S. A. Wellman

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Lesson 1—January 4, 1930

TO HONOR GOD'S SERVANTS IS TO HONOR HIM

MEMORY VERSE: Prov. 27:4.

LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 382-386, 395-405 (new ed., pp. 387-391, 403-413).

INTRODUCTION

This lesson deals with two events in the experiences of the children of Israel,—first, the sin of Aaron and Miriam in unjustly criticizing Moses, and second, the rebellion of Korah and his associates at a later period.

Moses was the meekest of men, yet in his leadership of Israel he was often subjected to criticism, blame, and false accusation by those who should have recognized his loyalty and devotion to the commands of their divine Leader. These were guilty of disloyalty to God in criticizing the one whom He had chosen as the visible head of the nation. The honor given to God's representatives who recognize Him and submit their lives to His leadings is honor given, not to them only, but to their Maker.

THE LESSON

1. While on the journey from Mt. Sinai toward Canaan, what wrong course did Aaron and Miriam take toward their brother Moses, the leader of the people? Num. 12:1, 2.

NOTE.—"In the appointment of the seventy elders, Miriam and Aaron had not been consulted, and their jealousy was excited against Moses. . . . Yielding to the spirit of dissatisfaction, Miriam found cause of complaint in events that God had especially overruled. The marriage of Moses had been displeasing to her. That he should choose a woman of another nation, instead of taking a wife from among the Hebrews, was an offense to her family and national pride. Zipporah was treated with ill-disguised contempt. Though called a 'Cushite woman,' the wife of Moses was a Midianite, and thus a descendant of Abraham. In personal appearance she differed from the Hebrews in being of a somewhat darker complexion. Though not an Israelite, Zipporah was a worshiper of the true God. . . .

"When Zipporah rejoined her husband in the wilderness, she saw that his burdens were wearing away his strength, and she made known her fears to Jethro, who suggested measures for his relief. Here was the chief reason for Miriam's antipathy to Zipporah. Smarting under the supposed neglect shown to herself and Aaron, she regarded the wife of Moses as the cause, concluding that her influence had prevented him from taking them into his counsels as formerly."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 382-384.

2. How is the disposition of Moses described? Verse 3.

NOTE.—"It was the experience gained during the years of toil and waiting in Midian,—the spirit of humility and long-suffering there developed,—that prepared Moses to meet with patience the unbelief and murmuring of the people, and the pride and envy of those who should have been his unswerving helpers."—Id., p. 384.

3. What call from God came suddenly to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam? Where did the Lord meet them? Verses 4, 5.

4. What did the Lord say to Aaron and Miriam? How did He show displeasure at the attitude they assumed toward their brother? Verses 6-10.

NOTE.—"This manifestation of the Lord's displeasure was designed to be a warning to all Israel, to check the growing spirit of discontent and insubordination. . . . The Bible specially teaches us to beware of lightly bringing accusation against those whom God has called to act as His ambassadors. . . . He who has placed upon men the heavy responsibility of leaders and teachers of His people, will hold the people accountable for the manner in which they treat His servants. We are to honor those whom God has honored. The judgment visited upon Miriam should be a rebuke to all who yield to jealousy, and murmur against those upon whom God lays the burden of His work."—Id., pp. 385, 386.

5. What plea did Aaron make to Moses? What did Moses do? For how long was Miriam shut out from the camp because of her transgression? Verses 11-15.

6. At a later time, under the leadership of Korah, a descendant of Levi, what rebellious attitude did two hundred fifty of the rulers of Israel take? Num. 16:1-3.

NOTE.—"Korah and his fellow conspirators were men who had been favored with special manifestations of God's power and greatness. They were of the number who went up with Moses into the mount and beheld the divine glory. But since that time a change had come. A temptation, slight at first, had been harbored, and had strengthened as it was encouraged, until their minds were controlled by Satan, and they ventured upon their work of disaffection. Professing great interest in the prosperity of the people, they first whispered their discontent to one another, and then to leading men of Israel. Their insinuations were so readily received that they ventured still further, and at last they really believed themselves to be actuated by zeal for God.

"They were successful in alienating two hundred and fifty princes, men of renown in the congregation. With these strong and influential supporters they felt confident of making a radical change in the government, and greatly improving upon the administration of Moses and Aaron."—Id., pp. 396, 397.

7. What plan did Moses set before the rebellious leaders to determine whom God approved for leadership? Verses 4-7.

NOTE.—"The test was to be deferred until the morrow, that all might have time for reflection. . . . The law was very explicit that only those who had been ordained to the sacred office should minister in the sanctuary."—Id., p. 398.

8. What rebuke did Moses administer to Korah and the sons of Levi? Verses 8-11.

9. When Moses called for Dathan and Abiram, what insolent reply was returned? What was the effect of this response upon Moses? What did he say to the Lord? Verses 12-15.

NOTE.—"Dathan and Abiram had not taken so bold a stand as had Korah; and Moses, hoping that they might have been drawn into the conspiracy without having become wholly corrupted, summoned them to appear before him, that he might hear their charges against him. But they would not come, and they insolently refused to acknowledge his authority. . . . They applied to the scene of their bondage the very language in which the Lord had described the promised inheritance. They accused Moses of pretending to act under divine guidance, as a means of establishing his authority; and they declared that they would no longer submit to be led about like blind men, now toward Canaan, and now toward the wilderness, as best suited his ambitious designs. Thus he who had been as a tender father, a patient shepherd, was represented in the blackest character of a tyrant and usurper. The exclusion from Canaan, in punishment of their own sins, was charged upon him." —Id., p. 399.

10. When the test came on the morrow, how fully had the congregation arrayed themselves against Moses and Aaron? Verses 18, 19.

11. What command came to Moses and Aaron from God? For what did they plead? Verses 20-22.

12. At the command of God what did Moses and Aaron order the people to do? When the congregation had departed, what statement did Moses make? Verses 23-30.

13. What punishment was meted out to the men that appertained to Korah and to their families? To the two hundred fifty who offered incense? Verses 31-35.

14. What was done with the brazen censers with which the two hundred fifty men had attempted to offer incense? What purpose was this covering for the altar to serve? Verses 36-40.

15. What did the congregation do the next day? What did the Lord say to Moses? Verses 41-45.

NOTE.—"It is hardly possible for men to offer greater insult to God than to despise and reject the instrumentalities He would use for their salvation. The Israelites had not only done this, but had purposed to put both Moses and Aaron to death. Yet they did not realize the necessity of seeking pardon of God for their grievous sin. That night of probation was not passed in repentance and confession, but in devising some way to resist the evidences which showed them to be the greatest of sinners. They still cherished hatred of the men of God's appointment, and braced themselves to resist their authority. Satan was at hand to pervert their judgment, and lead them blindfold to destruction."—Id., p. 402.

16. What punishment came quickly upon the congregation? How was the plague stayed? How many were destroyed because of their rebellious attitude? Verses 46-50.

17. How did God propose to settle before all Israel the question of Aaron's calling to the high priesthood? Num. 17:1-5.

18. When the rods of the twelve tribal representatives had been placed before the Lord, what took place? Where was Aaron's rod placed as a witness to future generations as to who had been called to the priesthood? Verses 8-11.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. Am I coöperative with those who are carrying the responsibility of leadership in God's cause to-day?

2. Does the advancement of another to responsibility in God's work cause me to become suspicious or jealous?

3. Make a list of the outstanding characteristics of the life of Moses.

Lesson 2—January 11, 1930

GOD REWARDS FAITH AND LOYALTY

MEMORY VERSE: Num. 14:8.

LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 387-394, 510-513 (new ed., pp. 393-401, 525-528).

INTRODUCTION

God always rewards the faith and loyalty of His servants. Caleb and Joshua had stood the test on the return of the spies from Canaan. They alone of the twelve looked beyond the giants, the walled cities, and the armament of the Canaanites, and saw the sustaining hosts of heaven in the impending struggle. Nor were they fearful of standing alone before the wrath of a disappointed nation. God rewarded them then with His protection, and later with the privilege of entering the land of their hopes. To-day the hosts of God face similar prospects in the command to proclaim the gospel in all the world, similar decisions of faith and trust must be made, similar victories of confidence in and loyalty to God may be won, similar rewards of an abundant entrance into the "Promised Land" will be received. We may learn much from the experience of these two men of courage and faith.

THE LESSON

1. While encamped in the wilderness of Paran, what command did God give Moses? Num. 13:1-3.

2. What instruction did Moses give to the men selected to spy out the Promised Land? Verses 17-20.

3. Into what parts of Canaan did they go? What fruits did they bring with them on their return? How long had they searched in Canaan? Verses 21-25.

4. To whom did they bring their report with the fruit of the land? What did they say concerning the land and its fertility? Verses 26, 27.

5. What was their attitude toward Israel's taking the Promised Land from its inhabitants? Who among the spies spoke words of courage and faith? Verses 28-33.

NOTE.—"After describing the beauty and fertility of the land, all but two of the spies enlarged upon the difficulties and dangers that lay before the Israelites should they undertake the conquest of Canaan. . . . Hope and courage gave place to cowardly despair, as the spies uttered the sentiments of their unbelieving hearts, which were filled with discouragement prompted by Satan. Their unbelief cast a gloomy shadow over the congregation, and the mighty power of God so often

manifested in behalf of the chosen nation, was forgotten. . . . Caleb comprehended the situation, and bold to stand in defense of the word of God, he did all in his power to counteract the evil influence of his unfaithful associates."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 388.

6. How did the congregation of Israel receive the news? What words of complaint did they utter? What did they propose to do? How did Moses and Aaron show their grief at the rebellious attitude of the people? Num. 14:1-5.

NOTE.—"Revolt and open mutiny quickly followed; for Satan had full sway, and the people seemed bereft of reason. They cursed Moses and Aaron, forgetting that God hearkened to their wicked speeches, and that, enshrouded in the cloudy pillar, the Angel of His presence was witnessing their terrible outburst of wrath. . . . They accused not only Moses, but God Himself, of deception, in promising them a land which they were not able to possess. And they went so far as to appoint a captain to lead them back to the land of their suffering and bondage, from which they had been delivered by the strong arm of Omnipotence."—Id., p. 389.

7. Who stood up to speak courage to the people? What counsel did they give? How did the people respond? Who then appeared to Israel? Verses 6-10.

NOTE.—"The unfaithful spies were loud in denunciation of Caleb and Joshua, and the cry was raised to stone them. The insane mob seized missiles with which to slay those faithful men. They rushed forward with yells of madness, when suddenly the stones dropped from their hands, a hush fell upon them, and they shook with fear. God had interposed to check their murderous design. The glory of His presence, like a flaming light, illuminated the tabernacle. All the people beheld the signal of the Lord. A mightier one than they had revealed Himself, and none dared continue their resistance. The spies who brought the evil report, crouched terror stricken, and with bated breath sought their tents."—Id., p. 390.

8. What did God propose to do? Verses 11, 12.

9. On what basis did Moses plead with the Lord in behalf of His people? For what did he very definitely ask? Verses 13-19.

10. What was the Lord's response to this plea? What was to be the fate of those who had doubted and rebelled? Verses 20-25.

NOTE.—The Lord declared that Israel had tempted Him "now these ten times." Jewish writers give the following as the list:

1. At the Red Sea. Ex. 14:11.
2. At Marah. Ex. 15:23, 24.
3. In the Wilderness of Sin. Ex. 16:2, 3.
4. About the manna. Ex. 16:20.
5. Breaking the Sabbath. Ex. 16:27, 28.
6. At Rephidim. Ex. 17:1-3.
7. Worshiping the golden calf. Exodus 32.
8. At Taberah. Num. 11:1-3.
9. At Kibroth-hattaavah. Num. 11:34.
10. At Kadesh-barnea. Numbers 14

11. In speaking further of Israel's future, what did God say would be their fate? From what age and upward were they rejected? What was promised to the little ones? For how long were they to wander in the wilderness? Verses 28-35.

12. What punishment was meted out to those who had brought the evil report? Who were spared? What effect did these experiences have upon the people? Verses 36-39.

NOTE.—"When Moses made known to the people the divine decision, their rage was changed to mourning. They knew that their punishment was just. The ten unfaithful spies, divinely smitten by the plague, perished before the eyes of all Israel; and in their fate the people read their own doom."—Id., p. 391.

13. What did Israel now propose to do? What warning did Moses give them? What was the result of this presumption? Verses 40-45.

NOTE.—"God had made it their privilege and their duty to enter the land at the time of His appointment; but through their willful neglect that permission had been withdrawn. Satan had gained his object in preventing them from entering Canaan; and now he urged them on to do the very thing, in the face of the divine prohibition, which they had refused to do when God required it. Thus the great deceiver gained the victory by leading them to rebellion the second time. They had distrusted the power of God to work with their efforts in gaining possession of Canaan; yet now they presumed upon their own strength to accomplish the work independent of divine aid. . . . The Lord had never commanded them to 'go up and fight.' It was not His purpose that they should gain the land by warfare, but by strict obedience to His commands."—Id., p. 392.

14. How fully did the Lord carry out His promised punishment of Israel because of their rebellion at Kadesh-barnea? Num. 26:63-65.

15. In rehearsing to Israel the story of their faithlessness and rebellion, what did Moses say of Caleb and Joshua? Deut. 1:35-38.

16. How completely had the Lord said their complaints would be reversed? Verse 39.

17. After the death of Moses, how did God renew His promise to Joshua? Joshua 1:1-6.

NOTE.—"It was with great anxiety and self-distrust that Joshua had looked forward to the work before him; but his fears were removed by the assurance of God, 'As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' "—Id., p. 482.

18. When Israel had conquered Canaan, how was Caleb rewarded for his faithfulness? Joshua 15:13, 14.

NOTE.—"Before the distribution of the land had been entered upon, Caleb, accompanied by the heads of his tribe, came forward with a special claim. . . . Caleb now reminded Joshua of the promise then made, as the reward of his faithfulness: 'The land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord.' He therefore presented a request that Hebron be given him for a possession. . . . Hebron was

the seat of the dreaded Anakim, whose formidable appearance had so terrified the spies, and through them destroyed the courage of all Israel. This, above all others, was the place which Caleb, trusting in the strength of God, chose for his inheritance. . . . It was no desire for honor or aggrandizement that prompted Caleb's request. The brave old warrior was desirous of giving to the people an example that would honor God, and encourage the tribes fully to subdue the land which their fathers had deemed unconquerable."—Id., pp. 511-513.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. In face of seemingly impossible obstacles, where do I place my trust?

2. When God's decision is contrary to my wishes, how do I relate myself to Him?

3. Am I rebellious against just punishment for wrong?

Lesson 3—January 18, 1930

DALLYING WITH EVIL LEADS TO SIN

MEMORY VERSE: Num. 24:17.

LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 438-452 (new ed., pp. 449-461).

INTRODUCTION

"Returning to the Jordan from the conquest of Bashan, the Israelites, in preparation for the immediate invasion of Canaan, encamped beside the river, above its entrance into the Dead Sea, and just opposite the plain of Jericho. They were upon the very borders of Moab, and the Moabites were filled with terror at the close proximity of the invaders."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 438.

THE LESSON

1. When Israel had defeated and destroyed the Amorites, into what country did they come? Who was king of that country? What was the state of mind of the people of Moab? Num. 22:1-4.

2. To whom did Balak send for help? What did he desire of him? What inducements did he offer to Balaam for his services? Verses 5-7.

NOTE.—"Balaam was once a good man and a prophet of God; but he had apostatized, and had given himself up to covetousness; yet he still professed to be a servant of the Most High. He was not ignorant of God's work in behalf of Israel; and when the messengers announced their errand, he well knew that it was his duty to refuse the rewards of Balak, and to dismiss the ambassadors. But he ventured to dally with temptation, and urged the messengers to tarry with him that night, declaring that he could give no decided answer till he had asked counsel of the Lord. Balaam knew that his curse could not harm Israel. God was on their side; and so long as they were true to Him, no adverse power of earth or hell could prevail against them. But his pride was flattered by the words of the ambassadors. 'He whom thou blessest is

blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.' The bribe of costly gifts and prospective exaltation excited his covetousness. He greedily accepted the offered treasures, and then, while professing strict obedience to the will of God, he tried to comply with the desires of Balak."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 439.

3. What course did Balaam pursue? What message did he receive from God? What did he tell the messengers of Balak? What did they then do? Verses 8-14.

4. Not satisfied with Balaam's refusal, whom did Balak next send to him? What promises did these messengers make? What weak, equivocating course did Balaam pursue? Verses 15-19.

5. What response did God give to the second appeal from Balaam? Verses 20, 21.

NOTE.—"There are thousands at the present day who are pursuing a similar course. They would have no difficulty in understanding their duty if it were in harmony with their inclinations. It is plainly set before them in the Bible, or is clearly indicated by circumstances and reason. But because these evidences are contrary to their desires and inclinations, they frequently set them aside, and presume to go to God to learn their duty. . . . When one clearly sees a duty, let him not presume to go to God with the prayer that he may be excused from performing it. He should rather, with a humble, submissive spirit, ask for divine strength and wisdom to meet its claims."—Id., pp. 440, 441.

6. On the way to Balak, what experience of warning came to Balaam? Verses 22-30.

7. On seeing the angel what did Balaam do? What message did the angel give him? What admission did Balaam make? What instruction was given him? Verses 31-35.

NOTE.—"The Lord suffered him [Balaam] to proceed on his journey, but gave him to understand that his words should be controlled by divine power. God would give evidence to Moab that the Hebrews were under the guardianship of Heaven; and this He did effectually when He showed them how powerless Balaam was even to utter a curse against them without divine permission."—Id., p. 443.

8. What did the king say to Balaam when they met? What truth did Balaam acknowledge? Verses 37, 38.

9. What preparations were made for the cursing of Israel? Who appeared to Balaam? To whom did he send a message? Num. 23:1-6.

10. Instead of cursing Israel, what message from God did Balaam deliver to Balak and all Moab? How did Balak reproach Balaam? What did Balaam say in reply? Verses 7-12.

11. What further effort was made to curse Israel? When the preparations for the second attempt were made, with whom did Balaam meet? After talking with the Lord, what did the prophet tell the king? Verses 13, 16, 18-20.

12. What did Balak then suggest? What was Balaam's reply? Verses 25, 26.

NOTE.—"While they were under the divine protection, no people or nation, though aided by all the power of Satan, should be able to prevail against them. All the world should wonder at the marvelous work of God in behalf of His people,—that a man determined to pursue a sinful course, should be so controlled by divine power as to utter, instead of imprecations, the richest and most precious promises, in the language of sublime and impassioned poetry. And the favor of God at this time manifested toward Israel, was to be an assurance of His protecting care for His obedient, faithful children in all ages. When Satan should inspire evil men to misrepresent, harass, and destroy God's people, this very occurrence would be brought to their remembrance, and would strengthen their courage and their faith in God."—Id., p. 449.

13. Where did Balak now take Balaam for a third attempt to accomplish his purpose? What preparations were made? Verses 27-30.

14. When Balaam saw that God was pleased to bless Israel, what did he do? What spirit took possession of him? Num. 24:1, 2.

15. What was Balaam's condition in vision? In what beautiful language does he depict Israel's prosperity? What would Israel do to their enemies? Verses 3-9.

16. What was the effect of this final prophecy upon Balak? What did he say to the prophet? How did Balaam respond to his complaint? Verses 10-14.

17. What outstanding lesson revealed in this experience should we take to heart?

NOTE.—"It is a perilous thing to allow an unchristian trait to live in the heart. One cherished sin will, little by little, debase the character, bringing all its nobler powers into subjection to the evil desire. The removal of one safeguard from the conscience, the indulgence of one evil habit, one neglect of the high claims of duty, breaks down the defenses of the soul, and opens the way for Satan to come in and lead us astray. The only safe course is to let our prayers go forth daily from a sincere heart, as did David, 'Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.' "—Id., p. 452.

18. What final message did Balaam deliver concerning Israel? What promise of the coming One was made? Verses 15-19.

19. In His dealings with Amalek and other nations, what would God do to them? Verses 20-25.

NOTE.—"Before returning to his people, Balaam uttered a most beautiful and sublime prophecy of the world's Redeemer, and the final destruction of the enemies of God:—

" 'I shall see Him, but now now. I shall behold Him, but not nigh.
There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel,
And shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.' And he closed by predicting the complete destruction of Moab and Edom, of Amalek and the Kenites, thus leaving to the Moabitish king no ray of hope."—Id., p. 451.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. What led Balaam to sin?
2. Am I so closely connected with the Lord that I can recognize the insidious approach of evil?
3. Do I dally with sin when I have recognized it as such?
4. If I want to do wrong, will God hinder me from doing it?
5. To seek power and influence may involve me in compromise with conscience. What is my attitude? Am I humble and teachable, or ambitious like Balaam?

Lesson 4—January 25, 1930

IN IMPATIENCE AND ANGER MOSES FORGETS GOD

MEMORY VERSE: Prov. 16:32.

LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 411-421, 469-480 (new ed., pp. 421-429, 481-491).

INTRODUCTION

Near the end of their forty years' wanderings, the Israelites were again near the Promised Land, in a place called "Kadesh," in the wilderness of Zin. Those who rebelled and doubted God at Kadesh-barnea had died as God foretold (Num. 14:27-32). It is their children who are now waiting to enter into the land of Canaan. Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Caleb and Joshua are with them as they arrive at the border of Canaan.

"From the smitten rock in Horeb first flowed the living stream that refreshed Israel in the desert. During all their wanderings, wherever the need existed, they were supplied with water by a miracle of God's mercy. The water did not, however, continue to flow from Horeb. Wherever in their journeyings they wanted water, there from the clefts of the rock it gushed out beside their encampment."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 411.

THE LESSON

1. To what place did Israel come in the wilderness of Zin? Who died and was buried there? Num. 20:1.

2. What serious difficulty at once confronted the children of Israel? What did they do and say? What action did Moses and Aaron immediately take? Verses 2-6.

3. What instruction did the Lord give Moses in response to their inquiry? Verses 7, 8.

NOTE.—"It was Christ, by the power of His word, that caused the refreshing stream to flow for Israel. 'They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.' He was the source of all temporal as well as spiritual blessings. Christ, the true Rock, was with them in all their wanderings. 'They thirsted not when He led them through the deserts; He caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them; He clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.' 'They ran in the dry places like a river.'"—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 411.

"Christ is the smitten Rock, from Him
The living waters flow,
Downward in undiminished stream,
Through every land they go.

" 'The Spirit and the Bride say, Come,'
Ye thirsty, come away,
Drink freely from the costly stream,
And live through endless day."

4. With what impatient words did Moses speak to the people? How did he disobey God? Verses 9-11.

NOTE.—"The two brothers went on before the multitude, Moses with the rod of God in his hand. They were now aged men. Long had they borne with the rebellion and obstinacy of Israel; but now, at last, even the patience of Moses gave way. 'Hear now, ye rebels,' he cried; 'must we fetch you water out of this rock?' and instead of speaking to the rock, as God had commanded him, he smote it twice with the rod. The water gushed forth in abundance to satisfy the host. But a great wrong had been done."—Id., p. 417.

5. In speaking and acting as they had, what sin had Moses and Aaron committed? What was to be the punishment for their transgression? Verse 12.

NOTE.—"By his rash act, Moses took away the force of the lesson that God purposed to teach. The rock, being a symbol of Christ, had been once smitten, as Christ was to be once offered. The second time, it was needful only to speak to the rock, as we have only to ask for blessings in the name of Jesus. By the second smiting of the rock, the significance of this beautiful figure of Christ was destroyed.

"More than this, Moses and Aaron had assumed power that belongs only to God. The necessity for divine interposition made the occasion one of great solemnity; and the leaders of Israel should have improved it to impress the people with reverence for God and to strengthen their faith in His power and goodness. When they angrily cried, 'Must we fetch you water out of this rock?' they put themselves in God's place, as though the power lay with themselves, men possessing human frailties and passions. Wearied with the continual murmuring and rebellion of the people, Moses had lost sight of his Almighty Helper, and without the divine strength he had been left to mar his record by an exhibition of human weakness. The man who might have stood pure, firm, and unselfish to the close of his work, had been overcome at last. God had been dishonored before the congregation of Israel, when He should have been magnified and exalted."—Id., p. 418.

" 'The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes,' said Moses. The eyes of all Israel were upon Moses, and his sin cast a reflection upon God, who had chosen him as the leader of His people. The transgression was known to the whole congregation; and had it been passed by lightly, the impression would have been given that unbelief and impatience under great provocation might be excused in those in responsible positions. But when it was declared that because of that one sin Moses and Aaron were not to enter Canaan, the people knew that God is no respecter of persons, and that He will surely punish the transgressor." —Id., p. 420.

6. When Israel arrived at Mt. Hor, what statement did God make to Moses? What was the sin of Moses and Aaron here called? Verses 23, 24.

7. What instruction did Moses receive regarding Aaron and his successor? Verses 25, 26.

8. How fully did Moses carry out the instruction of the Lord? How long did the congregation mourn the death of Aaron? Verses 27-29.

NOTE.—"The absence from the camp of the two great leaders, and the fact that they had been accompanied by Eleazar, who, it was well known, was to be Aaron's successor in holy office, awakened a feeling of apprehension, and their return was anxiously awaited. . . . 'The forms of Moses and Eleazar were at last discerned, slowly descending the mountain side; but Aaron was not with them. Upon Eleazar were the sacerdotal garments, showing that he had succeeded his father in the sacred office. As the people with heavy hearts gathered about their leader, Moses told them that Aaron had died in his arms upon Mt. Hor, and that they there buried him. The congregation broke forth in mourning and lamentation, for they all loved Aaron, though they had so often caused him sorrow."—Id., pp. 426, 427.

9. When nearing the Promised Land, to what mountain was Moses called? For what purpose? Num. 27:12, 13.

10. What reason is here assigned for this punishment upon Israel's commander? Verse 14.

NOTE.—"Let not the ease of pardon ever tempt thee to think lightly of sin, or to imagine that it leaves no traces on soul or life, because it is secure, through penitence and faith, of God's forgiving mercy. If one act of mistrustful anger laid Moses, the friend and servant of God, in a desert grave on the frontiers of the Land, what may it not do for thee?"—"Moses, the Servant of God," Meyer, p. 186.

11. What request did Moses make concerning the leadership of Israel? Verses 15-17.

12. Who was chosen of God to lead His people? How was he invested with authority? Verses 18-23.

NOTE.—"At the divine command, Moses and Joshua repaired to the tabernacle, while the pillar of cloud came and stood over the door. Here the people were solemnly committed to the charge of Joshua. The work of Moses as leader of Israel was ended. Still he forgot himself in his interest for his people. In the presence of the assembled multitude, Moses, in the name of God, addressed to his successor these words of holy cheer: "Be strong and of a good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them; and I will be with thee.' He then turned to the elders and officers of the people, giving them a solemn charge to obey faithfully the instructions he had communicated to them from God."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 469, 470.

13. When Moses had fully carried out the Lord's instruction concerning Joshua, what did God direct him to do? Deut. 32:48-52.

14. Alone on Mount Nebo, what was Moses permitted to see? Deut. 34:1-4.

NOTE.—"A panoramic view of the Land of Promise was presented to him. Every part of the country was spread out before him, not faint and uncertain in the dim distance, but standing out clear, distinct, and beautiful to his delighted vision. In this scene it was presented, not as it then appeared, but as it would become, with God's blessing upon it, in the possession of Israel."—Id., p. 472.

Moses was permitted to see the history of Israel through the centuries, their apostasies and their punishment, their dispersion, the captivity, the restoration, the rejection of the Messiah and their ultimate rejection as the chosen people, and after this the rejection of God's law by the ingrafted Gentiles, and the call of the saints into God's kingdom. Then "another scene opens to his view,—the earth freed from the curse, lovelier than the fair Land of Promise so lately spread out before him. There is no sin, and death cannot enter. There the nations of the saved find their eternal home. With joy unutterable, Moses looks upon the scene,—the fulfillment of a more glorious deliverance than his brightest hopes have ever pictured. Their earthly wandering forever past, the Israel of God have at last entered the goodly land."—Id., p. 477.

15. What description is given of the death and burial of Moses? What was Moses' age? What is said of his physical condition? Verses 5-7.

The Burial of Moses

By Nebo's lonely mountain,
  On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab,
  There lies a lonely grave;
But no man built that sepulcher,
  And no man saw it e'er;
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
  And laid the dead man there.

That was the grandest funeral
  That ever passed on earth;
Yet no man heard the trampling,
  Or saw the train go forth;
Noiselessly as the daylight
  Comes when the night is done,
And the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
  Grows into the great sun;

Noiselessly as the springtime
  Her crown of verdure weaves,
And all the trees on all the hills
  Unfold their thousand leaves:
So without sound of music,
  Or voice of them that wept,
Silently down from the mountain's crown
  The great procession swept.

Perchance the bald old eagle
  On gray Beth-peor's height,
Out of his rocky eyrie
  Looked on the wondrous sight;
Perchance the lion stalking,
  Still shuns that hallowed spot;
For beast and bird have seen and heard
  That which man knoweth not.

* * * * * *

This was the bravest warrior
  That ever buckled sword;
This the most gifted poet
  That ever breathed a word;
And never earth's philosopher
  Traced with his golden pen,
On the deathless page, truths half so sage
  As he wrote down for men.

And had he not high honor?—
  The hillside for a pall!
To lie in state while angels wait,
  With stars for tapers tall!
And the dark rock pines, like tossing plumes,
  Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand, in that lonely land,
  To lay him in his grave!—

* * * * * *

O lonely tomb in Moab's land!
  O dark Beth-peor's hill!
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
  And teach them to be still;
God hath His mysteries of grace,
  Ways that we cannot tell,
He hides them deep, like the secret sleep
  Of him He loved so well.

—Cecil Frances Alexander.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. Have I learned to give credit to the Creator for my life's accomplishments?

2. Yielding to anger or resentment is a victory for the enemy and weakens the moral fiber of the soul.

3. Do I in life's daily relationships forget God through yielding to temper?

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING
March 29, 1930
Philippine and Manchurian Unions

Lesson 5—February 1, 1930

GOD MAKES A WAY FOR HIS PEOPLE

MEMORY VERSE: Joshua 1:9.

LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 481-498 (new ed., pp. 493-511).

INTRODUCTION

"Heathen nations had reproached the Lord and His people because the Hebrews had failed to take possession of Canaan, as they expected, soon after leaving Egypt. Their enemies had triumphed because Israel had wandered so long in the wilderness, and they had mockingly declared that the God of the Hebrews was not able to bring them into the Promised Land. The Lord had now signally manifested His power and favor in opening the Jordan before His people, and their enemies could no longer reproach them. . . . The long years of their desert wanderings were ended. The feet of Israel were at last treading the Promised Land."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 486.

THE LESSON

1. What command did Joshua give to Israel when they were encamped across the Jordan from Jericho? Joshua 1:10, 11.

2. Although the three tribes, Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, had received an inheritance east of the Jordan, how were they to aid their brethren? Verses 12-15.

3. How did the people respond? Verses 16-18.

4. What precaution did Joshua take as he prepared to lead Israel into Canaan? Into whose house did the spies come? Who learned of it? How were the spies saved from discovery? How did they finally escape? Joshua 2:1-7, 15, 16.

NOTE.—"A few miles beyond the river, just opposite the place where the Israelites were encamped, was the large and strongly fortified city of Jericho. This city was virtually the key to the whole country, and it would present a formidable obstacle to the success of Israel. Joshua therefore sent two young men as spies to visit this city, and ascertain something as to its population, its resources, and the strength of its fortifications. The inhabitants of the city, terrified and suspicious, were constantly on the alert, and the messengers were in great danger."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 482, 483.

5. What promise of protection was given Rahab by the spies? By what sign was her home to be identified? Verses 17-21.

6. After the spies had reported to Joshua, what action did he at once take? What instruction was given to the people? To the priests? Joshua 3:1-6.

7. What renewed promise did God make to Joshua? What command was he to give to the priests? Verses 7, 8.

8. How was Israel to know that the living God was among them? What did the Lord promise concerning the waters of the Jordan? Verses 9-13.

NOTE.—"Thus was impressed upon the minds of all Israel the fact that the power that stayed the waters of Jordan was the same that had opened the Red Sea to their fathers forty years before. When the people had all passed over, the ark itself was borne to the western shore. No sooner had it reached a place of security, and 'the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land,' than the imprisoned waters, being set free, rushed down, a resistless flood, in the natural channel of the stream."—Id., p. 484.

9. How fully was the promise of the Lord to Joshua fulfilled? Verses 14-17.

NOTE.—"At the appointed time began the onward movement, the ark, borne upon the shoulders of the priests, leading the van. The people had been directed to fall back, so that there was a vacant space of more than half a mile about the ark. All watched with deep interest as the priests advanced down the bank of the Jordan. They saw them with the sacred ark move steadily forward toward the angry, surging stream, till the feet of the bearers were dipped into the waters. Then suddenly the tide above was swept back, while the current below flowed on, and the bed of the river was laid bare."—Ibid.

10. How did the Lord again manifest His power in the taking of Jericho? Joshua 6:12-16, 20.

NOTE.—"The very plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls, afforded opportunity for the development of faith among the Israelites. It was to be impressed upon their minds that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to relying wholly upon their divine Leader."—Id., p. 493.

11. When an attempt was made to capture the little city of Ai without awaiting the Lord's direction, how were the Israelites taught a needed lesson? Joshua 7:2-5.

12. What had stood in the way of their success? How was the guilty man discovered and brought to account? Verses 10-15, 22-25.

NOTE.—"The fact that divine power alone had given the victory to Israel, that they had not come into possession of Jericho by their own strength, gave solemn weight to the command prohibiting them from partaking of the spoils. God, by the might of His own word, had overthrown this stronghold; the conquest was His, and to Him alone the city with all that it contained was to be devoted. Of the millions of Israel there was but one man who, in that solemn hour of triumph and of judgment, had dared to transgress the command of God. . . . The deadly sin that led to Achan's ruin had its root in covetousness, of all sins one of the most common and the most lightly regarded. While other offenses meet with detection and punishment, how rarely does the violation of the tenth commandment so much as call forth censure. The enormity of this sin, and its terrible results, are the lessons of Achan's history."—Id., p. 496.

13. When sin was removed, what success attended the attack on Ai? Joshua 8:25-29.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. Is it necessary for us to have a demonstration of God's power before we can accept His word, as was the case with Israel?
2. What does sin in my life prevent God from doing?
3. How great is my faith in God's promises?

Lesson 6—February 8, 1930

WORLDLY SURROUNDINGS ENDANGER THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF ISRAEL

MEMORY VERSE: Ps. 121:7, 8.

LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 505-509, 543-545 (new ed., pp. 519-523, 565-567).

INTRODUCTION

"After the settlement in Canaan, the tribes made no vigorous effort to complete the conquest of the land. Satisfied with the territory already gained, their zeal soon flagged, and the war was discontinued. 'When Israel was strong, they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.'

"The Lord had faithfully fulfilled, on His part, the promises made to Israel; Joshua had broken the power of the Canaanites, and had distributed the land to the tribes. It only remained for them, trusting in the assurance of divine aid, to complete the work of dispossessing the inhabitants of the land. But this they failed to do. By entering into league with the Canaanites they directly transgressed the command of God, and thus failed to fulfill the condition on which He had promised to place them in possession of Canaan."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 543.

THE LESSON

1. When Joshua had destroyed Jericho and Ai, what attempt did the inhabitants of Canaan make to stop the conquest of the children of Israel? Joshua 9:1, 2.

2. In consequence of their fear, by what means did the Gibeonites seek an alliance with Israel? How well did they succeed? What reason is given for Israel's failure to recognize their deception? Verses 3-15.

NOTE.—"The Hebrews 'asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live. And the princes of the congregation sware unto them.' Thus the treaty was entered into. Three days afterwards the truth was discovered."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 505.

3. What did the people desire to do? Why were they not free to carry out their desires? What did the princes propose? What was finally done? Verses 18-20, 26, 27.

NOTE.—"The Gibeonites had pledged themselves to renounce idolatry, and accept the worship of Jehovah; and the preservation of their lives was not a violation of God's command to destroy the idolatrous Canaanites. Hence the Hebrews had not by their oath pledged them-

selves to commit sin. And though the oath had been secured by deception, it was not to be disregarded. The obligation to which one's word is pledged,—if it do not bind him to perform a wrong act,—should be held sacred. No consideration of gain, of revenge, or of self-interest, can in any way affect the inviolability of an oath or pledge."—Id., p. 506.

God had made provision for all who would renounce heathenism and connect themselves with Israel, to share in the blessings of the covenant. (See Num. 15:14-16.) "Such was the footing on which the Gibeonites might have been received, but for the deception to which they had resorted. It was no light humiliation to those citizens of a 'royal city,' 'all the men whereof were mighty,' to be made hewers of wood and drawers of water throughout their generations. But they had adopted the garb of poverty for the purpose of deception, and it was fastened upon them as a badge of perpetual servitude. Thus through all their generations, their servile condition would testify to God's hatred of falsehood."—Id., p. 507.

4. What instruction that God had given Israel did they afterwards frequently disobey? Judges 2:1, 2.

5. In their conquest of Canaan, what had Israel done repeatedly? Judges 1:21, 27-36.

Answer: Israel failed to drive out or destroy the Canaanites as God had commanded, but allowed them and their altars to remain in the country.

NOTE.—"God had placed His people in Canaan as a mighty breastwork to stay the tide of moral evil, that it might not flood the world. If faithful to Him, God intended that Israel should go on conquering and to conquer. He would give into their hands nations greater and more powerful than the Canaanites. . . . But regardless of their high destiny, they chose the course of ease and self-indulgence; they let slip their opportunities for completing the conquest of the land; and for many generations they were afflicted by the remnant of these idolatrous peoples, that were, as the prophet had foretold, as 'pricks in their eyes,' and as 'thorns in their sides.' The Israelites were 'mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.' They intermarried with the Canaanites, and idolatry spread like a plague throughout the land." —Id., p. 544.

6. In consequence of this disobedience, what were these nations to be to Israel? How were the people affected when they heard these words? Judges 2:3, 4.

7. What testimony is given concerning the influence of Joshua and the elders associated with him? How old was Joshua when he died? Verses 7-9.

8. As a new generation grew up in Israel, what did they forget? What did they begin to do? Verses 10-13.

NOTE.—"Until the generation that had received instruction from Joshua became extinct, idolatry made little headway; but the parents had prepared the way for the apostasy of their children. The disregard of the Lord's restrictions on the part of those who came in possession of Canaan, sowed seeds of evil that continued to bring forth bitter fruit

for many generations. The simple habits of the Hebrews had secured them physical health; but association with the heathen led to the indulgence of appetite and passion, which gradually lessened physical strength, and enfeebled the mental and moral powers. By their sins the Israelites were separated from God; His strength was removed from them, and they could no longer prevail against their enemies. Thus they were brought into subjection to the very nations that through God they might have subdued."—Id., pp. 544, 545.

9. What was the result of this apostasy? Verses 14, 15.

10. As Israel again and again forgot God and worshiped the gods of their neighbors, what did He allow to prove them? Verses 20-23.

11. Into what relationships was Israel led as the result of their proximity to their heathen neighbors? How completely did Israel forget God? Judges 3:5-7.

12. When afflictions came because of their transgressions, what did God do for them? Judges 2:18.

13. In spite of these deliverances, what did each new generation do? Verse 19.

NOTE.—"There was ever a remnant who were true to Jehovah; and from time to time the Lord raised up faithful and valiant men to put down idolatry and to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. But when the deliverer was dead, and the people were released from his authority, they would gradually return to their idols. And thus the story of backsliding and chastisement, of confession and deliverance, was repeated again and again."—Id., p. 545.

14. In thus bearing with Israel's transgressions, what attributes of His character was God demonstrating before them? Ex. 34:6, 7.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. What is my attitude toward worldly surroundings and associations?
2. Do I allow myself to become tolerant of evil in my desire to show kindness and love to the transgressor?
3. What is the effect of my associations with others upon my relationship to Christ and to spiritual things?

Lesson 7—February 15, 1930

A LESSON FROM GIDEON'S FLEECE

MEMORY VERSE: Judges 6:22, 23.

LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 545-548 (new ed., pp. 567-570).

INTRODUCTION

After the death of Joshua Israel did evil in the sight of God, intermarrying with the heathen and worshiping their gods. As a result the king of Mesopotamia oppressed them, and they were delivered after eight years by Othniel, a nephew of Caleb. For forty years they had

rest; then the new generation wandered from God, and Moab was permitted to gain control and Ehud delivered Israel. Shamgar was the next to bring relief when the Philistines were afflicting the nation. For twenty years Sisera, captain of the army of Jabin, king of Canaan, had held sway over Israel with oppression. Deborah and Barak led Israel to victory over their enemies at God's command. It is this latter experience that brought forth the triumphant song of Deborah in Judges 5, in which are the oft-quoted words, "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Again Israel had rest, bringing us to the time of this lesson and its experiences.

THE LESSON

1. When Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, into whose hands did He deliver them? For how long? Judges 6:1.

2. By reason of Midianitish oppression, what was Israel compelled to do? What was their condition? Verses 2-6.

NOTE.—"The Israelites dwelling in the open country were forced to abandon their homes, and to congregate in walled towns, to seek refuge in fortresses, or even to find shelter in caves and rocky fastnesses among the mountains. For seven years this oppression continued, and then, as the people in their distress gave heed to the Lord's reproof, and confessed their sins, God again raised up a helper for them." —"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 546.

3. When Israel cried to the Lord, of what did He remind them in a message sent to them? What had they not done? Verses 7-10.

4. As evidence that the Lord heard Israel's cry, to whom did the angel of the Lord appear at this time? Where? What salutation did he make to Gideon? Verses 11, 12.

NOTE.—Gideon belonged to the tribe of Manasseh. His father was Joash. He lived at Ophrah, a town about six miles southwest of Shechem. The story of Gideon is one of the most thrilling of all the stories of the judges. He was of noble appearance, as is indicated in Judges 8:18. At the time of the events of the lesson he was probably of middle age, for he had a son old enough to wield the sword.

5. What complaint did Gideon voice? What was the angel's response? Verses 13, 14.

6. What doubt did Gideon express? What assurance was given him? How did Gideon seek to know of a certainty that it was God's message to him? Verses 15-18.

7. When Gideon brought his offering, what evidence did the angel give of his divine mission? Verses 19-21.

8. With what feelings did Gideon receive this knowledge? What did the Lord say to him? Verses 22, 23.

9. What was the first work that God called on Gideon to do? Verses 25-27.

NOTE.—"Gideon's father, Joash, who shared in the apostasy of his countrymen, had erected at Ophrah, where he dwelt, a large altar to Baal, at which the people of the town worshiped. Gideon was commanded to destroy this altar, and to erect an altar to Jehovah, over the rock on which the offering had been consumed, and there to present a sacrifice to the Lord. The offering of sacrifice to God had been committed to the priests, and had been restricted to the altar at Shiloh; but He who had established the ritual service, and to whom all its offerings pointed, had power to change its requirements. The deliverance of Israel was to be preceded by a solemn protest against the worship of Baal. Gideon must declare war upon idolatry, before going out to battle with the enemies of his people."—Id., p. 547.

10. What effect had his action on the men of the city? What did they demand of Gideon's father? How were they answered? Verses 28-32.

11. At this time what action did the Midianites and Amalekites take? Verse 33.

12. What did God impress Gideon to do? Whom did he call? Verses 34, 35.

NOTE.—As Gideon saw the host of the Amalekites and Midianites gathered to ravage Israel, his heart was mightily stirred, and God impressed him to sound an alarm. Among the very first to respond were the Abiezrites, whose heathen altars he had overthrown. Abiezer was the founder of the family to which Gideon belonged. (Joshua 17:2.) Gideon's brave and conscientious course in carrying out God's earlier instruction had eventually won their respect and loyal coöperation. Other tribes joined his banner. Israel under divine leadership was ready for a demonstration of God's power to save.

13. What request did Gideon make of God to ascertain if He would indeed be with him? Verses 36, 37.

14. What response came from the Lord? Verse 38.

15. Still hesitant, what further evidence did Gideon require? How did the Lord respond? Verses 39, 40.

NOTE.—"Gideon dared not place himself at the head of the army without still further evidence that God had called him to this work, and that He would be with him."—Id., p. 548.

16. What needed lessons may we learn from this experience?

NOTE.—When needful, God reverses the ordinary course of nature, for all nature is at His command. He created all things; by Him they stand intact. Facing for the first time in his experience the mighty hosts of Israel's enemies, Gideon desired again a visible sign that God would go before them to battle, that He would be the leader of the hosts of Israel. Twice nature's order was changed. "God did so," is the record of the experience. We see a demonstration of nature's order reversed in every changed and transformed life. It is only as God enters in, and changes things, that that which tends downward to destruction turns about and brings salvation, new life, new strength, new power. Every answered prayer is an evidence of God's willingness to "change things" that He may convince us of His desire to lead us on to complete victory.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. Is my heart open to the first call of God? Do I cherish doubts that might hinder my hearing His call?

2. Would I have the courage to act at God's command if seemingly alone?

3. What evidence have I of a definite call to the service of Christ?

Lesson 8—February 22, 1930

SUCCESS DOES NOT DEPEND UPON NUMBERS

MEMORY VERSE: "Lord, it is nothing with Thee, to help, whether with many or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord, our God." 2 Chron. 14:11.

LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 548-556 (new ed., pp. 570-577).

INTRODUCTION

Gideon accepted the responsibility placed upon him, after receiving the unmistakable signs that God had called him to deliver Israel. "Thus encouraged, Gideon led out his forces to give battle to the invaders. 'All the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.' The entire force under Gideon's command numbered only thirty-two thousand men. . . . Because his numbers were so few compared with those of the enemy, Gideon had refrained from making the usual proclamation. [Deut. 20:5-8.] He was filled with astonishment at the declaration that his army was too large. But the Lord saw the pride and unbelief existing in the hearts of His people. Aroused by the stirring appeals of Gideon, they had readily enlisted; but many were filled with fear when they saw the multitudes of the Midianites. Yet, had Israel triumphed, those very ones would have taken the glory to themselves instead of ascribing the victory to God."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 548, 549.

THE LESSON

1. **How did Gideon arrange his forces for the battle with the Midianites? Judges 7:1, 2.**

2. **How did God first arrange for the reduction of the army? How many returned home? Verse 3.**

3. **With only ten thousand left, what second message did God give Gideon? Verse 4.**

4. **How was the second test arranged? How many fulfilled the Lord's conditions? Verses 5, 6.**

NOTE.—"By the simplest means, character is often tested. Those who in time of peril were intent upon supplying their own wants, were not the men to be trusted in an emergency. The Lord has no place in His work for the indolent and self-indulgent. The men of His choice

were the few who would not permit their own wants to delay them in the discharge of duty. The three hundred chosen men not only possessed courage and self-control, but they were men of faith. They had not defiled themselves with idolatry. God could direct them, and through them He could work deliverance for Israel. Success does not depend upon numbers. God can deliver by few as well as by many. He is honored not so much by the great numbers as by the character of those who serve Him."—Id., pp. 549, 550.

5. What instruction did God give Gideon concerning all but this remnant of the army? How many did he retain for the battle? Verses 7, 8.

6. In order that Gideon's heart might be strengthened for the coming battle, what did God instruct him to do? Verses 9-11.

7. What were the numbers and appearance of the combined army of the Midianites and Amalekites? Verse 12.

8. What conversation did Gideon and his servant overhear? What was the meaning of the Midianite's dream? Verses 13, 14.

NOTE.—"Gideon trembled as he thought of the conflict of the morrow. But the Lord spoke to him in the night season, and bade him, with Phurah his attendant, go down to the camp of the Midianites, intimating that he would there hear something for his encouragement. He went, and waiting in the darkness and silence, he heard a soldier relating a dream to his companion. . . . Gideon recognized the voice of God speaking to him through those Midianitish strangers. Returning to the few men under his command, he said, 'Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.' "—Id., p. 550.

9. What was Gideon's immediate response? What command was at once given? Verse 15.

10. What arrangement of his forces did he make? What instruction were they to follow? What was to be their war cry? Verses 16-18.

11. At what time of night did Gideon and his band come to the camp of Midian? What was their first act in battle? Verse 19.

12. What was the response of the other companies? What cry resounded from three sides of the camp? How did this affect the Midianites? Verses 20-22.

NOTE.—"The leader whom God chose to overthrow the Midianites, occupied no prominent position in Israel. He was not a ruler, a priest, or a Levite. He thought himself the least in his father's house. But God saw in him a man of courage and integrity. He was distrustful of himself, and willing to follow the guidance of the Lord. God does not always choose, for His work, men of the greatest talents; but He selects those whom He can best use."—Id., p. 553.

13. Who gathered to pursue the enemy whom God had thus routed? Verse 23.

NOTE.—"As news of the victory spread, thousands of the men of Israel who had been dismissed to their homes returned, and joined in

pursuit of their fleeing enemies. The Midianites were making their way toward the Jordan, hoping to reach their own territory, beyond the river."—Ibid.

14. What message was sent to Ephraim? Joining in the pursuit, whom did they capture? Verses 24, 25.

15. Later what other two kings did Gideon capture? Judges 8: 11, 12.

16. What did the men of Israel now request of Gideon? What was his response? Verses 22, 23.

17. Later what did Gideon make from the golden earrings of the heathen Amalekites? What was the consequence? Verses 24-27.

NOTE.—"Because he had been commanded to offer sacrifice upon the rock where the Angel appeared to him, Gideon concluded that he had been appointed to officiate as a priest. Without waiting for the divine sanction, he determined to provide a suitable place, and to institute a system of worship similar to that carried on at the tabernacle. With the strong popular feeling in his favor he found no difficulty in carrying out his plan. At his request, all the earrings of gold taken from the Midianites were given him as his share of the spoil. The people also collected many other costly materials, together with the richly adorned garments of the princes of Midian. From the material thus furnished, Gideon constructed an ephod and a breastplate, in imitation of those worn by the high priest. His course proved a snare to himself and his family, as well as to Israel. The unauthorized worship led many of the people finally to forsake the Lord altogether, to serve idols. After Gideon's death, great numbers, among whom were his own family, joined in this apostasy. The people were led away from God by the very man who had once overthrown their idolatry."—Id., pp. 555, 556.

18. After Gideon's death, what course did Israel again follow? Verses 33-35.

19. What great lesson may we learn from this experience?

NOTE.—"For myself I always translate the wars and battles of the past into moral battles, against the wrongs, the principalities and powers of evil, which are raging around us, and within us. They require the same courage, and skill, and consecration of ourselves, as did the wars against the ancient enemies which in earlier times assailed the very existence of the people of God."—Peloubet.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. Am I dependent upon numbers to give me courage, or am I willing to trust God with a few?

2. Do we "number Israel" to-day in our hearts, or do we depend upon God's power?

3. What effect does success have upon our hearts? Do we remain humble?

4. What things in my heart should I vigorously fight against?

Lesson 9—March 1, 1930

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF SAMSON

MEMORY VERSE: Rom. 6:16.
LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 560-568 (new ed., pp. 581-589).

INTRODUCTION

Set in the midst of the history of Israel during the time of the judges are the records of men of outstanding ability whose experiences teach valuable lessons to all generations. From the life of Samson we may learn the evils that follow yielding to one's passions and desires and forgetting our obligations to God and His cause. He was a man of marked ability, military prowess, and strong personality, and God used him for the assistance of His people in spite of weaknesses shown in his life.

THE LESSON

1. At a time when Israel was greatly oppressed by the Philistines, what message came to Manoah's wife? Judges 13:2-5.

NOTE.—"Amid the widespread apostasy, the faithful worshipers of God continued to plead with Him for the deliverance of Israel. Though there was apparently no response, though year after year the power of the oppressor continued to rest more heavily upon the land, God's providence was preparing help for them. Even in the early years of the Philistine oppression, a child was born through whom God designed to humble the power of these mighty foes."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 560.

2. What was the burden of Manoah's prayer? Under what circumstances was the instruction to Manoah's wife repeated? Verses 8-14.

3. When Manoah and his wife sought to entertain the messenger, what convincing evidence of his personality did he give? Verses 15-20.

4. What name was given to Manoah's son? What moved Samson as he grew into young manhood? Verses 24, 25.

5. With whom did he form an attachment? What question did his parents ask? What was hid from them? Judges 14:1-4.

NOTE.—"Just as he was entering upon manhood, the time when he must execute his divine mission,—the time above all others when he should have been true to God,—Samson connected himself with the enemies of Israel. He did not ask whether he could better glorify God when united with the object of his choice, or whether he was placing himself in a position where he could not fulfill the purpose to be accomplished by his life. To all who seek first to honor Him, God has promised wisdom; but there is no promise to those who are bent upon self-pleasing. How many are pursuing the same course as did Samson! How often marriages are formed between the godly and the ungodly, because inclination governs in the selection of husband or wife! The parties do not ask counsel of God, nor have His glory in view."—Id., p. 563.

6. On one of his visits to Timnath, what incident occurred? When Samson returned to take his wife, what did he find by the way? What did he do with the honey? Verses 5-9.

7. At the wedding feast, what riddle did Samson propound? To whom? How did they obtain the answer? With what results? Verses 10-20.

8. When Samson sought to visit his wife, what rebuff did he receive? In his anger, what did he do? Judges 15:1-5.

9. The Philistines having taken vengeance on Samson's wife's family, what did he do? What did the Philistines demand of Judah? Verses 6-10.

10. How did the men of Judah try to meet the demand? How was Samson's great strength used in his deliverance? Verses 11-15.

NOTE.—"Had the Israelites been ready to unite with Samson, and follow up the victory, they might at this time have freed themselves from the power of their oppressors. But they had become dispirited and cowardly. They had neglected the work which God commanded them to perform, in dispossessing the heathen, and had united with them in their degrading practices, tolerating their cruelty, and, so long as it was not directed against themselves, even countenancing their injustice. When themselves brought under the power of the oppressor, they tamely submitted to the degradation which they might have escaped, had they only obeyed God. Even when the Lord raised up a deliverer for them, they would, not infrequently, desert him, and unite with their enemies."—Id., p. 564.

11. When apparently in the power of his enemies in Gaza, how did Samson escape? Judges 16:2, 3.

12. What plan did the Philistines lay to learn the secret of Samson's strength? What was the result of the first attempt? The second? The third? Verses 4-14.

13. How urgent did Delilah become in her request? How was Samson finally deprived of his strength? Verses 15-20.

NOTE.—" 'He [Samson] loved a woman in the valley of Sorek,' not far from his own birthplace. Her name was Delilah, 'the consumer.' The vale of Sorek was celebrated for its vineyards; these also had a temptation for the wavering Nazarite, who had already indulged in the use of wine, thus breaking another tie that bound him to purity and to God. . . . Little by little he had violated the conditions of his sacred calling. God had borne long with him; but when he had so yielded himself to the power of sin as to betray his secret, the Lord departed from him. There was no virtue in his long hair merely, but it was a token of his loyalty to God; and when the symbol was sacrificed in the indulgence of passion, the blessings of which it was a token were also forfeited."—Id., pp. 565, 566.

14. When shorn of his strength, what did the Philistines do to Samson? How did his imprisonment cause the Philistines to feel? While they were feasting and carousing, for whom did they call? How did Samson respond? Verses 21-25.

NOTE.—"In suffering and humiliation, a sport for the Philistines, Samson learned more of his own weakness than he had ever known before; and his afflictions led him to repentance. As his hair grew, his

power gradually returned; but his enemies, regarding him as a fettered and helpless prisoner, felt no apprehensions."—Id., p. 566.

15. What did Samson ask of the lad who led him? What prayer did Samson offer? With what final effort did he close his life? Where was he buried? By whom? How long had he judged Israel? Verses 26-31.

NOTE.—"God's promise that through Samson He would 'begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines,' was fulfilled; but how dark and terrible the record of that life which might have been a praise to God and a glory to the nation! Had Samson been true to his divine calling, the purpose of God could have been accomplished in his honor and exaltation. But he yielded to temptation, and proved untrue to his trust, and his mission was fulfilled in defeat, bondage, and death. Physically, Samson was the strongest man upon the earth; but in self-control, integrity, and firmness, he was one of the weakest of men. Many mistake strong passions for a strong character; but the truth is that he who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. The real greatness of the man is measured by the power of the feelings that he controls, not by those that control him."—Id., pp. 567, 568.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. What very common habits tend to weaken our bodies?

2. Am I inclined to follow my desires in opposition to the instruction of God's word?

3. Is there anything in my life that causes me to lose my spiritual strength as Samson lost his physical strength?

4. The result of gradually departing from God's expressed will to follow natural desires.

5. The lesson to us of a life of great promise sacrificed on the altar of passion and pleasure.

Lesson 10—March 8, 1930

THE REWARD OF LOVE AND LOYALTY

MEMORY VERSE: Ruth 1:16, 17.

INTRODUCTION

The story of Ruth is one of the most beautiful pastoral narratives in the Bible. In it also are recorded some of the most touching passages dealing with filial love and devotion. Here are found early evidences of the ancestry of the Messiah, for it is one of the rewards of the faithfulness of Ruth to her mother-in-law and to her faith in Jehovah, that she became, although a Gentile by birth, the progenitor both of David the king and Christ the Saviour. In the experience of Ruth is illustrated the plan designed of God for the stranger who should enter Israel and, having accepted Jehovah, become one of the chosen people. (See Lev. 19:33, 34; Num. 15:15.)

THE LESSON

1. During the time of the judges, what family of Israel was driven by famine into Moab? After Elimelech's death what did Naomi's sons do? What were the names of their wives? Ruth 1:1-4.

2. After ten years, what change came into these families? What then did Naomi determine upon doing? Verses 5-7.

3. What did Naomi seek to persuade the two daughters-in-law to do? Which one of them returned to her people? Verses 8-14.

4. How did Naomi urge Ruth to do likewise? In what immortal words did Ruth avow her loyalty to Naomi and Naomi's God? Verses 15-17.

NOTE.—The experience here recorded indicates that long before Ruth was called upon to decide whether she would remain with her own people or cast in her lot with Naomi, with Israel, and with Israel's God, she had arrived at the parting of the ways in spiritual matters. No sudden decision was here made. The leaven of Naomi's godly life had been working, and Ruth "clave unto her," because of the happiness she found in the faith and godly companionship of Naomi. A true daughter to a widow bereaved of all her family, Ruth shared all with Naomi—her poverty, her sorrows, her labors for a livelihood. "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God," had a very real meaning to Ruth, and to the end of the record, even after her marriage to Boaz, Naomi shared in her life and happiness.

5. Permitting Ruth to continue with her, to what place did they come? How was Naomi greeted? What was her response? Verses 18-21.

6. At what season did they come to Bethlehem? What wealthy relative had Naomi in Bethlehem? What did Ruth propose to do to help? Verse 22; 2:1-3.

NOTE.—Boaz was the son of Rahab, the woman of Jericho who was saved because she sheltered Joshua's spies.

7. When Boaz came to the field, what courteous greeting was exchanged with the reapers? What did he ask the reapers concerning Ruth? What information was given him? What arrangements did he then make for her? Verses 4-9.

8. How did Ruth acknowledge his kindness? What reasons did he give for his attitude toward her? Verses 10-12.

NOTE.—Virtue has its own rewards. Boaz had been told of Ruth's faithfulness to and love for Naomi. He recognized the true worth of such devotion, and that she had come to depend in faith upon the care and protection of Israel's God. This in itself is assurance of His guidance and intervention in our behalf.

9. How did Ruth express her gratitude to Boaz? What special arrangements did he make for her successful gleaning? Verses 13-17.

10. What happiness did the results of Ruth's day bring to Naomi? What counsel did she give Ruth regarding the future? Verses 18-23.

11. After the custom of Israel concerning kinsmen had been called to the attention of Boaz (chapter 3), how did he seek to fulfill the law? With what result? Ruth 4:1-5.

NOTE.—Here again Ruth's loyalty to the laws and customs of Israel is demonstrated. She was young. She might have sought and obtained a husband from among the young men of Moab, for she was evidently an attractive person. Instead, she decided to unite with one of God's people.

12. In confirmation of his renunciation of his rights, what did the nearest of kin do? Verses 6-8.

NOTE.—The nearest kinsman drew off his shoe and gave it to Boaz, resigning his responsibility and claim upon the property in favor of Boaz, the next of kin. This was witnessed to in the simple but effective form of those days by the people and by the elders who sat in the gate. The full text of the law is recorded in Deuteronomy 25:5-9.

13. In witness of the renunciation on whom did Boaz call? What wish did they express? Verses 9-12.

14. Of the marriage of Boaz and Ruth, what child was born? Of whom did he become the father? Verses 13, 17.

15. How was Naomi blessed in this experience? Verses 14-16.

16. As the father of David, of whom else did Boaz become the progenitor? Matt. 1:5, 16.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. In the hour of decision to follow God with His children, or to remain with unbelieving relatives, where would I stand?
2. Do I recognize the necessity of carrying out God's counsel even against my natural desires?
3. What characteristics of Boaz as revealed in his treatment of his servants, of Ruth, and of Naomi, might I emulate with profit?
4. Why were such persons as Rahab, the converted harlot, and Ruth, the converted idolatress, made a part of the ancestry of our Lord Jesus?

Lesson 11—March 15, 1930

GOD'S ACCEPTANCE AND REWARD OF A MOTHER'S GIFT

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Sam. 2:2.
LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 569-580 (new ed., pp. 591-605).

INTRODUCTION

"Eli was priest and judge in Israel. He held the highest and most responsible positions among the people of God. As a man divinely chosen for the sacred duties of the priesthood, and set over the land as the highest judicial authority, he was looked up to as an example, and he wielded a great influence over the tribes of Israel."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 575.

THE LESSON

1. What man of Ephraim was a yearly attendant at Shiloh for worship and sacrifice? What was the situation in his family? Who were officiating at that time in the sanctuary? 1 Sam. 1:1-3.

2. Who mocked Hannah because she was childless? With what result? Who sought to comfort her? Verses 4-8.

3. As Hannah prayed at the entrance of the temple, what vow did she make to God? Who observed her? Of what did Eli accuse her? What was her reply? Verses 9-15.

4. As Eli discovered her heart's longing, what blessing did he pronounce? What change came to Hannah thenceforth? Verses 15-18.

NOTE.—"The high priest was deeply moved, for he was a man of God; and in place of rebuke he uttered a blessing."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 570.

5. When a son was born to Hannah, what name did she give him? For what reason did Hannah for the time cease going on the annual pilgrimage to Shiloh? Verses 20-23.

NOTE.—"Hannah's prayer was granted; she received the gift for which she had so earnestly entreated. As she looked upon the child, she called him Samuel—'asked of God.' As soon as the little one was old enough to be separated from his mother, she fulfilled her vow. She loved her child with all the devotion of a mother's heart; day by day, as she watched his expanding powers, and listened to his childish prattle, her affections entwined about him more closely. He was her only son, the special gift of Heaven; but she had received him as a treasure consecrated to God, and she would not withhold from the Giver His own." —Id., pp. 570, 571.

6. When Samuel was weaned, what preparation did Hannah make to dedicate him to the service of God? To whom did she bring him? What was Samuel's age? Verses 24, 25.

7. What acknowledgment of God's goodness did she make? For how long did she consecrate him to God's service? Verses 26-28.

NOTE.—"Eli was deeply impressed by the faith and devotion of this woman of Israel. Himself an overindulgent father, he was awed and humbled as he beheld this mother's great sacrifice in parting with her only child, that she might devote him to the service of God. He felt reproved for his own selfish love, and in humiliation and reverence he bowed before the Lord and worshiped."—Id., p. 571.

8. In her prayer of thanksgiving at the temple, whose power and goodness were extolled? 1 Sam. 2:1-10.

NOTE.—"Hannah's words were prophetic, both of David, who should reign as king of Israel, and of the Messiah, the Lord's anointed. Referring first to the boasting of an insolent and contentious woman, the song points to the destruction of the enemies of God, and the final triumph of His redeemed people."—Id., p. 572.

9. On the return of Elkanah to his home, where did Samuel remain to minister? Verse 11.

NOTE.—"From Shiloh, Hannah quietly returned to her home at Ramah, leaving the child Samuel to be trained for service in the house of God, under the instruction of the high priest. From the earliest dawn of intellect she had taught her son to love and reverence God, and to regard himself as the Lord's. By every familiar object surrounding

Him, she had sought to lead his thoughts up to the Creator. When separated from her child, the faithful mother's solicitude did not cease. Every day he was the subject of her prayers. . . . She did not ask for her son worldly greatness, but she earnestly pleaded that he might attain that greatness which Heaven values,—that he might honor God, and bless his fellow men."—Ibid.

10. As Samuel ministered in the temple, what did his mother do for him year by year? Verses 18, 19.

11. How did God reward Hannah for her dedication of her first-born? Verses 20, 21.

NOTE.—"What a reward was Hannah's! and what an encouragement to faithfulness is her example! There are opportunities of inestimable worth, interests infinitely precious, committed to every mother. The humble round of duties which women have come to regard as a wearisome task, should be looked upon as a grand and noble work. It is the mother's privilege to bless the world by her influence, and in doing this she will bring joy to her own heart. She may make straight paths for the feet of her children, through sunshine and shadow, to the glorious heights above. But it is only when she seeks, in her own life, to follow the teachings of Christ, that the mother can hope to form the character of her children after the divine pattern. The world teems with corrupting influences. Fashion and custom exert a strong power over the young. If the mother fails in her duty to instruct, guide, and restrain, her children will naturally accept the evil, and turn from the good. Let every mother go often to her Saviour with the prayer, 'Teach us, how shall we order the child, and what shall we do unto him?' Let her heed the instruction which God has given in His word, and wisdom will be given her as she shall have need."—Id., pp. 572, 573.

12. What is said of the character of the sons of Eli? How did these young men grievously sin? Verses 12-17.

NOTE.—"The sons of Eli, instead of realizing the solemnity of this symbolic service, only thought how they could make it a means of self-indulgence. Not content with the part of the peace offerings allotted them, they demanded an additional portion; and the great number of these sacrifices presented at the annual feasts gave the priests an opportunity to enrich themselves at the expense of the people. They not only demanded more than their right, but refused to wait even until the fat had been burned as an offering to God. They persisted in claiming whatever portion pleased them, and, if denied, threatened to take it by violence."—Id., p. 576.

13. What rebuke did Eli in his old age administer to his sons? How did they respond? What was God's purpose because of their rebellious conduct? Verses 22-25.

14. In the meanwhile how was the child Samuel developing? Verse 26.

NOTE.—"Every year saw more important trusts committed to him; and while he was yet a child, a linen ephod was placed upon him as a token of his consecration to the work of the sanctuary. Young as he was when brought to minister in the tabernacle, Samuel had even then

duties to perform in the service of God, according to his capacity. These were at first very humble, and not always pleasant; but they were performed to the best of his ability, and with a willing heart. His religion was carried into every duty of life. He regarded himself as God's servant, and his work as God's work."—Id., p. 573.

15. What message did a prophet of God bring to Eli concerning the future of his house? What was to be the sign of the complete fulfillment of this prophecy? Verses 27-34.

NOTE.—"Because of Eli's position, his influence was more extended than if he had been an ordinary man. His family life was imitated throughout Israel. The baleful results of his negligent, ease-loving ways were seen in thousands of homes that were molded by his example. . . . But great as are the evils of parental unfaithfulness under any circumstances, they are tenfold greater when they exist in the families of those appointed as teachers of the people. When these fail to control their own households, they are, by their wrong example, misleading many. Their guilt is as much greater than that of others as their position is more responsible."—Id., p. 579.

16. What kind of priest did God promise to raise up? Verses 35, 36.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. When sorrow burdens my heart, where do I go for help and comfort?
2. Would I be willing to give my choicest gift from heaven back to the service of the Giver?
3. Are we training our children so that in the hour of temptation they will stand true and steadfast like Samuel?

Lesson 12—March 22, 1930

SAMUEL CALLED TO BE A PROPHET: THE ARK OF GOD CAPTURED

MEMORY VERSE: Prov. 29:18.

LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 581-591 (new ed., pp. 607-617).

INTRODUCTION

"Another warning was to be given to Eli's house. God could not communicate with the high priest and his sons; their sins, like a thick cloud, had shut out the presence of His Holy Spirit. But in the midst of evil the child Samuel remained true to Heaven, and the message of condemnation to the house of Eli was Samuel's commission as a prophet of the Most High. 'The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, . . . that the Lord called Samuel.'"—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 581.

"The youth of our time may become as precious in the sight of God as was Samuel. By faithfully maintaining their Christian integrity, they may exert a strong influence in the work of reform. Such men are needed at this time. God has a work for every one of them. Never did

men achieve greater results for God and humanity than may be achieved in this our day by those who will be faithful to their God-given trust." —Id., p. 574.

THE LESSON

1. What spiritual condition prevailed in Israel as the child Samuel ministered in the temple? 1 Sam. 3:1.

NOTE.—"Though wholly unfit for the office, they [the sons of Eli] were placed as priests in the sanctuary to minister before God. . . . 'The sin of the young men was very great before the Lord.' These unfaithful priests also transgressed God's law and dishonored their sacred office by their vile and degrading practices; yet they continued to pollute by their presence the tabernacle of God. Many of the people, filled with indignation at the corrupt course of Hophni and Phinehas, ceased to come up to the appointed place of worship. Thus the service which God had ordained was despised and neglected because associated with the sins of wicked men, while those whose hearts were inclined to evil were emboldened in sin. Ungodliness, profligacy, and even idolatry prevailed to a fearful extent."—Id., pp. 576, 577.

"No open vision." God was no longer speaking directly through His appointed servants. Sin had separated them from Him. Sin cuts off both men and nations from God.

2. As Eli slept in the early evening and Samuel also had lain down to sleep, who called Samuel? To whom did Samuel go, thinking he had called? What reply did he receive? Verses 2-5.

3. What occurred the second time? What did Samuel not yet know? Verses 6, 7.

NOTE.—Samuel knew the word of God in the form which the Israelites had, but he was not familiar with the revelations of God in such a direct way as were made to prophets. God's call was repeated four times, for it was evident that Samuel's failure to respond properly was not due to a spirit of disobedience, for with promptness he ran each time to Eli, not knowing who called him.

4. When Samuel was called the third time, what did Eli recognize? What instruction did he give? Verses 8, 9.

5. At the fourth call, what response did Samuel make? What did the Lord say He would do in Israel? What ominous message was given Samuel concerning Eli and his house? Wherein had lain Eli's sin? Verses 10-14.

NOTE.—"God held Eli, as a priest and judge of Israel, accountable for the moral and religious standing of his people, and in a special sense for the character of his sons. He should first have attempted to restrain evil by mild measures; but if these did not avail, he should have subdued the wrong by the severest means. He incurred the Lord's displeasure by not reproving sin and executing justice upon the sinner. He could not be depended upon to keep Israel pure. Those who have too little courage to reprove wrong, or who through indolence or lack of interest make no earnest effort to purify the family or the church of God, are held accountable for the evil that may result from their neglect of duty. We are just as responsible for evils that we might

have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority, as if the acts had been our own."—Id., p. 578.

6. Having received the message, what did Samuel do? What did he fear to do? Verse 15.

7. When called by Eli and the message of God demanded, how fully did he tell it? What was Eli's response? Verses 16-18.

NOTE.—"Eli was confident that the message foretold some great calamity to him and his house. He called Samuel, and charged him to relate faithfully what the Lord had revealed. The youth obeyed, and the aged man bowed in humble submission to the appalling sentence. . . . Yet Eli did not manifest the fruits of true repentance. He confessed his guilt, but failed to renounce the sin."—Id., p. 582.

8. What is said concerning Samuel's relation to the Lord? What was soon known to all Israel? Through Samuel, what was restored that had for a long time been lost to Israel? Verses 19-21, 1, last part.

9. When Israel was at first defeated by the Philistines, what plan did they follow in hope of victory? 1 Sam. 4:2, 3.

10. Who went with the ark to the camp of Israel? How was the ark received? What effect did the arrival of the ark have upon the Philistines? What fervent appeal was made to them? Verses 4-9.

NOTE.—"This expedition was undertaken by the Israelites without counsel from God, without the concurrence of high priest or prophet. . . . The Lord had given no command or permission that the ark should come into the army; yet the Israelites felt confident that victory would be theirs, and uttered a great shout when it was borne into the camp by the sons of Eli."—Id., p. 583.

"How could they expect it should bring a blessing when Hophni and Phinehas were the men that carried it? It would have given too much countenance to their villainy if the ark had done any kindness to Israel while it was in the hands of those graceless priests."—Matthew Henry.

11. In the battle with the Philistines, how seriously was Israel defeated? What great calamity came to them? Who were slain? Verses 10, 11.

NOTE.—"Thirty thousand men lay dead upon the field, and the ark of God was taken, the two sons of Eli having fallen while fighting to defend it. Thus again was left upon the page of history a testimony for all future ages,—that the iniquity of God's professed people will not go unpunished. The greater the knowledge of God's will, the greater the sin of those who disregard it."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 583, 584.

12. What had Eli meanwhile been doing? Who came to him? What message did he bring? Verses 12-17.

13. What news most affected Eli? What was the result? Verse 18.

NOTE.—Although Eli had not the moral strength of character to command his household or the nation, he did highly estimate the service and sanctuary of God. The loss of that which represented to him God's presence in Israel was the crowning blow in an unhappy and burdened life. An old man, he fell fainting and died. In one day the warn-

ing of God concerning this weak father and his wayward sons was fulfilled.

14. What experience did the Philistines have in caring for the ark of God? 1 Sam. 5:2-6.

15. What affliction followed the presence of the ark in the places where it was taken? Verses 7-10.

16. What did the Philistines decide to do? Verses 11, 12.

17. How long was the ark of God among the Philistines? 1 Sam. 6:1.

18. How was it eventually restored to Israel? Where was it placed? Verses 2-14; 7:1, 2.

NOTE.—"With great joy the men of this place [Kirjath-jearim] welcomed the sacred chest. They knew that it was the pledge of divine favor to the obedient and faithful. With solemn gladness they brought it to their city, and placed it in the house of Abinadab, a Levite. This man appointed his son Eleazar to take charge of it, and it remained there for many years."—Id., p. 589.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. Am I as careful in the training of my children for God as He indicates, or am I fearful to correct their wrongdoing?
2. If the Lord speaks to my heart directly, or indirectly, do I listen?
3. What kind of religion have I, heart religion, or merely nominal religion, like Israel's?
4. What causes personal defeat in the battle with sin?

Lesson 13—March 29, 1930

ISRAEL DEMANDS A KING

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Sam. 8:7.

LESSON HELP: "Patriarchs and Prophets," pp. 603-615 (new ed., pp. 629-641).

INTRODUCTION

"The government of Israel was administered in the name and by the authority of God. The work of Moses, of the seventy elders, of the rulers and judges, was simply to enforce the laws that God had given; they had no authority to legislate for the nation. This was, and continued to be, the condition of Israel's existence as a nation. . . . When the Israelites first settled in Canaan, they acknowledged the principles of the theocracy, and the nation prospered under the rule of Joshua, But increase of population, and intercourse with other nations, brought a change. The people adopted many of the customs of their heathen neighbors, and thus sacrificed, to a great degree, their own peculiar, holy character. Gradually they lost their reverence for God, and ceased to prize the honor of being His chosen people. Attracted by the pomp and display of heathen monarchs, they tired of their own simplicity. . . . As they departed from obedience to God's law, they desired to be

freed from the rule of their divine Sovereign; and thus the demand for a monarchy became widespread throughout Israel."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 603.

THE LESSON

1. In his old age, what arrangement did Samuel make for judging Israel? What course did his sons pursue? What did the elders make this an excuse for asking? 1 Sam. 8:1-5.

NOTE.—"It was with the full assent of the nation that Samuel had appointed his sons to office; but they did not prove themselves worthy of their father's choice. The Lord had, through Moses, given special directions to His people that the rulers of Israel should judge righteously, deal justly with the widow and the fatherless, and receive no bribes. . . . The sons of the prophet had not heeded the precepts which he had sought to impress upon their minds. They had not copied the pure, unselfish life of their father. The warning given to Eli had not exerted the influence upon the mind of Samuel that it should have done. He had been to some extent too indulgent with his sons, and the result was apparent in their character and life."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 604.

2. How did Samuel receive their request? To whom did he go? Whom had Israel really rejected? What was Samuel to show to Israel? Verses 6-9.

NOTE.—"The cases of abuse among the people had not been referred to Samuel. Had the evil course of his sons been known to him, he would have removed them without delay; but this was not what the petitioners desired. Samuel saw that their real motive was discontent and pride, and that their demand was the result of a deliberate and determined purpose. No complaint had been made against Samuel. All acknowledged the integrity and wisdom of his administration; but the aged prophet looked upon the request as a censure upon himself, and a direct effort to set him aside. He did not, however, reveal his feelings; he uttered no reproach, but carried the matter to the Lord in prayer, and sought counsel from Him alone."—Id., pp. 604, 605.

3. In describing the manner of a king, what did Samuel say he would do to their sons? To their daughters? What would they become? Verses 11-17.

4. When they should complain of their burdens, what would God not do? What stubborn course did the people take? What reasons did they give? Verses 18-20.

NOTE.—"The prophet was reproved for grieving at the conduct of the people toward himself as an individual. They had not manifested disrespect for him, but for the authority of God, who had appointed the rulers of His people. Those who despise and reject the faithful servant of God, show contempt, not merely for the man, but for the Master who sent him. It is God's words, His reproofs and counsel, that are set at naught; it is His authority that is rejected. . . . When men choose to have their own way, without seeking counsel from God, or in opposition to His revealed will, He often grants their desires, in order that, through the bitter experience that follows, they may be led to realize their folly and to repent of their sin. Human pride and wisdom will

prove a dangerous guide. That which the heart desires contrary to the will of God, will in the end be found a curse rather than a blessing."—Id., pp. 605, 606.

" 'Like all the nations.'—The Israelites did not realize that to be in this respect unlike other nations was a special privilege and blessing. God had separated the Israelites from every other people, to make them His own peculiar treasure. But they, disregarding this high honor, eagerly desired to imitate the example of the heathen! And still the longing to conform to worldly practices and customs exists among the professed people of God. As they depart from the Lord, they become ambitious for the gains and honors of the world."—Id., p. 607.

5. When Samuel again went to the Lord, what instruction did he receive? What order did he give to the people? Verses 21, 22.

6. How is Saul the son of Kish described? On what errand was he sent? When he was unsuccessful, what did he propose to do? 1 Sam. 9:1-5.

NOTE.—"Of noble and dignified bearing, in the prime of life, comely and tall, he [Saul] appeared like one born to command. Yet with these external attractions, Saul was destitute of those higher qualities that constitute true wisdom. He had not in youth learned to control his rash, impetuous passions; he had never felt the renewing power of divine grace. Saul was the son of a powerful and wealthy chief, yet in accordance with the simplicity of the times, he was engaged with his father in the humble duties of a husbandman."—Id., p. 608.

7. What did the servant propose? How was the prophet located? Verses 6-14.

8. Who had spoken to Samuel before their arrival? What message had Samuel received from God? Verses 15, 16.

9. When Saul appeared, what further message did Samuel receive from the Lord? What was told Saul concerning his own place in Israel? Verses 17-21.

10. As they started to return home next day, what arrangement did Samuel make? What significant ceremony did he perform upon Saul? What did he tell Saul at parting? Verses 25-27; 10:1, 2.

11. Whom would Saul meet on the plains of Tabor? Whom would he meet in the hill of God? What would come upon him? What would he do? Verses 3-7.

NOTE.—"As evidence that this was done by divine authority, he [Samuel] foretold the incidents that would occur on the homeward journey, and assured Saul that he would be qualified by the Spirit of God for the station awaiting him."—Id., p. 610.

12. To what place was Saul to precede Samuel? As these things prophesied by Samuel took place, what did people begin to say? Verses 8-13.

NOTE.—"As Saul united with the prophets in their worship, a great change was wrought in him by the Holy Spirit. . . . The plan of salvation, which had before seemed dim and uncertain, was opened to his understanding. The Lord endowed him with courage and wisdom for

his high station. He revealed to him the Source of strength and grace, and enlightened his understanding as to the divine claims and his own duty."—Id., pp. 610, 611.

13. When Saul's uncle inquired concerning his movements, what did he reply? Of what was he silent? Verses 14-16.

14. Whom did Samuel call to Mizpeh? What did he say to them? When the lots were cast by tribes, whose tribe and family were taken? Verses 17-21.

15. When Saul was brought from his hiding place, what was his appearance among the people? Verses 22, 23.

16. With what words did Samuel present him to them? What response did they make? What instruction did Samuel give? Verses 24, 25.

17. Where did Saul then go? Who accompanied him? What attitude did some take? Verses 26, 27.

NOTE.—"While the people in general were ready to acknowledge Saul as their king, there was a large party in opposition. For a monarch to be chosen from Benjamin, the smallest of the tribes of Israel—and that to the neglect of both Judah and Ephraim, the largest and most powerful—was a slight which they could not brook. . . . In this condition of affairs, Saul did not see fit to assume the royal dignity. Leaving Samuel to administer the government as formerly, he returned to Gibeah. He was honorably escorted thither by a company, who, seeing the divine choice in his selection, were determined to sustain him. But he made no attempt to maintain by force his right to the throne."—Id., pp. 611, 612.

18. Under what circumstances did Saul take the leadership of the nation? How did he show a generous spirit to those who had opposed? 1 Samuel 11.

NOTE.—"The promptness and bravery of Saul, as well as the generalship shown in the successful conduct of so large a force, were qualities which the people of Israel had desired in a monarch, that they might be able to cope with other nations. They now greeted him as their king, attributing the honor of the victory to human agencies, and forgetting that without God's special blessing all their efforts would have been in vain. In their enthusiasm, some proposed to put to death those who had at first refused to acknowledge the authority of Saul. . . . Here Saul gave evidence of the change that had taken place in his character. Instead of taking honor to himself, he gave the glory to God. Instead of showing a desire for revenge, he manifested a spirit of compassion and forgiveness. This is unmistakable evidence that the grace of God dwells in the heart."—Id., p. 613.

MEDITATION TOPICS

1. Instead of trying to be "like" the world, what should be my ambition?
2. In what do I rejoice, in God's leadership or in the power of growing numbers and influence?
3. To whom do I attribute the victories of the cause of God?
4. Do I sustain the chosen of God, or do I have personal ambitions for myself or others?

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