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The Teachers' Monthly.

Vol. 1.

NOVEMBER, 1895.

No. 11.

OUR OWN LESSON HELPS.

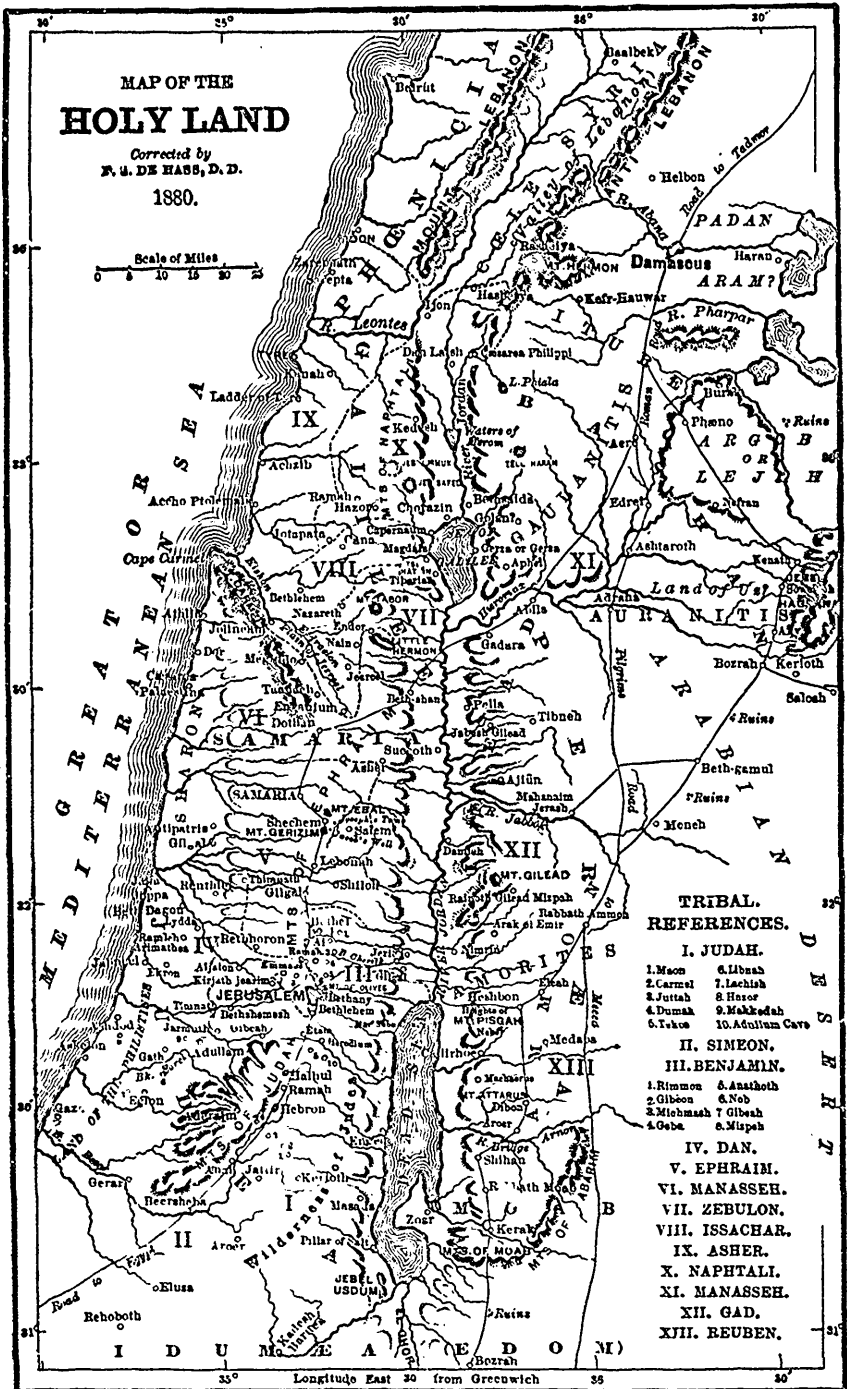
At its meeting in Toronto, on September 10th, the General Assembly's S. S. Committee, decided to publish a complete outfit of lesson helps for our own Schools. Before doing so, however, it appeared due as courtesy to the Presbyterian Board of Publication at Philadelphia that we should give it the opportunity of making some offer looking in the direction of an arrangement similar to that by which the publications of the Methodist Book Concern of New York are republished by the Toronto Methodist Book and Publishing House. Accordingly last February the convener wrote to the business Superintendent enquiring as to the terms on which the "Westminster" publications could be re-issued in Canada, as is done by the Methodists in the case of the "Berean" series. In reply he offered to print for us a Canadian edition, making what additions and elisions we desired (for which changes we were to pay), and give us agent's commission on subscriptions received. The committee did not agree to this proposal. The alterations necessary, especially about the time of "Independence" and "Decoration" days, but, indeed in almost every issue of the "Teacher" and illustrated papers, would eat up the commission received. But had the proposal been as pecuniarily profitable as could be desired the Committee did not think that it was proper for the representatives of our General Assembly to assume the role of mere agents of a foreign publishing house. The convener then made the counter proposal that the Board should furnish us with duplicate plates, permit us to make such alterations in them as we pleased, refer all orders from Canada in future to us and receive from us in return a royalty upon our subscription list. We would then control the whole business in Canada. This is exactly the arrangement between the Methodist publishing houses in Toronto and New York. This offer the Board refused to consider and in a subsequent letter its representative writes, "I do not feel, therefore, that it is at all likely that we shall be able to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the question, and I think it is hardly worth while for us to carry on any further negotiations." Stripped of polite phrases the answer was "We have a lucrative business in Canada and we do not mean to relinquish it. If you will be our agents, pay for all you ask us to do for you, and work to swell the subscription list which we handle, we will avail ourselves of your help, give you just what other agents are now getting and supply your schools, as now, direct from Philadelphia." We think that the General Assembly will approve of our declining to accept such terms.

Upon the loyalty with which our schools stand by the committee in its attempt to supply them with lesson helps of their own depends the whole future of the organized work under the care of the General Assembly. If those who are now using American publications will favour us with their orders for 1896 we shall at once have a revenue sufficient to pay the salary of a General Superintendent and Editor. The cost of administration and publication will be fully met. The S. S. department of our church will be **endowed** with a permanent income. The whole collection on "Children's Day" could then be devoted to aggressive S. S. Missionary work. What a magnificent prospect of helpfulness to our weaker schools and neglected districts this opens up. Will you make it possible by ordering your lesson helps for 1896 from the convener of the committee Rev. T. T. FOTHERINGHAM 107 Hazen St. St. John N. B? Sample packages will be ready early in November.

MAP OF THE HOLY LAND

Corrected by
F. J. DE HAAS, D. D.
1880.

Scale of Miles
0 5 10 15 20 25



TRIBAL REFERENCES.

I. JUDAH.

1. Maon
2. Carmel
3. Juttah
4. Dumah
5. Tekoa
6. Libnah
7. Lechish
8. Hor
9. Makkedah
10. Agulim Cave

II. SIMEON.

1. Rimmon
2. Gilboa
3. Michmah
4. Gaba
5. Anathoth
6. Nob
7. Gilbeah
8. Mispah

III. BENJAMIN.

1. Rimmon
2. Gilboa
3. Michmah
4. Gaba
5. Anathoth
6. Nob
7. Gilbeah
8. Mispah

IV. DAN.

V. EPHRAIM.

VI. MANASSEH.

VII. ZEBULON.

VIII. ISSACHAR.

IX. ASHER.

X. NAPHTALI.

XI. MANASSEH.

XII. GAD.

XIII. REUBEN.

Notes on the Lessons.

LESSON V—November 3rd., 1895.

Samuel the Judge. 1 Sam. 7: 5-15.

(Commit to memory verses 13 and 15.)

GOLDEN TEXT: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." 1 Sam. 7: 12.

PROVE THAT—God delivers us when we ask him. Ps. 50: 15.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Review Quests. 14-16.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*. Nos. 108, 151, 99, 133.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday*. Samuel the Judge. 1 Sam. 7: 5-15. *Tuesday*. An upright Judge. 1 Sam. 12: 1-5. *Wednesday*. Daniel's intercession. Dan. 9: 8-19. *Thursday*. Prayer answered. Ps. 99. *Friday*. Remembering God. Ps. 20. *Saturday*. God's compassion. Joel 2: 12-17. *Sabbath*. Prayer for others. 1 Tim. 2: 1-8. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. The judgment pronounced against the house of Eli had fallen upon it. The Ark of God was captured by the Philistines and the two sons of Eli were slain. On hearing the news of the disaster, the aged priest, now 98 years old, fainted, and in his fall his neck was broken. Samuel succeeded him as judge and by his faithful words, after twenty years longer, awakened the nation to repentance. Probably his life was that of a fugitive, going stealthily from place to place that he might teach and preach, hiding in the caverns in the limestone range of Judea, emerging thence to visit now one quarter of the country and now another, ever in danger, but gradually awakening, not merely those districts which were contiguous to the Philistines, but all Israel to a sense of the greatness of their sins, and the necessity of renewed trust and love to their God. And so a fresh spiritual life sprang up among the people. (R. Payne Smith). "All the house of Israel lamented after the Lord." The ark rested at Kirjath-jearim, and the national worship at Shiloh seemed empty without it. God had withdrawn from them and left them to reap the bitter fruits of their sins. Sincerely penitent, the people longed for God, for "the living God," and promptly responded to Samuel's exhortations to put away strange gods and prepare their hearts unto the Lord. The prophet-judge then convened an assembly of all Israel at Mizpah.

LESSON PLAN. I. Israel Penitent. vs. 5-8. II. Israel Protected. vs. 9-12. III. Israel Prosperous. vs. 12-15.

I. ISRAEL PENITENT. 5. And Samuel said—that is, to the elders, or heads of tribes and families. Gather all Israel—Samuel knew that the Philistines would rightly interpret the destruction of the idols as an act of revolt and would lose no time in advancing to crush it. It was necessary to deepen the religious and patriotic enthusiasm of the people, unitedly join in an act of solemn re-consecration to God, and muster the army for the approaching battle. To Mizpeh—(*The Watch Tower*). Should be spelled "Mizpah." There were many places of this name, but probably this one lay about five miles north of Jerusalem. Although Samuel may have partly chosen it as a holy place (Judges 11: 11; 20: 1) yet the chief reason was probably its lofty situation, 500 feet above the neighboring plateau, which itself was 2000 feet above the sea level. It was thus difficult to surprise, and admirably adapted for warlike purposes. (R. Payne Smith). It was the meeting place of the national assembly on two other important occasions in this period: (a) when war was declared against Benjamin (Judges 20); and (b) when Saul was elected king (10: 17). Here on a later occasion, not unlike the present, the Jews were mustered by Judas Maccabæus to revolt against the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes. (Kirkpatrick). Its

modern name is *Nebv Samwil*. And I will pray for you unto the Lord—Samuel was noted for his "effectual fervent" prayers (Isa. 5: 16), see illustrations in ch. 8: 6; 12: 17; 19: 23; 15: 11. His prayers are referred to in Ps. 99: 6; Jer. 15: 1. Other instances of intercessory prayers are Abraham (Gen. 18: 22-33), Elijah (1 Kings 18: 36, 42), Ezra (Ezra 9: 5-15). It is a great privilege to secure the prayers of a good man.

6. And they gathered together to Mizpeh and drew water and poured it out before the Lord—The precise meaning of this symbolic act is not quite clear. From the connection it certainly implies sorrow for sin. The Jewish commentators say "They poured out their hearts in penitence like water before the Lord." It would also indicate helplessness (Ps. 22: 14; 2 Sam. 4: 14); earnest supplication (1 Sam. 1: 15); and consecration (Ps. 62: 8). "This seems to have been done as a symbol of pouring out before God confessions of sin drawn from the depths of the heart. What they said in connection with these acts was, 'we have sinned against the Lord.' They were no longer in the mood in which the Psalmist was when he kept silent, and his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day. They were in the mood into which he came when he said 'I will confess

my transgressions to the Lord.' They humbled themselves before God in deep convictions of their unworthiness, and being thus emptied of self they were in a better state to receive the gracious visitation of love and mercy." (Blaikie). "It may be supposed to represent the pouring out of their penitential sorrow, with which some have thought should be combined an allusion to the weakness resulting from dejection and grief (Josh. 7: 5), or to shedding floods of tears (Jer. 9: 1), or to cleansing of sin (2 Sam. 14: 14)." (Greene). In other cases the pouring out of water is represented as a joyful act (Isa. 12: 3; John 7: 37, 38). The pouring of it on the ground and not on the altar clearly marks it as an act of sorrow and not of rejoicing. **And fasted on that day**—Fasting was enjoined "for the afflicting of their souls" on the great day of atonement (Lev. 16: 29, 31; 23: 27, 32; Num. 29: 7). It has its rational explanation in the fact that deep sorrow takes away the desire for food as well as for gay clothing. Hence the wearing of sackcloth generally accompanied it. It is doubtless an aid to devotion and a wholesome exercise of the authority of the spiritual nature over the bodily. Instances of private fasting on special occasions are Judges 20: 26; 1 Sam. 31: 13; 2 Sam. 1: 12; 12: 16; Ezra 8: 23. See also Neh. 9: 1; Dan. 9: 3-5; Joel 2: 12. **And said there we have sinned against the Lord**—To these symbolical acts they added audible confession (Judges 10: 10; 1 Kings 8: 47; Prov. 28: 13; 1 John 1: 9). **And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah**—That is, he now became the acknowledged ruler of Israel in things temporal, both civil and military, as he had previously been in things spiritual by virtue of his office as prophet. The words strongly suggest that there was some direct appointment or at the very least a national acknowledgement of Samuel's authority. (R. Payne Smith). "The people recognized his authority; they saw in him one who was well fitted to be their ruler in things temporal, and here in full convention they by universal acclamation elected him as judge. A worthier choice could not have been made. It is true he was no warrior, no sagacious general who could lead them forth to victory having the experience of many a well-fought battle to guide him; but he was strong in prayer, strong in faith; he had the prudence of calm wisdom; he knew his countrymen thoroughly, and understood exactly how far they could be trusted, and what they could be expected to effect. In his capacity as judge, he marshalled them and reduced them to discipline and order so that they might resist the attack which he foresaw." (Deane). The next verse clearly implies that the assembly at Mizpah continued for some time during which Samuel was organizing the civil and military affairs of the nation.

7. **And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the**

Philistines went up against Israel—The chiefs of the five confederated cities of Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath (ch. 6; 16, 17). They acted with promptness and vigor. They knew that a revival of the national worship meant a revival of the old spirit of independence under the protection of Jehovah. They were determined to nip the rebellion in the bud. "It is not rare for steps taken with the best of intentions to become for a time the occasion of a great increase of evil,—just as the remonstrances of Moses with Pharaoh led at first to the increase of the people's burdens; or just as the coming of Christ into the world caused the massacre of the babes of Bethlehem. So here the first public step taken by Samuel for the people's welfare was the occasion of an alarming invasion by their cruel enemies. This should not dismay but stimulate faith and patience." (Blaikie). When the church and Christian people are doing their duty they may expect attacks from evil men. Try to pass and enforce Sabbath observance laws, or to repress the liquor traffic and the "lords of the Philistines" are as prompt and powerful as ever. **And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines**—As they might well be. They were doubtless as poorly armed as during other oppressions (1 Sam. 13: 19-22). Nevertheless they were not cowards but went forth bravely to meet the hosts of Philistia in the name of Jehovah.

8. **And the children of Israel said to Samuel, cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hands of the Philistines**—Margin "Be not silent from us from crying." On this Dr. Maclaren remarks, "They are afraid but they mean to fight all the same, and, because they are afraid they long for God's help. That is the right temper, which, if a man cherish, he will not be defeated, however many Philistines rush at him. Twenty years of slavery had naturally bred fear in them, but it is a wise fear which breeds reliance upon God. Our enemy is strong, and no fault is more fatal than an underestimate of his power. If we go into battle singing, we shall probably come out of it weeping, or never come out at all. If we begin bragging, we shall end bleeding. It is only he who looks on the advancing foe, and feels 'They are too strong for me,' who will have to say, as he watches them retreating, 'He delivered me from my strong enemy.' We should think much of our foes and little of ourselves. Such a temper will lead to caution, watchfulness, wise suspicion, vigorous strain of all our little power, and, above all, it will send us to our knees to plead with our great Captain and Advocate."

II. ISRAEL PROTECTED. 9. **And Samuel took a sucking lamb**—Not less than seven days old (Ex. 22: 30; Lev. 22: 27). Such a young animal suitably represented the nation that had awakened to new life and was, as it were, new-born. (K. and D.) **And**

offered it—This may have been done by the priests at Samuel's request. The general opinion of commentators, however, is that Samuel performed the sacrifice himself and his doing so in violation of the strict letter of the law which permitted none to usurp this peculiar function of the descendants of Aaron is thus explained (Lev. 1: 11; Num. 17: 7). He offered this sacrifice, and others subsequently as the immediate messenger of God. By virtue of his office as prophet he is invested with the right to supersede the degenerate priests, and to assume their functions. The ark was "resting" at Kirjath-jearim and the sanctuary at Shiloh had lost that which gave it its sanctity. Religious affairs had reverted to their primitive patriarchal simplicity and the moral head of the nation assumes the leadership in religious functions. The divine approval is shewn by repose to his prayer. Compare the case of Elijah at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18). **For a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord**—R. V. "a whole burnt-offering," *'Olak* ("burnt-offering") means "that which ascends" and symbolized devotion and consecration to God. *Chalil* ("whole") intensified the signification, and shewed that all was God's, and no part whatsoever was reserved for the priest or the offerer. And thus then Samuel's burnt-offering meant that the people gave themselves unreservedly to Jehovah. (R. Payne Smith). (Rom. 12: 1). **And Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him**—R. V. "answered him." The next verse describes the manner in which God answered him.

10. "We have here a detailed and lively description of the whole event. The lamb is still burning upon the altar, and Samuel still kneeling before it, when the Philistine hosts appear upon the lofty plateau just below the hill of Mizpah, and marshal themselves for battle. It seemed as if Israel's case were hopeless, and many a heart, no doubt, was bravely struggling against its fears, and scarcely could keep them down. But as the enemy drew near the electric cloud formed in the heavens, and 'Jehovah thundered with a great voice on that day upon the Philistines.' Alarmed at so unusual a phenomenon, the Philistines hesitate in their advance, and Samuel, seeing their consternation, gives the signal for the charge, and Israel, inspired by the voice of Jehovah, rushes down the hill upon the foe. Full of enthusiasm, they forget the poorness of their weapons, and the weight of their impetuous rush breaks the opposing line. And now a panic seizes the Philistines; they attempt no further resistance, but flee in dismay from the pursuing Israelites. Their course would lead them down a huge valley 1000 feet deep, at the bottom of which was a torrent rushing over a rocky bed; nor was their flight stayed 'until they came under Beth-car.' Of this place we know nothing, but probably it was a fastness where the Philistines could protect themselves from further attack." (R. Payne Smith). **And as Samuel was offer-**

ing up the burnt-offering—God's answers are not delayed in the time of his people's need (Isa. 65: 24; Ps. 32: 5; Dan. 9: 20, 21). **The Philistines drew near to battle against Israel, but the Lord thundered with a great under on that day upon the Philistines**—lit. "with a great voice." Thunder is the voice of God (Ps. 29: 3, 4; 1 Sam. 2: 10; 2 Sam. 22: 14, 15). **And discomfited them**—The Hebrew word expresses the confusion of a sudden panic, and is especially used of supernatural defeats. Compare Ex. 14: 24; Joshua 10: 10; Judg. 4: 15; 15: 20; 2 Sam. 22: 15. (Kirkpatrick). **And they were smitten before Israel**—R. V. "Smitten down." The word is specially used of divine judgments. See ch. 4: 3, 10, where the same word is used. The word "smote" in the next verse describes the blows given in battle.

11. **And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car**—(*House of a lamb*). Probably on some commanding height overlooking the road to Philistia. Its site is unknown.

12. **Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer**—(*The stone of help*).—The exact spot is unknown, but it was here that the Philistines gained their great victory 20 years before (ch. 4: 1). Other examples of memorial stones will be found in Gen. 28: 18; 31: 45; 35: 14; Josh. 4: 9; 24: 26. **Saying, hitherto hath the Lord helped us**—The deliverances of the past are a pledge of continued help for the future, on this they built their confident hopes.

III. ISRAEL PROSPEROUS. 13. **So the Philistines were subdued**—lit. "were brought low," humbled. They were not conquered nor indeed entirely driven out of the country for they had garrisons there when Saul was made king, but the forty years oppression was at an end (Judges 13: 1). **And they came no more into the coast of Israel**—Their invasions ceased for the time being. **And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel**—This, of course, includes the reign of Saul, till within four years of his death, for Samuel continued to be prophet, and to a certain extent judge, even when Saul was king. The words, moreover, imply a struggle, during which there was a gradual growth in strength on Israel's part, and a gradual enfeeblement on the part of the Philistines, until David completely vanquished them. Israel's freedom and the final subjugation of the Philistines were both contained in Samuel's victory at Mizpah. (R. Payne Smith).

14. **And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath**—These cities themselves do not seem to have been captured, but the towns and villages lying among the western foothills on the borders between Israel and Philistia were recon-

quered. And the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines—The territory adjacent to these cities. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites—"The highlanders." On the west of Jordan they lived chiefly in the mountainous country of Judah and Ephraim (Num. 13: 29; Josh. 10: 5); east of Jordan they occupied the high plateau of rich pasture-land between the Jabbock and the Arnon, from which they had expelled the Moabites (Num. 21: 13, 26) and were in their turn dispossessed by the Israelites. In the

Egyptian inscriptions the Amorites give their name to the whole country of Canaan, and in several passages of the Old Testament the name appears to be used loosely of the original inhabitants in general. Possibly this is the case here. (Kirkpatrick). (Judges 1: 34, 35).

15. And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.—In his old age Samuel made his sons judges (ch. 8: 1), and Saul was elected king a considerable time before Samuel's death, but up to the end of his life he was held in the highest reverence and there was practically no limit to his authority.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *God pardons the penitent.* When the Israelites began to feel their need of God's pardon and presence so that they "lamented after" him (vs. 2) he was ready to meet them with a message of love and promise of deliverance. The condition of Israel had been very deplorable. They had fallen in with the wicked customs and idolatry of the nations around, the ark was almost forgotten at Kirjath-jearim, the sanctuary at Shiloh was neglected, and Samuel seemed to preach for twenty years in vain. Yet the moment the people desired to return to the Lord he was found waiting to receive them. Is it not mean and unworthy, as well as wicked, to withhold our love and obedience from such a gracious God?

2. *We should ask others to pray for us.* Samuel had been praying for the people all these twenty years and their reformation now was the answer. So he felt sure that God would not refuse what he might further ask. It is a great help to us to try and do what is right when we know that others remember us in their prayers. Parents, teachers, pastors, friends are asking that we be kept from harm and all evil. If others are so anxious about us we ought to be anxious about ourselves. If God will hear the prayers of others for us, he will all the more readily answer our own.

3. *We should not forget God's answers to prayer.* It is a good thing to reflect upon the answers which God has already sent to our prayers. Every morning that we waken refreshed from sleep we should feel as if he had given back to us the life we entrusted to his keeping when we retired to rest. Every day that he keeps us from harm he has answered our morning prayer. Think of how many things you have wished for and have obtained and how often God gave you far beyond what you expected. Even when you did not get what you desired you are able to see that God gave you something far better and only kept back what you would now be sorry to have.

4. *He will help us in the future as effectually as he has in the past.* This was not the first time by any means that God had delivered Israel. He threw down the walls of Jericho for them, lengthened the day at Beth-horon

so that their victory might be complete, scattered the Midianites before the torches and trumpets of Gideon's three hundred. God's past mercies are a guarantee that he has blessings still in store for us. Every wonderful preservation that we have experienced assures us that we need fear no evil for God is with us when we trust ourselves to his care and in our hearts lean on him.

5. *How much the happiness of a country depends upon its rulers.* We read not long ago that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and now Samuel's influence prevails with them and they continue loyal to Jehovah. Rulers have much to do with the religious character of a people. Let our members of parliament, our magistrates and others who occupy influential positions be men who fear God and are sincere Christians and the whole nation will feel the power of their lives. What a blessing it has been to the British Empire and to the world that a woman like Queen Victoria has occupied such an exalted position so long.

ADDED POINTS.

1. There is no true repentance if we are not willing to "put away the strange gods."
2. We should "prepare our hearts" if we are to render acceptable service.
3. Assemblies for public worship "where prayer is wont to be made" are helpful to penitence and confirmation of good resolves.
4. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.
5. There is One Intercessor, Jesus Christ, whom the Father heareth always.
6. Prayers are not answered, often because we do not expect an answer.
7. If we want help against the Lord's enemies we must be on the Lord's side. Then we need fear none.
8. Unless we are willing to have a blessing, God will not force it upon us, no matter how much our friends may plead with him.
9. It is good to keep memorials of God's mercies. They make us humble and thankful.

TEST QUESTIONS.

What superstitious use was made of the Ark of the Covenant? (4: 3). What effect did this have upon the Philistines? What was the result of the battle? How did the news reach Eli? What was the effect of it upon him? What did the Philistines do with the ark? Why did they send it back? How did they send it? To whom did it come? Where was it lodged? How long did it remain there? To what place did Samuel summon all Israel? What other assemblies were held there? What evidence did the people give of genuine repentance? What other instances of priestly functions performed by persons who were not priests? (Judges 8: 27; 1 Sam. 6: 14; 1 Kings 18: 19, 36; 2 Kings 9: 6). By what reason could this be justified? Give other victories obtained by supernatural means?

THE BLACKBOARD.

The key word of this lesson is **Ebenezer**. What does it stand for?

Ering Israelites.
Beginning of repentance.
Earnest prayer.
Not without sacrifice.
Eventful storm.
Zealous pursuit.
Excluded invaders.
Restored territory.

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

LESSON VI—November 10th, 1895.

Saul Chosen King. 1 Sam. 10: 17-27.

(Commit to memory verses 24 and 25).

GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." Ps. 97: 1.

PROVE THAT—God's kingdom is a spiritual one. Rom. 14: 17.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Review Quests. 17-19.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 11, 62, 56, 69.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Saul Chosen King. 1 Sam. 10: 17-27. *Tuesday.* The people's desire. 1 Sam. 8: 1-10. *Wednesday.* Saul indicated. 1 Sam. 9: 15-22. *Thursday.* Anointing of Saul. 1 Sam. 10: 1-9. *Friday.* Samuel's exhortation. 1 Sam. 12: 6-19. *Saturday.* Laws for the king. Deut. 17: 14-20. *Sabbath.* Christian loyalty. 1 Pet. 2: 11-17. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. When Samuel grew old he made his sons judges. But they proved corrupt and took bribes. Feeling the need of a leader and seeing little prospect of a worthy successor to Samuel, threatened too by powerful enemies on the east and south, the people desired to end the uncertainty attached to the office of Judge and organize a united nation under a king like the communities around them. This indicated distrust of God's providence and ingratitude towards Samuel. Nevertheless God permitted them to have their own way and directed Samuel to privately anoint Saul the son of Kish as king.

LESSON PLAN. I. A Sorrowful Reproof. vs. 17-19. II. A Divine Choice. vs. 20-23. III. A Loyal Reception. vs. 24-27.

I. A SORROWFUL REPROOF. 17. And Samuel called the people together—Note his unselfish and noble conduct. We might have expected him to say "Well, if you will have a king, go and find one; I can have nothing to do with it." Though evidently much pained, he sank all thoughts of self, headed the "king movement," and set himself to find the best man. And when Saul was chosen, Samuel proved the most faithful friend he had. Most men in such circumstances would have wished the experiment to fail—Samuel did his best to make it successful (Stock). "I think that one of the most magnanimous, and majestic, and heroic deeds ever done in our world's story, was done by

Samuel, when, convinced that it was the will of God, he set himself to do what no other man could do: to forsake all his past, to abandon all the lines of action on which he had worked through the best years of his life, and to put into other men's hands fresh possibilities. I call that conduct magnificent." (Elmslie). Since the people would not have the best, God allowed them to have the next best, and made the most possible for them out of that choice. So God is doing continually with his children. They so often refuse their highest privileges, and take the second best, or the third best, instead of the best. And then all that God can do for them is to enable them to make the very most out of what they choose. (Peloubet). **Unto the Lord**—It was a solemn religious gathering. Possibly the High Priest was there with the Urin and Thummim. It was not so much the people choosing a king, as God designating the future viceroy to represent Himself. The national assembly or "congregation of Israel" was composed of all Israelites, of twenty years old and upwards (Num. 1: 3), who had not forfeited their privileges, together with foreigners admitted upon certain conditions. (Kirkpatrick). **To Mizpah**—Should be spelled "Mizpah." The usual place of assembly at this period.

18. And said unto the children of Israel—Samuel first points out in his address to the assembled people, that Jehovah had always done for them the very thing for which they desired a king. But their deliverance by Jehovah had been made dependent upon their own conduct; they were required to repent them of their sins, and purge the land from idolatry, before victory could be theirs. What they wanted was national independence freed from this condition, and secured by an organization of their military resources. (R. Payne Smith). **Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians**—The pronoun is emphatic. "It was I who brought up Israel," in contrast to "and ye," verse 19. (Kirkpatrick). **And out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you.** (K. V.)—The reference to the kingdoms from which God had delivered Israel is noteworthy, because, after the pattern of these very kingdoms, the Israelites wished to have a king and an outward kingdom. There is in this a factual irony. (Erdmann). See the whole story of the Judges.

19. And ye have this day rejected your God who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, nay, but set a king over us—Because what you want is a divorce of your national well-being from religion. (R. Payne Smith). The following are some of the reasons which may have induced the people to demand a king: (1) Samuel was growing old. Wise and vigorous as his rule had been, with advancing years there was less energy. He could no longer go out with them to battle as formerly.

(2) His sons were not worthy to fill his place. They took bribes and did not walk in the ways of their father. (3) Their nation was breaking up. Sectional interests were considered more important than national. Intertribal war might break out if the strong influence of Samuel were removed by death. (4) Their enemies were mustering in force. The Ammonites and Philistines—one on the east and the other on the west—were preparing to attack them. These were not undisciplined hordes of desert wanderers, but powerful, organized monarchies, their armies equipped with the most "modern" style of weapons. (5) All other nations had kings. To the oriental a nation without a royal head is scarcely a nation at all. The sovereign seemed to them a centre of unity and strength. (6) It is true that God had always raised up a leader for them when he wished to deliver them, but they were tired of that hand-to-mouth system. It made their freedom depend so much upon their good behaviour. They would like to feel that there was some one to look to when danger threatened. They had lost sight of the moral glory of the theocracy. As the "peculiar" people of Jehovah, his own amongst the nations of men, they occupied a unique position. What earthly monarch so august as the One whose throne was between the cherubim. However natural their request may have been, and justifiable on the grounds of worldly prudence, it marked a moral decline and loss of faith in the presence and power of their God. **Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord**—In order to receive the king which he has chosen for you. The decision was doubtless made by lot. This is not regarded in Scripture as giving a chance decision, but as a legitimate mode of ascertaining the divine will (Prov. 16: 33). Its use was accompanied with acts of worship as if in God's immediate presence. **By your tribes and by your thousands**—The natural sub-division of the nation into tribes; of the tribes into families or clans; of the families into houses; of the houses into men (Josh. 7: 14); was supplemented by Moses with an artificial organization of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens (Ex. 18: 25). The thousand corresponded to the family, and the terms appear to be used here as synonymous. Compare ch. 23: 23; Judg. 6: 15; Josh. 22: 14. (Kirkpatrick). Also Num. 1: 16; 10: 4.

II. A DIVINE CHOICE. 20. And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. Had not God already pointed out Saul to Samuel? Why then did he not simply present him to the people as the anointed of the Lord? "The secret meeting of the seer with Saul was not sufficient to secure a complete and satisfactory recognition of him as king; it was also necessary that the Spirit of Jehovah should single him out publicly in a solemn assembly of the nation, and point him out as the man of Jehovah." (Ewald). Compare the public recognition of Christ at his baptism, and of Paul when

sent forth as a missionary from Antioch.

21. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Mat-ri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken—Not mentioned among the families of Benjamin in Num. 26: 38-41. It may have been a new family arisen since the almost extinction of the tribe as narrated in the book of Judges. Others suppose that it is a corruption of Bikri, i. e. a descendant of Becher (1 Ch. 7. 6, 8). And when they sought him, he could not be found—Knowing what would happen Saul had concealed himself. No really worthy man was ever promoted to high office without having to overcome his own unwillingness, and no one probably ever worthily discharged solemn duties without having felt oppressed and humbled with the consciousness of his own unfitness to overtake them. As a matter of fact, Saul was now called to a most weighty responsibility, and he failed and was rejected, though not without proving that he was a man of extraordinary genius and power. And it never can be said of him that presumption was the cause of his fall, or that he hastily undertook serious duties in the spirit of light-hearted levity. (R. Payne Smith). Compare Moses (Ex. 3: 11, 13; 4: 1, 10, 13), and Jeremiah (Jer. 1: 6). "Saul might have well been staggered by the thought that in electing a king the people rejected God. Even though his mind was not a spiritual mind, there was something frightful in the very idea of a man stepping, so to speak, into God's place. No wonder that he hid himself. Perhaps he thought that when he could not be found the choice would fall upon some one else." (Blaikie). Yet we must remember that excessive self-depreciation easily degenerates into faithlessness. Modesty is beautiful, but to refuse any call of God is to distrust his willingness to fit us for the duty to which he summons us.

22. Therefore they inquired of the Lord further—The technical phrase for ascertaining God's will by means of the Urim and Thummim in the breast plate upon the High Priest's ephod (Ex. 28: 30; Num. 27: 21). (Kirkpatrick). If the man should yet come hither—Lit. "Is any one as yet come hither." This indirect form was considered more reverential than "Has Saul come to the assembly, or does he tarry at home?" And the Lord answered, Behold he hath hid himself among the stuff—the baggage and travelling equipment of the people. The people, collected from all Israel, would come with wagons and provisions, and such arms as they could procure; for very probably the Philistines would interrupt such a meeting, as they had that convened formerly by Samuel (ch. 7: 7). Naturally, therefore, they would follow the regulations of an army, and so arrange their baggage as to form a place of defence in case of attack. (R. Payne Smith).

23. And they ran and fetched him thence—The poetic force of the original is

weakened in our translation, "And they ran, and took him thence, and he stood forth among the people, and he was taller, &c." (R. Payne Smith). And when he stood among the people he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward—It was an age when leaders stood in the forefront of the battle, and a giant would be conspicuous before his friends and strike terror to his foes. In the Mahometan traditions Saul is known only by the name Thalût, "The Tall." He could not have been much less than seven feet high. Great stress is laid upon this, because this distinguished stature, with the impression of bodily powers which it conveyed, helped much to commend him to the choice of the people. When from long peace, there was no man of distinguished renown among the people, and when in battle much less depended upon military skill than upon the bodily prowess of the chief in single combat, or in the partial actions with which most battles began, it was natural enough that the people should take pride in the gigantic proportions of their leader, as calculated to strike terror into the enemy and confidence into his followers; besides that, it was no mean advantage that the crest of their leader should, from his tallness, be seen from afar by his people. The prevalence of this feeling of regard for personal bulk and stature is seen in the sculptures of ancient Egypt, Assyria and Persia, and even in the modern paintings of the last named nation, in which the sovereign is invested with gigantic proportions in comparison with the persons around him. (Kitto). Perhaps something of the same preference for size as symbolic of influence leads to the erection of statues of "heroic" size in our public parks.

III. A LOYAL RECEPTION. 24. And Samuel said to all the people, see ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people—The popular acclamation is merely the acceptance of the previous divine choice. There could be no doubt about the "divine right" of king Saul. God had endowed Saul with all the natural qualifications of a true king. Success or failure depended upon his use of these. And all the people shouted and said, God save the king—Lit. "Let the king live" (1 Kings 1: 25, 34, 39; 2 Kings 11: 12; 2 Chr. 23: 11). "The familiar phrase of our version appears to occur first in the Geneva Bible (1560). Coverdale (1535) has "God save the new kyng." It was probably adopted from the liturgical response, "O Lord save the king," which is taken from the Vulgate version of Ps. 20: 9." (Kirkpatrick).

25. Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom—The constitution of the new kingdom. Saul was not to be an unrestrained oriental despot (1 Sam. 8: 11-18). He received his crown from God, and he was to regulate his authority by divinely ordained principles (Deut. 17: 14-20). And wrote it in a book, and laid it up

before the Lord—Lit. "the book." Possibly this important charter was added to "the book of the law" kept by the side of the ark "before the Lord" (Deut. 31: 26). This book contained not only the record of the Mosaic legislation (Ex. 24: 7; Deut. 28: 61), but historical narratives (Ex. 17: 14) and other records of importance, such as the solemn renewal of the covenant at Shechem under Joshua (Josh. 24: 26). (Kirkpatrick). **And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his own house**—Saul does not at once assume his authority. Indeed up to the close of his life he treated Samuel with the utmost deference and recognized the superior position of the aged prophet judge.

26. And Saul also went home to Gibeah—(a hill). The native place of Saul, four miles north of Jerusalem, and two south of Ramah, where Samuel dwelt. This course was wise. It would lull the suspicions of the Philistines, give Saul time to think, and permit the news to spread amongst the tribes before there was any hostile demonstration against the enemy. **And there went with him a band of men**—R. V. "the host." Brave and distinguished men. They are contrasted with those who rejected Saul. **Whose hearts God had touched**—Who had been peculiarly affected by the scenes of the election they had witnessed at Mizpeh, and who were inwardly drawn by the divine influence to love and admire the new sovereign. (Terry). God selected his body-guard and counsellors.

27. But the children of Belial said—"Certain worthless fellows." Our translators have treated "Belial" as a proper name in the historical books, but not elsewhere, though the alternative is generally given in the margin. It means "worthlessness," and, according to the usual Hebrew idiom "a son" or "daughter of worthlessness" signifies "a worthless man or woman," and with a positively bad sense, a lawless, ungodly, wicked person. "Belial," or more correctly "Beliar," is used

by St. Paul in 2 Cor. 6: 15 as a name of Satan, the personification of all lawlessness and worthlessness. (Kirkpatrick). **How shall this man save us?** He was an unknown man from the smallest of all the tribes. **And they despised him, and brought him no presents**—The refusal of the customary offerings of homage was tantamount to a deliberate and contemptuous rejection of his authority. It was a studied insult. Apparently, therefore, the people did bring him presents; and as these would chiefly consist of food, they would be useful only for maintaining a body of men. This, too, would scarcely escape the notice of so watchful an enemy as the garrison of Philistines in Gibeah, yet until Saul smote one of their strongholds they did nothing; but, then, forthwith they invaded Israel so promptly, and with such overwhelming numbers, as seems to prove that they had been busy making preparations meanwhile to maintain their empire. (Kirkpatrick). **But he held his peace**—R. V. Marg. "But he was as though he had been deaf." This shows self-control, and self-denial, and also great foresight and prudence. (Erdmann). Had Saul not controlled his anger, a civil war would have been the result, and the lordly tribes of Ephraim and Judah might have refused a king chosen from the little tribe of Benjamin. In fact Judah never does seem to have given a hearty allegiance to Saul. (R. Payne Smith). While perhaps only a few were outspoken in their disloyalty, it seems from what followed that there was quite a widespread dissatisfaction. (Terry). He patiently bided his time until he could prove himself worthy of being a king. He did not have to wait long. Israel was attacked by an invading army of Ammonites from east of Jordan, under Nahash. Saul summoned the warriors of the nation; and 330,000 men assembled around his standard. A great victory was gained, which established the confidence of the people in their new leader, and his authority was confirmed. (Peloubet).

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *We are apt to forget what God has done for us.* When Samuel grew old and his sons proved themselves unworthy to take his place the people began to forget what he had done for them, and to wish that he could be superseded by a younger man, and one whom they could call "king." This was most ungrateful towards the aged prophet, but the worst of it was that it was ungrateful towards God. He had always provided a leader for them when it was necessary. If they would only fear him and keep his covenant no king could defend them like the One whose throne was between the cherubim. His past deliverances of them were a guarantee that he would not leave them undefended. It is good for us to recall God's mercies in the past that we may have no anxious care for the future.

2. *God overrules our mistakes and our sinfulness for our good.* God did not wish to give

the Israelites a king just then. They were better under judges for a few generations more. Bye and bye he would give them a king "after his own heart." But when men will not let God do the best thing for them, he lets them have their own way and helps them to make the most of their foolish choice. If the people were determined to have a king, God would choose for them the best that could be found, of the style that they were looking for. How very patient and forgiving He is. We often act very foolishly and wilfully, but he still tries to help us to repair our mistakes and lets us suffer as little harm as possible from them.

3. *He sometimes punishes us by letting us have our own way.* When our own way crosses God's plan it is sure to lead to trouble. Saul defeated the enemies of Israel, and was a success as a military leader for the greater part of his reign. But there were other results

following his elevation to royalty that were not calculated upon. He extorted severe military service, and assumed the prerogatives of oriental despots. His disposition itself changed, so that he was feared more than beloved. While God graciously leads us in spite of our rejection of his wisdom, nevertheless, our folly must produce its bitter results that we may learn to trust God next time. Any plan, purpose, or ambition that is not entered upon with humble-hearted submission to God's will and pursued in the spirit of obedience to him, will lead to disappointment, if not moral disaster.

4. *Sincere modesty is often a mark of real worth.* Saul does not seem to have entered upon his duties with presumptuous self-confidence. When Samuel first announced to him that he was to be chosen, and anointed him, he quietly returned to his duties on the farm and told nobody, not even his father. Now he hides himself as if to escape the honor thrust upon him. After his presentation to the people he went back to Gibeah, and only came out to lead the army at the call of danger. Those who are really fit for any important position, realize the difficulties of it, and the insufficiency of their own power to fill it. Yet often we think ourselves modest when we are only selfish, slothful, and cowardly. We ought never to refuse an offer or duty that is clearly laid upon us by God. If he calls us, he will enable us to discharge its responsibilities.

5. *It is wisest to take no notice of those who insult us, but let our character speak for itself.* When Saul heard that some "worthless fellows" despised him, and tried to stir up discontent by depreciating him, his first impulse may have been, as would have been the case

with most people, to make use of the popular enthusiasm to nip the rebellion in the bud. But "he was as if deaf." In this he shewed his self-restraint and wisdom. Had he made martyrs of those he would have stirred up sympathy for them. It is better to put down detraction by shewing that it is false, than by trying to make our slanderers smart for it. After Saul had proved himself worthy to reign, some wanted him to shew them that no one could talk in that way about him with impunity. But still he was wise. There was then no need to punish them. Never demean yourself to gratify revenge by striking a defeated and despicable foe.

ADDED POINTS.

1. We often wish very much for what is not best for us.
2. God is always loving and forbearing towards us. We ought to be docile and grateful.
3. There are many ways of rejecting king Jesus.
4. Those who have been baptized in infancy, reject him if they do not confess him for themselves.
5. Those who have allowed the love of the world to banish thoughts of him and his service, also renounce his rule.
6. God will bring good out of evil to those who turn to him.
7. Those who are faithful in humbler duties are most likely to be called to higher ones.
8. When God has any work for us to do he prepares us for that work.
9. If we cannot be "king" we should be one of a band of willing helpers around the leader.
10. Note how Christ treats his enemies.

TEST QUESTIONS.

What was the character of Samuel's sons? What revolutionary movement did the Elders of Israel propose to Samuel? What reasons led them to do this? Why was Samuel displeased? What answer did God give him? What solemn warning did he give the Elders? How was Saul described? What led him to the house of Samuel? How did Samuel entertain him? What did Saul say to Samuel when he hinted to him of the kingship? What proof did Samuel give that what he did was by God's command? What is meant by the proverb "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Mention some other occasions on which the people assembled at Mizpah. What proof had God given of his power to deliver the people from their enemies? On what condition alone, however, did he do this? Give other instances of persons chosen by lot. (Josh. 7: 14; Judges 20: 9, 10; 1 Sam. 14: 42; 1 Chr. 24: 5; Luke 1: 9; Acts 1: 26). Also of its use for other purposes. (Josh. 18: 10; Lev. 16: 8, 10). Give other instances of Saul's modesty. Why did some refuse to render him homage? How did he display his wisdom in regard to them? (11: 12, 13).

THE BLACKBOARD.

On the one hand—

L oving care
O mnipotent power
R ighteous Law
D eliverance assured

On the other—

S elfwill
A postacy
U nbridled Ambition
L asting sorrow

"Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all."

LESSON VII—November 17th, 1895.

Saul Rejected. 1 Sam. 15: 10-23.

(Commit to memory verses 10 and 11).

GOLDEN TEXT: "To obey is better than sacrifice." 1 Sam. 15: 22.

PROVE THAT—There can be no substitute for obedience. 1 John 3: 24.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Review Ques. 20-22.

LESSON HYMN. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 76, 130, 78, 104.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Saul Rejected. 1 Sam. 15: 10-23. *Tuesday.* A previous sin. 1 Sam. 13: 5-14. *Wednesday.* Result of disobedience. 1 Sam. 15: 24-31. *Thursday.* The sentence confirmed. 1 Sam. 28: 15-20. *Friday.* The Lord's requirement. Micah 6: 1-8. *Saturday.* Judgment on disobedience. Prov. 1: 22-33. *Sabbath.* Obedience better than sacrifice. Isa. 1: 10-20. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. Saul had now reigned for ten years. Under his command the army had been victorious over the Ammonites of the eastern desert and the Philistines of the western plain. With an arm of 200,000 men he proceeded to execute vengeance upon the fierce marauders of the south, the Amalekites, the ancient foe of the nation. At first Saul gave promise of being a king after God's own heart, but he lacked the "one thing needful," a heart filled with the fear of the Lord. He soon became imperious, impatient, vindictive and disobedient to the divine commands.

The Amalekites had attacked the Israelites immediately after crossing the Red Sea (Ex. 17: 8-16), and seem to have kept up a cowardly and treacherous guerilla warfare upon them (Deut. 25: 18). "Nations having a corporate life, when they continue to manifest the spirit of preceding generations, are held responsible for their actions, and liable to the penalty. Saul was sent to inflict on Amalek the retribution that had been due so long for his perfidious treatment of Israel on the way to Canaan." (Blaikie). The whole nation was "devoted" or placed under the ban, and consequently was to be wholly exterminated. Such a course was dictated by policy, for the Israelites could only in this way be permanently freed from danger from the inveterate foes on their southern border, and the penalty was richly deserved for their wickedness and treachery. It was in accordance with the usages of war in those days. The Israelites were forbidden to touch the spoil. "The extermination was to be carried into effect with all the solemnity of a judicial execution, and the soldiers were to have no benefit from it whatever, any more than the jailer or the hangman can have benefit from the execution of some wicked murderer." (Blaikie).

LESSON PLAN. I. The Rejected Word. vs. 10-15. II. The Rejected King. vs. 16-23.

I. THE REJECTED WORD. 10. Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying—This was a direct communication from God, perhaps in a dream or in a vision. It was not something which arose spontaneously in his own mind as the result of his experience of Saul's character. God spoke to him. Saul when Saul changes his conduct towards God. The heart of God throbs with all holy and tender affections. This was Saul's second offence (ch. 13: 13; 15: 3, 9). And it grieved Samuel—R. V. "Samuel was wroth." That this was holy anger is clear from what follows, for Samuel could pray in his anger.

11. It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king—Yet Samuel says (vs. 29) that God cannot repent (Num. 23: 19; Rom. 11: 29; Heb. 13: 8; Jas. 1: 17). God always does what is perfectly wise and right and therefore can never regret his actions as we often do because we have been ignorant, or foolish, or wicked. But using the language of men, God is said to repent when sorrowfully, but with good and sufficient reason he reverses his treatment of men. A change in man's attitude to God necessarily involves a change in God's attitude to man. Repentance is followed by forgiveness (Ex. 22: 14; 2 Sam. 24: 16) or disobedience by a withdrawal of promised blessings. For he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments—God changes his plans for Saul. He was disappointed in Saul and jealous for the honor of God. (Erdmann). There is nothing to shew that Samuel was displeased with God as was Jonah (Jonah 4: 1). The whole transaction was disappointing, worrying, heart-breaking. (Blaikie). And he cried unto the Lord all night—Doubtless his prayer was for Saul and the people of Israel. But Saul could be forgiven only when he repented. "It took the whole night to reconcile Samuel to the Divine sentence. How very deeply and tenderly must this man's heart have been moved by regard for Saul and for the people! In the morning, his soul seems to have returned to its quiet rest. His mood seems now to have been 'not my will but thine be done.'" (Blaikie). Compare ch. 1: 8, 9; Ex. 32: 11-13; Luke 6: 12.

12. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning—He did not delay although sorely grieved. He lost no time in carrying God's message. It was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel—(Park, or Garden). A town about 7 miles south of Hebron (ch. 25: 2). It lay in Saul's homeward route and Samuel expected to meet him there. And behold, he set him up a place—R. V. "He set him up a monument." Heb. "a hand." It is translated "pillar" in 2 Sam. 18: 18. Whatever was the form of the monument, it was surmounted, according to the ancient fashion, by the figure of a hand, the symbol of power and energy. Jerome says it was a triumphal arch made of myrtle, palm and olive branches. These decorations might have been added to heighten the splendor of the trophy. But it is more than probable that, as the Hebrew text plainly states, the memorial of the victory was in the form of a colossal hand of stone, wood, or other durable material. Many such forms of the human hand exist among the monuments of ancient Egypt. The erection of this vain-glorious trophy was an additional act of disobedience. His pride had overborne his sense of duty, in first raising this monument to his own honor, and then going to Gilgal to offer sacrifice to God." (J. F. and B.) The "him" is in the whole connection significant as it brings out the selfish principle which actuated Saul. He does not give the honor to God the Lord by unconditional obedience, but he sets up a monument in his own honor. Such a monument may have been called "a hand" not because of its shape but because, like the hand, it directs attention to what it denotes. (Erdmann). And is gone about and passed on—Turned off the direct road homeward and proceeded further. And gone down to Gilgal—This lay in the Jordan valley 3,000 feet below Carmel and about 30 miles away. At this ancient sanctuary, the first fortified camp of Israel, and the place of his own coronation, Saul doubtless intended to celebrate his victory with fitting pomp and ceremony. But God so ordered it that here, where he had received his first warning (13: 13, 14) he should receive his final sentence.

13. And Samuel came to Saul—The Septuagint here adds "*and behold he was offering a burnt-offering to the Lord, the first-fruits of the spoil, which he brought from Amalek.*" But there is no good authority for this insertion. And Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord—Saul could hardly fail to know that this was not true, but he hoped that imperfect obedience would be accepted. Compared with what any other king of his time would have done he thought that he had acquitted himself creditably. In this case however, the whole character of the transaction was changed by his disobedience. "Instead of wearing the aspect of a solemn retribution upon a sinful nation, on a people laden with iniquity, all the more impressive

because the ministers of God's vengeance abstained from appropriating a vestige of the property, but consigned the whole like a plague-stricken mass, too polluted to be touched, to the furnace of destruction—instead of this, it just appeared like an ordinary unprincipled foray, in which the victorious party slew the other, mainly to get them out of the way and enable them without opposition to appropriate their goods. It was this consideration that made the offence of Saul so serious, that made his breach of the divine order so guilty." (Blaikie).

14. And Samuel said, what meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?—Saul is convicted of falsehood by the voices of the animals which he had spared contrary to God's command. Samuel's words have an air of holy humor and cutting irony. (Erdmann).

15. And Saul said, they have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God—Like Aaron (Ex. 32: 22) he tries to shift the blame upon the people, and then hints that after all their motive was a good one and therefore their conduct worthy of the approval of a prophet of the God whom they meant to honor. "But the king who heeded the voice of his army in such a matter shewed that he was not their leader, but their tool and their slave. The king who pretended to keep the booty for the purpose of offering sacrifice to the Lord his God, was evidently beginning to play the hypocrite;—to make the service of God an excuse for acts of selfishness, and so to introduce all that is vilest in king-craft as well as in priest-craft." (Maurice). Thus men have thought to atone for lives of sin by giving their riches unrighteously acquired to pious uses. They would compound with God for acts of transgression by gifts which they lay upon his altar. (Green). Saul's words seem to indicate a subtle consciousness that Elijah's God was not his. And the rest have we utterly destroyed—R. V. margin "have we devoted." For what was disobedient, he blames the people alone but takes credit to himself along with them for what was in accordance with the command. But partial compliance, was from the nature of the case, flagrant violation of instructions. Perhaps the dull spiritual sensibilities of Saul failed to appreciate the essential character of his work as one of holy judgment.

II. THE REJECTED KING. 16. Then Samuel said unto Saul, stay—Forbear! Cease these flimsy excuses! (Kirkpatrick). "O sinners, you do miscalculate fearfully when you give to God's servants such false explanations of your sins! How long, think you, will the flimsy material hold out? In the case of Saul, it did not even enable him to turn the corner." (Blaikie). And I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said, say on—Ramah was within 15

miles of Gilgal. Samuel might easily have come that morning. It is not said that he went to Carmel (vs. 12) but that some one had told him of Saul's having been there. Saul could not but listen to him however unwelcome his message might be. Samuel though addressing a king just returning with the spoils of victory at the head of his conquering army, and although personally and warmly attached to Saul, for whom he had been importunately interceding all the night, nevertheless speaks the plain and honest truth without disguise, sternly rebukes him for his fault, and denounces upon him that judgment which he had vainly implored the Lord to avert. (Green).

17. And Samuel said, though (R. V.) thou wast little in thine own sight—See ch. 9: 21; 10: 22. It little became one whose elevation was solely God's doing, and confessedly owing in no degree to his own rank or merit, thus to exhibit rebellious pride and self-will. Wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel—(1 Sam. 10: 1). The hand that gave the power can take it away. He who enthroned, may dethrone. God's faithful prophet, is above his faithless king.

18. And the Lord sent thee on a journey—Lit. "a way." Saul had received an explicit command directly from God. "Whenever God's word is truly spoken by human lips, it is the Lord who speaks through those lips; and the message comes with the same authority as though spoken directly from heaven." (Green). And said, go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites—It was a judicial execution of criminals for the crimes which they had committed against God and against his people. It was not an arbitrary and cruel sentence of extermination against an innocent and unoffending race. If God had seen fit to execute it by his own immediate interposition, as he did in the case of Sodom, all would be obliged to confess with Abraham that the Judge of all the earth did right (Gen. 18: 25). He chose, in this instance, to commit the execution of his righteous sentence to Saul and the army of Israel. This justifies no crusade in the name of religion which God himself does not expressly authorize by the direct and immediate declaration of his will. And that Saul was made the executioner of Divine justice in this instance should have warned him that, if he too transgressed the will of God, retribution would likewise overtake him. (Green). And fight against them until they be consumed—This ban had been pronounced by Moses and solemnly recorded (Ex. 17: 14-16).

19. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord—"Fly," as in ch. 14: 32, expresses eager, passionate craving. Neither king nor people tried to maintain the glory of God, but were actuated by avarice and greed. To cast now a thin veil of religious ceremonial

over their sordid motives was the rankest hypocrisy.

20. And Saul said unto Samuel, yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me—Saul seems to think Samuel altogether too particular about trifles. He claims to have carried out his instructions as fully as there was any occasion for. If he had come short the people were to blame, not he. And have brought Agag the king of Amalek—This he mentions as a proof of the completeness of his victory, whereas it was only an evidence of his vanity in wishing to hold a captive king at his court and one so renowned as the dreaded sheik of the desert. Agag seems to have been the official title of the kings of Amalek like Pharaoh amongst the Egyptians. See Num. 24: 7. And have utterly destroyed the Amalekites—How imperfectly he had accomplished this is seen from the fact that David made a raid against them (ch. 27: 9) and they afterwards recovered sufficiently to burn Ziklag (30: 14, 16, 17). Their final obliteration is mentioned in 1 Chr. 4: 42, 43.

21. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things (R. V.), to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal—It might seem a praiseworthy act to reserve the spoil for sacrifice; but since it was "devoted," it already belonged to the Lord and should have been disposed of as the law prescribed (Lev. 27: 28, 29). Compare Num. 31: 48-54, where gold ornaments "devoted," are presented to the Lord. Saul's argument was plausible but the law was plain. Samuel brushes the shallow excuse to one side by the enunciation of a great principle. His words fall into the rythmical measures of an inspired seer. The truth he declares is eternal and universal.

22. And Samuel said, hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?—To ask such a question is to answer it. "In sacrifices a man offers only the strange flesh of irrational animals, whereas, in obedience he offers his own will, which is rational or spiritual worship." To give color to his open disobedience to the Lord, Saul adduced his purpose to make an offering. In opposition to this is the meaning of Samuel's words: offering, brought with such a disobedient heart, cannot be well-pleasing to God, as is the obedience of the will, which subjects itself unconditionally to the will of the Lord, and brings itself as offering. External offerings are an abomination to the Lord, when there is lacking the heart full of obedient love, the humble consecration of the whole man. (Erdmann). Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams—It is vain to attempt to propitiate God and retain the sin. External ceremonial has great value when truly expressive of the sentiments of the worshipper. But when void of self-surrender and submissive obedience it is impious mockery. "Burnt-offerings" were

wholly consumed by fire, "sacrifices," denote peace-offerings, of which a portion was eaten in a sacrificial feast by the worshipper and his friends. "To hearken" means to listen devoutly and attentively with the intention of obeying. "The fat" as the richest portion of the animal was in every species of sacrifice to be exclusively the Lord's, and to be burned upon the altar. In consequence of this sacrificial use, the eating of fat, as of blood, was strictly prohibited (Lev. 3: 17; 7: 25, 26). (Green). For repeated enunciations of the sublime truth contained in these verses see Ps. 40: 6-8; 50: 8ff; 51: 16, 17; Isa. 1: 11-15; Jer. 6: 20; Hos. 6: 6; Amos 5: 21-24; Micah 6: 6-8; Matt. 5: 24; 9: 13; 12: 7; Mark 12: 33.

23. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft—Marg. "divination," seeking help and information from evil spirits which is tantamount to apostasy from God. This sin is denounced in the strongest terms (Ex. 22: 18; Lev. 19: 26-31; Deut. 18: 10). Modern "spiritism" is, largely, a sin of this nature. And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry—R. V. "idolatry and teraphim." "Idolatry" means literally "vanity" or "emptiness." The worship of gods that have no existence (1 Cor. 8: 4). "Teraphim" were the *penates* or household images of the Israelites, brought originally from their Chaldean home (Gen. 31: 19). In spite of the

strict prohibition of idols, they were used, by those who professed to worship Jehovah, in the time of the judges (Judges 17: 5; 18: 14ff), and even down to the later days of the kings (1 Sam. 19: 13; 2 Kings 23: 24). They seem to have been a kind of fetish or household charm for good luck, rather than an object of worship, and were used in divination (Zech. 10: 2; Ezek. 21: 19-22). The images were in the human form (1 Sam. 19: 13). (Kirkpatrick). Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king—This does not imply that Saul would cease to reign, but that God would no longer countenance him as king, would no longer make him his instrument of deliverance and blessing to Israel, but would leave him to the miserable feeling that he was reigning without authority. More than that, as we know from the sequel, it implied that God was about to bring his successor forward, and thereby exhibit both to him and to the nation the evidence of his degradation and rejection. (Blaikie). The words are a final sentence of deposition (ch. 13: 14). His confession of sin was merely the "sorrow of the world" (2 Cor. 7: 10), regret for the consequences brought upon himself. He wished to retain his honor before the people, he does not appear to have humbled himself before God.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *God requires perfect obedience.* Saul began his reign under very bright auspices. God blessed him, Samuel loved him, the people were proud of him, his enemies were vanquished before him. He appeared modest, brave, wise and magnanimous. But he lacked "the one thing needful," a renewed heart. No one could bear such honors as were heaped upon him without becoming corrupted by them unless there was in his heart the salt of divine grace. One sin unrepented of is like the "little rift within the lute." It becomes the germ of many others and the life soon drifts away from God.

2. *No service or sacrifice will excuse disobedience.* Saul and the people fancied that God would overlook their sin, and let them keep what they had taken, if only they would honor him with a part of it. We cannot compromise in this way with God's law. Going to church on Sunday will not atone for a wasted or mispent week. Liberal donations to missionary and benevolent objects purchase no immunity from the deserved punishment of the extortioner and oppressor of the poor and "hiringling." God will accept no sacrifice from hands that are "full of blood."

3. *Good intentions will not excuse bad deeds.* Saul seemed to think so. God said "destroy every devoted thing; but the people said, "Let us offer the best of the cattle in sacrifice." They were going to improve upon God's plan for God's own benefit. It is always

best and safest to do right. No amount of advantage gained for a good cause by questionable methods will make these methods excusable. Gambling, extortion, unfair means and persuasions, doubtful expedients,—are as bad at a church fair as any where else,—nay, worse. Morally, the effect of using wrong means to gain right ends is to deaden the conscience and sanction the evil involved.

4. *God rejects no one who does not first reject him.* God was very long-suffering with Saul. His offence was repeated until it shewed a fixed purpose not to submit himself, before the sentence finally fell. So God is waiting very lovingly and patiently for men to-day. He is not willing that any should perish, but desires that all should come to repentance. So he pleads with, and warns them, by the lessons of providence, by conscience and the Holy Spirit, by his Word and its teachers, by parents and friends. But the time will come when he will say to those who resist him, what he said to Saul,—"Depart from me."

5. *It is impossible to deceive God.* Saul's real motive was quite plain. He was vain-glorious and covetous. There is often a great difference between the pretext given and the real motive. Even our fellowmen are seldom deceived. How many excuses are made for not accepting Christ and confessing him, that are only meant to hide the real motive which is not given. "Time enough yet." "Am

not worthy." "Am afraid I would not hold out," &c.

ADDED POINTS.

1. To all sinners the day of reckoning comes at last. It was 400 years since the Amalekites incurred their doom.
2. How tenderly God watches over his people. Those who harm them "touch the apple of his eye."
3. It is a fearful thing to abandon God, for that means ultimately abandonment by God.
4. We should grieve for the wicked and pray that their hearts may be changed.

5. A half truth is often the worst kind of a lie.
6. We cannot excuse our sins by laying the blame of shame elsewhere.
7. From what a low condition we have been raised to become "Sons of God."
8. Men may excuse, or even approve, our conduct, but if God condemns it, it is wrong.
9. There is a "sorrow of the world" and a "godly sorrow," distinguish them.
10. God's work does not depend on any one man. He has other agents if we prove unworthy.

TEST QUESTIONS.

What noble record could Samuel point to? (12: 3). What evidence did God give that he was angry at the people for asking a king? What comfort did Samuel give them? What test of his faith and obedience was laid upon Saul at Gilgal? (13: 11, 12). What judgment was pronounced upon him then? What hint was given that his successor was already selected? Describe the wretched condition of the oppressed people. What gallant exploit did Jonathan perform at Micmash? What rash vow did Saul make? (14: 24). How did Jonathan violate it? How did God shew that even such vows ought to be kept? How was Jonathan rescued? Why were the Amalekites doomed to destruction? Why were the Kenites warned? What relationship had they with Moses and Israel in the desert? Why was Agag spared? Did Saul really think that he had obeyed? How do you reconcile the statements in verses 11 and 29?

THE BLACKBOARD.

WHEN

COMMANDS CROWNS ARE BROKEN. LOST.

"Shew me thy ways O Lord."

—S. S. Times.

LESSON VIII—November 24th, 1895.

The Woes of Intemperance. Isa. 5: 11-23.

(Commit to memory verses 11 and 18).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink." Isa. 5: 11.

PROVE THAT—Drunkards will be punished. Prov. 23: 21.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Review Quests. 23-26.

LESSON HYMNS. Children's Hymnal—Nos. 5, 116, 173, 40.

DAILY PORTIONS. Monday. The Woes of Intemperance. Isa. 5: 11-23. Tuesday. The mocker. Prov. 20: 1-7. Wednesday. Poverty and rags. Prov. 23: 15-23. Thursday. The serpent's bite. Prov. 23: 29-35. Friday. The drunkard rejected. I Cor. 5: 7-13. Saturday. Shun out of the kingdom. Gal. 5: 16-26. Sabbath. Works of darkness. Eph. 5: 11-21. (The I. B. R. A. Selections).

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. In the chapter from which our lesson is taken Isaiah represents the nation under the figure of a vineyard which God had planted and from which he had a right to expect good fruit, but it produced only "wild grapes," a bitter poisonous berry resembling grapes. Dropping the parable, the prophet denounces in plain and burning words these "wild grapes" of sin.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Drunkard's Danger. vs. 10-17. II. The Drunkard's Degradation. vs. 18-23.

I. THE DRUNKARD'S DANGER. 11. Woe

—From verse 8 to verse 23 there are six distinct woes pronounced. The first is against **AVARICE** (vs. 8) shewn in the appropriation of the land by a few large proprietors, to the impoverishment of the people. The same sordid desire for gain is at the root of the liquor traffic. If it were not such a very profitable business no one would engage in it. The second woe is pronounced against **INTEMPERANCE**. The "woes" of the Bible are solemn warnings, predictions of the inevitable consequences of continued evil-doing. **Unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink**—Whenever intoxicating liquor is indulged in, even in moderation, it is almost sure to culminate in the condition here described. The craving for it so grows upon the drinker that eventually dissipation becomes his main business from morning till night (Prov. 23: 29, 30; Eccl. 10: 16). It was considered specially degrading to be "full of wine" in the morning (Acts 2: 15; 1 Thess. 5: 7). To "follow" strong drink, implies a habitual custom. The "strong drink" of Bible times was a fermented liquor made from dates, pomegranates, apples, honey, barley, &c. Distilled liquors were not known, nor were those in use adulterated. All the Bible denunciations of drink refer to "pure" liquors, represented by the light wines, beer and cider of to-day. **That continue until night, till wine inflame them**—Margin "pursue them." (Prov. 20: 1; 23: 32). In the morning they seek strong drink, in the evening it drives them. It kindles every bad passion, destroys self-control, silences reason and shames decency. With fatal persistence the luxury of every civilization has taken to drink; and of all indictments brought by moralists against nations that which they reserve for drunkenness is, as here, the most heavily weighted. The crusade against drink is not the novel thing that many imagine who observe only its late revival amongst ourselves. In ancient times there was scarcely a state in which prohibitive legislation of the most stringent kind was not attempted and generally carried out with a thoroughness more possible under despots than where, as with us, the slow consent of public opinion is necessary. A horror of strong drink has in every age possessed those who from their position as magistrates or prophets have been able to follow for any distance the drifts of social life. Isaiah exposes as powerfully as ever any of them did where the peculiar fatality of drink lies. (G. A. Smith).

12. **And the harp and the viol**—The viol is usually called a "psaltery." It was like the lyre but with twelve strings. **The tabret**—A kettle drum or tambourine. **And pipe**—The flute, or flageolet. **And wine are in their feasts**—Music, which would elevate the soul, is used to enhance the pleasures of revelry and excite sensuous emotions. **But they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands**—No

one who has had to do with persons slowly falling from moderate to immoderate drinking can mistake Isaiah's meaning here. Nothing kills the conscience like the steady drinking of intoxicants. (G. A. Smith). God's displeasure is plainly seen but men will not take note of it (Job 34: 27; Ps. 23: 5; Hos. 4: 11).

13. **Therefore my people are gone into captivity**—The northern kingdom had been recently destroyed and carried captive to Assyria. Others regard these words as the prophetic present. This is the reason why they were about to be carried into captivity. **For lack of knowledge** (R. V.)—Because of their foolish recklessness and wilful ignorance as to God, his law, and his visible manifestations of providence, chastisement and grace (ch. 1: 3; Hos. 4: 6; Luke 19: 44). (J. F. and B.) **And their honorable men are famished**—Heb. "Their glory are men of famine." No one is so exalted by rank or wealth that strong drink cannot bring him to poverty and disgrace. **And their multitude**—The common people as contrasted with the nobles, or "honorable men." **Dried up with thirst**—Contrast to their drinking. In their deportation and exile they shall hunger and thirst. (J. F. and B.)

14. **Therefore hell**—R. V. marg. "or the grave. Heb. *sheol*." The place of the dead without special reference, except so far as the context demands, to its moral character. **Hath enlarged herself** (R. V. "her desire") and **opened her mouth without measure**—So many perish through strong drink that the abode of the dead is represented as growing more ravenous and opening wide its gaping mouth to swallow up everything noble and good in every rank of life. **And their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it**—A vivid description of the engulfing maelstrom of intemperance. When our judges tell us from the bench that nine-tenths of pauperism and crime are caused by drink; and our physicians, that if only irregular tipping were abolished half the current sickness of the land would cease; and our statesmen, that the ravages of strong drink are equal to those of the historical scourges of war, famine, and pestilence combined, surely to swallow such a glut of spoil the appetite of hell must have been still more enlarged, and the mouth of hell made yet wider. (G. A. Smith).

15. **And the mean man**—The man of humble rank. **Shall be brought down**—To a lower degradation. **Picture the effect of drunkenness upon the poor and the working classes. And the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled**—Neither education nor intellect necessarily places any man above the peril of excess. Who has not heard of the pitiful failing of Pitt, Addison, Brown, Lamb, Coleridge. (Farrar).

16. **But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment**—The holiness of God

is seen in his punishment of sin. **And God that is holy, shall be sanctified in righteousness**—Shall be revered and worshipped as holy by reason of his righteous dealings. (J. F. and B.)

17. Then—When God's righteous judgments have fallen and the nation is carried into captivity. **Shall the lambs feed after their manner**—R. V. "as in their pasture." The city shall become a rural pasture land. **And the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat**—The deserted lands of the rich, then gone into captivity, shall be possessed by foreign nomad tribes.

II. THE DRUNKARD'S DEGRADATION.
18. The evils denounced in the following verses are the invariable concomitants of unrestrained appetites and degraded morals. The *third* woe is pronounced against impious, defiant, **PERSEVERANCE IN SIN.** **Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity**—Their strong desire, is as it were, a magnet drawing to them the wickedness that they wish to indulge in. By "cords of vanity," the unutterably folly and wickedness of the means which they take to secure the gratification of their desires is expressed. **And sin as it were with cart rope**—By this figure the strength and determination of their evil desires is indicated.

19. That say, Let him make speed and hasten his work that we may see it. A drunken and impious defiance of God's threatened work of judgment. **And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come that we may know it.** They do not believe that the threatened evil will ever come (Isa. 66: 5; Jer. 17: 15; Amos 5: 18; 2 Pet. 3: 3, 4).

20. The *fourth* woe is denounced upon

those who **CONFOUND MORAL DISTINCTIONS.** **Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil**—(Jer. 2: 19; 4: 18; Acts 8: 23; Rom. 3: 14; Heb. 12: 15). Those who call things by the wrong name e. g. temperance legislation, interference with liberty and the liquor traffic are honorable and respectable business. **That put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter**—By sophistical arguments the evil is justified and its odious features apologized for, or explained away.

21. The *fifth* woe is attached to overweening **SELF-CONFIDENCE.** **Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight**—Those who think that they know better than others who have learned from experience and the word of God. Those who say "We know when to stop," "We are not to blame if others make fools of themselves" (Prov. 5: 7; Rom. 1: 22; 12: 16). The drunkard thinks he is in no danger when all his friends see that he is on the brink of a precipice.

22. The *sixth* woe is denounced against **CORRUPT JUDGES.** Intemperance has destroyed their sense of honor and justice. **Woe unto them who are mighty to drink wine and men of strength to mingle strong drink**—They are heroes of the wine cup. The wine was mixed with spices to increase its intoxicating properties (Prov. 9: 2, 5; S. S. 8: 2).

23. Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. One who is the slave of his appetites cannot be trusted to decide justly or wisely.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. Intemperance brings nothing but woe. Lord Shaftesbury, with his unrivalled experience, was right in his conviction that "it is impossible, absolutely impossible, to do any thing permanently or considerably to relieve poverty until we have got rid of the curse of drink." Lord Beaconsfield said, In the success of our efforts to control it "is involved the triumph of the social virtues, and the character of the great body of the people," according to Chief Justice Coleridge, we might, but for drink, shut up nine out of every ten jails in England; we could thus, in the opinion of men like Bright and Cobden, make England such a paradise as at present we hardly dream. (Farrar).

2. It hardens the conscience. At first the intoxicating cup is handled with care. The young man may be on his guard for a time, but the solicitations and jeers of boon companions overcome his caution. Once fallen he must assume a bravado which his conscience reproves, to maintain his reputation. A second offence against sobriety is treated as a jest.

Outraged conscience is silenced by excuses and promises. The poison of alcohol works a moral as well as a physical degeneration and with a weakened moral sense, self-respect is lost.

3. It brings poverty, disgrace and ruin upon its victims. "Alcohol," said Sir Andrew Clark, "is a poison,—so is strychnine, so is opium: it ranks with all these agents." He said that for at least 25 years he had been physician to one of our greatest hospitals, and had to enquire into the habits and health of about ten thousand people a year, and, as a result of his studies, he held that "health is a state which cannot be benefitted by alcohol in any degree. Nay, it is a state which, in nine cases out of ten, is injured by alcohol; "it can bear it sometimes without obvious injury, but is benefitted by it never." There are 32,000 prisoners in the kingdoms, and, though the immense majority of them have been either inebriated, or at least, non-abstainers, no alcohol is given them during their sojourn in prison for years together, and yet prisoners form

one of the healthiest and most long lived bodies in the country, and constantly leave prison greatly improved in health and appearance. (Farrar).

4. *It perverts the moral sense.* This it does by hardening the conscience through repeated disregard of its reproofs. It leads into low company where virtue and goodness are ridiculed. It inflames the evil passions so that the voice of conscience is silenced and the judgment perverted. It "quenches the Spirit"—no real piety can dwell in the heart when evil appetites are unrestrained. There is no more subtle and powerful antagonist to religion than the drinking customs of society.

5. *The only safe plan is to abstain altogether from intoxicating drink.* With such examples as we have before us in history and literature, it is idle for any man to pretend to feel insulted by a suggestion of the possibility of his becoming a slave to drink. One of the most eminent clergymen and men of genius of this age says, in one of his published letters: "I must be on my guard, for I find that I am getting an ugly fondness for alcohol." What

multitudes of men, aye, and of women,—men and women of high principles and religious instincts,—have yet been slowly swept into the vortex of excess under the influences of solitude, of depression, or of old age. (Farrar).

A BARREL OF WHISKEY.

A barrel of headaches, of heartaches, of wots;
 A barrel of curses, a barrel of blows;
 A barrel of tears from a world-weary wite;
 A barrel of sorrow, a barrel of strife;
 A barrel of all unavailing regret;
 A barrel of cares, and a barrel of debt;
 A barrel of crimes, and a barrel of pain;
 A barrel of hope ever blasted and vain;
 A barrel of falsehood, a barrel of ories;
 That fall from the maniac's lips as he dies;
 A barrel of agony heavy and dull;
 A barrel of poison—of this nearly full;
 A barrel of liquid damnation that fires;
 The brain of the fool who believes it inspires;
 A barrel of poverty, ruin and blight;
 A barrel of terrors that grow with the night;
 A barrel of hunger, a barrel of groans;
 A barrel of orphans' most pitiful moans;
 A barrel of serpents that hiss as they pass
 From the head on the liquor that flows in the glass.
 —Selected.

TEST QUESTIONS.

Give some instances from Bible history of the evils of intemperance. (Gen. 9: 21; 19: 33, 1 Sam. 25: 36; 1 Kings 16: 9; 20: 16; Esth. 1: 10, 11; Dan. 5: 1-6). What two kinds of intoxicating liquor are referred to in verse 11? Compare the beverages of Bible times with those in use now? What are the effects of strong drink, as described in the lesson, upon national prosperity? upon the human body? upon the mind? upon the moral sense? What connection between Intemperance and Crime? Between intemperance and disease? Between intemperance and pauperism? Between intemperance and missions? What is the remedy? Are you doing your duty?

THE BLACKBOARD.

"WILD GRAPES."

- A ppetite unrestrained. (11)
- L ove of pleasure. (12)
- C aptivity to sin. (13)
- O pened Hell. (14)
- H omes desolate. (15-17)
- O utrageous impiety. (19)
- L ow morals. (20-23)

"Wine and new wine take away the heart."

A Winnipeg superintendent utters these sentiments: "Our teachers are well pleased with the *Home Study Leaflet* which is evidenced by the fact that our subscription is renewed for another year. Most of the scholars take a deep interest in answering the questions which has promoted a close study of the lesson at home. Last year we kept a record of the marks and gave a 1st and 2nd prize in each class accordingly. It has caused most of the scholars to bring their Bibles, but it requires a lot of preaching to get some of the boys to bring theirs. Most of our scholars write the answers on a separate piece of paper."

Primary Department.

Conducted by GEORGE H. ARCHIBALD, Superintendent St. Matthew's S. S., Montreal, Que.

LESSON V—November 3rd, 1895.

Samuel the Judge. 1 SAM. 7: 5-15.

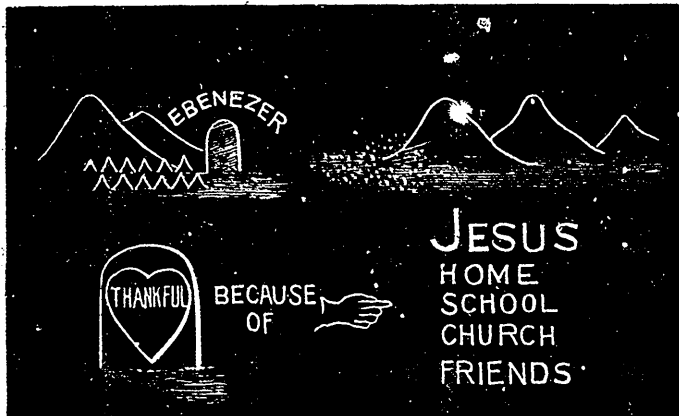
I. GOLDEN TEXT: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." 1 Sam. 7: 12.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: "Thanksgiving."

III. REVIEW: Who can tell about the story in last lesson? Does God ever speak to boys and girls now? Tell some ways in which God now speaks. What should boys and girls do when they hear God's voice speaking to them?

IV. INTERVENING EVENTS: Samuel told Eli the vision. The Philistines overcame the Israelites at Ebenezer, and took the ark of the Lord. Hophni and Phinehas were slain, and Eli hearing the dreadful news fell backwards and was killed. After seven months the ark was sent back by the Philistines, and placed in the house of Abinadab, at Kirjath-je rim.

V. LESSON STORY: To-day's lesson is about the same little Samuel we learned about in our last lesson. But many years have passed since the time that God called him, and now, he had grown up to be a man, and was judge over the Israelites and lived in a place called Ramah not far from Jerusalem. The people had not been doing what was right; they had again got far away from God and were serving idols. For many years they had gone on this way, but they were not happy. Their enemies, the Philistines were oppressing them all the time, and the idols could not help them to overcome them. They remembered the happy times they used to have when they worshipped their own true God and longed to get back to him again. Samuel had been listening to God's voice and lovingly obeying him all these years. Likely he had been going about amongst the people telling them how foolish they were to keep away from such a loving God, for if they would return to him with all their hearts, put away their strange gods and serve him only, he would forgive them and deliver them out of the hands of the Philistines. They listened to Samuel and put away their idols, and all gathered together with him at a place called Mizpah. There Samuel prayed for them. There they drew water and poured it out before the Lord; which was a symbol of pouring out their sins. There they fasted; which showed that in their great sorrow they had no desire for food, and lastly they confessed their sins to God. When the Philistines heard that the Israelites were gathered together they thought that they were going to rebel, so their lords called them together and went up against them to subdue them. The Israelites learning that they were coming were afraid and asked Samuel not to stop praying to God for them. As Samuel prayed, and offered up a young lamb for a burnt-offering to God, God heard him, and thundered with a great thunder upon the Philistines, which frightened them so much that they all fled, and the Israelites ran after them until they came to Beth-car. So they were subdued and came no more into the land of Israel. The Israelites were so glad and thankful to God for pardoning them and giving them this great victory, that they took a large stone and set it up for a monument between Mizpah and Shen and called it Ebenezer (the stone of help) saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. As you describe the assembling at Mizpah roughly draw a hill on the board, pin your symbol



of tents on it and draw an altar—the Philistines advance—make many dots in the distance—setting up stone—draw a large stone and print Ebenezer over it. Have the Golden Text printed on the right-hand corner of board (beforehand if desired).

VI. APPLICATION: We have been learning about God's goodness to his

people the Israelites. Let us now talk a little while about his goodness to us; for just as he was so good to them and helped them in so many ways, so he keeps us in many ways, and gives us many good things. Let us see what some of these good things are. The best gift of all is that God gives us Jesus, then he gives us our homes, and school, and church, and friends, and so many more good things, that it would take us a long time to count them all up. How thankful we ought to be to God for this precious gift of Jesus and all the other good things that he gives us, and for all the ways in which he helps us. As the Israelites set up a monument to show how grateful they were to God for all his goodness to them, I am sure God would like us also to set up a monument to him and thus shew him that we are grateful to him for all his goodness to us. Yes, we should and we can. Let us give him our heart filled up with thankfulness, that will be a monument well pleasing in his sight. As the "good things" are named print them upon the board. As you speak of "monument" make one on the board, afterwards form heart on it and print "thankful," pining the hand in review to add emphasis to the thought. Then as a closing word with the red chalk cover the white letters of the word "Jesus" and also pick out the letters "E," "S," "U," "S" and cover with red chalk.

LESSON VI—November 10th, 1895.

Saul Chosen King. I SAMUEL 10: 17-27.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." Psalm 97: 1.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: God knows what is best for us.

III. REVIEW: At what place did the Israelites assemble in last lesson? Who prayed for them? How did they shew their sorrow for sin? What enemies came up against them? Which side gained the victory? Who helped the Israelites? How did they shew they were grateful to God?

IV. INTERVENING EVENTS: The Israelites asked for a king. Samuel prayed in grief about it and was comforted by God. Samuel shewed the people evils which would arise from this desire, but still they wanted a king. God allowed Samuel to yield to their importunity and made them a king. Saul, the son of Kish, despairing to find his father's asses by God's guidance, comes to Samuel who told him that the asses were found, entertained him at a feast, and afterwards communicated with him secretly. Next day Samuel anointed Saul. Saul's heart was changed and he prophesied. He concealed the matter of the kingdom from his uncle.

V. LESSON STORY: About twenty years after we left the Israelites in our last lesson we find them again gathered together at the same place, Mizpah. Samuel too was with them still, though now he was getting old, being about seventy. He is speaking words from God to the people, let us hear what he is saying. "Ye have rejected your God and have said unto him, Set a king over us." Yes, that is what they wanted to do, for though the faithful and unselfish Samuel had all these years been their leader, had taught them, had led them back from idolatry, had won victories for them and helped them in many ways, he had done it all under the guidance of God who was really their great leader and king. The people had become dissatisfied, thought that Samuel was getting too old to be their leader, and wanted to have a man for their king instead of God. God knew that this would not be best for them and told them so, but when he saw that they were determined to have their own way, he allowed them to have it and selected a king for them. The chosen one was Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, a tall, strong, handsome young man, naturally well fitted to be king. Now the people arranged by tribes and thousands were assembled to see who would be chosen, by lot. The lot fell upon Saul, and when they looked for him he could not be found. He knew before this that he had been chosen by God and his name would be drawn in the lot, and had been too modest to come forward. But God knew where he was and through Samuel told the people to look behind the baggage. There they found him, and when they had fetched him out they saw that he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upwards. Samuel said "see ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among the people?" And all the people shouted and said "God save the king!" Sketch the hill of Mizpah, on it pin symbol of tents and make dots for the assembled multitude. Make stroke for Samuel and larger stroke for Saul.

VI. APPLICATION: In to-day's lesson we have been learning about two kings, God and Saul. Make two crowns on board and print "the Lord" in one and "Saul" in the other. The

people had to choose which one they would have for their king. God knew and told them which would be the best for them to choose, but they wanted to have their own way and so they chose Saul. They would not have God (the best way) so God allowed them to have their own way, which we find out later was not the best way. Make two ways or roads on board and in one print "God's way," and in the other



"Israelites' way." Why did they want Saul to be their king? Because they wanted to be like the other nations, and thought if they could get away from God a little bit and have Saul for their king they could do more as they wished themselves. So it really was self they wanted for their king (rub out "Saul" and print "self" on crown). So it is with people now, and even little boys and girls although they know that God knows what is best for them still they want to have their own selfish way, want self to reign in their hearts instead of God (draw hearts over the crowns). Let us not be like the Israelites but let us choose God's way for it is best (write "is best" after "God's way.") Let us have him for our king and let him reign in our hearts. The Golden Text is "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." Let him reign in our hearts and our hearts will rejoice. As a closing thought change "Israelites way" into "my way" and ask the children which they will choose, crossing out "my way" in response to their answer.

LESSON VII—November 17th, 1895.

Saul Rejected. I SAM. 15: 10-23.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "To obey is better than sacrifice." I Sam. 15: 22.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: Obedience.

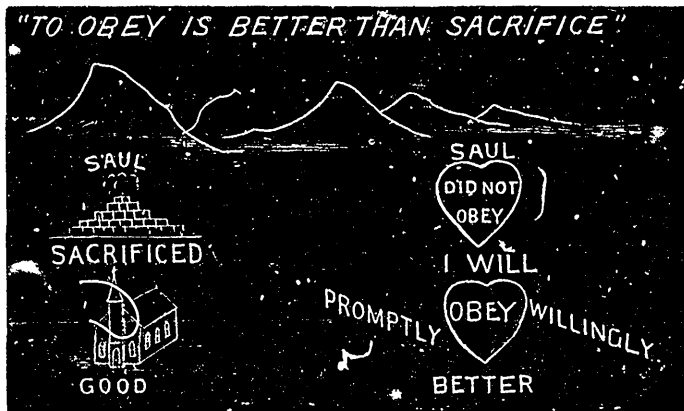
III. REVIEW: What did the people want in last lesson? Whom did they choose? Was it the best choice? Who knows what is best for us?

IV. INTERVENING EVENTS. When Saul was crowned king Samuel made a farewell speech and all the people bore witness to his just and good rule. Soon after this the Philistines tried again to conquer Israel and came up with a great host. God gave Saul the victory over them, but Samuel told him that because he had shewn himself impatient and disobedient God would have to take him away from being king. Still God gave him another chance. If he had only repented at this first warning, and done what God sent him to do to the Amalekites, he might have been forgiven. The Amalekites had treated the children of Israel very badly when they came out of Egypt, ever since they had tried to do them all the harm they could. They too had been warned a long time and had not paid any attention. Now the time of their punishment had come.

V. LESSON STORY: Saul had been king now for about ten years. How had he been getting on all this time? When first he began to reign everything seemed bright and prosperous, he had Samuel to advise him and tell him what God wished him to do. God himself was his friend and promised to be with him if he would follow and obey him. But after a while Saul seemed to forget God, and instead of obeying him disobeyed him, and many times instead of doing that which would please God did that which pleased himself. In this lesson we have a story about his disobedience. God told Samuel to tell Saul to go to war with the Amalekites and to utterly destroy them all and everything they had. After the battle Samuel went to see Saul. He found him at a place called Gilgal (point out place on the map). Saul said to Samuel "Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord." "If you have," Samuel said, "what mean the bleating of the sheep in mine ears and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" When Saul told him they had brought these

from the Amalekites Samuel asked him why he had done that instead of obeying God when he told him to destroy ever 'thing? Saul then tried to make an excuse and said the people had saved these animals and other things of the spoil to sacrifice unto God. Samuel knew it was only an excuse and said "I will have the Lord as great delight" in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." He then said to Saul "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord he hath also rejected thee from being king." Draw a little scene of Gilgal in the Jordan valley and make two strokes for Samuel and Saul. Draw an altar on one side and on the other print the words "Saul did not obey." Print the Golden Text above.

VI. APPLICATION: How foolish Saul was not to obey? How much happier he would have been if he had done so. What a lesson this should be to us, and how we should try hard to obey. God is the first one to be obeyed, but he wants us also to obey our parents, our teachers and those whom he has placed over us. Our Golden Text says "To obey is



better than sacrifice." Saul thought "I am not doing exactly as God told me, but he won't mind about that if I take the spoil and offer up a sacrifice to him." But although God likes sacrifices when they are offered up in the right spirit he likes obedience better. Sometimes, in the same way children think, if

we go to church and Sunday school God won't mind if we don't always obey father and mother, but God does mind, he likes us to go to church and Sunday school but he likes obedience better. Draw or pin symbol of church on the board to impress the truth and write under it the word "good." Let us tell some of the ways God likes us to obey. God likes us to obey "promptly." Sometimes when boys and girls are told to do something, unless they want to do it themselves, they are very slow to hear and have to be told more than once before they start to obey, and even then they sometimes want to do something else first, as Jenny did when her mother told her to do something; "I want to kiss you first mother," she said, but although mother loved her little girls kisses, she said "No, Jenny, obedience first and kisses after." God likes us to do what we are told, promptly—at once. Another way God likes us to obey is "willingly." Some boys and girls (little ones too) when they are asked to do something begin to grumble and make excuses and say "Oh! I'm having such a nice play," or "I'm reading such an interesting story and wish I hadn't to do it!" And when they are obliged to do it they do so so unwillingly that it makes the person who asked them feel very sad. You may be sure that that is not the way God likes us to obey, no he likes us to obey with that willingness which comes from a loving heart and shews itself in a cheerful happy face.

LESSON VIII—November 24th, 1895.

The Woes of Intemperance. ISAIAH 5: 11-23.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink." Isaiah 5: 11.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: The woes of intemperance.

III. REVIEW: What did God through Samuel tell Saul to do? Did he do as God commanded him? What excuse did he make? Was God pleased with him? What does God like better than sacrifice? Tell two ways in which God likes us to obey?

IV. LESSON STORY: The words of our lesson are those of Isaiah, one of God's prophets, who long before these things took place is telling about the sins and punishments of some of the Israelites, so that they might be warned against the dangers into which they were going.

God had told him that because of those sins they would suffer much, enemies would distress them, they would lose their property and at last be carried into captivity. So he tells them that those woes should come upon them if they would not be warned and repent of their sins. Our lesson begins with the Golden Text "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink." Those who do that make strong drink their god. It is the first thing that they think of and rise up early to get it, and think more of it than anything else all day. Isaiah says woe to those who do that, they have already gone into captivity, they are bound round with its chains. In another verse Isaiah says "woe unto them that call evil good and good evil;" he means by that that people will be punished who give good names to bad things. He says woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight. Those who think too much of themselves are self-conceited. Wine makes people like that. Drunkards often think they are safe when they are in great danger. Again Isaiah says woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine and men of strength to mingle strong drink. They think they are mighty and can do great things when they are drinking, but all the time the habit is growing upon them, and soon it becomes mightier than they.

V. APPLICATION: We have a temperance lesson to-day, about the woes of intemperance. Let us first see what intemperance means. When we talk about intemperance we generally mean, the use of too much wine or strong drink, but we can be intemperate in eating, in speaking, in our play, and in many other ways as well as in drinking. To be temperate in all things is the right way. To have control over ourselves, that is, when we have had

as much of anything as is good for us, although we should like more, to be able to say "No." When we want to go anywhere where we think it would be better for us not to go, to be able to say, "I will not." We must be masters of self or self will get master of us. Isaiah says, woes will come upon those people who are intemperate, who allow self to be the master.



But in our lesson he especially says woe to those who allow wine and strong drink to control them, to be their master. (Have symbol of Bible with "Isaiah" printed on top of page, wine-glass and bottle and pin on board, or draw them on board). This master is such a bad one, does so much harm and causes so much misery in the world, that we have to be very careful to keep away from it. The best way is not to have anything to do with it. Although the red wine looks very pretty in the wine-glass, beware! there is danger in it, don't touch it. Many people begin by taking a little, and then go on taking more, and a little more, and by and by they get to love it and feel that they cannot do without it. It becomes their master, and when it is too late they find out what a cruel master it is, for it binds them in chains and makes slaves of them. Then come the woes to themselves and all those about them. Many woes, but the worst one is that this sin keeps them away from God. Let us be careful of the little beginnings and when temptations come ask God to help us to overcome them and keep us close to himself. Make a chain and write "slaves" in it, make a heart and write "away from God" in it.

VARIETY.

Do not get into ruts. Do not always do the same thing in the same way. The material out of which a Sunday school session is made is about the same Sunday after Sunday, singing—prayer—lesson study—reports, etc.—and yet variety is possible. A good housewife who was proud, (and justly), of her apple pies, which she prepared in a variety of ways used to say to her guests, "Will you have some of my apple pie? I have it open-faced, cross-bar, and cover-lid; just take your choice." It was all apple pie but in different forms. Study new ways of doing things, and especially of presenting the truth.—(Selected).