 1. 11; Prov. 1. 24-31; Matt. 19. 21, 22.

5. COUNSELS TO CHILDREN. Prov. 1. 8-10; Eph. 6. 2; Eccles. 12. 1; Prov. 3. 1-6.

6. PROMPT RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL. 1 Sam. 3. 10; Isa. 6. 8; John 1. 35-39; Gal. 1. 15, 16; Mark 2. 14.

7. LIVES OF USEFULNESS. Deut. 34. 10-12; Josh. 24. 31; 2 Tim. 4. 7; Rev. 14. 13.

2. SEED-THOUGHTS.

1. What is the meaning of *ministered unto the Lord before Eli*?

2. What, in those days, rendered the word of the Lord *precious*, or scarce?

3. What is meant by *open vision*?

4. At what time were the lamps extinguished in the tabernacle?

5. What was Samuel's *relation* to Eli at this time?

6. What two reasons can be assigned for Samuel's *misunderstanding* this divine call?

7. What is meant by his not *knowing the Lord*?

8. Who assisted Samuel to understand that call?

9. Why should Eli more readily understand a call directly and personally from heaven than Samuel?

10. Does God call children to a special life service before they are capable of fully understanding it?

11. Do those who are thus called need the aid of their seniors?

12. What contrary instruction do we find here respecting our *young and religiously inclined* children?

3. DOCTRINE.

"The Call of God." 1 Chron. 28. 5; Judges 6. 11, 12; 1 Chron. 29. 1, 25; 1 Sam. 16. 1, 11, 12.

The Primary Class.

Do you remember the name of the old minister who was spoken of in the lesson last week? Of course you remember the name of the little boy whose mother brought him to Eli. Several years went by after that time. The little boy became larger and stronger, but the old minister, as he grew older, became weaker and he lost his sight. What do we call people when they lose their sight? Did you ever see a blind old man? Of course when Eli became blind Samuel had more to do; but he was very willing to do all he could to help the old minister. He always obeyed him. Can you tell me of any thing in this lesson which shows how obedient he was? [He came when he thought Eli called him.] Can you tell me any thing which shows that he obeyed willingly? [He ran.] Now there are children who do not mind what they are told to do; and there are some who mind, but not readily. [The teacher may enlarge here, giving illustrations of non-obedience, of unwilling obedience, and of ready obedience.] Had Eli really called Samuel? Who had called him? Did Samuel know that the Lord had called him? How did he find out? If he had not been obedient to Eli, who was his teacher, do you think he would have learned about God? There is another thing about this little boy you do well to remember. He loved the house of God. Repeat this verse, which is taken from the Psalms of David: "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." You ought to go to church whenever you can. It was in God's house that the Lord called Samuel. In his house now he instructs and blesses people. Still another thing you must remember about Samuel. He not only heard God call him, but he obeyed the voice. There are many who know what is right, but they will not do it. They hear God but they do not heed him. [Give illustrations of this.] We must be as obedient to God as we would be to our parents. [Repeat the Golden Text.] Does God call little children now? How does he call them? In the same way that he called Samuel? Can you hear God's voice as you would hear the voice of a man? Then, how does God call? What is the Bible? [God's word.] Then when you read the Bible or hear it read, God calls you! And is there not something within that makes you feel happy when you do right, and unhappy when you do wrong? What do we call that? [Conscience.] This is the way God's Holy Spirit

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calls you. He would have you love him and serve him while you are yet young. Try, then, to be like little Samuel.

WHISPER-SONG.

When the Lord on me doth call
Asking service great or small;
I will also quick reply,
As did Samuel—"Here am I."

SUNDAY, MAY 30, 1875.

LESSON IX.—THE DEATH OF ELI. 1 Sam. 4. 12-18.

Berean Notes.

Lender. 12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

School. 13 And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the way-side watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

L. 14. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

S. 15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

L. 16 And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?

S. 17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

L. 18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy.

S. And he had judged Israel forty years.

HOME READINGS.

M. 1 Sam. 4. 12-18. *Th.* 2 Sam. 1. 1-12.
Tu. 1 Sam. 4. 1-11. *F.* Prov. 29. 1-18.
W. 1 Sam. 6. *S.* Psa. 24.
Sabbath. Psa. 90.

TOPIC.—*Earnest Grief of an Old Man.*

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.* Prov. 19. 18.

OUTLINE.—1. *Waiting for News*, v. 12-16; Judges 5. 28; Isa. 21. 11, 12.

2. *Bereaved*, v. 17; 2 Sam. 18. 33; John 11. 32.

3. *Dishonored*, v. 17; Micah 7. 6; Psa. 78. 61.

4. *Dead*, v. 18; Heb. 9. 27; Rev. 20. 12.

LESSON HYMN.—*Tune: "Kentucky."* S. M.

My life is but a span;
Mine age is naught with thee;
What is the highest boast of man
But dust and vanity?

Dumb at thy feet I lie,
For thou hast brought me low;
Remove thy judgments lest I die;
I faint beneath thy blow.

I. GENERAL STATEMENT.

Behold the strength of an old man's devotion to the ark of God and the cause of religion! Full of sorrow on account of his sons, he is overwhelmed with sorrow on account of the mishap to the ark of Jehovah. We see in the **TOPIC**: *Earnest grief of an old man*, while by his melancholy example all parents will be warned in the language of the **GOLDEN TEXT**: *Chasten thy son while there is yet hope, and let not thy soul spare because of his crying.* Prov. 19. 18. Trace the whole sad story in the **OUTLINE**: 1. *Waiting for News*; 2. *Bereaved*; 3. *Dishonored*; 4. *Dead*; and learn in the **DOCTRINE**: *The chastening of the Lord.*

QUESTIONS, etc.

Recite **TITLE**, **TOPIC**, **GOLDEN TEXT**, and **OUTLINE**.

1. *Waiting for news*, v. 12-16.

In which verse do we read of Eli "waiting for news?"

About what great event did he want news? v. 1, 2.

For what did *his heart tremble*? v. 13.

What was this ark?

Where was it? v. 3-5.

Describe the messenger who came from the battle, v. 1.

To whom did he report? v. 13, 14, 16.

2. *Bereaved*, v. 17.

Read carefully v. 6-11, and tell how the battle turned.

What report did the messenger give Eli? v. 17.

Read chap. 2. 12-17, and tell what you think of these sons of Eli.

[Recite GOLDEN TEXT.]

What end had God foretold for these two sons? [Chap. 2. 34.]

3. *Dishonored*, v. 17.

What four things did the messenger tell Eli? In which of these was Eli dishonored?

In which was he most dishonored? [Compare v. 13, 18.]

4. *Dead*, v. 18.

Compare v. 15 and 18, and tell Eli's age and size, also about his eyes, and his time as judge.

How did he die? v. 18.

How may we die more happily?

[Read 2 Tim. 4. 6-8.]

Where in this lesson do we see—

1. The terrible influence of wicked children?

2. The end of negligent servants of God?

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

10. *Why ought we to partake of the Lord's supper regularly and frequently?*

We ought to partake of the Lord's supper regularly and frequently,—

1. In obedience to Christ's commandment, "This do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22. 19.)

2. To make a holy profession of Christ and his cross, by declaring our entire dependence on his death as the only atonement for our sins, and as our only hope of salvation.

3. To declare our love and thankfulness to him; and to enjoy communion with God, and with our fellow-Christians, in the remembrance of Christ's death.

NOTES, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND LESSON 4.

1. THE STORY OF AN OLD MAN. Other old men in the Bible. Enoch, Methuselah, Abraham, Jacob, Caleb, Paul. [Think of others.] "Shoek of corn." Job 5. 26; "Good old age." Gen. 15. 15. "Length of days." Prov. 3. 2.

"Natural force." Deut. 34. 7. "Windows he darkened." Eccl. 12. 3, 4.

2. ELI. 1. His name meant—"elevation." 2. His office was elevated—high-priest, and he, perhaps, fulfilled the office of Judge. 3. His descent from a distinguished family—from Ithamar, the youngest son of Aaron. 4. His character was meek and submissive and reverential. He loved the ark of God. 5. His meekness was marred by weakness. He was too indulgent, (1) As a father, failing to restrain his sons. 1 Sam. 3. 13; (2) As a priest and judge, failing to remove them from office or to punish them. See the account of these two bad sons, Hophni and Phinehas, in 1 Sam. 2. 12-17, 22-25, 27-36; 1 Sam. 3. 11-14.

3. THE CROWNING ACT OF FOLLY. In a final and fearful struggle with the Philistines Hophni and Phinehas took the ark of God from Shiloh to the battle-field. See full account in 1 Sam. 4. 1-11.

4. EXPOSITORY. THERE RAN—a professional runner. Such attended every army to carry news. 2 Sam. 18. 19, 24, 26. SAME DAY. Battle-field not far from Shiloh. CLOTHES RENT, etc. Signs of grief. Flag of distress. Hospital flag. BY WAY-SIDE. Not gate of city but by gate-way through which the people entered the tabernacle. Eli, very old, blind and heavy, would not go far from the tabernacle. WATCHING. A blind man may watch with ear and heart. So much at stake. Poor old man! He had great fear as to the results of that day's battle. HIS HEART TREMBLED for the ark more than for his sons. He did not have faith that God had ordered the ark to the front. He had no ground for such faith—hence he trembled. ALL THE CITY. Loud, demonstrative, Oriental grief. HASTILY, as he would naturally do. EYES DIM. See 1 Sam. 3. 2. "Set." As in old people often—the eyes move slowly, are fixed on vacancy, have a sort of expressionless stare in them. Verse 17. What a world of grief in a small compass. It takes but few words to tell much bad news. Disaster follows disaster. Wave after wave rolls over the old man. The loss of the ark overwhelms him. He dies.

..... In the evening of the same day (on which the Philistines defeated the Hebrews) there rushed through the vale of Shiloh a youth from the camp, one of the active tribe of Benjamin—his clothes torn asunder, and his hair sprinkled with dust, as the two Oriental

signs of grief and dismay. A loud wail, like that which on the announcement of any great calamity runs through all Eastern towns, rang through the streets of the expectant city. The aged high-priest was sitting in his usual place beside the gate-way of the sanctuary. He caught the cry; he asked the tidings. He heard the defeat of the army; he heard the death of his two sons; he heard the capture of the ark of God. It was this last tidings, when mention was made of the ark of God, that broke the old man's heart. He fell from his seat and died in the fall.—*Stanley's Jewish Church.*

5. LESSONS. 1. Parental authority is of God and should be used for God. 2. The importance of restraining children in youth. 3. God's indignation against vileness in holy places. 4. "It may be long delayed, but vengeance even though delayed, will come." 5. Disobedience to God and deepest disgrace go together. 6. If God is thus just in his retributions toward his own people, what may the sinner expect? See 1 Pet. 4. 18. 7. Symbols and ceremonies without God's authority are useless. 8. The chastening of the Lord. Heb. 12. 5-12. 9. Love for our children should not be greater than the love we have for the cause of God. 10. He who does God's will fully has no need of a trembling heart. 1 John 3. 21; John 14. 1. 11. It is good to be concerned for Zion. God's people sure of final victory. Luke 12. 32; Phil. 2. 9-11; 1 Cor. 15. 25.

English Teacher's Notes.

The natural way to take this lesson would be to start from the *cause*—Eli's unhappy leniency to his sons—and to go on to the *effect*—the calamity that befel Israel and Eli's death. But it will probably be more interesting, and more impressive, to start from the *effect* and go back to the *cause*.

I. The first thing, then, is to describe the great catastrophe recorded in this chapter. There are four features in it:—

1. The double defeat of the Israelitish army with great slaughter. After the first battle (ver. 2) the elders expressed their alarm in terms similar to those in which Joshua complained of the check before Ai; but they never thought of the cause of their defeat being the same as on that memorable occasion, namely, *sin* in the camp. They knew it was Jehovah's presence they wanted, but they forgot that what would secure his presence was not the ark, but clean hands and pure hearts. Yet

how often is their fatal mistake to be seen now! that is, trust in the externals of religion while the heart is unchanged.

2. The capture of the ark by the Philistines. What a terrible shock to the hopes of Israel it must have been to see the sacred chest in the hands of the enemy! True, the ark was no infallible sign of God's presence—the result of the battle showed that; but it was a sure sign of His having in wrath forsaken them. It seemed all over now! The wonders of Egypt, the glories of Sinai, the victories of Joshua, were all for nothing—God had left them to perish.

3. The death of Eli. To him, at all events, the loss of the ark seemed to mean all this. It was no surprise to him, indeed, for the poor old man, with his truer perception of what would really procure God's favour, could not share in the confidence of his wicked sons and the elders. (See ver. 13.) Yet when the blow came he instantly sank under it. It is the saddest death of a good man recorded in Scripture. And it left Israel without a ruler or a leader—though no doubt Samuel's gentle and reviving influence began to work at that lowest ebb of the national fortunes.

4. The fourth feature in this catastrophe is not seen in this chapter, but it is described very vividly elsewhere.

First look at the 78th Psalm: vers. 59, 60 plainly refer to this event. "He was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: so that He forsook the tabernacle of *Shiloh*." (Where Eli was and where the ark never was after that.) Ver. 61 as plainly refers to the capture of the ark: "And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand." Then what a terrible picture follows! "He gave his people over also unto the sword"—there is the slaughter. "The fire consumed their young men"—as if the fugitives from the battle shut themselves up in the city, and there perished in the flames that destroyed it. "Their maidens were not given to marriage," but ruthlessly carried off by the conquerors. "Their priests fall by the sword,"—here is the fate of Hophni and Phinehas. "Their widows made no lamentation." Do we not at once think of the wife of Phinehas and her child, *Ichabod*? (See the concluding verses of our chapter.)

Then look at Judges 21. 19, by which we find that when that book was *written* (and probably

Samuel wrote it) the position of Shiloh had to be carefully described, so utterly had the city been swept away. (The words *spoken* in this verse end at "yearly;" "in a place," being in italics, is not in the original; and the rest is evidently a geographical note by the historian.)

Finally, look at Jer. 7. 12, 14 and 26. 6, 9, and see how the fate of Shiloh could be taken centuries afterward as the type of God's heaviest judgments. "Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, . . . and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel." "This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant."

I have dwelt thus on the history itself, because the crisis, though the greatest between the Exodus and the captivity, is very often quite misread by commentators, and a due appreciation of it will much enforce the solemn teachings of the chapter.

II. Now what was the cause of this overwhelming calamity?

1. The immediate cause was the gross wickedness of Hophni and Phinehas. And the lesson for us is, what sad misfortunes *our* sins may bring on *others*. Boys and girls generally think very lightly of sin. Let the teacher strive on this occasion to show its dreadful power. A three-fold power: (a) To turn our loving Father into a terrible judge; (b) To destroy our own souls; (c) To cause suffering to those around us.

2. But another cause lay behind, namely, Eli's sinful indulgence of his sons. He lamented their villainy; he earnestly expostulated with them, (chap. 2. 23, 24;) but he did not exercise undoubted authority to prevent their evil practices. And so, in a sense, he was responsible for all that followed. It is a sad picture of the havoc a good man's faults may work. He himself may be saved, but instead of bringing others with him to heaven he smooths their path to hell!

But the point for our scholars is this: Would you not rather have a father like Eli, who let you have your own way? Yet it would be the greatest misfortune to you! Thank God for all the restraints of home and school and Church; and the stronger they are, the more grateful you should be for them!

For Senior Scholars.

I. THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. THE BATTLES OF SCRIPTURE. Gen. 14.

8; Exod. 17. 10-13; Rev. 16. 14; Judges 7. 18.

2. THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE. 2 Cor. 7. 5; Heb. 11. 34; 1 Tim. 6. 12; 1. 18; Eph. 6. 10-12.

3. THE ARK OF GOD. 2 Chron. 6. 41; Num. 14. 43-45; Josh. 7. 6; 1 Sam. 5. 1-4; Rev. 11. 19.

4. CITIES IN DISTRESS. Josh. 6. 24; Jonah 2. 5-8; 2 Kings 7. 3, 4; Dan. 5. 9; Jer. 52. 6.

5. ISRAEL DISCOMFITED. Num. 14. 40-45; Josh. 7. 1-5; Judges 2. 11-14.

6. THE BEREAVED FATHER. 1 Sam. 4. 17, 18; 2 Sam. 18. 33; Matt. 9. 23-35.

7. HELP FROM HEAVEN. 1 Pet. 1. 6; 4. 12, 13; Psa. 25. 15; 27. 5.

2. SEED-THOUGHTS.

1. What was the import of *clothes rent and earth on the head*?

2. Is there any evidence that God authorized this battle with the Philistines?

3. Had the Israelites with them the ark of the covenant when they pitched the battle?

2. Why did they send for it before the second battle?

5. Did its presence secure them the expected victory?

6. What reasons can be assigned for that?

7. For what was Eli anxiously watching by the way-side?

8. What occasion had he to be anxious?

9. Did Eli *know* and was he *responsible* for the character of his sons?

10. Why were the *wicked* sons of Eli with the ark at Shiloh?

11. Why were the Philistines disheartened when they learned that the ark had been brought into the camp of Israel against them?

12. What and how many calamities of the battle were stated by the messenger to Eli?

13. What was the *order of their severity*, and which, probably, proved *fatal* to Eli?

3. DOCTRINE.

"The chastening of the Lord." Job 2. 7; Heb. 12. 6, 7; James 5. 10, 11; 1 Pet. 1. 7.

FOR INFANT CLASS.

PEOPLE
PROPHETTURNED BACK.
TAKEN.DEFEATED.
DEAD.

The Primary Class.

A FEW HINTS TO THE TEACHER BY J. H. VINCENT.

1. The scene of the lesson is full of pictorial power. Get it well into your thought and feelings. Read it over. Shut your eyes. Think it over. Let your imagination see it. The vivid picture in your mind will be a vivid picture in the minds of your pupils.

2. Truths you wish to leave with your pupils in connection with the picture of the old man's sad death:—

(1) Eli's bitter sufferings caused by his own sons. 1 Sam. 2. 12; 2. 22-25.

(2) The sins of Eli's sons caused by his own neglect. 1 Sam. 3. 13.

(3) The love of Eli for the ark of God. He died when he heard that it had been taken. 1 Sam. 4. 18.

3. The ONE GREAT LESSON you wish to teach is, that little children should be restrained and "chastened" in childhood for their own good. You cannot reach the parents. You can reach the children. Do your best to show them the important lesson of the GOLDEN TEXT: "Chasten thy son," etc. Prov. 19. 18.

4. Different lines of approach to the lesson:—

(1) Did you ever see a *very old man*?... A *blind old man*?... An old man *in trouble*?... Ever in a *blind asylum*?... Well, our lesson is about an old blind man in trouble. Tell who he was... where... cause of trouble... give full story... and trace it to his sons... and finally to himself. 1 Sam. 3. 13. Or, (2) Who likes to be whipped or otherwise punished?... Who likes to take bitter medicine?... Yet both are sometimes necessary... A parent dislikes to punish a child... So much so sometimes as to fail in his duty as a parent... Child does not like medicine... cries... mother excuses him... child grows worse... dies. Apply to "chastisement." Apply to Eli's case... Tell whole story. Teach Golden Text. Or, (3) A

mother lets her little daughter wear or carry a very costly or precious ring for her. O if she *should* lose it! *Does* lose it! Cries out in terror, or faints... God gave Eli a precious treasure to keep—THE ARK of God. His two sons took it to aid them in battle. [Explain that it was a symbol and medium of God's presence, just as a lantern contains and carries the light.] It was captured by the enemy. The news comes to Eli, He falls dead... Cause of all this: Eli's sons not properly trained. Connect with Golden Text.

5. Always use the LEAF CLUSTER. Always sing the WHISPER SONG. Always call the ROLL. Always put into your PRAYER the great truth of the lesson. Always distribute the PICTURE LESSON PAPER, and urge the children to read all about the lesson at home.

WHISPER-SONG.

Stricken Eli falls and dies;
All the city mourns and cries.
How much pain and suffering
Disobedient children bring.

LESSONS FOR JUNE.

JUNE 6. Samuel the Judge. 1 Sam. 7. 5-12.

JUNE 13. A King Desired. 1 Sam. 8. 4-9.

JUNE 20. Saul Chosen. 1 Sam. 10. 17-24.

JUNE 27. Samuel's Parting Words. 1 Sam. 12. 20-25.

"FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH" in the early days of Christianity.—Blandina, a delicate female slave, was torn with the scourge, then placed on a red-hot chair, then tossed in a net by wild beast, and died crying with her latest breath, "I am a Christian, and there are no evil practices among us." Ponticus, a boy of fifteen, suffered the same torments, and with the same heroic declaration. Symphorinus, a youth of noble family, near Lyons, refused to fall down before the image of the goddess Cybele, and was ordered to be beheaded. On the way to execution he was met by his mother. "My son," said the Christian mother, "be firm, and fear not that death which so surely leads to life. Look to him who reigns in heaven. To-day thy earthly life is not taken from thee, but transferred by a blessed exchange into the life of heaven."—Burns's "History of the Church."

The Gate Ajar for Me.

Words by Mrs. LYDIA BAXTER.

Music by S. J. VAILL.

1. There is a gate that stands a - jar, And, thro' its por - tals gleaming,

A rra - liance from the Cross a - far The Saviour's love re - veal - ing.

REFRAIN.

Oh, depths of mer - cy! can it be That gate was left a - jar for me?

For me... for me?... Was left a - jar for me?
For me, for me?

2 That gate ajar stands free for all
Who seek through it salvation;
The rich and poor, the great and small,
Of every tribe and nation.—*Refrain.*

3 Press onward, then, though foes may frown,
While mercy's gate is open.
Accept the cross, and win the crown,
Love's everlasting token.—*Refrain.*

4 Beyond the river's brink we'll lay
The Cross that here is given,
And bear the Crown of life away,
And love Him more in heaven.—*Refrain.*

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