

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 23.]

JULY, 1889.

[No. 7

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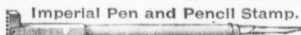
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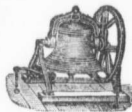
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SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
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VOL. XXIII.]

JULY, 1889.

[No. 7.



EASTERN CARAVAN.

Eastern Caravan.

THE modes of travel in the East have undergone almost no change since the time when Joseph was sold to the company of Ishmaelites going down into Egypt, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh. The cut on this page might well illustrate the scene. There are still few good roads in Palestine, almost none for wheeled vehicles, so camels and asses are still the chief means of travel and chief sources of wealth. That

humble, long-suffering beast of burden, the ass, has in a sense—as far as a dumb beast can be—been canonized in religious art, as bearing the Virgin Mother into Egypt, and as carrying the meek and lowly Christ in triumph into Jerusalem. For long journeys, and for bearing heavy burdens, the patient camel is indispensable.

MEDITATION is the soul's perspective glass; whereby, in her long remove, she discerneth God, as if he were nearer hand.—*Feltham*.

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Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, JULY, 1889.

The World's S. S. Convention.

By the time these words reach the reader the Editor of these papers with a party of friends, embracing some of the most earnest-hearted Sunday-school workers in the Dominion, will be on the ocean on the way to the World's Sunday-school Convention in London. He will keep both eyes and ears open, and will endeavour to learn something that may be of use to him in his work, and which he will communicate to his fellow Sunday-school workers.

Talks with Teachers on Retaining Elder Scholars.

BY THE REV. A. ANDREWS.

THE FACT.

As in the past, so in the present, when our scholars pass the line of boyhood and girlhood the tendency, and largely the practice, is to drift away from the Sabbath-school. Every convention deprecates this state of things and studies the best means at command to remedy the evil. And still we are brought to face the truth that, after all our efforts, large numbers of our young people utterly neglect the Sabbath-school. In many places it must be acknowledged that there has been a marked improvement, and this encourages further attempt in this line. Yet the fact remains, that the Sabbath-school does not retain its elder scholars as it ought to do.

THE CAUSE.

Before we can hope to effect a remedy in any given case, we do well to enquire into the causes of its existence. Some of these we propose to mention—

1. The Sabbath-school from the beginning, and for very many years, was considered to be only intended to teach children. At first, indeed, only children of the neglected masses of the poor, and then children of all classes. In some of the early schools it was a common practice, when a scholar had passed through the various classes and knew the catechisms, etc., to formally dismiss him, just as a graduate is passed out of college with his diploma. It has been reserved to recent times to change this theory and practice, and we now aim at holding on to all the scholars. And we must repeat it, line upon line, "The Sabbath-school is designed for all; for the young, the middle aged, and the old."

2. Growing out of this fact is the idea in the minds of many boys and girls that it is childish to attend Sabbath-school.

3. Many lose their interest in the school. They are conscious of personal sin, and do not like to be placed where they can be appealed to in such a close way as in the Sabbath-school class, and so easily are persuaded to stay away.

4. Many worthy young people are nervous and hesitating, as some teachers practise the class in reading the lesson, so that each scholar must read his verse aloud. And, added to that nervousness, some fear that they cannot read well, and rather than run this gauntlet they stay away. This is no man of straw that we set up. I have met with young people who give this as their only reason for leaving the adult class.

5. Another class of young people have seen and felt the inefficiency of their teachers, and from lack of respect to them have stayed away. It must be admitted that some of our teachers are neglectful in preparing their lessons, and this lack is sure to tell on their classes.

6. Then such scholars have reached an age when they are fond of society, and it is a strong temptation to follow young acquaintances who spend their afternoons in promenading the streets rather than in the Sunday-school.

These seem to us the principal causes which render it difficult to retain them in the schools.

THE CURE.

Now, what remedies shall we propose?

1. Let as many of the adult members of the Church and congregation, as wish to keep their hold of these dear young people, attend the school themselves, and thus show that the school is not for the children alone. Then our young people will feel that it is not childish to go to Sabbath-school.

2. We must aim at the conversion of the scholars before they reach this dangerous period. I attended our Sabbath-school at Gorrie and found 56 scholars fifteen years of age and upwards, and 79 under fifteen. I asked the superintendent how he accounted for this excellent state of things, so different from what is

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usually seen. He very modestly replied, "We try to make all them feel at home, and we get the best teachers we can find for them. But our revival last year helped us very much. A large proportion of these young people are members of the Church." This is the very best thing. Get them converted as soon as possible.

3. We must emphasize the importance of getting the very best teachers we can for these classes. Not necessarily the best talker, or even the best scholar. But one (a gentleman or a lady) whose soul goes out in desire to help the young people to come to Christ and live for Him. Let the teachers who are now engaged improve themselves by careful study of lessons and methods of teaching; and let them avoid anything that will make the class irksome to any of the members of it.

4. Mixed classes of gentlemen and ladies are sometimes more attractive than others, and often prove successful. Yet let none that are doing well change without clear reasons, since what may do well in one place, may not in another, situated differently.

5. Let every school have a reserve list of teachers, who shall hold themselves responsible to fill vacancies, instead of drawing scholars from the adult class to teach for an absentee. And let it be understood that from this list of supply-teachers persons shall graduate to the position of regular teacher as openings occur.

6. Give every member of the class something to do. A thoughtful teacher will easily plan this according to the ability and taste of each pupil. They may be encouraged to ask questions, or after a thought has been brought out by the teacher a question may be put to the scholar to get that thought brought back again to the teacher.

7. It is well to avoid as much as possible the lecture style of teaching; questions and answers are more interesting and more profitable in such classes. And, at all cost, discourage lengthy discussions, in which only two or three talkative persons take part, to the disgust of all the other members of the class.

8. Let us all resolve to do it. Do what? Why retain the senior scholars. It may be their only hope for life. If we set ourselves to the work earnestly, and pray for divine assistance, we shall succeed far beyond what we have conceived possible. And, instead of allowing them to drift off into neglect of religion, they will be workers together with us in the common cause of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A GREAT deal of time is contracted in opportunity—which is the flower of time.—*Whicheote.*

NOTHING makes so much noise as a rickety wagon with nothing in it, unless it be the man who insists on talking when he has nothing to say.

EVOLUTION stands by to note calmly the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence. Christianity goes to work to make something more fit to survive.

Deeds, Not Words.

"Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

Not forever on thy knees,
Would Jehovah have thee foud,
There are burdens thou canst ease;
There are griefs Jehovah sees;
Look around.

Work in prayer if done for God,
Prayer which God delighted hears.
See beside yon upturned sod
One bowed 'neath affliction's rod;
Dry her tears.

Not long prayers, but earnest zeal;
That is what is wanted more,
Put thy shoulder to the wheel;
Bread unto the famished deal
From the store.

No high-sounding words of praise
Does God want, 'neath some grand dome;
But that thou the fallen raise;
Bring the poor from life's highways
To thy home.

Worship God by doing good;
Works, not words; kind acts, not creeds.
He who loves God as he should,
Makes his heart's love understood
By kind deeds.

Deeds are powerful; mere words weak
Batt'ring at high heaven's door.
Let thy love by actions speak;
Wipe the tear from sorrow's cheek;
Clothe the poor.

Be it thine life's cares to smother,
And to brighten eyes now dim.
Kind deeds done to one another,
God accepts as done, my brother,
Unto Him.

—Selected.

THE following, from a sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, contains encouragement for ministers and teachers who labour for the conversion of children: "I have more confidence," said the great preacher, "in the conversion and grace of children that I have received into the church this year, than I have in the conversion of the adults. I will go further than that. I have seen a deeper knowledge, and I have heard a clearer statement of the things of Christ from those dear children than from the elder folk. And, what may astonish you most of all, I have met with deeper spiritual experience in children of ten or twelve, than I have in some men and women of fifty and sixty. 'He is only a child, who should be seen and not heard. He is always getting in the way.' Some of you talk like that. God forgive you! When the grace of God comes into a boy, he is more worth saving than some of you!"

Book Notices.

Father Lambert's Family; A Tale of the Olden-Time France. By MARY E. BAMFORD.

This is a touching story of the persecution of the Protestants in France in the stormy period extending from 1571 to 1598. It brings vividly before us the sufferings of God's elect in a manner which should make us doubly thankful for the civil and religious liberties we to-day enjoy. The main incidents are based upon historical data.

What happened on a Christmas Eve. By EMILY HUNTINGTON MILLER. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Pp. 276. Price \$1.

The accomplished author of "Thorn Apples" here tells a charming Christmas story, or rather a succession of Christmas stories. It is a book suitable not only for Christmas, but for all the year round. It shows how the spell of the Christ-child can melt the hardest heart, and stir the founts of feeling in even the coarsest nature.

When the War Broke Out; or, Sailor Boy Bob's Sister. By the REV. E. A. RAND. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Pp. 368. Price \$1.25.

Mr. Rand's stories are always interesting, instructive, and instinct with a positive religious teaching. They are much above the average Sunday-school book. This is a sequel to his "Sailor Boy Bob," and tells the fortunes of that interesting youth's interesting sister. It describes some stirring episodes of the late war.

The Sunday-School: Its Origin, Mission, Methods and Auxiliaries. By H. CLAY TRUMBULL. Pp. xiii, 414. Philadelphia: John D. Wattles. Toronto: William Briggs. Price \$1.50.

It is a worthy recognition of the place and power of the Sunday-school that one of its leading exponents should be requested to give this course of lectures at the venerable seat of learning at New Haven. And right worthily has he fulfilled his task. His many years' experience as editor of the *Sunday-School Times* has brought him intimately into touch with every aspect of Sunday-school work. He treats the subject very comprehensively. He traces it back to Jewish times, and shows its Christian adoption. He traces its history through seventeen Christian centuries till its modern revival under the Wesleys and Raikes, and illustrates its wonderful expansion. He shows it to be a divinely ordained complement of family religious instruction. He discusses its membership and management, its teachers and training, the pastor and the school, its auxiliary training agencies, preaching to children, its importance and difficulties, etc. The book is in Dr. Trumbull's best style, and its study will be of great benefit to all Sunday-school workers.

Opening and Closing Service.

I. Silence.

II. Responsive Sentences

Supt. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

School. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

Supt. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:

School. Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.

Supt. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

School. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

Supt. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

School. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

Supt. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.

III. Singing.

IV. Prayer.

LESSON SERVICE.

I. Class Study of the Lesson.

II. Singing Lesson Hymn.

III. Recitation of Title, Golden Text, Outline, and Doctrinal Suggestion, by the school in concert.

IV. Review and Application of the Lesson, by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. The Supplemental Lesson.

VI. Announcements (especially of the Church service, and week-evening prayer-meeting).

CLOSING SERVICE.

I. Singing.

II. Responsive Sentences.

Supt. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

School. How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Supt. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.

School. To whom be glory forever. Amen.

III. Dismissal.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD QUARTER: STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

B. C. 1151.]

LESSON I. SAMUEL CALLED OF GOD.

[July 7.]

Authorized Version.

1 Sam. 3. 1-14.

[Commit to memory verses 8-10.]



1 And the child Sam'u-el ministered unto the LORD before E'l'i. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

2 And it came to pass at that time, when E'l'i was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see;

3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Sam'u-el was laid down to sleep;

4 That the LORD called Sam'u-el: and he answered, Here am I.

5 And he ran unto E'l'i, and said, Here am I: for thou callest me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And the LORD called yet again, Sam'u-el. And Sam'u-el arose and went to E'l'i, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 Now Sam'u-el did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8 And the LORD called Sam'u-el again the third time. And he arose and went to E'l'i, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And E'l'i perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9 Therefore E'l'i said unto Sam'u-el, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Sam'u-el went and lay down in his place.

10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Sam'u-el. Sam'u-el. Then Sam'u-el answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

11 And the LORD said to Sam'u-el, Behold, I will do a thing in Is'ra-el, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform against E'l'i all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of E'l'i, that the iniquity of E'l'i's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever.

Revised Version.

1 And the child Sam'u-el ministered unto the LORD before E'l'i. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when E'l'i was laid down in his place, (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, that he could not see,) and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Sam'u-el was laid down to sleep, in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was; that the LORD called Sam'u-el: and he said, Here am I.

2 And he ran unto E'l'i, and said, Here am I; for thou callest me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

3 And the LORD called yet again, Sam'u-el. And Sam'u-el arose and went to E'l'i, and said, Here am I; for thou callest me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

4 Now Sam'u-el did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. And the LORD called Sam'u-el again the third time. And he arose and went to E'l'i, and said, Here am I; for thou callest me. And E'l'i perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore E'l'i said unto Sam'u-el, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth.

5 So Sam'u-el went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Sam'u-el, Sam'u-el. Then Sam'u-el said, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

6 And the LORD said to Sam'u-el, Behold, I will do a thing in Is'ra-el, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against E'l'i all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of E'l'i, that the iniquity of E'l'i's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

BY REV. MILTON S. TERRY, D.D., GARRETT BIBLICAL INSTITUTE.

We learn from the present lesson that when Samuel appeared in Israel the word of the Lord was rare. No visions or revelations of Jehovah were given among the people. It was one of the darkest periods of Israelitish history. The chapter preceding our lesson shows how the priests who ministered at the altar were guilty of gross immorality and sacrilege. Where the priests were so destitute of piety, what must the people have been? In this dark period, and rising up in the midst of such wickedness, Samuel appeared as a great light in Israel. He was the last of the Judges and the first of the great prophets. Like Samson he was a Nazarite from the womb, and, while yet a tender child, was taken to the tabernacle at Shiloh and there consecrated to the service of the Lord. While he was yet a youth all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, knew that Jehovah had called and confirmed him as a prophet (ver. 20). He became the founder of the schools of the prophets, and after the nation had chosen a king he retired among his spiritual children in one of these schools (chap. 19. 18). There have been other prophets in some respects greater than Samuel; other Judges of Israel surpassed him, per-

haps, as hero and warrior, but, considering his holy childhood, his unblemished character, and all his work as judge and prophet, we find for him in history no parallel.

Verses 1. The child Samuel. He had been consecrated to the service of the Lord soon after he was weaned (chap. 1. 24) in accordance with a vow his mother made before his birth (chap. 1. 11). According to Josephus (*Ant.*, v. 10, 4), he began to prophesy when he was twelve years old. **Ministered.** As a young Levite, wearing a linen ephod (chap. 2. 9). His work was that of lighting the lamp (ver. 3), opening the doors of the house of the Lord (ver. 15), and other similar duties of the Levites, such as a child might perform. His father, Elkannah, was a Levite of the Kohathite family (comp. chap. 1. 1 with 1 Chron. 6. 34), and may have often ministered in the sanctuary along with his son at such times as he went up from his home in Mount Ephraim to worship and sacrifice at Shiloh (chap. 1. 3). **Before E'l'i.** Under his oversight and direction. Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, the youngest son of Aaron; but according to Numa. 30. 28, Eleazar, the elder son, succeeded his

father in the office of high-priest. How this honor came to be transferred to the line of Ithamar we are nowhere informed. As Eli was also judge, it may be that some great deed of heroism had exalted him in the eyes of the people, and opened the way for him to become at once chief priest and ruler. **The word of the Lord.** Revelation, or divine communications of instruction, counsel, rebuke, exhortation, and promise, imparted through prophets to the people. This phrase is very common in later prophets, and means the divine message which the Lord sent by them. **Precious in those days.** The Hebrew word here translated *precious* is most commonly applied to rare and costly stones. Applied to the word of prophecy, as here, it must mean that in those times direct communications from God to men were very rare. When such a word was given it was of the nature of a rare and precious jewel. The only instance in those days, aside from Samuel, is that of the man of God mentioned in chap. 2, 27, whose appearance in history is as remarkable as that of Melchizedek in the time of Abraham, and somewhat like it. **No open vision.** This means that no heavenly revelation was known to break upon the soul of any, and none was published abroad. The words, literally translated, are, "No vision broke itself forth." There was not then, as in later times, an opening of heaven to prophetic souls, a breaking in upon them of visions and voices.

2. At that time. Namely, when Samuel was yet a child, and there was no prophet of Jehovah known to be established in Israel. **In his place.** In the place where he was accustomed to sleep. After the tabernacle had been set up at Shiloh (comp. Josh. 18, 1), it appears to have become the center of a group of dwellings which served as residences of the priests. One of these Eli and Samuel occupied together. The next sentences should be read in parenthesis, as in the Revised Version, thus: ("Now his eyes began to wax dim; he could not see.") This inability to see was the result of old age, and seems to have been mentioned here to explain why Samuel was so quick to run to Eli when he heard his name called.

3. Ere the lamp of God went out. That is, before the dawn of day. The golden candlestick is here referred to which, according to Exod. 25, 31-37, had six branches and a central shaft, so that it held seven lamps. It was the business of the priests to light these lamps every evening so that they might burn until the morning (see Exod. 27, 21; 30, 8; Lev. 24, 2). **In the temple of the Lord.** The word *temple* seems to be somewhat inaccurately employed here and in chap. 1, 9 to designate the tabernacle, which in ver. 15 and chap. 1, 7, 24, is called "the house of the Lord." Possibly this narrative was not written in its present form until long afterward, when the temple of Solomon was standing and the word *temple* had become the more common name of the sanctuary of God. **Where the ark of God was.** The lamp was in the holy place, the ark in the holy of holies. The common version does not correctly represent the original here. Better is the Revised Version, which reads: "And the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down to sleep in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was." This obviously implies that Samuel was sleeping somewhere within the temple, but it does not necessarily mean that he was in the most holy place. It would seem from ver. 2 and from the propriety of things that the high-priest and the child Samuel occupied a dwelling in immediate proximity to the tabernacle, and the ark is here mentioned as being the place where Jehovah was wont to reveal himself.

4. The Lord called Samuel. These words and the whole context show that this call was an audible utter-

ance of Samuel's name. Comp. Exod. 3, 4. The entire communication made to Eli through the child was obviously of a supernatural character.

5. He ran unto Eli. This statement shows the promptness with which the youthful Samuel was accustomed to respond to the calls of the venerable Eli.

7. Samuel did not yet know the Lord. Knowing the Lord is an expression used here in a different sense from what it signifies in chap. 2, 12. There it means that Eli's sons had no decent respect for the commandments of the Lord, and gave no thought or study to his holy claims upon them. Here it means, as the next sentence explains, that Samuel had not yet received any revelation from the Lord.

8. The third time. The threefold repetition of the call made it the more emphatic and impressive. Compare the repetition of Peter's vision in Acts 10, 16. **Eli perceived.** The venerable priest at length discerned that Jehovah was about to reveal something, and he gave the obedient child the necessary counsel and direction.

10. Came, and stood. This implies a vision, a perception on the part of Samuel of a supernatural movement and presence, and so it is called in ver. 15. That which had been only a voice aroused him from his sleep became a vision now. Thrice the voice had called and thrice Samuel had gone to Eli. Thus both the child and the priest were gradually prepared for the remarkable revelation about to be given. What form this vision assumed we are not told. **Samuel answered.** He responded now as to the voice of a supernatural presence.

11. I will do a thing. Or, I am about to do. The word or decree of judgment is something about to be executed. **In Israel.** Among the Israelitish people. The chosen nation is to be visited with a bitter judgment. This threatened judgment came speedily, as the next chapter shows. **Both the ears....tingle.** Compare the same expression as employed in 2 Kings 21, 12; Jer. 19, 3.

12. In that day. Every such visitation of wrath upon a guilty family or people is conceived as a day of judgment. The Lord had foretold the coming woe. **Spoken concerning his house.** The reference here is to the prophecy which the man of God had spoken to Eli, and which is recorded in chap. 2, 27-36, which the reader should carefully examine in connection with this verse. **Begin....end.** The sense is, I will thoroughly accomplish all I have said I would do to Eli's house; from beginning to end the judgment shall be rigidly executed.

13. For I have told him. A strict adherence to the law of tenses in Hebrew would require here the future instead of the past, and so the margin reads: *And I will tell him.* Better, "And I will show him." Eli will live to see the beginnings of the bitter judgment and so have personal assurance that God is about to judge his house. It is here evident that judgment and punishment are associated ideas in the Scriptures. **For ever.** Perpetually. The judgment is of a nature not to be reversed or set aside. **Because his sons made themselves vile.** More correctly the Revised Version: "His sons did bring a curse upon themselves." The vile deeds and impety of Eli's sons are described in 1 Sam. 2, 12-17; 22-26. Eli knew of their wickedness, and rebuked them, but exercised no authority against them. So it is here charged against him that he restrained them not.

14. I have sworn. The determination of Jehovah to execute punishment is represented as a solemn oath. Nothing could be more immutable. Comp. Gen. 22, 16; and Heb. 6, 13. **Iniquity of Eli's house.** The sins of

the sons had heaped up a burden of iniquity on the family which they represented in the holy office. So, often, the persistent sin of representative members of a household brings irreparable loss and shame upon the whole house. **Shall not be purged.** Hebrew: "Shall not ever itself." The crying offense belonged to the class of presumptuous sins for which the law of sacrifices provided no atonement. See Num. 15. 27-31. **With sacrifice nor offering.** That is, neither by blood-sacrifices nor vegetable offerings. **For ever.** Compare the same expression in verse 13. The meaning is that the judgment is irreversible and perpetual.

This account of Samuel's call furnishes the following subjects for devout meditation:

1. The beautiful innocence and simplicity of consecrated childhood.
2. The word of divine revelation precious because of its scarcity.
3. The house of God the fitting place for receiving special revelations.
4. The tender condescension of God in repeated calls to such as fail to comprehend.
5. The variety of the manifestations of God.
6. The irrevocable doom of incorrigible sinners.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

We may distinguish between three ways of hearing. There is first the mere outward hearing, without taking in the full significance of what is heard. You may hear a knock at your closed door, and a voice addressing you; you go to the door and ask, "What is it?" You are not yet aware what the speaker would convey to you, but you hear and heed. Next comes the inward hearing, the mind receiving and taking in the meaning of the speech heard. You find out who it is that addresses you, and what he wants; you hear and understand. Then comes the active hearing, the will responding to the thing heard, and guiding the conduct in accordance with it. You find that something is wanted or required of you, and you immediately set about it. You hear and do.

Our lesson to-day is about a hearer, and in it we shall find these three kinds of hearing exemplified.

In the forefront of the picture given us in the passage stands the child Samuel—brought up in the temple of God, brought up in the service of God, brought up in the knowledge of God, and yet not acquainted with him personally (ver. 7), like so many young people around us. In the background stands Eli, the aged priest, old in the service and in the knowledge of God, yet an unsatisfactory servant because an unsatisfactory hearer. Eli had heard the voice of God. He was not like his sons who "knew not the Lord." He could speak of him to the woman who prayed in her sorrow (chap. 1. 17). He could speak of him to his rebellious sons (chap. 2. 25). But his hearing did not rule his will and guide his conduct, or his sons would early have been restrained, and the honor of God's house and service (ver. 17) guarded. Even the express message brought to him by the prophet (chap. 2. 27) seems to have had no outward effect at all. Eli heard with the outward ear and with the understanding as well, but the active hearing and obeying did not follow, save in a very small degree.

When the voice of God, calling "Samuel, Samuel," first fell on the ear of the child and woke him from his sleep it was to him little more than an outward sound. He supposed it to be the voice of his fatherly master and teacher, Eli, and hastened to answer it accordingly. He was a faithful and obedient hearer as far as his knowledge

went. He heard and heeded. And when at the third call he returned the answer that Eli had put into his lips it was no mere form of words. Our Golden Text, "Speak, for thy servant heareth," was truth with Samuel. And then God spoke to his understanding, and he knew that he was listening to a message of the Lord and took in its significance. He heard and understood.

It was a sad message, a message of judgment upon the unfaithful hearer that fell upon his ear, and it must have been terrible indeed to the affectionate child. But this child was called to be a prophet of the Lord, and he was to begin by making experience of what that calling involved, and of the responsibility of those who are set high in God's service. He had to learn the strict obedience God required, and to be tested whether he would obey at all costs.

He heeded the lesson, and he stood the test. He "feared to show Eli the vision;" he may have dreaded the old man's reproof, as he no doubt dreaded wounding him. To take to his master and friend such a message as he had heard must have been a severe trial; yet when questioned he told him all, and "hid nothing from him" (ver. 27). He thus proved himself a true hearer in the third and highest sense, that is, one of those who "hear the word of God and keep it."

There are abundance of hearers in the first sense; a goodly number of hearers in the second sense. Which of us are hearers in the third sense—not merely hearing and heeding, hearing and understanding, but, like Samuel, hearing and doing?

Cambridge Notes.

BY REV. JAMES HOPE MOULTON, M.A.

[These notes are based on the Revised Version.]

GENERAL NOTE.—The margin of the Rev. Ver. (which is as before the only version used here) contains so many references to the LXX, (Septuagint) that a word of explanation seems needed. The earliest copies of the Hebrew Bible extant are less than one thousand years old. The Greek translation, called the LXX., from a legend ascribing it to seventy authors, was made between 250 and 150 B. C., and though often uncritical and generally bald, is of the utmost importance for the text, as well as for the fact that it was the Bible of the New Testament writers and of our Lord himself. The *Antiquities* of Josephus (first century A. D.) are very helpful in detecting errors of transcription in the historical books. Finally, Jerome's great work, the Latin Vulgate, is a witness to the text in the fourth century. To a certain extent conjecture has to be called in, especially in cases where a clear improvement comes by discarding the traditional vowel points added to the consonants of the text. Obviously it is a method that needs the utmost caution.

The books of Samuel and Kings belong to the prophetic class, contrasted with the priestly Book of Chronicles. This means that the documents and traditions which underlie the narrative were edited by members of the order of prophets, now first starting into prominence. The Chronicles give us bare history, selected and arranged by men interested mainly in the outward ceremonial of the Jewish Church. But the unknown authors of Samuel and Kings write with a deeper purpose, that shown by the Christian prophets in their use of history (Acts 7. 13), revealing God's will to men in the present by showing its operation in the past. The order of prophets, as a continuous institution, was founded by the great man who links together the theocracy and the monarchy. There had been prophets before, notably Moses, but what had become rare in the troubled times

of the judges was now perpetual until the long, sad period between Malachi and the Baptist (Psa. 74, 9). To mark the importance of the functions assumed by the order the old names "Seer" and "Gazer" were superseded by a higher title "*Nabi*," comp. *Bar-nabas*) which described the divine inspiration swelling within the representative of God to men; the prophet was the "mouth" of God (Exod. 7, 1). The narrative of this great change in the national life is fitly called after Samuel, the Moses of the new period of Israel's history. He was probably (comp. 1 Chron. 29, 29) the chief authority for the events of his own life, and the annals were continued by members of the prophetic schools which he founded. The date of the compilation must have been after the disruption, but there is no evidence to bring it down much later.

VER. 1. Like Moses, Samuel was a Levite, but he was reckoned with the tribe of Ephraim, in which his family dwelt. Comp. 1 Chron. 6, 22, 23 with chap. 1, 1. His consecration to a life-long Nazarite, like that of Samson and the Baptist, has been described, and we now read of his call to prophetic duties. *Child*. Josephus says he was twelve years old, the age at which Jesus was found "in his Father's house" (Luke 2, 49; comp. also 52 with chap. 2, 26). *Ministered*. A word emphasizing the dignity of the service of Him "whose slaves are kings." *Here* (margin). The religious declension of the Judge's period involved an almost complete cessation of prophesy or intimation of divine will. *Vision*. The same conception as in the title "gazer" (see above). VER. 2. *Time*. Rather day, the day of his ministration. *Now*, etc. This explains the lad's assumption that he had been called by Eli to do something for the helpless old man. VER. 3. The lamp is the golden stand with seven branches. We may suppose that the lamps were burning dim soon before sunrise, as they were lighted at the evening sacrifice. *Temple*. The phrase probably denotes the chambers built round the tabernacle, for the priests and Levites on duty, and for stores; but it is clearly borrowed from the language of the compiler's own day. *Where*. The mistranslation of the Authorized Version attempts to avoid the difficulty of Samuel's apparently sleeping in the sanctuary itself. The ark may, however, be mentioned simply as the place from which the divine Presence called to Samuel as he slept outside the veil. VER. 4. The LXX. (and comp. ver. 10) suggests that we should read "Jehovah called, Samuel, Samuel." *Here*. Literally, "Behold, I;" the usual formula of assent. VER. 6. Samuel's words to Eli are exactly the same each time; Eli first adds the affectionate address which he omitted when first roused from sleep, then realizes the meaning of what he had supposed to be only a fragment of the boy's dreams. VER. 7. This explains Samuel's not recognizing the Voice; his call to the prophet's office had not come before. *Did not know*. The innocent ignorance of the child is contrasted with the guilty ignorance of the grown men (chap. 2, 12). The second clause here interprets the first. VER. 9. *If he call*. Eli does not name the Speaker. *Heard*. An allusion to Samuel's own name, "heard of God." VER. 10. *Stood*. Implying a Presence as well as a Voice (comp. ver. 15, "vision.") *Spoke*. Note the omission of "Jehovah;" it would seem that Samuel shrunk from using that Name of awe to the benign Angel who stood before him. Throughout the narrative the perfect fearlessness of the child is most striking. With simple obedience he lies down, perhaps even sleeps, and then looks up into his Father's face without a sign of awe. For the pure in heart, the child and the child-like, see God and fear not. (Comp. Exod. 24, 11 and our notes, July 1, 1888). The New Testament

shows us that it was "God Unholy-begotten" (John 1, 18; margin) who manifested Jehovah's presence. VER. 11. As in the case of Isaiah (see Isa. 6, Rev. Ver.) the message accompanying the prophet's call is one of unrelieved judgment. I. *Emphatic*. *Will do*. Literally, "am doing," and so ver. 13, "I am judging." There is no future with God. *At which*. Literally, "in which whosoever heareth, both his ears shall tingle," as in 2 Kings 21, 12, and Jer. 19, 3. The latter passage seems an intentional reminiscence of this. The judgment is that related in chap. 4. VER. 12. *Spoken*. By the unnamed prophet of chap. 2, 27. VER. 13. *I have told*. The Hebrew is ambiguous, and there is much in favor of Klostermann's suggestion to read "thou shalt tell," by omitting one letter. Clearly Samuel was sent to bring Eli the divine message. *Upon themselves*. The LXX. (see margin) almost certainly preserves the right text, and it is supported by a Jewish tradition attributing the change to mistaken reverence. *Restrained*. He had been content with remonstrance (chap. 2, 23-25), though his authority as priest and as father (Deut. 17, 12; 21, 18) might have been exercised to check them. VER. 14. *Purged*. Literally, "covered," the word used for "atonement." *Sacrifice*, etc. That is, bloody and unbloody offerings, an exhaustive description. *Forever*. Comp. Isa. 52, 14. The phrase in the Old Testament is necessarily confined to time, the conception of eternity being so shadowy as hardly to color it at all. The Law provided no expiation for willful sin, and Eli's house was to be while it lasted a continual object-lesson of the personal penalties of wickedness. Nothing is said against the temporal forgiveness of individuals. Eli himself and his daughter-in-law showed by their grief for the ark that their hearts were right with God.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. How did God speak to Samuel?

God called him in a manner that seemed to him natural, real, and audible. He thought Eli had called. There was no vision, no apparition, but a voice, speaking in his soul, which made known God's purpose against Eli and his house. God spoke to him as he did to Noah, when called into the ark, or to Saul on his way to Damascus. He spoke to him, as in nature, revelation, and providence he speaks to every soul, in words that are louder and more impressive than any that break against the tympanum of the ear.—*Rev. A. E. P. Albert, D.D., New Orleans, La.*

In an audible voice, which was mistaken for a human voice three times. The very natural mistake of Samuel is explained. 1. By his partly stupefied and drowsy state; 2. By his inexperience in matters of divine communication; 3. By his loyal recognition of his relation to Eli as one who had the right to call and command.—*Rev. H. M. Simpson, Paterson, N. J.*

Directly and orally, Samuel's failures to apprehend the Speaker's divinity were natural. For (1) as the Lord had not yet spoken to him he could not identify the voice from personal experience, and (2) as there was no publicly accredited prophet then receiving such messages from God, Samuel could not expect one on general principles.—*Rev. W. A. Dickson, New York City.*

Lesson Word-Picture.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

Night about Shiloh, hushing all noises, bringing rest. Night, too, in the sanctuary; no priest in his vestments

giding about. Eli, that old servant of God, is fast asleep. His sons, where are they? Quietly at rest, or plotting mischief? When will the Lord come and call forth some faithful servant to do his will? None can say. It is night-time in Israel as well as in Shiloh. In spiritual things there is slumbering. But where is he whom Hannah gave to the Lord for the Lord's work? He is but a youth, and to-night Samuel sleeps, feeling not the burden of any spiritual responsibility. Every body and every thing asleep save the beautiful lamp in the abiding-place of the Lord. Its light falls undisturbed in that hushed, sacred spot. How quiet it is! There is no sound save as the wind murmurs under the silvery stars.

Suddenly, there is a voice, most mysterious, solemn, impressive! It sounds just above the resting-place of Samuel. It is impressed confusedly upon him that somebody is calling. He opens his eyes. He raises himself on his elbow. He looks around. He sees no one. He hears nothing but his beating heart. He concludes, "It must be Eli. He is old. He may need my help."

He springs from his couch. He runs to Eli. He stands by Eli's bed. He finds, though, it is not the old priest who called. He returns wondering at the occasion of that call. Was it a dream? But it comes again, the same voice. Still it is not Eli. And once more! So strange, that voice echoing in the night, and yet not Eli's. But the old priest interprets it, and the solemn thought makes an awe in his face. It is the Lord calling!

Told what to do, Samuel lies down again. Can he sleep? To think that somewhere near him is God, the Jehovah of his fathers! How awful the thought! Would he call again? If he called, what would he want? To think that God, the great Jehovah, who had divided the wide sea, who had led his people like a flock through the wild desert, should want any thing of Samuel—only a youth waiting on Eli! He cannot sleep. When would it be morning? Has the lamp of God gone out? That would prophesy morning. Is any one stirring with whom Samuel could talk? Suddenly, that deep, solemn, echoing voice calls again! It is not just "Samuel." It is "Samuel! Samuel!" It is urgent. God wants him. And Samuel is ready. His voice is choked, it almost falls him, but he answers, "Speak, for thy servant heareth!"

And then comes sentence after sentence of a solemn announcement. It may have been uttered in the dark, but it was burnt into Samuel's memory as if pressed by a heated iron.

Then Samuel lay down again upon his couch. He kept it till morning. He could not have slept. His heart would beat wildly, while over and over again that voice kept sounding in his memory. He was glad when the early light made a grayness in his room, when familiar steps sounded without, when some sweet, clear note of a bird said, "It is time to arise, Samuel, and go to thy work in the house of the Lord."

Primary and Intermediate.

BY MARTHA VAN MARGER.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Hearing God's Call.*

Put upon the board a picture of a church. Print above it "God's House." Make or pin up picture of the Jewish tabernacle. Print above this also "God's house." Show pictures of some of the furniture of the tabernacle, as the candlestick, ark, etc.

Do we have these things in the Church now? No, but we have the holy Bible, which tells us about Jesus. Tell that the church now is like the tabernacle in this: that children are welcome there, and may work there. Our lesson is about a child who had important work to do in God's house, and to whom God spoke. His name was Samuel. [Print.]

The Child Believer. Tell what the word *Samuel* means, "Asked of God," or, "Heard of God." Tell the story of Hannah's love and prayer, and how she trained her little boy for God's service, bringing him, as soon as he was old enough, to be with Eli, the high-priest, to help in the care of the tabernacle. Teach that, though but a child, Samuel could obey; he could be reverent, careful, truthful, and earnest in his work. This was because he believed in God. A child believer now will be all this.

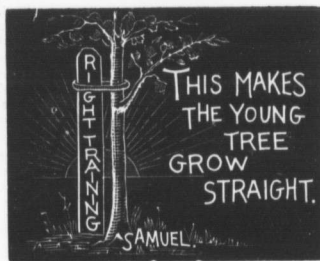
God's Call. God saw his little servant, and knew just what kind of a servant he was. He saw how fully he obeyed Eli, how carefully he did all the work that was given him to do, and he knew that such a boy could be trusted. One night God himself spoke to little Samuel. Tell that he was twelve years old at this time, and did not yet know the Lord's voice. He thought it was Eli, and rose quickly to see what the old priest wanted. Tell the story graphically, and teach that the quick obedience to Eli's supposed call showed that Samuel would answer the Lord's call just as readily when he knew it to be from the Lord.

Work for the Lord. When God called Samuel it was to tell him to do something. [Tell the work that he gave him to do. It was hard work, but Samuel did not shrink, and God honored his obedience. When God calls a child now he always gives him work to do. Some children do not obey, and so God cannot honor them as he did Samuel.]

God Calling Now. Print on the board, "How does he call?" Make list of ways on the board. By his word; by his Holy Spirit; by kind teachers and friends; by holy voices in the heart. Who will listen?

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The blackboard represents one out of many illustrations that might be made from this beautiful lesson. This design shows the benefit of good influences on the life of a young person, and illustrates it with a picture of a young tree supported and upheld by a strong post, to which it is bound by the cords of love. The sun rising is symbolic of the morning of life, when the need of right influences is the greatest. If there is room on the

board, or if it is reversible, write the following, to be used with the picture :

INFLUENCES	
FOR WRONG. Bad Example of Eli's Sons.	FOR RIGHT. Mother's Love, Religious Home, Dedicated to God, A Church Home, Eli's Council.
God cared for Samuel.	He cares for me.

Hebrew Methods. The Teachers' Meeting.

Draw a sketch map of tribal Palestine, and mark the various sites where the tabernacle was erected, from the crossing of the Jordan to the building of the temple. . . . Fix the time of the lesson—how many years from Moses' death; how many years before the Solomonic era of prosperity. . . . Describe the tabernacle and adjoining priests' apartments and the probable influence of such an establishment on the town and surrounding country. . . . Tell the story of Eli; his position in the hereditary priesthood; the universal degradation and general idleness of his time; his failure in bringing up his family for the service of God. . . . Sketch the history of Samuel; his godly father and mother; his dedication to the Lord, and his early ministry in the tabernacle. . . . The methods of God's revelation under the judges: the Urim and Thummim, dreams, visions, oral voices, etc. . . . Emphasize the difference between the principle underlying the eternal punishment of sin and that underlying the disastrous consequence of evil action in this life. . . . God "prepared for himself a people" by a series of selections. He first selected from the human family the Semitic race; from that selected Abraham; from all Abraham's children he chose Isaac; from Isaac's sons, Jacob; from Jacob's descendants those of Judah, and finally from Judah's descendants that noble remnant which voluntarily returned from the Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem. In a similar way God selected the Messianic family; but it was by a process which incidentally rejected one after another of the prominent families of Israel. The "judges" were tried, and each in his day doubtless hoped to forward the historic line in which the great "Anointed" was to appear. But, one by one, they were rejected by divine wisdom. Samuel's sons are soon to be rejected in favor of Saul, and Saul, in his turn, in favor of David. In this lesson the proud priestly family is thus tested and the house of Eli is rejected. This view gives new interest to the lesson. God's act is to be regarded as a punishment in itself, for Eli's misgovernment; but it also to be looked upon as part of his providential plan in the gradual selection of that pure family from which "in the fullness of time" Christ was to come.

References. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Ver. 3: The Ark of the Covenant, 142. . . . FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Vols. 1-10; Poetical, 3066, 3068; Prose, 3595, 7072, 8148. Ver. 10: Prose, 524, 529; Poetical, 3069. Ver. 13: Poetical, 2450; Prose, 4312, 7102, 10895.

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE. The Child Samuel.

I. A HELPFUL CHILD.

Samuel ministered unto the Lord. v. 1.

"Opened the doors of the house," v. 15.

"A doorkeeper in the house of the Lord." Psa. 84. 10.

II. A HOLY CHILD.

The Lord called Samuel. v. 4.

"Samuel among them that call." Psa. 99. 6.

"Diversities of gifts. . . . same Spirit." 1 Cor. 12. 4.

III. A WILLING CHILD.

He answered, Here am I. v. 4.

"Here am I; send me." Isa. 6. 8.

"What wilt thou have me to do?" Acts 9. 6.

IV. A PROMPT CHILD.

He ran unto Eli. v. 5.

"Do it with thy might." Eccl. 9. 10.

"Wait on our ministering." Rom. 12. 7.

V. A PATIENT CHILD.

The third time. . . . he arose. v. 8.

"Fruit of the Spirit. . . . gentleness." Gal. 5. 22.

"Trying your faith. . . . patience." James 1. 3.

VI. A SUBMISSIVE CHILD.

Speak; for thy servant heareth. v. 10.

"To do the will. . . . sent me." John 4. 34.

"I delight to do thy will." Psa. 40. 8.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

Conversing With God.

1. *God's voice can be heard in childhood.* There are few converts in maturity who cannot recall the convictions of their childhood. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy;" and if boys and girls will only answer "Here am I" when God calls, guidance, both providential and spiritual, will be vouchsafed to them through life.

2. *God's voice is most plainly heard by those who are already consecrated to him.* If a child be sincerely devoted to God's service, whether by his own infantile decision, by the solemn baptismal covenant of his parents, or by some Christian pastor or teacher, that fact is always recognized by God. His voice is addressed to all his children, in Christian and heathen lands alike, but it is most likely to be plainly heard by those whose lives have already been consecrated to him.

3. *In the temple of the Lord God's voice is plainly heard.* He speaks at all hours and in all places, but the world's hubbub and bustle are apt to drown his accents. They who "dwell" in God's house have already placed themselves in the best condition to receive divine revelations.

4. *Samuel was not the only person who has mistaken God's call for the call of a fellow-being.* Ignorance and prejudice and evil tendencies alike lead to such a misapprehension. Children and adults who "do not yet know the Lord" do not like to recognize his voice.

5. *The consent of the listener is necessary to an effective hearing.* If Samuel had not said, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," the message would never have been completed. And so it is to-day. Our Samuels and Johns and Charlies, our Marys and Jennies and Hatties have, all of them, heard the repeated call. Have they welcomed the message?

HOME READINGS.

M. Samuel called of God. 1 Sam. 3. 1-7.

Th. Samuel called of God. 1 Sam. 3. 8-14.

W. The Lord with Samuel. 1 Sam. 3. 15-21.

Th. The call of Moses. Exod. 3. 1-10.

F. Timothy's early call. 2 Tim. 1. 1-10.

S. Call of the apostle Paul. Gal. 1. 11-24.

S. Called by Jesus. Mark 1. 14-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 1 Sam. 3. 10.

TIME.—115 B. C.

PLACE.—Shiloh.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The divine call.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 45, Dominion Hymnal.

God has said, "Forever blessed

Those who seek me in thy youth.

No. 46, Dominion Hymnal.

Happy the child whose youngest years

Receive instruction well.

No. 53, Dominion Hymnal.

Thronging the temple like those of old,
Saviour, we enter thy tender fold.

My Sabbath song.

Sing them over again.

Come, said Jesus' sacred voice.

Saviour, like a shepherd.

Keep thou my way.

I love to tell the story.

O God, my youth is thine.

Father, lead thy little child.

Dear Jesus, hear me.

God is in heaven.

Growing up for Jesus.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Call.

Who was Samuel? Read chap. 1.

How came he to be ministering unto the Lord?
Where was the tabernacle of Israel at this time located?

Why was it that God seemed to be so distant from men at this time?

What is meant by the assertion that Samuel did not know the Lord?

How did God call Samuel?

Do you believe that God calls men now as certainly as then?

Give a reason for your answer.

How does God call men now?

What is essential now to hearing God's call?

Why were not other boys in Israel called as well as Samuel?

What had led to this special call?

2. The Message.

To whom did this message relate?

Why was not the message given directly to Eli?

What two parental courses are brought into strong contrast by this message?

What does one of the commandments say about visiting iniquity of fathers upon children? Exod. 20. 5.

How was the visitation of iniquity in this case?

What law concerning parental duty is here implicitly stated?

Was the message new?

Why was not the manner of the punishment revealed?

Practical Teachings.

No open vision: in times of spiritual dearth and spiritual death, in the Church, in society, in human life.

Nothing to see, because nothing to see with. The boy's eyes were the only two eyes in all Israel.

He did not know God. But he heard his voice. He needed only one lesson from Eli. But we?

The lesson of God's nearness: is told us a hundred times, and we heed not. Faithful mother: her boy became God's channel for revelation. Unfaithful Eli: his sons became the channels of God's wrath.

Hints for Home Study.

1. Learn all about Samuel's parentage and previous history.

2. Learn about the tabernacle; where it was stationed, etc.

3. Who was Eli? Search all the references concerning him in the Scriptures.

4. Find indications of the beginning of the prophetic order previous to this. See chap. 2.

5. Write a parallel, or a contrast, between yourself and Samuel.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Call, vs. 1-10.

Of what child ministry does this lesson tell?

What is said of the word of God?

What shows that Eli was growing old?

Whose call did Samuel hear?

What statement shows the time of this call?

How long were the lamps kept burning? Exod. 27. 20.

From whom did Samuel think the call came?

What did Eli bid him do?

What was done and said when the call was repeated?

Of what was Samuel yet ignorant?

What did Eli infer from the third call?

What did he bid Samuel do and say?

What then occurred?

What was Samuel's reply to this call? (Golden Text.)

2. The Message, vs. 11-14.

To whom would God's message prove startling?

Against whom did God pronounce a judgment?

What warning had Eli before received?

By whom had this warning been uttered? Chap. 27. 2.

For what evil in his family was he responsible?

When would the evil be forgiven?

How can we be saved from such peril? Psa. 19. 13.

Teachings of the Lesson.

What is there in this lesson which teaches—

1. That we ought to serve God, while young?

2. That we ought to listen to God's word?

3. That we should fear God's judgments?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Learn of a young king who honored God's word before his people.

Learn of a New Testament character who, from childhood, knew God's word.

Read in Luke the story of a child in the temple.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was Eli? A priest and a judge of Israel.

Where did he minister? In the Lord's house.

Who helped Eli care for the Lord's house? The child Samuel.

Whose son was Samuel? The son of Elkannah and Hannah.

To whom did they give Samuel? To God.

Who came and called Samuel one night? The Lord.

Who did Samuel think called him? Eli.

How many times did Samuel rise to go to Eli? Three times.

What did Eli tell Samuel to do? To say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

What did Samuel do? He answered the Lord's call.

With whom did the Lord talk? With Samuel.

What did he tell him? That he would punish the house of Israel.

How could God trust a child? Samuel had shown himself an obedient child.

Who calls children now? The Lord.

How does he call? By his word and his Spirit.

Who are sure to hear? The obedient and attentive.

How should we answer the Lord's call? "Speak, Lord; thy servant heareth."

Words with Little People.

To love Jesus.

I am called. To obey Jesus.

To work for Jesus.

"Faithful is he that called you." 1 Thess. 5. 24.

"I have called thee by thy name." Isa. 43. 1.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

(For the entire school.)

1. Where did Samuel first receive a revelation from Jehovah? In the tabernacle at Shiloh.

2. Under what circumstances was Samuel at the tabernacle? He was ministering unto the Lord.

3. What was peculiar about this first revelation? God called, and Samuel knew it not.

4. What was Samuel's answer when he learned that the voice was God's? "Then Samuel answered, Speak," etc.

5. What reason did God assign for his punishment of Eli? Infidelity to parental responsibility.

6. When Eli heard the message what did he say? "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good."

CATECHISM QUESTION.

29. Are there more gods than one?

There is one God only, the living and true God.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.—Deuteronomy vi. 4.

B. C. 1141.]

LESSON II. THE SORROWFUL DEATH OF ELI.

[July 14.

Authorized Version.

Revised Version.

1 Sam. 4. 1-18. [Commit to memory verses 17, 18.]



they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Is'ra-el^s said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philis'tines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shi'loh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

4 So the people sent to Shi'loh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubim: and the two sons of E'li, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Is'ra-el shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

6 And when the Philis'tines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the He'brews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp.

7 And the Philis'tines were afraid; for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the E-gyp'tians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

9 Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philis'tines, that ye be not servants unto the He'brews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

10 And the Philis'tines fought, and Is'ra-el was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Is'ra-el thirty thousand footmen.

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of E'li, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, were slain.

12 And there ran a man of Ben'ja-min out of the army, and came to Shi'loh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, E'li 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.

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

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

16 And the man said unto E'li, 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?

17 And the messenger answered and said, Is'ra-el is fled before the Philis'tines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

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. And he had judged Is'ra-el forty years.

1 And the word of Sam'u-el came to all Is'ra-el.

Now Is'ra-el went out against the Philis'tines to battle, and pitched beside E-ben-e'zer: and the

2 Philis'tines pitched at A'phek. And the Philis'tines put themselves in array against Is'ra-el: and when they joined battle, Is'ra-el was smitten before the Philis'tines: and they slew of the army in the

3 field about four thousand men. And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Is'ra-el

said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philis'tines? Let us fetch the ark of the

4 covenant of the Lord out of Shi'loh unto us, that it may come among us, and save us out of the hand of

5 our enemies. So the people sent to Shi'loh, and they brought from thence the ark of the covenant of the

6 Lord of hosts, which sitteth upon the cherubim: and the two sons of E'li, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, were

7 there with the ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into

8 the camp, all Is'ra-el shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philis'tines

9 heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the

10 He'brews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philis'tines

11 were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath

12 not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty

13 gods? these are the gods that smote the E-gyp'tians with all manner of plagues in the wilderness. Be

14 strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philis'tines, that ye be not servants unto the He'brews, as

15 they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. And the Philis'tines fought, and Is'ra-el

16 was smitten, and they fled every man to his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell

17 11 of Is'ra-el thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of E'li, Hoph'ni

18 and Phin'e-has, were slain. And there ran a man of Ben'ja-min out of the army, and came to Shi'loh

19 the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, E'li sat upon

20 his seat by the way-side watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came

21 into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. And when E'li heard the noise of the crying, he said,

22 What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told E'li.

23 Now E'li was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

24 And the man said unto E'li, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army.

25 And he said, How went the matter, my son? And he that brought the tidings answered and said, Is'ra-el

26 is fled before the Philis'tines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two

27 sons also, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

28 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off his seat backward

29 by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Is'ra-el forty years.

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

In giving us an account of Samuel's call to the prophetic office, the last lesson disclosed the deplorable condition of the priesthood in Israel, and the purpose of God to visit the house of Eli with most bitter judgment.

This lesson shows how speedily the punishment began to come, and how certainly the prophetic word was destined to be fulfilled. While the internal and religious condition of the nation was so lamentable, the external was no less so. The Philistines were holding

the Israelites in subjection; for it is generally conceded that the forty years of Philistine oppression mentioned in Judg. 13. 1 was at this time only half over. Twenty long years of oppression must have dispirited many. Without, all seemed dark and hopeless, and within, men had come to abhor the very offerings of the sanctuary (1 Sam. 2. 17). No wonder that, when Samuel became known and recognized throughout the whole land as a prophet of Jehovah, there soon followed a movement on the part of the Israelitish leaders to throw off the hateful yoke of the Philistines. With what utter failure the war of emancipation was at this time attended we are informed in the present lesson.

Verse 1. Word of Samuel. Various prophecies uttered by this new prophet. **Came to all Israel.** They became noised abroad among all the people of the several tribes from Dan to Beer-sheba (chap. 3. 20). This sentence is best understood when connected with the last verse of the preceding chapter. So the Revised Version has placed it. **Israel went out against the Philistines.** They had been under oppression for a score of years, and were anxious to throw off the burdensome yoke. What was the special cause or occasion of this uprising we are not told. **Pitched.** Pitched their tents; encamped. **Beside Ebenezer.** It is said that Israel encamped beside this place, while the Philistines encamped in **Aphék.** The word here translated "beside" commonly means *over, above*, and suggests that the Israelitish camp was on some slope or height above the place afterward known as Ebenezer, while the Philistine host occupied the town of Aphék. The exact location of these places has not been determined, but they were both evidently but a short distance north or north-west of Jerusalem, and about half way between Shiloh and Ashdod. Comp. chap. 5. 1. The name Ebenezer, meaning the *stone of help*, was given to this place at a later day (see chap. 7. 12). The writer of this book, penning this record some time after this had become the common name of the place, would not otherwise designate the spot.

2. Put themselves in array. Arranged the ranks of the army in order for battle. **They joined battle.** Or better, perhaps, as the margin: *the battle was spread.* As man fought with man, and rank with rank, the battle itself spread out over the field. **Israel was smitten.** They suffered a painful defeat on the field, but were not overthrown, for they retired to the camp and subsequently renewed the battle. **Of the army in the field.** Rather, *in the array in the field.* That is, while in the order and disposition of battle on the field, and during the conflict. The nearly four thousand Israelites fell in battle, not in flight before the enemy.

3. The elders. The heads and representatives of the people, who acted as the officers of the army. Even in Egypt the people had their elders (Exod. 3. 16), but in later history the title came to have a more official significance. **Wherefore.** Comp. Josh. 7. 7. **The Lord smitten.** They recognized by this language that Jehovah had been against them in the battle. **Let us fetch the ark.** Possibly the Philistines carried into battle some image or symbol of their gods, and this prompted the Israelitish elders to adopt a similar measure. But more probably they remembered how the walls of Jericho had fallen when the ark of the covenant was carried around them by the priests (John 6. 6-16), and also how Moses had sent Phinehas, the priest, "with the holy instruments" to war against the Midianites (Num. 31. 6). **Ark of the covenant of the Lord.** This full name of the sacred treasure suggests their confidence in

the covenant of Jehovah with Israel. Surely, they thought, the Lord himself will interpose with miraculous power, if we carry this holy vessel with us into battle. **That, when it cometh.** Better, *And let it come among us and save us from the hand of our enemies.* They seem to have had in mind the words of Moses when the ark was wont to set forward: "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee" (Num. 10. 35; comp. Exod. 23. 27).

4. Sent to Shiloh. Not many hours distant from this field of battle, so that a man could run from the one to the other in a short time (see verse 12). Observe with what studied reverence the sacred vessel is again mentioned in this verse, as "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts which dwelleth between the cherubim." The Revised Version has, "sitteth upon the cherubim"; or, "inhabitteth the cherubim." The explanation of this is seen in Exod. 25. 10-22, where the construction of the ark is fully described. **Hophni and Phinehas... with the ark.** They were the official guardians of the ark, and therefore went along with it into the battle.

5. All Israel shouted. Observe here the usage of the phrase "all Israel." It evidently means only the army of Israelites in the camp, not including the thousands and tens of thousands who went not to the war. The thirty thousand mentioned in verse 10 and all the rest of the army exulted as over a new and powerful reinforcement, and felt that now victory was certain. **Earth rang again.** As if shaken and disturbed by the excitement of the camp.

6. Philistines heard. Their camp was therefore not far from that of Israel. **What meaneth the noise.** Or, *what voice is this great shouting?* They were startled and amazed at this tumult of joy in the camp of an enemy supposed to be defeated. **They understood.** How they obtained their information can only be conjectured. Probably they learned it from the watchmen who were stationed as pickets about the camp.

7. Afraid. A superstitious awe, bordering on terror, would be likely to seize them upon hearing the cause of the shouting. **God is come into the camp.** The heathen nations of the old time recognized the reality of the gods of other peoples. Compare especially 2 Kings 17. 26-33. Here is an incidental illustration of the fact that men of all nations and tribes of the earth are religious beings, and possess some knowledge and fear of God. **Not been such a thing heretofore.** Such a thing as the coming of the God of their foes into the camp with evident purpose to fight for them. All their knowledge of gods, giving assistance in battle or elsewhere, did not furnish an example quite like this.

8. These mighty gods. The language of polytheism. They knew not the lofty Hebrew doctrine of the absolute unity of God, and therefore conceived that Jehovah was but the representative, and perhaps chief, of the Israelitish deities. **Smote the Egyptians.** The plagues of Egypt, and especially the destruction of Pharaoh's army in the sea, were noised abroad among the nations (comp. Exod. 15. 14; Josh. 2. 10). **In the wilderness.** All the other miracles of the exodus and of the march through the wilderness made a profound impression on the neighboring peoples. Jehovah put "the dread and fear of them upon the nations under the whole heaven," who heard the report of them (Deut. 2. 25).

9. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men. It is noticeable that the Philistines make no appeal to their own god Dagon to help them against the "mighty gods"

of the Hebrews, and yet, perhaps, we should not infer that no such appeal was made. They subsequently placed the captured ark in Dagon's temple at Ashdod (chap. 5, 2). **Quilt** is here used in the sense of acquitting one's self. The Hebrew reads, literally, "Be for men," or "be men." Act the part of heroes. Compare Paul's words in 1 Cor. 16, 13. Observe the rapid changes of feeling among the Philistines. First, they were astonished at the shouting of all Israel, then they were afraid; then they yielded to momentary despair, and cried, "Woe unto us!" But at length they suddenly rallied, and displayed heroic courage and resolute purpose. **Be not servants.** A powerful motive for warriors about to engage in battle. If they get not the victory they must in turn become slaves of the victors.

10. Israel was smitten. Israel needed the terrible lesson of this defeat to assure them that the holiest external symbols are of no avail when the people are corrupt, and the ministers of religion have no deep sense of moral obligation. **Every man into his tent.** Not to the camp tents, but to their several homes. The word tent here is a relic of the long period of Israelitish history in which the people abode in tents. **Thirty thousand footmen.** About four thousand had fallen in the previous battle (verse 2). Such a defeat was truly "a very great slaughter." All the Israelitish army, and probably that of the Philistines also, was composed of footmen.

11. Ark of God was taken. This was the most lamentable blow of all. To have that sacred chest with its mercy-seat and cherubim fall into the hands of the heathen foe was to a devout Israelite a certain sign that Jehovah had utterly forsaken his people. **Hophni and Phinehas were slain.** Literally, *died*. Being in charge of the ark, they would have been among the first to fall when the ark itself was captured.

12. Ran a man. Swift runners were always to be found with armies of footmen, for they were often needed to carry messages (comp. 2 Sam. 18, 19-32). **Came to Shiloh.** A distance probably of about twenty miles, so that a swift footman could easily reach it the same day on which the battle was fought. **Clothes rent, and earth upon his head.** A symbolical sign, expressive of unutterable woe (comp. Josh. 7, 6; 2 Sam. 1, 2; Job 2, 12).

13. Eli sat upon a seat by the way-side. The Hebrew is, *upon the throne*, as in chap. 1, 9. The Septuagint here reads, "Upon the seat by the gate watching the way." Some think the pontifical chair was placed just outside the gate of the tabernacles inclosure. Hence the swift footman's tidings were published in the city before they were reported to Eli. But it is quite as probable that, **when he came**, the runner rushed by the aged priest and told his message first in the city. **When the woeftul tale was told, all the city cried out.**

14. Eli heard. So loud a wall of sorrow was easily heard beyond the city gate. **Came in hastily.** Rather, *the man hastened and came and told*. He did not tell Eli, however, without special questioning, as verse 16 shows. Possibly he had intentionally avoided him on his entrance into the city, feeling that the terrible report would break the old man's heart.

15. His eyes were dim. Rather, *his eyes stood*. They were set fast with age; an expression well adapted to describe the stiff and motionless condition of the blind eye.

16. The man said. He spoke as if answering the question, "Who art thou?" Thereupon Eli has to question him still further before he draws out of him the fatal words. **What is there done?** Rev. Ver., *How went the matter?* More exactly, *What was the*

matter? He added the words **my son**, as was natural for an old man or one in authority when addressing a younger person (comp. Josh. 7, 19).

17. The messenger answered. This answer is a model of terse and thrilling statement, put in the form of a climax. The four things are: **Israel fled; great slaughter; sons dead; ark taken!**

18. When he made mention of the ark. He might have borne up under the other woes, but the loss of the hallowed symbol of God's presence with Israel was to his soul a shock which he could not survive.

In the study of this lesson we do well to observe—

1. How easy it is for over-zealous and ambitious political leaders to construe prophetic oracles to suit their own projects.
2. How difficult for such chiefs to recognize the cause of their failures in their own neglect of God's laws.
3. How delusive is a faith or an enthusiasm which does not rest on a correct knowledge of God's word.
4. No nation, however highly favored, can live and prosper on the fame of their ancestors.
5. The religious susceptibility of the heathen.
6. Outward signs and symbols are of no value without a pure and consecrated life.

English Teacher's Notes.

I REMEMBER a vessel being wrecked on a sand-bank off the eastern coast of England. As she lay there at the mercy of the tossing waves the life-boat was sent off from the shore to rescue the sailors who clung to the breaking timbers. In time they were all got off and safely conveyed to shore, but the captain would not be persuaded to accompany them. In spite of urgent entreaty from the brave men who had come to the rescue, he persisted in remaining all night on the wreck, and it was not till next morning when he was exhausted and must in half an hour more have perished that they succeeded in dragging him from the sinking ship and thus saving his life. What was it that made him cling to that ill-fated vessel with such desperate tenacity? It was not merely the natural love of a captain for the vessel committed to his charge, nor merely the natural grief at losing that which he has ruled and guided and brought perhaps through many a storm in safety. It was the consciousness that the present disaster was partly owing to his own want of care in managing the ship.

So it was in the sad case presented to us in the lesson for to-day. Eli had long held in his hands the reins of government. It was his duty to "judge" Israel diligently and wisely according to the written law committed to his keeping (Deut. 17, 9-13). To the performance of this law were many promises of protection, prosperity, and blessing given by God to Israel. But the first thing we read in to-day's passage is in exact contrast to these promises. The people of God are "smitten before the Philistines"—before the worshippers of idols, the enemies of Jehovah. When Joshua was once thus smitten he returned and fell on his face with the elders of Israel before God (Josh. 7, 6), until the reason of the defeat was revealed to him. But on this occasion there was no mourning, no searching of heart, no penitence, no putting away of the evil thing from the midst of the people, only the daring act of sending to Shiloh for the ark that it might save them out of the hand of their enemies. At Shiloh the power had slipped out of the hands of the aged and infirm high-priest into those of his godless sons, and they immediately consented to the sacrifice and took the ark into the camp. Then came the terrible disaster, the crushing defeat, the capture of the ark, "the glory of Israel," the death of

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Hophni and Phinehas, together with thirty thousand of Israel, shortly to be followed by the destruction of Shiloh (Psa. 78, 59-64) and the long servitude of Israel to the Philistines.

Here was the complete overthrow of all that had once been intrusted to Eli. Whatever he may have done in former days his work became now a hopeless wreck. When he heard that the ark of God was gone he at once saw that all was over—as it proved, for many years (chap. 7, 2)—and he knew that the terrible catastrophe was due to his own fault. His neglect to restrain his sons while yet young, which might in the beginning have been deemed more fatherly indulgence, had resulted, first in their profanation of the sacred office they filled (chap. 2, 12), then in the alienation of the people from the bringing and service of God (chap. 2, 17), and consequently in their utter destruction as a people, so that they soon became a prey to their enemies, and lastly in the loss of the crowning distinction of Israel—the outward type of the presence of God among them. When we remember all this we do not wonder first at the trembling anxiety of Eli as to the fate of the battle, and then at the despairing grief which caused his sad and sudden death. The captain could not and would not outlive the vessel his own neglect had wrecked; and though the aged priest was surely not cast away by God, whom he had so imperfectly served, still his life has proved a failure. His work when brought to the test could not abide it, and so he suffered the saddest loss of all except the loss of his own soul (see 1 Cor. 3, 13-15).

The lesson conveyed by the narrative is a solemn one. Each one, even the youngest, has something for which he is responsible. Each one exercises some influence over another, and has some part assigned him by God to carry out. The failure of a person to stand up boldly for the honor of the Lord whom he professes to serve may lead to some sorrowful wreck which he as yet little dreams of. What seems but a little weakness may turn out a fatal mistake. There is only one way to keep free from failure—obedience in little things as well as in great to the commandment of God, together with humble reliance on the great Keeper who can make the weakest strong, hold up the foot that otherwise must certainly have slipped (Psa. 94, 18), and prosper the work of his servants' hands (Psa. 90, 17).

Cambridge Notes.

Samuel's prediction, the "word" of verse 1, was fulfilled while the prophet was yet too young to lead the armies of Israel. The forty years of Philistine tyranny (Judg. 13, 1) closed with the second battle of Aphek (see next lesson), and had now run about half their course. Eli and Samson being probably contemporaries, it is well conjectured that the insurrection of the Israelites was connected with the great blow struck by the Danite hero at his death. The "Philistines" (= "aliens") were perhaps Egyptian immigrants (Amos 9, 7; Gen. 10, 13, *eg.*). At this time they formed a league of five independent cities near the south-west coast—Gath, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, and Gaza—each ruled by its own "prince." Their chief deity was the "fish-god Dagon," but Baal-zebub was worshipped at Ekron, and the Schemitic cult of Ashtoreth had also made way among them. The preternatural stolidity of their character is well brought out in the story of Samson (see our notes thereon). For the narrative of the desertion of Shiloh compare Psa. 78, 59-64; Jer. 7, 12, *Ver. 1*. The unfortunate division of chapters is due to the most improbable idea that Samuel's "word" was to call the Israelites to this disastrous battle. *Now*,

The extreme abruptness of this opening is possibly explained by the loss of a clause or two which appear in the LXX. and the Vulgate. It may equally well be the mark of a new document inserted here without change, after the usual manner of the compilers of the historical books. *Eben-zer*. A name of happier omen, given by anticipation (chap. 7, 12). *Aphek*. Probably in Benjamin, near the historic pass of Beth-horon. Another Aphek is mentioned (chap. 29, 1). *Ver. 3, Elders*. The heads of families, the regular representatives of the nation under a patriarchal government. Compare the Roman *patres*. Note that the "people" form the army and the "elders" the council of war. *Jehovah*. They recognize whence the defeat had come. *Let us*. A plausible reading, suggested by the LXX. is, "Let us bring our God out of Shiloh, that he may come," etc. This illustrates well the half-heathen conception to which the Hebrews had descended—the presence of a deity secured by the movements of his outward symbol. *Ver. 4, Shiloh*. Clearly not far off (comp. *ver. 16, "to-day"*). *Jehovah of hosts*. In Hebrew *Yahweh Selâth*, is a common title of God appearing first at this period. All the powers of heaven and earth are pictured as owning his universal sway. *Sitteth*. "Is enthroned upon." The wings of these golden cherubim overshadowed the ark, and on them the Shekinah rested (see Exod. 25, 17-22). The full title comes here to emphasize its sanctity, and consequently the magical power it was presumed to possess. *There* should probably be omitted, with LXX. and Vulgate. Hophni and Phinehas accompanied the ark. *Ver. 5*. This is doubtless a reminiscence of the siege of Jericho, whose result they attributed to the sacred symbol and the shout of victory. *Ver. 6, Hebrews*. The international title of the people, "sons of Israel" being the covenant name, used among themselves. The former signified "men from beyond [Euphrates]" referring to their original migration. An eponymous hero Eber appears in Gen. 10, 21, 24. *Ver. 7, God*. This is a word that does not suit the polytheist Philistines, and there seem to be traces in the LXX. of another reading, "because they [the Hebrews] said;" the rest of this verse also being altered to suit Philistine speakers. *Ver. 8*. The heathen conception of national deities involved, of course, that the divine patron of one tribe was mightier than another. *Yahweh*. The Israelites' deity had vanquished the gods of Egypt, and hence the Philistines' terror. *Smiling* (margin). Not the word used for the ten plagues. It refers to the overthrow at the Red Sea. *Ver. 9*. Paul perhaps had this in his mind in the exhortation of 1 Cor. 16, 13. *Servants*. Vassals, though in some cases it involved even slavery (chap. 14, 21). *Ver. 10, Tent*. Comp. 1 Kings 12, 16, etc., for such reminiscences of nomad life. Clearly the routed army fled to their homes, not to the camp, as in *ver. 3*. *Ver. 11*. The capture of the ark was meant to teach the Israelites to trust the reality and not the emblem. The subsequent plagues were to teach the Philistines that they had not conquered Jehovah. The predicted sign of doom. The family of Ithamar, Aaron's youngest son, had displaced that of Eleazar, the elder branch, in the judges' time. The course on Eli's house was completed when Abiathar was thrust out by Solomon, and Zadok's succession restored the old line. Saul's slaughter of the priests at Nob was another fulfillment. *Ver. 12, Array* (margin). Thus he left before defeat became rout. The distance was only twenty miles, and trained runners always accompanied an army to take news. Rent clothes and dust on the head were signs of mourning in all ancient nations. *His seat*. With this text we must probably suppose he sat by the

entrance to the tabernacle; with the LXX. text (see margin) he must have been by the town gate, as belittled a judge, so that the messenger passing by him to bring tidings to the city was taken back to report to him. *His heart*, etc. We may well believe that he had protested against the departure of the ark in custody of his doomed sons. VER. 14. Eli asks the bystanders, but the messenger anticipates them with the readiness so often seen in men who have bad news to tell. VER. 15. *Set*. In the fixed state of total blindness. VER. 16. *How*. Comp. 2 Sam. 1. 4. VER. 17. There is a climax, each blow heavier than the preceding. VER. 18. Eli was prepared for the loss of his sons by the prediction which he had received with such resignation. But the loss of the ark seemed to mean Jehovah's abandonment of his rebellious people. *Side*. Comp. 2 Sam. 18. 4. The raised bench on which he sat was placed sideways to the post of the gate. *Forty*. Thus the Philistine oppression, brought on by Israel's apostasy, began half-way through his judgeship.

The Lesson Council.

Question 2. *Why could such wonders be done through the ark of God at one time, and none at another?*

No wonders were done through the ark of God alone. The ark was only a symbol of the presence of God. The presence of the ark did not necessitate the presence of God himself. If certain conditions were wanting, namely, faith, obedience, and reverence toward God, the ark itself would become a source of disaster, if only for the reason of the false trust placed in it.—*Rev. H. M. Simpson.*

The wonders were conditioned on the moral character of the people. Hence when crime linked itself with apparent sanctity, when proud self-confidence supplanted faith in God, and when a superstitious regard for the material ark usurped obedience to the law it contained, all formal repetitions of past methods were powerless to avert retribution.—*Rev. W. A. Dickson.*

The wonders achieved depended upon the moral condition of Israel, and were accomplished when that condition conformed with the divine will, when the priests who bore the ark were clothed in righteousness, and when they went out under God's direction. Defeat and ruin visited them whenever they, presumptuously or superstitiously, met an enemy with it, under other conditions. It became then no more than any other wooden box, as on this occasion.—*Rev. A. E. P. Albert, D.D.*

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Poor old Eli!

He sits alone in Shiloh waiting for news from the battle. When did he ever feel more lonely and wretched? His two sons have gone to the war, and what if in battle they should pay the penalty due their sins! But there is the ark of God—that too has gone! Behind the sacred veil, before the most holy place there is to-day no ark of God! Dark and deserted is the holy of holies! Did Eli do right to let the ark go, the ark of Jehovah dwelling between the cherubim with outstretched wings, day and night?

But it all came about in this way. Down-trodden Israel got up out of the dust and tried to stand before the Philistines in battle. It was one angry, tumultuous, horrible collision, and when it was all over there were the faces of four thousand Israelites turned up from the battle-field, white and cold and dead. Then Israel, that lived to mourn and tried to stand up again, cried, "The

ark, the ark! We must fetch the ark of the covenant. That shall fight for us." Was it any wonder? Had Israel forgotten how Jordan, proud and swelling, fled away from the presence of the ark borne down to its banks? So Philistia shall flee away from the presence of the ark, the same old ark, borne into battle.

So they came to Shiloh for the ark. Eli heard them coming, and with a trembling heart he let the ark go. O day of heavy-heartedness! Will the ark ever come back?

But hark! Even now we seem to hear a great uproar, a mighty shout, swelling all through the camp of Israel, rising up to the heavens! It is Israel's loud, ringing shout of welcome to the ark borne into the camp.

"What is that?" ask the startled Philistines, and when they hear it is the ark their faces, pale with terror, are white as those of the dead Israelites on the plain after the fight.

"It is God! It is God!" is the solemn thought.

"Yes," they say, "God has come into the camp."

O Philistines, Hophni and Phinehas, wicked and presumptuous, are within the camp! They came with the ark. Did God come? We shall see.

Another heavy-hearted day has come. Eli, sitting alone in Shiloh, is waiting for news from the battle. O, if he had sent his sons as men of God into the fight! He cannot see, but does he hear a swift foot-fall? Somebody has come to Shiloh, his clothes torn, and dust is upon his head. With sobs and sighs he tells his story, and as he speaks others tear their robes. Others hear dust on the head. Others wail and cry aloud, and Eli hears their lamentation.

"What is it?" he is querying.

And then the messenger stands before him.

Israel is defeated!

Eli's sons are dead!

The ark of God is the dishonest booty of idolaters!

How long there may be an empty holy of holies!

But look! Somebody run to the old priest! He is falling! He drops from his seat! He is lifted—dead!

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Fruit of Sin.*

Review briefly, recalling the warning that God sent to Eli through Samuel. Make two small trees on the board. Print on the trunk of each, "Self-will." Name them "Hophni" and "Phinehas." Ask children to think of the trees as emblems of the lives of Eli's sons. What grows out from the trunk of a tree? Branches. If the trunk is not good, the branches will not be. Talk about self-will. These boys would not mind their good father Eli. They were priests, as he was, but they did not serve God because they believed in him and loved him; they served him for love of money, and to please themselves. They did this for many years, and God bore with them. Eli reproved them, but they did not listen. What was below the self-will in their characters?

Print "Sin" at the base of the tree, and teach that this always underlies self-will. Name some of the branches to show what grew out of this evil stem—Covetousness, Impurity, Untruth, Disobedience, etc.

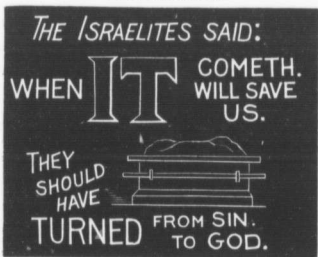
A Great Battle. The Israelites had been growing more and more sinful. It was now twenty years since the Lord had sent them warning by Samuel, but they kept on in their evil ways.

Each that sin grows stronger and stronger by indulgence, and illustrate, if deemed best, by the winding of the thread about the wrists. Show how easily it is broken at first, but how impossible it is to break the fine threads when many of them are together. Tell story of the sad defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines.

A Great Loss. Show picture of the ark of God. Tell that it meant the presence of God among his people. What will keep God out of the heart? Yes, sin; and sin can keep him from coming to the help of those who cling to it. When we put away sin, then God will come to our help. Tell how the Israelites sent for the ark. They thought it would save them. Only God can save, and he will save only when we put away sin and turn to him. Tell of the overthrow of the Israelites, and the capture of the ark.

The Death of Eli. Eli was now an old man, ninety-eight years old. He loved God, though he had sinned in letting his sons do so wickedly. He was very sad about the taking of the ark to the battle, for he knew the people had not put away sin. Tell how the sad news of the defeat and the death of his sons came to him, and what followed. Print in large letters, "Sin kills," and teach that we must learn to fear the beginnings of self-will, for it will surely end in ruin.

Blackboard.



This is an illustration of the folly of trusting in a religious ceremony or arm for salvation when the heart has not turned from sin. The point of this lesson is that the Israelites did not turn to God, and call on him to save them. What did they do? [Have some one tell.] Yes, they said, "When it [the ark] comes, it will save us." What does God's word say about confession of sins? Read Psa. 66, 18; 32, 5; Prov. 28, 13; 1 John 1, 9. A religious ceremony alone will not save a sinner. One must repent of sin, forsake sin, and turn to God. Joining the Church will not save one without forgiveness of sins. A certificate of Church membership, without love toward God, is of no avail. God is merciful, ready and willing to save, only we must turn to him.

Berean Methods, The Teachers' Meeting.

Draw a map showing as nearly as possible the position of the Philistines and that of the Israelitish army, and the relation of the battle-field to Shiloh. Picture these two armies. The Philistines were a warlike race, doubtless well furnished with ammunition. The Israelites were a thoroughly equipped agricultural people, and had been frequently through the previous years deprived of all their weapons of war by hostile invaders.... Describe an ancient battle; its test of physical and mental endurance. The ark of the covenant; its history; reasons for superstitious regard in which it was held.... Genuine piety of Eli, the climax of whose grief is found in the news of the capture of the ark of God.... The effect of this capture on a people who regarded its presence as the proof and indication of the presence of their God.

References. FREEMAN, Ver. 4: "Between the cherubim," 295. Ver. 12: Rendering the clothes, 70; Earth on the head, 279. Ver. 18: Gates, 15; The seat of judgment, 248.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 234, 1091, 2943, 3944, 4313, 4363, 8198, 8201, 5005, 9196, 10895, 10957, 11442. Ver. 8: Prose, 9131. Ver. 9: Prose, 8481, 8486, 8487; Poetical, 550; Prose, 485, 551, 5982, 7596, 12190, 12197. Ver. 11: Poetical, 3122; Prose, 7335, 7827. Ver. 12: Prose, 6518, 11945. Ver. 15: 8297, 8212, 8213, 8215.

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Results of Forsaking God.

I. RESULTS TO ISRAEL.

- 1. Weakness.** "Israel was smitten," v. 2.
"Turned their backs....accursed." Josh. 7, 12.
- 2. Superstition.** "Fetch the ark," v. 3.
"To obey is better than sacrifice," 1 Sam. 15, 22.
- 3. Presumption.** "Israel shouted," v. 5.
"Tempted....the most high God," Psa. 78, 56.
- 4. Loss of Privilege.** "Ark of God....taken," v. 11.
"He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh," Psa. 78, 60.

II. RESULTS TO ELI.

- 1. Anxiety.** "Heart trembled," v. 13.
"If I forget thee....tongue cleave," Psa. 137, 6.
- 2. Sorrow.** "Two sons....dead," v. 17.
"In one day they shall die," 1 Sam. 2, 34.
- 3. Death.** "He died," v. 18.
"I will cut off thine arm," 1 Sam. 2, 31.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

Folly and Sin.

- 1.** All misdeeds arise from either folly or sin.
- 2.** All follies bring their own mischievous consequences in this life.
- 3.** All sins merit punishment in the life to come.
- 4.** God's providence is an instrument of chastisement in this world, as well as of advantage and prosperity. But providence never punishes.
- 5.** God's providence will supply all short-comings of good sense, if God is only applied to for wisdom.
- 6.** If men were guided by providence in their secular actions and by his Spirit in their moral decisions, sins and sorrow would be banished from the earth, and the millennium would already have dawned.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The sorrowful death of Eli. 1 Sam. 4, 1-9.
Tu. The sorrowful death of Eli. 1 Sam. 4, 10-18.
W. Eli warned. 1 Sam. 2, 27-34.
Th. Certainty of death. Job 7, 1-10.
F. Righteous judgment. Lam. 3, 31-41.
S. Parental obligation. Deut. 11, 18-25.
S. God's law to be taught. Psa. 78, 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.

His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. 1 Sam. 3, 13.

TIME.—1141 B. C.

PLACES.—Ebenezer. Aphek. Shiloh.
DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Retribution.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 248, Dominion Hymnal.
O happy is the child who hears
Instruction's warning voice.
- No. 275, Dominion Hymnal.
God of pity, God of grace,
When we humbly seek thy face.
- No. 278, Dominion Hymnal.
Sing to the great Jehovah's praise
All praise to him belongs.

Eventide,
Though troubles assail,
There's a wisdom,
Thy word, Almighty God,
O come at once to Jesus,
Worship of,
Hasten, sinner, to be wise,
Depth of mercy! can there be,
Rock of Ages,
Is this thy time of trouble?
Come unto me,
Dare to do right,
Lord, I care not for riches,

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Army Smitten.

What foe troubled Israel through many years of her history?

Where was the territory of this people?

What was their character?

What was the effect of the battle described in vers. 1, 2?

2. The Ark Taken.

How did Israel purpose to recover the prestige lost in this first battle?

What was the character of the nation at this time?

Why should the elders think there was virtue in the ark for winning victories? Josh. 6.

In what did the power of the ark consist?

By whom was it brought into the camp?

What was their record before God? 1 Sam. 2, 12-17.

What was the effect of the arrival on the Israelites?

What on the enemy?

What was the sequel?

3. The Priest Dead.

Whither was the news of the disaster carried?

What was the effect of the news—on the city? on the priest?

Which thing of the three parts of this message affected Eli most?

What prophecy had been literally fulfilled by this day's events?

What part did Samuel have in this disaster?

What lesson concerning ritualism can be learned from this incident?

What was the lesson taught many centuries after in this same line? Zech. 4, 6.

Practical Teachings.

See this nation after disaster turn to a semblance of godliness. They sent for the ark, not because they revered God, but because they had met with defeat.

How many times we send for "arks" after trouble comes. We are very willing to have God's help, but we never want to serve. The ark was no fetish.

The ark came. God did not. The ark was carried into the fight. God was not. The ark was taken. God was not. Sin may triumph on earth for a while, but God lives and rules.

Poor Eli: his last hours bitter because of weakness and sin. His bitterest thought must have been, "I might have changed all this, if I had done my duty." Remorse is the same to-day—bitter and pitiless.

Hints for Home Study.

1. Study from Exod. 25, 10-22 about the structure of the ark.

2. Learn concerning every thing that was captured with it. 2 Chron. 6, 11; Heb. 9, 4.

3. Study the sequel to the ark's capture. What happened where it was carried? etc.

4. Learn what you can about the Philistine people. 1 Chron. 1, 8, 12; Gen. 20, 12-14; Josh. 13, 1, 2; Judg. 3, 1-3; 3, 31; 14, etc.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Army Smitten, vers. 1, 2.

To whom did Samuel's message come?

Against whom did Israel go to battle?

Where were the two camps pitched?

Who began the attack?

Which army was victorious?

What was the loss to the Israelites?

2. The Ark Taken, vs. 3-11.

What did the elders say when the fugitives came in?

What did they propose for safety?

What then did the people do?

Who were in charge of the ark?

What sign of joy did the people give when the ark came?

What questions did the Philistines ask?

What did they soon learn?

How did the news affect them?

What did they say of the might of Israel's God?

With what words did they encourage each other?

Which army was victorious in the second battle?

How many Israelites were slain?

What further calamity occurred?

3. The Priest Dead, vs. 12-18.

Who brought the news of defeat to Shiloh?

What anxious watcher sat by the way-side?

How was the news received in the city?

What question did Eli ask?

What did the messenger say to him?

What effect had the news?

How old was Eli at his death?

How long had he judged Israel?

What sin had not brought punishment? (Golden Text.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

What is there in this lesson from which we can learn—

1. That sin brings weakness?

2. That sin brings punishment?

3. That sin brings death?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Learn by what names the ark was called, and why each was given?

Learn how long the Philistines had the ark, and what evil's came to them because of it.

Learn what proper name commemorates the capture of the ark.

Learn of an earlier defeat of Israel because of a sinner's wrong-doing.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What were Eli's sons named? Hophni and Phinehas.

What is said of them? "They knew not the Lord."

What was Eli's sin? He allowed his sons to do wrong.

What does God want parents to do? To keep their children from doing wrong.

Why could not God bless the Israelites now? They were wicked, and he must punish sin.

Who came to fight against Israel? The Philistines.

Who gained the victory? The Philistines.

What did the Israelites bring to help them? The ark.

What did they hope? That God would fight for them.

Why would not God fight for them? Because of their sin.

How many Israelites were killed? Thirty thousand.

What was taken from them? The ark.

What became of Eli's sons? They were killed.

Who waited at home to hear the news of the battle? Eli.

What happened when he heard the sad news of defeat? He fell back and died.

What did this defeat mean? That God was angry with the Israelites.

Words with Little People.

WHAT PARENTS OUGHT TO DO.

Show children the right way. Lead them in it. Restrain them when they leave it.

WHAT CHILDREN OUGHT TO DO.

Listen to what their parents teach. Believe that it is love which restrains. Honor and obey their parents.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. What disaster to Israel does our lesson record? Defeat by the Philistines.

2. How did the Israelites think to recover lost ground? By bringing the ark of God.

3. What was the effect of this action? The ark of God was taken.

4. Why did God allow these troubles? Because of Israel's sin.

5. What was the last effect of this calamity? The sorrowful death of Eli.

6. Why did such sorrow come upon him? "His sons made themselves," etc.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

30. How many Persons are there in the Godhead?

In the Godhead there are Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are one God.

Matthew xxviii. 19.

B. C. 1141-1120.]

LESSON III. SAMUEL THE REFORMER.

[Ju'y 21.

Authorized Version.

Revised Version.

1 Sam. 7. 1-12. [Commit to memory verses 3, 4.]



1 And the men of Kir'jath-je'a-rim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of A-bin'a-dab in the hill, and sanctified E-le-je-a-zar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kir'jath-je'a-rim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years; and all the house of Is'ra-el lamented after the LORD.

3 And Sam'u-el spake unto all the house of Is'ra-el, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ash'ta-roth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Phi-lis'tines.

4 Then the children of Is'ra-el did put away Ba'al-im and Ash'ta-roth, and served the LORD only.

5 And Sam'u-el said, Gather all Is'ra-el to Miz'peh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6 And they gathered together to Miz'peh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Sam'u-el judged the children of Is'ra-el in Miz'peh.

7 And when the Phi-lis'tines heard that the children of Is'ra-el were gathered together to Miz'peh, the lords of the Phi-lis'tines went up against Is'ra-el. And when the children of Is'ra-el heard it, they were afraid of the Phi-lis'tines.

8 And the children of Is'ra-el said to Sam'u-el, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Phi-lis'tines.

9 And Sam'u-el took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the LORD; and Sam'u-el cried unto the LORD for Is'ra-el; and the LORD heard him.

10 And as Sam'u-el was offering up the burnt-offering, the Phi-lis'tines drew near to battle against Is'ra-el; but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Phi-lis'tines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Is'ra-el.

11 And the men of Is'ra-el went out of Miz'peh, and pursued the Phi-lis'tines, and smote them, until they came unto Beth'car.

12 Then Sam'u-el took a stone, and set it between Miz'peh and Shen, and called the name of it Eb-en-e-zer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

1 And the men of Kir'jath-je'a-rim came and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of A-bin'a-dab in the hill, and sanctified E-le-je-a-zar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2 And it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode in Kir'jath-je'a-rim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years; and all the house of Is'ra-el lamented after the LORD. And Sam'u-el spake unto all the house of Is'ra-el, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your heart, then put away the strange gods and the Ash'ta-roth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Phi-lis'tines. Then the children of Is'ra-el did put away the Ba'al-Im and the Ash'ta-roth, and served the LORD only.

5 And Sam'u-el said, Gather all Is'ra-el to Miz'pah, and I will pray for you unto the LORD. And they gathered together to Miz'pah, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Sam'u-el judged the children of Is'ra-el

7 in Miz'pah. And when the Phi-lis'tines heard that the children of Is'ra-el were gathered together to Miz'pah, the lords of the Phi-lis'tines went up against Is'ra-el. And when the children of Is'ra-el heard it,

8 they were afraid of the Phi-lis'tines. And the children of Is'ra-el said to Sam'u-el, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of

9 the hand of the Phi-lis'tines. And Sam'u-el took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto the LORD; and Sam'u-el cried unto the LORD for Is'ra-el; and the LORD answered him.

10 And as Sam'u-el was offering up the burnt-offering, the Phi-lis'tines drew near to battle against Is'ra-el; but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Phi-lis'tines, and discomfited them;

11 and they were smitten down before Is'ra-el. And the men of Is'ra-el went out of Miz'pah, and pursued the Phi-lis'tines, and smote them, until they came under Beth'car. Then Sam'u-el took a stone,

12 and set it between Miz'pah and Shen, and called the name of it Eb-en-e-zer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

The loss of the ark was a terrible blow to Israel, but it probably also taught them some salutary lessons. The victorious Philistines carried the wonderful trophy to the temple of their God Dagon, in Ashdod. But their idol was overthrown and the whole city was severely plagued. They carried it about from city to city, but plague, terror, and confusion followed in every place. After remaining in the Philistine territory seven months it was returned to Israel as far as to Beth-shemesh, and treated with such reverence as the lords of the Philistines knew how to show. But the people of Beth-shemesh were smitten for sacrilegious handling of the sacred treasure, and they petitioned the inhabitants of Kirjath-je'rim to come and take it away. Such is the substance of what is related in the two chapters intervening between the last lesson and the present. The reader should carefully study the details of these two chapters, and note that the power and glory of Israel's God were magnified among the Philistines more by the bare symbol of his presence than when it was accompanied by the corrupt priests. The present lesson sets in strong contrast with the previous one the great defeat of the Philistines by the Israelites under the leadership of the holy Samuel.

Verse 1. Kirjath-je'rim. The name means "city of forests," and indicates the presence in ancient times of extensive forests in this part of Canaan. It was seven or eight miles from Beth-shemesh, on the way toward Shiloh, and may be noted on the map a few miles to the north-west of Jerusalem. It has been commonly identified in modern times with a place called Kuryet-el-Enab, situated in a picturesque basin among the hills, but Lieutenant Conder proposes to identify it with Erma, some four miles east of Beth-shemesh. The men of this place were requested by the people of Beth-shemesh to come down and fetch the ark away from their city, where it had caused such terrible destruction. (See vers. 19-21 of the previous chapter, to which the verse properly belongs.)

Fetched...brought. Literally, "caused to go up and caused to come in;" that is, effected its transportation. In what particular manner it was brought up and brought into Abinadab's house we are not informed. Why it was not taken back to Shiloh is a question not easily determined. It has been commonly supposed that the **Abinadab** here mentioned was a Levite, whose house was in the hill, or upon the hill-side, overlooking the town. This would have been a reason for taking the ark thither, and it is confirmed by the statement that

he sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark. The Levites of Beth-shemesh, which was one of the Levitical cities (Josh. 21, 16), seem to have proven unfit to guard this sacred treasure, and were guilty of sacrilege (see chap. 6, 15-20). Hence its transfer to Kirjath-jearim. Judg. 17, 7 shows that in those days some of the Levites sojourned in cities which were not specially set apart for the sons of Levi.

2. Twenty years. This was a period of dense gloom and of deep humiliation for Israel. Samuel grew up to manhood, married, and had children (comp. chap. 8, 1). Of his ministry as a prophet during this time we have no certain knowledge, but this chapter shows that he was recognized and revered as a leader. The separation of ark and tabernacle demoralized what remained of regular worship among the tribes, and they were left without any one central seat of national worship. **Lamented after the Lord.** Several eminent authorities translate this, "assembled themselves after the Lord." Thus rendered, it serves as an appropriate introduction to the next verse, wherein **all the house of Israel** is addressed as if assembled together. On the other hand, the word so translated always elsewhere means "to lament," and hence it seems best to adhere to the common translation.

3. Samuel spake. We need not suppose that what is here written was spoken to **all the house of Israel** in formal assembly. Rather, his word of prophecy, consisting of rebuke, warning, and exhortation, was spoken to a number of the leaders of the people and by them repeated to others. **If ye do return.** This conditioning their salvation from their enemies upon repentance and obedience is characteristic of much of the Old Testament prophecy. The people are addressed as having gone away from God; and hence the exhortation to return. **With all your hearts.** True repentance and acceptable service must spring from the heart and must affect the whole heart. **Put away the strange gods.** This same language occurs in Gen. 35, 2, and Josh. 24, 23. Through all their history up to the time of the exile, the Israelites showed a most perverse tendency to cling to some form of idolatry. We meet the mention of teraphim in a number of instances (Gen. 30, 19; Judg. 17, 5; 1 Sam. 19, 13; 2 Kings 23, 24); and open idolatry is mentioned, as in Judg. 2, 12, 13. According to Amos they had carried about a star-symbol of Chiton, or Saturn (Amos 5, 26). Among the strange gods which they had followed **Ashtaroth** is here expressly mentioned. This is the Hebrew plural form of the word **Ashtoreth**, which appears 1 Kings 11, 5. **Ashtoreth** was the female, as **Baal** was the male, divinity of the Phenicians (see ver. 4). Her worship was very ancient and wide-spread, and her rites and ceremonies filthy and abominable. **Prepare your hearts unto the Lord.** Or, "establish your hearts firmly unto Jehovah." There had ever been too great a lack of steadfastness in their relations to Jehovah, as the above mentioned facts evince. **Him only.** According to the obvious requirement of the first commandment of the decalogue. All forms of idolatry were treason to the fundamental principle of the religion of Israel. **He will deliver you... Philistines.** Though the Philistines had been awed so as to return the ark, they still held the Israelites in irksome bondage.

4. Israel did put away. Here was genuine repentance, shown not by weeping and sentiment only, but by obedience to the word of the Lord. **Baalim and Ashtaroth.** Names in the plural, denoting all the images of the male and female idols of the Zidonians.

5. Samuel said. To the elders of the tribes. He thus issued a proclamation for a great assembly. **All**

Israel to Mizpeh. The phrase "all Israel" here, as often elsewhere, means a full representation of the people, not every individual of the entire nation. The name Mizpeh means "a watch-tower," or lofty place whence one could survey a wide range of country. It was accordingly given to several places which answered this purpose. The one here mentioned is not the Mizpeh of Gilead, where Jephthah summoned the eastern tribes to prepare for war against Ammon (Judg. 10, 17), but the Mizpeh of Benjamin, mentioned in Josh. 18, 25, 26, in connection with Gibeah and Ramah. Two empires near Jerusalem present rival claims for being the site of this ancient Mizpeh. One is now known as Nebi Samwil, about five miles north-west, the other the he called Scopas, about a mile directly north of Jerusalem. **I will pray for you.** Samuel is remarkably celebrated for his prayers (see chap. 8, 6; 12, 17; 15, 11; Psa. 99, 6; Jer. 15, 1).

6. Drew water, and poured it out. All Orientals are keenly alive to the significance of symbolical actions. This pouring out of water before Jehovah signifies the pouring out of the soul in humble penitence before him. Thus the psalmist says, "I am poured out like water" (Psa. 22, 15); and in Lam. 2, 19 we read, "Pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord." **Fasted.** The symbolical act of penitence was supplemented by this sign of lamentation and grief. **We have sinned.** To their symbolical acts they also added open and audible confession. **Samuel judged... in Mizpeh.** He there and then, as this narrative shows, performed the work of a judge of Israel. The people came to him with their questions as they did to Moses (Exod. 18, 13-16), and his words of rebuke and counsel (comp. ver. 3), and his encouragement and prayers (ver. 9), helped Israel to victory.

7. The Philistines heard. These enemies probably had their garrisons in several strongholds of the country, and were quick to notice such a gathering as this at Mizpeh, and to regard it as the beginning of a revolt from their power. **The lords.** Chiefs; representatives of the confederate cities of the nation. These leaders joined their military forces to keep Israel in subjection. **Went up against Israel.** In battle array. They were resolved to nip in the bud all such beginnings of revolt as this great assembly at Mizpeh seemed to indicate. **Israel heard.** Fugitives, coming in from the country bordering on the Philistine plain, reported the march of an approaching army of their enemies, and, after forty years' oppression by these lords of the plain, the Israelites were naturally very much afraid of the Philistines. They were probably poorly armed (comp. chap. 13, 19-22), and, having come to Mizpeh for other purposes than war, they felt their want of ability to cope with the enemy, and feared still more grievous oppression might ensue.

8. Cease not to cry. They feel that now their only hope is in Jehovah. One principal object of their gathering at Mizpeh was to have the prophet pray for them (see ver. 5).

9. Samuel took a sucking lamb. The law provided that an animal victim to be acceptable must be over seven days old (Exod. 22, 30; Lev. 22, 27). Such a young lamb was, like the first-fruits of the field, a most fitting expression of the tender affection of the heart. **A burnt-offering wholly.** So that it was not like the peace-offering, of which those offering it ate a share, but was entirely consumed on the altar as a sign that the whole people offered themselves penitently in complete consecration unto God. Being a Levite and a prophet, Samuel felt himself warranted in offering this sacrifice with his own hand. Ark and tabernacle were separate, the Aaronic priesthood in a demoralized condition, and this

was an extraordinary occasion. Hence Levitical laws and customs, appropriate for other circumstances, were not considered binding here. **Samuel cried.** A loud, far-sounding cry of supplication for divine help in that hour of peril. **The Lord heard.** Rather, "answered." Thus illustrating how powerfully the supplication of a righteous man avails in its working (James 5. 16).

10. As Samuel was offering. The enemy paid no attention to these acts of worship, but probably deemed it a favorable time to begin the attack. **The Lord thundered.** Here was a supernatural display of divine power in behalf of Israel. **With a great thunder.** Rather, "with a great voice." Loud peals of thunder from the heavens seemed like the voice of God shouting against the Philistines, and putting them in terror and confusion. **Discomfited them.** Put them in consternation and dismay. **They were smitten.** As Israel had been before them on the former occasion (see chap. 4. 3, 10).

11. Pursued the Philistines. They improved the great opportunity thus granted them, and chased the terrified Philistines, and smote them, probably for several days. The word here rendered "smote" is different from that rendered "smitten" in verse 10. That denotes a judgment-stroke of heaven; this refers to the blows and slaughter incident to battle. The Israelites followed and beat down their foes until... **under Beth-car.** The situation of Beth-car is now unknown, but it was probably on or near the border of the Philistine plain, and occupied some commanding height, so that those who fled by it would be spoken of as "under" it.

12. Took a stone. For a memorial monument of the nation's gratitude. **Between Mizpeh and Shen.** Both these names have the article, and may be translated as appellatives: "the watch-tower and the tooth." Shen, which means a tooth, was probably some sharp, tooth-shaped rock or cliff, but its location is unknown. Samuel set up his monument at the place where Jehovah's help had been notably conspicuous, and called it **Eben-ezer**, which means "stone of help." It seems to have been erected at the place where Israel was smitten and the ark captured twenty years before (see chap. 4. 1; 5. 1). **Hitherto.** Up to this point; so far. In this lesson learn—

1. Penitence and prayer without the ark are better than ark, priests, and armies without penitence and prayer.

2. God's favor, in answer to prayer and reform, is mighty than all weapons of war.

3. One great reformer is worth more to a nation than many mere military chieftains.

4. There is propriety in monumental exhibitions of gratitude to God.

English Teacher's Notes.

PERHAPS the most striking part of the story told us in the passage for to-day is that related in the third verse when read together with the first clause of chap. 4. 1. In the latter verse we read that "the word of Samuel came to all Israel." Then in chap. 7. 3 we get a glimpse of a long, long season of spiritual drought, together, as we infer from ver. 4, with temporal bondage, the nation of Israel being under the rule and oppression of the Philistines. The period of gloom during which there was nothing to chronicle for future ages lasted nearly twenty years. But at the end of that time a change had come over the nation, and "all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord." Here was the sign of restoration to follow. But what has brought this about?

There stands on the table beside me as I write, a

primrose which three months ago was adorned with fair white blossoms, with plenty of buds half open and others ready to follow. But the promise which these gave was never fulfilled. As the already open blossoms faded away, those which should have succeeded all died in the bud, and the leaves began to wither and shrivel up. I wondered what was the cause, till one day, emptying a little water which had run through into the saucer beneath, I found a worm in it which had evidently been preying on the plant. This having been removed the question arose as to whether the spoiled plant with the leaves gone from one side and no sign of any possible blossom to come should be kept or not. I kept it, marred as it was, and tended it day by day, giving just so much water as was needed, placing it in the light, though not in the hot sun. And now a sweet odor is rising up from some shoots which are lifting their heads, and the delicate, creamy buds are just beginning to appear again.

Just so during those sad twenty years God did not leave Israel uncared for. There was a prophet among the people. And his holy example as well as his faithful words were as light in the darkness, as springs in the drought; and long and helpless as the time must have seemed, at the end of it the tiny buds of repentance began to appear, promising the fair blossoms of restoration and peace and gladness. The "reform" under Samuel was preparing silently and steadily. The prophet did not waver or weary in repeating the word of God, and at length he had to answer a definite inquiry which must have been made of him by the people and bid them "put away the strange gods" and "prepare their hearts unto the Lord and serve him only."

The long, patient, almost unrecorded service had now to be followed by prompt, vigorous, and heroic action. There was first the fast at Mizpeh, the public expression of Israel's repentance; next, the open assumption of authority by Samuel in defiance of the Philistine rule; then the attack of the enemy, the sacrifice, the prayer, and the victory; and then the setting up of the stone "Eben-ezer" in commemoration of the Lord's deliverance. These events followed fast the one upon the other, and stand out in bold relief on the page of Scripture history. But where had they been without the long years of patient working and waiting?

It is not every one who is called to such a work as that of Samuel. It is only once in a while that we meet with the reformer of a whole nation. But on a small scale a similar work may come to many in the class. Each one who knows and serves the Lord Jesus is bound to be a "reformer." However obscure and unknown, there is some one whom he may influence, some one whom he may help to carry out our Golden Text and "cease to do evil" and "to learn to do well." But let the fact be emphasized that it is the quiet, steady, unwavering witness for Christ that tells on others. Now and then the occasion may come for bold and spirited action like that of Samuel with regard to the Philistines. But the ordinary way of "reform" is by persevering, whole-hearted, faithful continuance in well-doing. And this, by the grace of God, may be accomplished even through a child.

Cambridge Notes.

1 Sam. 7. 1-12.

At the time of our lesson Samuel had apparently reached the age of thirty, at which so many prophets began their public work. With his labors came deliverance, but the Philistines were only temporarily checked. Their tyranny was even heavier in Saul's reign, and after the disruption their still-born hostility was a thorn

in Israel's side and Judah's until the age of the Maccabees.

VER. 1. *Kerith-Yearim*. "City of woods" (comp. Psa. 132, 6), lay on the frontier of Judah. It was perhaps selected as the nearest town on the road to Shiloh. *Up*. For the city was in the hill country. Abinadab was almost certainly a Levite, as Josephus says. *Hill*. Some unnamed height in the neighborhood, possibly marking one of the "high places" so often used for worship. *Sanctified*. As a Levite, for specially Levitical functions. VER. 2. The ark had remained seven months (chap. 6, 1) in Philistine hands, and now it had lain for about twenty years in Abinadab's house before these reforms of Samuel's. It was not placed in a public sanctuary until David's time (2 Sam. 6). *Lamented*. A difficult word. The text is a vivid description of the at last repentant people turning to cry after the God whom they had repelled from them. The margin, which has excellent authority, shows us the spontaneous instinct that brought Israel together. VER. 3. *If*. Samuel puts their repentance to the test just as the Baptist does (Matt. 3, 8). *Strange*. That is, foreign, the "idols of the nations." *Ashtaroth*, plural of *Ash-toreth*. See our note on Judg. 2, 11 (Dec. 2, 1888), and comp. 1 Kings 11, 5. She was the "queen of heaven," goddess of the moon or of the planet Venus, and her worship, the foulest of all Oriental cults, passed into Greece with the name of Aphrodite, to bring the same poison there. *Direct* (margin), so read. *Only*. "He is a jealous God," and it is this attribute that rouses pagan hostility to his worship. VER. 4. The plural names of Bani and Ash-toreth indicate that the Israelites adopted all the various cults of these deities, as differentiated by local names or special functions. VER. 5. *Mizpah*. "The watch-tower," always with the definite article, to show that it is not quite a proper name yet. It lay near Jerusalem on the north. *Pray*. The eager penetrating tones of Samuel's voice in these intercessions were remembered as peculiarly characteristic of the great Prophet (comp. chap. 8, 6; 12, 17 *sq.*; and Psa. 90, 6; Jer. 15, 1). VER. 6. *Drew water*. Some have connected this with the traditional rite at the feast of tabernacles, allegorized in Isa. 12, 3 and John 7, 37, *sq.* But the water was then poured on the altar and as a sign of joy; it was scooped on the ground (LXX.) and accompanied the fast of penitence. Others more probably take the water as a symbol of purifying the land, and others of hearts poured forth in penitence. *Fasted*. As on the day of atonement (Lev. 16, 29). The ceremonies of this day had the same purpose as those which were systematized in the Levitical ritual for that yearly occasion. *We have sinned*. Comp. Judg. 10, 10; 2 Sam. 12, 13. *Judged*. This describes the reformation which he carried out at this prolonged assembly, involving his assumption for the future of the functions of "Judge" (again see notes December 2, 1888). Samuel's government was much more universal and thorough than any of his predecessors had exercised.

VER. 7. The assembly lasted so long that the Philistines suspected an insurrection and massed their forces. *Lords*. The "princes" of the five towns (see last lesson). Thus the whole army of the confederacy marched on Mizpah. VER. 8. *Case*. Literally, "be not silent from crying," like Psa. 28, 1. VER. 9. *Lamb*. See Lev. 22, 27. *Whole*. A more probable reading is suggested by the LXX. and Josephus. "Offered it as a burnt-offering for all the people." *Answered*. Quoted in Psa. 90, 6. VER. 10. The "answer" is the "great voice" (Psa. 29, 3) with which Jehovah thundered. Comp. Isa. 65, 24. *Discomfited*. "Struck panic into," a word used, as panic was originally, for supernatural defeats. VER. 11.

Beth-car. Above the road to Philistia, but unknown otherwise. VER. 12. *Shen*. Literally, "the tooth," some sharp rock called so from its shape. The word recurs in chap. 14, 4. *Eben-ezer*. See margin. This signal victory on the very site of the disaster of twenty years before emphasized Jehovah's lesson to the people. They never thought of using the ark as a charm again. *Hither*. The thought is exactly that of Psa. 105, 12. VER. 13. The events of the next chapter show that this subjugation was only relative, probably extending over the time of Samuel's active judgeship. VER. 14. These verses describe the period of Samuel's prime, his military success, and his vigorous and equitable administration. The pure theocracy was to be exhibited at its best before yielding to the earthlier ideal of the monarchy. *From Ekron*, etc. Not including these cities, which had never been Israelite. Judah's occupation of Ekron (Judg. 1, 18) was brief. The frontier towns between Ekron and Gath were released from vassalage. *Amorites*. That is, "highlanders," who thus joined with a people of like habits. The name is often used generally of the aborigines of Palestine. VER. 15. *Judged*. Surrendering his military and administrative functions to his sons and then to Saul, but remaining to the last by far the most venerated authority in the land. VER. 16. *Circuit*. A very confined one, for all these places were in Benjamin. We may suppose that the routine work was done by the elders in each town, but that serious matters came to Samuel in Ramah. None of the Judges had moved much outside a rather small circle. *Beth-el*. For its eventful history see Gen. 12, 3; 28, 11, *sq.*; 35, 10; Judg. 20, 18, 26; 1 Kings 12, 32, *sq.*; Hos. 4, 15; 10, 5. *Gilgal*. An important place during the conquest. VER. 17. *Ramah*. His birthplace (chap. 1, 1) and burial-place (chap. 21, 1) is claimed by no less than eight sites. It may be identical with Arimathea (from *Ramathaim*, the dual, "two heights"), *Atar*. Not improbably he may have erected the tabernacle there. It was at Gibeon, hard by (?) at Solomon's accession.

The Lesson Council.

Question 3. What were the characteristics of the reformation or revival under Samuel?

The revival was preceded (1) by a profound sense of personal wickedness; (2) by a distressing sense of abandonment by God; and (3) by a conviction of the folly of attempting the service of God and of the heathen deities at the same time. The reformation consisted (1) in an absolute abandonment of the easy, sensuous, and selfish idolatrous rites; (2) in a gathering by common consent of all the moral force in the great assembly of Mizpah, in a church-like way; and (3) in sole trust in God, not, this time, in the ark or in Samuel. This trust in God was shown in the prayer offered.—*Rec. H. M. Simpson.*

The reformation began where their troubles began more than a score of years before; in the moral condition of the priesthood and the people. Instead of the vile sons of Eli, Eleazar, who has been sanctified or ceremoniously set apart, is put in charge of the ark of the Lord. Instead of vainly trusting in the ark for victory, while their hearts sinfully cling to their idolatries, the people now, under the private exhortations of Samuel, turn to God with their hearts.—*Rec. A. E. P. Albert, D.D.*

1. It evinced deep sorrow for sin. Strength of sorrow is always proportioned to one's knowledge of good. As Israel recalled holier days they bitterly lamented after their offended Lord. The fasting, the public confession of guilt, the intercession through Samuel, and the will-

ingness to accept any terms were evidences of a moral revolution of the best kind. 2. It laid foundations for future obedience by destroying the idols which caused Israel to sin, and by sacrifices of burnt-offering which attested their unreserved consecration to the Lord. 3. It secured the brightest era in their national history. As calamity followed backsliding, so fidelity insured prosperity. In the last analysis the splendors of David's and Solomon's reigns were due to the movement inaugurated by Samuel.—*Rev. W. A. Dickson.*

Lesson Word-Picture.

One man crying out, "Repent!" All over the land echoes the voice of one, sharp, fearless, "Put away your strange gods, put them away! The Lord will deliver you from the Philistines." And in response, what a trembling among the idols! Down goes Baal! Crash goes Ashoreth! Uprises the worship of Jehovah!

And now there is a great gathering at Mizpah. You can see the Hebrews swarming along the highways and crossing the lonely fields, all hurrying to Mizpah. They are going there to meet Samuel, who will pray for them. One man crying to men, "Repent!" and one man crying to God, "Save!" O, what power is here! Such a time of repentance, such fasting and heart-searching! O, it was a wonderful revival at Mizpah led by one earnest man.

But look across the border into Philistia. What scowling faces and muttering tones, what angry threats, and then what a frenzied rush of idolaters for the worshipers of the one God. Mizpah is alarmed. The Israelites are trembling.

"Cry unto God for us!" they plead before Samuel.

Solemn, significant scene! At an altar is Israel's great prophet. He lays an offering upon the ascending flames, a whole offering. It is all given to God.

And hark! Hear Samuel's earnest, supplicating tones. He wrestles with God before the quivering flames. He stretches out his hands, lifts his tearful, pleading face, cries in agonizing tones.

But, O Israel, look away toward Philistia's borders! The land is black with the swarming idolaters. The air trembles with their hoarse cries of vengeance. They brandish their weapons. They rush in frenzy.

Cry, Samuel, cry! Take hold of the angel of the covenant! Plead Jehovah's great name like Jacob of old. And Israel, look again, toward the heavens this time! What a blackening sky! Another army there is gathering! How their fire-tipped spears are flashing! And hark! Hear the heavy thunder-roll of the great chariots of God!

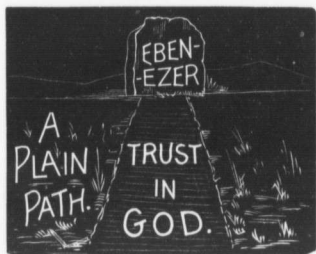
The rain crashes down. The tempest charges upon the ungodly, blasphemous mass rushing blindly on.

Pray, Samuel! Fight, Israel! Thunder and flash, O frowning sky!

And O, what a discomfiting of the enemies of the Lord! They shrink back in terror. They turn in despair. They flee. Out of Mizpah, over the fields, beyond the hills, through the valleys, even "under" Beth-car, victorious Israel chases the idolaters. The blackness is lifted from the heavens. The lightning sheathes its gleaming sword. The sunset clouds are radiant with colors, as if triumphant banners had been lifted there.

But what is Samuel doing? He still lingers amid these victorious fields. He is searching for a stone. Ah, he has found one! It is rolled to its resting-place between Mizpah and Shen, and in grateful tones the voice of Samuel is lifted above it, consecrating it, naming it, giving to the Church that motto of hope, that song in the night, that war-cry of victory—"Eben-ezer."

Blackboard.



Here is a plain path that never turns, but leads straight to victory. It is a plain path; a sure path (no pitfalls in it); a path of peace; a path of faith; a path of victory. If you will look back over the history of the Israelites, it will seem strange that they did not always walk therein. In every instance when they trusted in God, they could say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." It is so also with individuals, and those who put their trust in the Lord will be delivered from trouble.

DIRECTIONS. Draw the stone in light brown, and the words in yellow; the lines of the path in white, and the sentence in blue or crimson.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God our Helper.*

Question about the ark. See if children can tell what it was like, what it meant to the Israelites, and what became of it when the Israelites and Philistines were at war. If the children seem to know little about it, put a picture of it on the board. Tell the story very simply, of its wanderings.

With flat crayon make a path leading downward. Tell the children to imagine a great many people in that path. These were Israelites. God called them his people. How much he had done for them! How many teachers he had sent them! Get children to recall some—Moses, Aaron, Joshua, etc. He loved the Israelites. Did they love him? Ask children if a disobedient boy loves the father who is always trying to help him? Show that true love leads to obedience.

Trace the history of an Israelite who went the downward path. He has been taught the worship of the true God. But he sees his neighbor worshipping false gods, and he thinks it is not very bad. That is the first step down, to call evil good. Trace him step by step, until he, too, is offering sacrifices to false gods. Teach that false gods to-day have other forms. (Show an idol of some sort, such as heathen worship.) Teach that any thing which turns the heart away from God may be called an idol. Here is a little girl who loves fine dress so much that when in church she forgets God to think how pretty her new hat is. Here is a boy who forgets to pray, or rattles off his prayer heedlessly, in thinking of to-morrow's sport, or to-morrow's lessons. Both are going the downward path.

Erase, and beginning near the bottom of the board make the path leading upward. Teach that it is harder to go up than down. Samuel wanted the Israelites to go up. First, he made them put away the strange gods. When we go the upward way we must leave all wrong things behind. Call for the Golden Text. Teach that what may

seem a very small thing is large enough to shut God away—a little ugly temper, a little white lie, a little disobedience. "Cease to do evil," Samuel said. But to go in the upward way we must "learn to do well." How do we learn a lesson? By study. So we must study to learn to do right things.



Tell of the great revival meeting at Mizpah, the offering of the sacrifice, Samuel's prayer to God, and the enemy that came to fight against them.

Only God can help, and he always helps those who mean to turn from sin. On the board make a stone in the shape of a cross, "Eben-ezer" above, and teach that all our help comes from Jesus crucified.

Berean Methods.

The Teachers' Meeting.

Give the connecting history. The adventures of the ark, from the time of its capture until the time it was brought into the "house of Abinadab in the hill." . . . The grounds for Samuel's pledge that God would deliver the Israelites out of the hands of their enemies, if they would reject their false gods. . . . What were Baalim and what were Ashtaroth? . . . Explain the ceremonies described in verse 6. . . . Why the Philistines always came up against the Israelites when the Israelites were "gathered together." . . . What light is thrown on ancient military strategy by this lesson? . . . The characteristics of the Philistine conquest. The sort of servitude in which the Israelites were kept by them. . . . The religious lessons of the erection of the stone Eben-ezer. ILLUSTRATIONS: True worship in all nations and ages has been in constant danger of degenerating into mere forms and rites. The Romish Church and most of the Protestant denominations have again and again brought the "ark of God" into their theological struggles, instead of seeking the true presence of God by prayer and humiliation.

References, FREEMAN. Ver. 3: Ashtaroth, 304; Baalim, 222. Ver. 12: Monumental stones, 49. . . . FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 1616, 1617, 2532, 2908, 3811, 7532, 7533, 7536, 7538, 7543, 8135. Ver. 8: Prose, 4560. Ver. 12: Prose, 5673, 9518, 11945.

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Seven Traits of a True Revival.

- I. SORROW FOR SIN.
Israel lamented after the Lord. v. 2.
"Godly sorrow worketh repentance." 2 Cor. 7. 10.
- II. RENUNCIATION OF SIN.
Put away the strange gods. v. 3.
"Let the wicked forsake his way." Isa. 55. 7.
- III. CONFESSION OF SIN.
We have sinned against the Lord. v. 6.
"Render your heart, and not your garments." Joel 2. 13.
- IV. PRAYER TO GOD.
Cry unto the Lord for us. v. 9.
"Seek ye the Lord while . . . found." Isa. 55. 6.
- V. VICTORY FROM GOD.
The Lord thundered. . . . discomfited. v. 10.
"Then shall the Lord go before thee." 2 Sam. 5. 24.
- VI. WORKING WITH GOD.
Men of Israel went out. v. 11.
"Work . . . it is God which worketh." Phil. 2. 13.
- VII. GRATITUDE TO GOD.
Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. v. 12.
"Who delivered. . . will yet deliver." 2 Cor. 1. 10.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

True Repentance.

1. True repentance is usually brought about by the faithful witness of some godly man.
2. True repentance is always characterized by the rejection of Baalim and Ashtaroth and all other false deities.
3. With true repentance always comes outspoken confession of sin.
4. True repentance depends for successful reform on prayer and faith.
5. True repentance is associated with entire consecration.
6. As a result of true repentance comes victory.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Samuel the reformer. 1 Sam. 7. 1-8.
Th. Samuel the reformer. 1 Sam. 7. 9-17.
W. Intercession of Moses. Exod. 17. 8-16.
Th. Exhortation to repentance. Acts 5. 19-20.
F. Turning to God. Isa. 1. 13-20.
S. The two ways. Psa. 1.
S. John preaching repentance. Luke 3. 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.

CEASE TO DO EVIL; LEARN TO DO WELL. Isa. 1. 16, 17.

TIME.—1141-1120 B. C.

PLACES.—Gibeah, in the house of Abinadab; or, as also called, Kirjath-jearim. Mizpeh. Shen.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Conitration for sin.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 11, Dominion Hymnal.

Jesus! the Name high over all,
In hell, or earth, or sky.

No. 118, Dominion Hymnal.

Come, thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace.

No. 285, Dominion Hymnal.

We're marching to the promised land,
A land all fair and bright.

Praise for his greatness.
Come, Holy Ghost.
Holy Spirit, faithful Guide,
Deep are the wounds.
Come, ye sinners.
I do believe.
None but Jesus.
Jesus, my Lord.
O for a heart.
Jesus, Lover of my soul.
Yield not to temptation.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Repentance.
How long was the ark in the country of the Philistines? 1 Sam. 6. 1.
Why was it sent back? chaps. 5 and 6.
To what place was it returned?
How long did it remain there? 2 Sam. 6. 2. See chronology of David's reign.
What is meant by the statement in ver. 2?
What was the final effect of their sorrows upon all Israel?
What had been the cause of their sorrows?
How did they show the genuineness of their repentance?
What principle is illustrated by the statements of ver. 6, and what follows? James 5. 16.

2. Victory.

What was caused by this convocation of the people at Mizpeh?

In what frame of mind were the people at this time? What difference of spirit is shown by the statement of ver. 8 from the spirit which moved them at Aphek? 1 Sam. 4, 3.

What was the occasion of the victory? How will you explain ver. 10; as recording a miracle, or a natural occurrence, which proved advantageous to Israel?

Give reasons for your answer to the last question.

How complete was the victory? vers. 13, 14.

To whom did Samuel ascribe the victory?

Practical Teachings.

Twenty years was a long time for penitent sorrow; but the sin had been very heinous.

It brought true repentance. How good to come to love God before the awful sins begin! Have you come to him?

They put away their idolatry. Have you?

They asked God's servant to pray for them. Let us all do that too.

Samuel was their mediator; but we have a better one—Christ Jesus, the Lord.

Their mediator grew older. Ours never changes.

Their mediator died. Ours ever liveth.

Their mediator was a man. Ours is very good of very God.

Their mediator God heard. Will he not much more hear ours?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Study the geography of this lesson.
2. Find five other instances of prayer, for others that God answered.
3. For illustration, find in English history how fervent prayer before entering battle was crowned with victory; 4. Learn all you can about the worship of Baal and Astarte.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**1. Repentance, v. 1-6.**

Who brought back the ark of God?

From what place was it brought? See chap. 6, 30, 21.

How long did the ark remain there?

What demand did Samuel make on Israel?

What is true repentance? (Golden Text.)

What did Samuel promise to Israel?

What like promise is made to every sinner? Isa. 55, 7.

Where was it brought, and to whose charge was it given?

From whose worship did Israel turn, and to whom?

What assembly did Samuel summon?

By what acts and words did Israel make confession?

2. Victory, v. 7-12.

What enemy came up against Israel?

How did the Israelites feel?

What appeal did they make to Samuel?

What two things did Samuel do?

How did the Lord answer him?

Which army was now victorious?

How far did the Israelites pursue the foe?

Where did Samuel set up a memorial?

What was its name and meaning?

Teachings of the Lesson.

From what facts in this lesson may we learn—

1. That we ought to forsake sin?
2. That we ought to serve God?
3. That we ought to remember his mercies?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Learn who removed the ark from Kirjath-jearim. Find other instances when God miraculously delivered Israel from their enemies.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did the Philistines do with the ark? They took it to their own country.

What came upon the place where the ark was kept?

Great plagues.

What did the Philistines finally do with the ark?

They sent it back to the Israelites.

Why were the Israelites glad? Because the ark was the sign of God's presence.

To what place was it finally taken? To Kirjath-jearim.

How long did it remain there? Twenty years.

For what were the Israelites sorry? For their sins.

What good prophet prayed for them? Samuel.

What did he tell them to put away? Their false gods.

Where did they go to fast and pray? To Mizpeh.

Who came to fight against them there? The Philistines.

Who was defeated? He offered sacrifices and prayed.

Who were the Israelites and who were the Philistines?

Why did the Israelites gain the victory? The Lord was on their side.

What did they set up in remembrance of the victory?

A stone of help.

What was it called? Ebenezer.

What should we remember? How God helps.

Words with Little People.**THE DOWNWARD WAY.**

It is easy to go away from God. A little naughty temper, a little self-will, a little untruth, how quickly they shut God out!

THE UPWARD WAY.

How can we come back? "Cease to do evil, learn to do well." Only God can teach us how; when he sees we are sorry for sin, he will come and help us.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. How long a time passed before God once more showed mercy to his people? "The time was long—twenty years."

2. How did the people prove that their lamenting was sincere? "They put away Hailim and Asherah."

3. For what did Samuel gather the people to Mizpeh? For a service of confession.

4. What was the great lesson which in substance Samuel here taught them? "Cease to do evil; learn to do well."

5. What was the result of this new consecration? A victory for Israel.

6. In what words did Samuel recognize this divine help? "Hitherto hath the Lord," etc.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

31. What do you call this mystery?

The mystery of the Holy Trinity.

32. What do you mean by mystery?

A truth which man's reason could not discover, and which God by degrees makes known.

B. C. 1095.]**LESSON IV. ISRAEL ASKING FOR A KING.****Revised Version.**

[July 28.]

Authorized Version.

1 Sam. 8. 4-20. [Commit to memory verses 4-7.]

Then all the elders of Is'ra-el gathered themselves together, and came to Sam'u-el into Ra'mah.

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6 But the thing displeased Sam'u-el, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Sam'u-el prayed unto the LORD.

7 And the LORD said unto Sam'u-el, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8 Then all the elders of Is'ra-el gathered themselves together, and came to Sam'u-el into Ra'mah:

5 and they said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6 But the thing displeased Sam'u-el, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Sam'u-el prayed unto the LORD.

7 And the LORD said unto Sam'u-el, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.



8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice; howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

10 And Sam'u-el told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king.

11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

13 And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

16 And he will take your men-servants, and your maid servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.

17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Sam'u-el; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;

20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

8 that I should not be king over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, in that they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit thou shalt protest solemnly unto them, and shalt show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

10 And Sam'u-el told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him for his chariots, and to be his horsemen;

12 and they shall run before his chariots: and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots.

13 And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers, and he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks; and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not answer you in that day.

19 But the people refused to hearken unto the voice of Sam'u-el; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us: that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

For many years after the events of the last lesson Samuel was recognized as the judge in Israel, and in fact he never ceased to be such all his days. He had his annual circuit through Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, and back to Ramah, in all which places he in years sent his sons to act as judges in the more remote cities. They received bribes and perverted justice. Great dissatisfaction arose, and after a while the leaders of the nation began to feel that their interests would be better served if they were governed and guided by a king.

The asking for a king was in itself no wrong. According to Deut. 17, 14-20 the law of Moses had contemplated the election of a king in Israel. Balaam had prophesied of a scepter to arise among this people (Num. 24, 17), and Abraham had been assured that kings should come out of his loins (Gen. 17, 6). We are not then to suppose that it was God's purpose or desire to have Israel perpetually governed by judges like those of whom we read in the Book of Judges. A peaceful change in the form of government may have had many reasons in its favor, but it was a turning-point, a crisis in the history of the Israelitish nation. Samuel faithfully warned the people of the oppressions likely to come from a monarchical form of government, and later history shows us that his admonitions were eminently wise.

Verse 4. All the elders. These were the leaders and representatives of the people. **Gathered themselves.** Such a gathering as is here implied could not have been without much previous consultation. The corrupt administration of Samu-el's sons mentioned in vers. 1-3 of this chapter aroused the indignation of the people, and became a matter of general complaint. **Came to Samuel unto Ramah.** The situation of

Ramah, the residence of Samuel, is one of the most disputed topics of biblical geography. See one of the large Bible dictionaries or encyclopedias on the name. It is evidently the same as Ramathaim-zophim in chap. 1, 1, as a comparison of vers. 3 and 19 of the same chapter shows. The most probable location is at the modern or Ram, five miles north of Jerusalem, and situated on the top of a conical hill.

5. Thou art old. They expressed what Samuel probably fully realized, and perhaps has himself put forward as a reason for appointing his sons judges in Beersheba. **Thy sons walk not in thy ways.** A delicate and difficult matter to state to the venerable prophet, but a fact which could no longer be passed over in silence. It is notable that the children of Israel as well as those of the priest Eli walked not in the ways of their father's piety. **Make us a king.** Or, "appoint for us a king." They would follow the law and seek to secure the king whom the Lord would be pleased to choose (Deut. 17, 15), and who so likely to make the right selection as this venerable prophet of Israel! **To judge us like... the nations.** Here and in ver. 20 we discover what was particularly offensive and censurable in their demand. Their thought was more upon the pomp and process of the heathen nations than upon the exceptional glory which God had given to them as a peculiar people.

6. Displeased Samuel. Literally, "The matter was evil in the eyes of Samuel." His superior insight into the tendencies of men of the world, his lofty view of trust in Jehovah, and the necessity of Israel's keeping themselves free from the ways of the heathen, enabled him at once to perceive that this new movement among the elders foreboded many evils to the chosen people. **Samuel prayed.** Here again we note the manner of

the man of prayer (comp. chap. 7, 5, 8, 9). In anguish of spirit and pressed down with a new burden he turns unto Jehovah and casts the burden upon him.

7. The Lord said. Such earnest prayer does not wait long without a response from heaven. **Hearken unto the voice.** Be attentive to this cry, and let the people have their way in this thing. It was a voice of the people so loudly spoken that Jehovah himself would not have it unheeded. **They have not rejected thee, but...me.** The prophet is thus made to see that his God feels the intractability of the people more deeply than himself. When he comes to recognize that his own sorrow is only a small measure of God's sorrow in the same thing he himself becomes more God-like. The next verse helps to explain more fully in what sense they had rejected God.

8. All the works. A general reference to their disobedience, as is immediately stated. **They have forsaken me.** The murmurings and rebellions which occurred during the Journey of the exodus are recorded examples. **Served other gods.** As was seen in the last lesson. See on chap. 7, 3, 4. So the condemning feature of this demand for a king was not that they saw reason for a new form of government, or felt the need of some change in public affairs, but the desire to be like the nations.

9. Hearken. Repetition of the command of verse 7. **Yet protest solemnly.** Testify in the most emphatic and earnest manner. The elders needed to know that the change they were seeking to effect was of a most grave and far-reaching character, and Samuel was the proper person to give them the solemn warning. Show them "the manner of the king." They had probably never fully considered the taxation and consequent oppression which a monarchy always requires. The manner of this form of government is well set forth in the following verses (11-18).

10. Samuel told. This prophet, like Moses, acted the part of a mediator between God and the people. He received the divine message, and then made it known.

11. This will be the manner. The word translated "manner" is elsewhere commonly translated "judgment." It here denotes what the king would claim as his lawful right. Verses 11-13 designate the claim he would make to their persons; verses 14-17 to their property. **Take your sons.** So it came to pass that when Saul became king, and "saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him" (chap. 14, 32), and appointed him for such military service as he saw proper. **His chariots.** No chariots had as yet been used by the Israelites, but the northern Canaanites had employed them in their wars with Israel (Judg. 4, 15; 11, 6, 9), and a king who aspired to rank with those of other nations would be likely to provide himself with these signs of power and majesty. Such implements of national power would also require **horsemen**, and men to **run before the chariots** (see 2 Sam. 15, 1; 1 Kings 1, 5), and the king would naturally command the services of all whom he found suitable for such duties.

12. Captains. Chief officers over divisions of his armies. Such organization is a necessity in both civil and military affairs, but under the autocratic dictation of a king it may become a form of tyranny (comp. 2 Kings 1, 9-14). **To ear his ground.** An obsolete English phrase for plowing the soil. The Hebrew is, literally, "to plow his plowing," and corresponds with **reap his harvest**, so that by the two expressions the beginning and end of the agricultural work of the year is denoted. **Instruments of war.** Arms, military weapons of all sorts. **Instruments of his chariots.** Such equipage and utensils as were required in the

use of chariots, including also the different parts of the car, such as wheels, axle, bow-case, and spear-case.

13. Daughters. Women as well as men would be despotically taken for the monarch's service, and the court of an oriental prince was itself organized on a grand scale. **Confectionaries.** Whose work was to prepare precious ointments and perfumes. **Cooks.** Such as had the whole direction of preparing meat for the royal table. The Hebrew word means "slaughterers," and the chief cook, though a woman, and those under her may have had oversight of the animal from its slaughter to the time it was made ready for the table. **Bakers.** Those who prepared bread and cakes, as distinguished from such as prepared meats.

14. Fields... vineyards... olive-yards. Not only their persons but their property would a king appropriate for his own uses. One of the most heartless and tyrannical examples of this may be read in 1 Kings 21, 1-16, showing how Ahab possessed himself of Naboth's vineyard. Some one has said that kings' palaces were built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise. The monarch naturally takes the best of things for himself and his ministers.

15. The tenth. The tenth part, or tithe, of one's produce had been from the earliest times considered an appropriate offering for religious purposes (comp. Gen. 14, 20; 28, 22). The portion of the Levites, according to the law of Moses, consisted of "the tithes of the children of Israel" (Num. 18, 21, 24). Samuel notifies the people that another tenth will be claimed by the king. **Officers.** The Hebrew word here is the one for "eunuchs," and probably denotes "chamberlains," or servants of the royal bedchamber, a class of court-servants very common in the East. Because of their more delicate relations to the royal family they were distinguished from ordinary servants, and held a rank above them.

16. Men-servants. Domestic slavery existed from the earliest times among the Hebrews, and is recognized in the Mosaic legislation. Such servants, or bond-slaves, both male and female, were looked upon and treated as property, and so here are mentioned in connection with cattle. A monarchy would tend to multiply the evils of such servitude rather than diminish them. **Goodliest young men.** By a very slight change the word thus rendered becomes the word for "oxen," and this seems more suitable in this place. The choice young men would be included under "sons" in verse 11, and **men-servants** in this verse. By substituting one letter of a similar sound we read "oxen" instead of "young men," and this reading accords better with the next word, **asses**. The error probably arose from the carelessness of some ancient copyist. Not only their land and servants, but their cattle also would be arbitrarily taken for the work of the king.

17. Tenth of your sheep. This is mentioned as an additional tithe over that of verse 15. Not only a tithe of the produce of the field, but also of the small cattle, sheep, lambs, goats, kids, would be taken for the king's table. **Ye shall be his servants.** This is a general summing up of the whole matter. They will be reduced from free men to the condition of servants.

18. Ye shall cry out. So we find them after Solomon's death crying unto Rehoboam: "Thy father made our yoke grievous" (1 Kings 12, 4); but he only answered, "I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions" (1 Kings 12, 14). **Lord will be their action.** In the day when the bitter consequences of their hear are felt, it will be too late to remedy the evil. **Penitence**

and prayer will not avail to remove the evil consequences of some deeds, especially those of national magnitude.

19. The people refused. They had set their minds on royalty, and a king they would have. No argument or persuasion will convince or change those who have determined in advance to risk all consequences. **The voice of Samuel** in such a case is less potent than "the voice of the people" (ver. 7).

20. We also . . . like all the nations. Here is seen the main idea that controlled their action. They gloried more in certain things of other nations than in the lofty privileges of their hallowed relationship to Jehovah. **Our king may judge us.** Here was not, perhaps, a reflection on Samuel's administration as judge in Israel; but rather on that of his sons (comp. verse 5). **Go out before us.** Here we note their ideals of pompous parade. How grand to have a regal chieftain, arrayed in barbaric splendor, to move forth like a conqueror at the head of the host! **Fight our battles.** Here we see that their ideal of a king was also that of a mighty warrior. The warlike movements of the king of Ammon were, according to chap. 12, 12, a controlling influence in this action of the elders of Israel. They felt they must also have a warlike king to guard their national interests.

In this lesson we note:

1. A most devout and holy man may be made to suffer by impious and unworthy children.
2. The voice of the people is as likely to be inspired by delusive notions of the world as by that which is holy and good.
3. The popular mind is governed more by outward forms and pretensions than by spiritual truths.
4. The value of prayer in times of trial and when under heavy responsibility.
5. Monarchical government is incompatible with the highest ideals of personal liberty and right.
6. Hasty popular votes too often entail evils which generations and centuries cannot remove.
7. When the people of God show more yearning after the glory of the world than after soul purity and power with God they are sowing for a bitter harvest.

English Teacher's Notes.

There are few words to which a more repulsive idea is attached than the word *tyrant*. Call a man a tyrant and you mean he is a self-willed and cruel oppressor. This was, however, not the case with the first persons to whom the name is applied. The early Greek "tyrants" were often wise, humane, and benevolent. The word then signified a man who, not being the rightful king of a state or city, had grasped for himself the supreme power and become absolute ruler. A tyrant meant simply a usurper, whose rule was arbitrary and despotic, and whose subjects, whatever other advantages they might be possessed of, did not enjoy freedom. As the tyrants themselves gradually degenerated in character so did their name degenerate, until it came to be associated with the idea of wickedness and cruelty.

In the passage for to-day we are presented with the picture of a tyrant. The portrait was sketched by Samuel at the divine command for the Israelites who had asked for a king to reign over them. It is the portrait of one who without any special moral fault followed his own will and pleasure at the expense of his subjects. The Israelites were warned that not only their lands and possessions would be at the king's disposal (vers. 14, 15, 17), but that he would also demand

from them whatever personal service he pleased, whether military (vers. 13, 16), agricultural (ver. 12), or domestic (vers. 13, 16). They would in fact lose their freedom when he was established on the throne, and would feel painfully the contrast with their former position (ver. 18).

I have said that the portrait drawn by Samuel was that of a tyrant, but it may be objected that he was describing a "king" properly appointed to the throne, and not one who had usurped it unjustly.

True, Saul did not actually usurp the throne, yet the place he filled ought never to have been his, for his appointment was the result of Israel's rejection of their rightful king. They professed themselves dissatisfied with the administration of Samuel's sons. But there was a deeper reason for their request for a king. "They have not rejected thee," said the Lord to Samuel, "but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them." They were weary of the direct rule of God himself (through the medium of priest and judge and through the Book of the Law), which was their distinguishing and glorious characteristic as a nation. In their hearts they longed for something else. And what was this thing which seemed to them more to be desired than the rule of Jehovah? It was "a king . . . like all the nations." It was conformity to the world round about them after which they bankered, and it was this which lost them their freedom and set over them one who actually became a tyrant (comp. chap. 14, 24; 32, 2). There is a deep lesson in this. We see just the same rejection in the present day. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8, 7). And so when the claims of Christ are set forth the cry often is, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19, 14). What then is chosen instead? Something that has no right to the supreme rule over man's heart and life; the "course of this world" (Eph. 2, 2), behind which is the guiding hand of the great adversary.

And the world always does and always will turn out to be a tyrant. It may give much at the first, and promise more, but it demands the utmost devotion, the most unsparring labor, whether in the service of business or of pleasure. And when it has worn out the best years of its votaries it has nothing to make up for what they have expended on it. At the end it is "vanity of vanities" (Ecc. 1, 2, etc.).

Against this tyrant the teacher has to warn his class. He has to show on the one side the hard and unrecompensed service which the world demands, and on the other the claims of the rightful king whose absolute rule is the rule of supreme love, and who gave his own life and gives himself for those whose devotion he seeks. May the grace of God cause some hearts to yield to the testimony given in connection with this passage!

Cambridge Notes.

From the pure theocracy we pass now to the theocratic monarchy, which this momentous revolution requires us carefully to examine our terms. A theocracy is often mistaken for hierarchy or government by ecclesiastics—a most disastrous misconception. It is strictly a government in which God reigns through representatives specially accredited by him, so that every act of government is directly determined by God's will. Carried on through human instruments, it had necessary imperfections, and it was partly because of these, partly through the craving for a military rule like that of their neighbors, that Israel asked for a king instead of a prophet to govern them. In some respects the change

was needed. The people must be weaned some time from the daily sustenance of miracle which had lasted through the heaven-surrounded infancy of their race. They must be taught that God's providence in the natural is more wonderful than in what we call the supernatural. Moreover, the first kings were prophets with a divine mission, though their inspiration was but fitful. None the less there "passed away a glory from the earth" when Israel renounced his childhood and asked a king. The seeds of future evil were introduced by the hereditary principle, occasional under the Judges, but under the kings the only alternative to revolution. No government can be sound which brings to power men like Abimelech, Hophni, and Abijah, Rehoboam, Manasseh, and Jehoahaz, merely as their fathers' sons, however good these fathers be. VER. 4. *Elders*. Representing the people (see chap. 4. 3 and note). VER. 5. *Old*. His age may have been about seventy, allowing ten years for the development of his sons' misrule. *Sons*. The complaints evidently centered on the administration of justice. Samuel's infirmities were assumed to prevent his attending to all his work in the northern tribes, and in the southern province Joel and Abijah outraged the law they were appointed to guard (ver. 3; Deut. 16. 19). *To judge*. Here lay the sting to the feelings of the grand old judge. *Like*. Ichabod! the glory of their willkiness is flung away! VER. 6. *Displeased*. We see from Jehovah's answer that Samuel's sensitive nature felt keenly the ingratitude of this slight upon his life-long service. For the moment personal soreness overcame other thoughts; Samuel was human, and it is just such fine natures as his that suffer most acutely in secret from the stabs of ungrateful indifference. But prayer was an instinct with him, and he found in casting his burden on Jehovah that the burden was not his at all. VER. 7. The request might have been innocent, but this lays bare the motive. There is now no way of teaching this willful people but by granting their petition and giving them a king after their own heart, whose failure should make way for a king after the divine model. VER. 8. (Comp. John 15. 20; Matt. 10. 25.) The constant ingratitude of the people to Jehovah is the burden of Psa. 106 and of Stephen's speech (Acts 7). VER. 9. They were about to change a liberty checked only by the law of God for the gilded slavery of an Oriental despotism, and Jehovah still bears with them so as to show them what it means. *Protest*. Literally, "witness." *Manner*, or "right," privileges claimed. VER. 10. *People*. Through the elders (ver. 4). VER. 11. This vivid picture of absolute monarchy shows what a price they paid for Solomon's splendor (comp. 1 Kings 5. 13-18; 12. 4). *Horsemen*. The mention of horses suggests a hated foreign intrusion. The Israelites were naturally mountaineers, and never used cavalry; horses were associated with either aping foreign customs or seeking foreign (especially Egyptian) aid. *Don before*. So Absalom and Adonijah (1 Kings 1. 5) did, as a mark of regal state. Compare also Elijah's action (1 Kings 18. 46). VER. 12. (Comp. chap. 14. 52.) This decimal division of the army appears very frequently (comp. Num. 31. 14; chap. 17. 18, 18, 13, etc.). VER. 13. *Perfumers* (margin), so read. The word in the text used to mean the same. *Believers*. Work done by men in Egypt (Gen. 40. 1; comp. also 19. 3). VER. 14. (Comp. 2 Sam. 16. 4; 1 Kings 21. 7; 22. 45, 8; 46. 18.) VER. 15. Taxation (taken in kind as usual) was to be on a truly oriental scale and wasted on worthless objects. *Officers*. "Chamberlains," like Potiphar (Gen. 39. 1). VER. 16. *Herds* (margin). This, the reading of the LXX., is indisputably correct. Comp. Exod. 20. 17 for the natural couples thus given. VER. 17. The previous verse de-

scribes forced loans, this the most oppressive form of taxation. *And ye*, summing up all. The subjects of such a king would be slaves (comp. Matt. 18. 23). VER. 18. *Because of*, or "from," like an appeal from a lower court to a higher, from a king to the King of kings. *Answer*. That is, will not grant your prayer for political deliverance; they must abide by their choice and learn from experience. So the ten tribes cried out from Rehoboam's tyranny, but could obtain no relief but by setting up a worse monarchy than that they rebelled against. In a higher sense Jehovah did answer them, as when they pined for deliverance from the Romans and he came to "deliver his people from their sins," a deadlier foe. VER. 19. The hoary judge, the hero of Eben-ezer, has once more to hear the unthankful people clamor for another to do badly the work he had done so well. It might have been thought that the two battles at Aphek would have taught Israel the vanity of human prowess. Chap. 12. 12 tells us that the Ammonites were threatening invasion. VER. 20. *Go out*. The regular phrase for taking the lead in war. Note Samuel's second appeal to Jehovah, in his intense aversion to the change.

The Lesson Council.

Question 4. Why did God seem to be unwilling to give to Israel a king?

Because of the dangers and evils of hereditary kingship. In a monarchy strong forces would gravitate toward that point. If gained, the most unworthy persons would sometimes succeed to the throne, the fittest be excluded, and despotism introduced. Apart from this the spirit of the request predicted ill in any form of government. It implied unjust reflection on Samuel. It indicated waning of their trust in the God of battles, and preference for military organization and human prowess.—*Rev. W. A. Dickson.*

The real reason in the mind of God for not wishing to give Israel a king was one that Israel could not appreciate, had it been given them. Such a change of government would doubtless frustrate God's plan concerning Israel, at least for the time. Even though the kingly idea was itself a divine idea, yet Israel was not ready for the change. God did not, however, waste argument or offer points in casuistry to convince the people, but told them what the practical results would be, seeing that if that appeal failed no higher motive existed in Israel to which an appeal might be made.—*Rev. H. M. Simpson.*

1. Because their request was treasonable. It involved the rejection of God as their King. 2. Because their supreme desire was to be like the heathen nations, by which they were surrounded, when God's purpose was that they should not be like them. His purpose, then as now, was that his people should be a peculiar people. They were not to be conformed to the world, but transformed, by the renewing of their minds, to the perfect will of God.—*Rev. A. E. P. Albert, D.D.*

Lesson Word-Pictures.

The elders of the people come to Samuel, one day, and confront him with an astonishing petition. There he sits, the white-haired Samuel, the simple-hearted, strong, grand old man. And these elders of the people, how inferior they must have seemed and felt! What wonder if their petition stung in their throat, for they tell Samuel they want—a—a—king!

It is out at last. The old prophetic looks grieved. The interview may not have been a long one, and Samuel is

left all alone. It is the old story. Tired of the old steadfast protector, the nation wants a new ruler, and, like the rest of the world, they want a king.

Why, the time was when God called him and every healy also wanted him, and at Mizpeh he was the sturdy healy that rose between Israel and death. But it has come at last; Israel does not want Samuel any longer. They desire a king. Poor, heavy-hearted, weary old man! There is One who wants him, and to him he goes. It is not Samuel they reject, God tells Samuel; it is God. And yet Samuel is told to hearken to the people; to hearken and protest.

So there they are again before the white-haired old prophet. What wonder if shame flush their faces! What wonder if they hang their heads in confusion! But Samuel looks at them steadily, his clear eyes searching to the bottom of their hearts. Do they still want a king?

Then Samuel paints. He talks and they look. You look also. You see a man with long, grasping hands reaching down among the sons of the people. He plucks this one for a charioteer. He pulls over the heap and picks out a second for a horseman, a third for a chariot-runner. There is another overhauling and drafting. Hark! You hear the whirl of the sickle as some drafted son slashes it through the king's wheat, or you catch the "clang-clang," as he pounds the king's iron for a royal weapon, or for the royal chariot.

Do they want a king?

Samuel paints again. O, the hungry, greedy hands of the royal gormandizer, reaching down, picking out a daughter to be cook or confectioner, or baker! You see him gorging himself at his feasts or wallowing amid his cups. And then he may stammer out his covetous craving for vineyard or olive-yard, or sweep the poor man's lamb into the king's rich folds. And hark! Hear the cry of Israel caught between the mill-stones of the king's power and the king's greed.

Surely now those boggers before Samuel will hearken to Samuel. But listen again! Hear that shout of loyalty?

It is "nay" still. It is a clamor for a king!

When Samuel is again alone, heavier yet must have been his heart. It is not so much a king the people have enthroned, but it is God they would dethrone.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT, *Choosing a King.*

Revered, Let some child tell all he can about Samuel. Remind of the fact that Samuel was called to the prophetic office when but twelve years of age—just the age Jesus was when he went up to Jerusalem. Tell that now he was seventy years old. He had been Judge of Israel for many years, and now the people were uneasy and wanted a king.

Pin a gilt crown to the board. What is a king's business? To rule. Who ruled Israel? Tell that the Israelites had prophets and judges, but God was their King. The prophets were men through whom God chose to speak to the people, and the judges were good men also, who sought to know what God wanted the people to do, and taught them to do it. Tell why the Israelites asked for a king now; because Samuel was growing old, and his sons were not like their father, good, true men.

Choosing earthly kings. Can we see God? No, not with these eyes. How do we know that there is a God who thinks about us? Show a watch. Talk about it. Tell what it does. How did it come to be? Show that

there would have been no watch but for a maker. We have not seen the man who made it, but we believe in him because we have seen his work. Sing "Little Gentle Breath," and teach that although we cannot see God or hear him we know that he is, because he has made our wonderful bodies, and given us hearts that can love and believe. Tell that the Israelites were tired of having a King whom they could not see. They wanted an earthly king who would speak great words to them, and sit upon an earthly throne, and make a fine appearance. Every time we choose the things of earth before God we are like these Israelites with whom God was displeased. Tell the story of Samuel's prayer to God, his liking to the people, and their persistent desire to be like other people.



Choosing King Jesus. Make a large heart on the board. Tell that every child's heart must be under the rule of King Jesus or the world. If we choose the world we choose self-will, pride, discontent, hard service. If we choose Jesus we choose obedience, love, gentleness, a contented mind, and heaven hereafter. Which will we have?

Teach that the right time to choose is in childhood. Pin the crown above the heart, and ask each child to close the eyes and whisper a little prayer that from his heart he may this day choose Jesus for his King.

Blackboard.



Draw this design with care before the school assemblies.

DIRECTIONS. The outline of the crown in bright yellow, touched up with crimson and green, where the small marks are noticed. The rays may be made of a different shade of yellow or white. The words round about the crown should be white. The large letters, "ONE KING," make in bright red, and shade them with yellow or green; the remaining words make all alike in white.

APPLICATION. The Israelites rejected God, the invisible King. I also reject him when I refuse to do his will or to obey his commands.

Berean Methods.

The Teachers' Meeting.

Ascertain the true meaning of the request for a king to judge Israel... Give in detail the reason which led Samuel to believe that this desire for a king was a rejection of himself.... The incapacity and injustice of his sons.... Give the reasons for God's assertion that the

choice of a king was not a rejection of Samuel primarily, but a rejection of God. . . . Describe in detail an Oriental monarchy, and its peculiar methods of administering justice, and draw out reasons why the Israelites might with justice desire such a king. . . . Study God's idea of government, as indicated in Moses's regulations and in Christ's precepts. . . . Why were the Judges a failure? . . . Measure the independent history of the Hebrew nation by centuries, and ascertain what proportion, from Moses to the Babylonian captivity, is the history of monarchies, and what proportion the history of a theocracy. Which was really the more successful? Would a theocracy be possible now?

References. FREEMAN. Ver. 16: Anointing the king, 346. Ver. 25: Dwelling on the house-top, 464, 201. . . . FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Poetical, 3965. Ver. 3: Prose, 6935, 6938. Ver. 9: Prose, 2348, 1481, 1491-1493, 6935, 6938, 6936, 6932, 7993, 8010, 9165-9171, 10787, 11584.

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

National Sins.

I. WORLDLY AMBITION.

A king. . . like all the nations. v. 5.

"Love not the world." 1 John 2. 15.

"Be not conformed to the world." Rom. 12. 2.

II. FORGETFULNESS OF GOD.

They have rejected me. v. 7.

"Forsaken the Lord." Isa. 1. 4.

"Murmurings. . . against the Lord." Exod. 16. 8.

III. FOLLOWING IDOLS.

Served other gods. v. 8.

"Broken cisterns. . . hold no water." Jer. 2. 13.

"Make them. . . like unto them." Psa. 115. 8.

IV. SELF-WILL.

Hearken. . . yet protest. v. 9.

"Stiff-necked and uncircumcised." Acts 7. 51.

"Thou art obstinate." Isa. 48. 4.

V. PRIDE.

The manner of the king. v. 11.

"Pride of life. . . of the world." 1 John 2. 16.

"Pride compasseth them about." Psa. 73. 6.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

Every Man has his King.

1. *Every soul selects its sovereign.* Samuel was not so much displeased because the Israelites asked for a chief magistrate as because they asked for a king to judge them "like all the nations." It was not their longing for a king that was their cardinal sin, but their rejection of the powers which God had already constituted.

2. *We all obey our king.* This is as true in a monarchy as in a republic. The most obedient serf in Russia who in some military establishment cuts his hair and trims his beard according to despotic regulation; who dresses himself and arranges his household furniture according to an imperial ukase; whose hours by night and day are officially allotted to different duties, and whose whole powers seem to be degraded to the level of machinery, may have nevertheless some unthroned sovereign to whom he pays supreme allegiance, an allegiance that cannot be touched by any despot. He may be a loyal lover or an affectionate father, and his supreme allegiance may be given to his wife or his child; he may be a member of some secret society, working with hostility against the government he nominally serves, and his true loyalty may be held for the Nihilistic chiefs. He may, in spite of his environments, sincerely reach after intellectual attainment, and his

noblest endeavor may be given to the search for wisdom. Or he may be a spiritual Christian, and owe his prime allegiance to God; but, in any case, the soul is obedient to its own chosen sovereign.

3. *The character of our sovereign shapes our destiny.* Whether Samuel or Saul or David rule over Israel is not a question of mere dynasty. On it depend the dominance of certain ideas of right and wrong. And we become assimilated in character to the person who is enthroned in our loyalty. Let the throned King of Calvary be ours.

HOME READINGS.

M. Israel asking for a king. 1 Sam. 8. 4-9.

Th. Israel asking for a king. 1 Sam. 8. 10-20.

W. Samuel's prophecy fulfilled. 2 Chron. 10. 1-11.

Th. Commands concerning a king. Deut. 17. 14-20.

F. Duty of a king. Prov. 16. 7-19.

S. Ruling by wisdom. Prov. 8. 10-21.

S. The event recalled. Acts 13. 16-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us. 1 Sam. 8. 19.

TIME.—1065 B. C.

PLACE.—Ramah.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Divine forbearance.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 55, Dominion Hymnal.

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us,
O'er the world's tempestuous sea.

No. 68, Dominion Hymnal.

Come, every soul by sin oppressed,
There's mercy with the Lord.

No. 61, Dominion Hymnal.

Children of the heavenly King,
As ye journey, sweetly sing.

Coronation.

Hail, thou once despised Jesus,
Majestic sweetness sith enthroned.

Beautiful Saviour.

Fear not! God is thy shield.

Am I a soldier?

When the King comes in.

Battling for the Lord.

Stand up! Stand up!

March along together.

Onward, Christian soldiers.

Soldiers of the Eternal King.

Jesus shall reign.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The People's Demand.

What was the government under which Israel had lived for about four centuries?

What new order did Samuel seem desirous of effecting by making his sons Judges?

Why did Israel object to this?

What does their demand of Samuel show concerning their regard for him?

What does it show as to their own increasing power in the nation?

On what custom was their plea based?

What was the one great defect in the philosophy of this plea?

2. The Lord's Consent.

What was the effect of this request on Samuel?

What trait of his character appears in his action?

How was his prayer answered by the Lord?

To what national trait did the Lord charge the request?

To what did their request virtually amount?

3. The Prophet's Protest.

Why did Samuel protest?

What glimpse of the future did his protest give?

Under what **king** was this prophecy fulfilled?
What does it show concerning the knowledge and statesmanship of Samuel?

What was the effect of the protest upon the people?
What choice of God for them does ver. 20 show that they deliberately refused? Deut. 14, 2.
How is God's peculiar love manifested by his consent to their request?

Practical Teachings.

"Like all the nations." How men dislike to be peculiar! To-day we act just like the world. We do not like to be known as Christians by our peculiarities. Is that like Christ?

See God's readiness to grant earthly favors to his people. They were rejecting him. Yet he allowed it. He could still govern through their king. But God never chooses men to love him. We can choose him if we will. We can reject him if we will. Which have you done?

Samuel was Israel's preacher. He told them the truth. But they would not listen. How like to-day! Our preachers are faithful, and we refuse to be guided. We go our own way. Alas for us!

This is true every-where. Parents and children, teacher and scholars, all show it. Fidelity on one side; willfulness on the other.

Hints for Home Study.

1. Study out the parts of the protest, which were fulfilled. 1 Sam. 14, 32; 1 Kings 21, 7; 12, 4, etc.
2. Find the names and characters of some of the kings of the surrounding nations.
3. Study out the kind of government under which the people had heretofore lived. Was it a republic, a monarchy, a democracy, an oligarchy, or what?
4. Give three good reasons that led the people to this demand.
5. List three reasons why they should not have made it.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **The People's Demand**, vs. 4-6.
What assembly occurred at Ramah?
What demand did the elders make?
What reason did they give for their demand?
How did Samuel like their request?
What wise thing did Samuel do?
2. **The Lord's Consent**, vs. 7-9.
What did the Lord say in answer to Samuel?
Whom had the people really rejected as their ruler?
Since what time had they been rebellious?
How had they shown their disobedience?
While yielding to them, what was the prophet to do?
What was he to declare to them?
Why did the Lord consent? Hosea 13, 11.
3. **The Prophet's Protest**, vs. 10-20.
For what service would the king take their sons?
What would he do with their daughters?
Of what lands would he deprive them?
What titling of fruits would he demand?
What titling of flocks?
What would he do with the people's servants?
Who would then become servants?
What protest would the people then make?
What effect would the protest have?
How did the people receive Samuel's words? (Golden Text.)
Why did they want a king?

Teachings of the Lesson.

- What is there in this lesson which shows—
1. The evil influence of wicked rulers?
 2. The downward course of wrong-doers?
 3. The patience of God with the wayward?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Learn which one of the commandments the sons of Samuel had broken while acting as judges.
Learn from Deuteronomy what God prohibited in a king.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

- Who judged Israel for many years? **Samuel**.
What kind of a judge was he? **A wise and safe one**.
How long did the Israelites prosper? **As long as they obeyed Samuel**.
Whom did they obey, in obeying Samuel? **The Lord himself**.

What did Samuel do when he became old? **He made his sons judges**.

Were they good judges? **They were not**.

What did the Israelites ask of Samuel? **That he would give them a king**.

Did it seem right to Samuel? **No; it seemed evil**.

To whom did Samuel go for counsel? **To the Lord**, Who was the true king of Israel? **The Lord himself**, What were the Israelites really asking? **For another king than God**.

What did God tell Samuel? **To let the people have a king**.

What else did he tell him to do? **To warn the Israelites of trouble**.

Did they heed the warning? **No; they would have their own way**.

What should we give to God? **The first place in our lives**.

What shall we have if we choose another king to rule over us? **Trouble and sorrow**.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

1. Who demanded from Samuel the appointment of a king? **"All the elders of Israel"**.
2. Like what did they wish to become? **"Like all the nations"**.
3. What did Samuel do when they had made this request? **"He prayed unto the Lord"**.
4. What did God answer Samuel? **Grant their request, but protest**.
5. After the long protest did the people hearken? **"Nevertheless the people refused," etc.**

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

33. What do you mean by the attributes of God?
All the perfections of His nature.
34. What do the Scriptures teach concerning God's attributes?
That He is omnipresent and almighty, that He is omniscient and all-wise.

LESSONS FOR AUGUST, 1889.

- Aug. 4. Saul Chosen of the Lord. 1 Sam. 9, 15-27.
Aug. 11. Samuel's Farewell Address. 1 Sam. 12, 1-13.
Aug. 18. Saul Rejected by the Lord. 1 Sam. 15, 10-23.
Aug. 25. The Anointing of David. 1 Sam. 16, 1-13.

A Great Man's Death.

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