

The Sunday-School.

THIRD QUARTER,
LESSON IV.—July 26.

SAUL REJECTED AS KING.

I SAMUEL 15: 13-23.

Study Verses 10-31. Read I Sam.,
Chapters 13-15.GOLDEN TEXT.—*To obey is better
than sacrifice.*—I Sam. 15: 22.LEARN BY HEART.—Vs. 20-22; John
14: 21; Isa. 55: 8.HISTORICAL SETTING.—*Time.*—Ten
or 15 years after the beginning of
Saul's reign.THE LESSON.—The war with the
Philistines, including Saul's disobe-
dience with reference to the sacrifice at
Gilgal and Jonathan's heroic exploit
at Michmash (I Sam. 13, 14), and the
campaign against the Amalekites,
with Saul's second disobedience (I
Sam. 15: 1-35).THE BEGINNING OF SAUL'S DISO-
BEDIENCE.—I Sam. 13: 1-23. The
early years of Saul's reign were spent
in organizing and strengthening the
nation; it was several years after the
coronation before the first severe test
of Saul's character came. The war-
like Philistines dwelt along the Med-
iterranean. Saul was compelled to
move against these oppressors. He
gathered an army at Gilgal. Saul had
been commanded (I Sam. 10: 8) to
wait for Samuel's arrival. Seven days
he waited, and then, seeing his terri-
fied troops melting away, he began
the sacrifices in preparation for the
battle. At this moment Samuel ap-
peared, and rebuked the king. "Thou
hast not kept the commandment of
the Lord," said he. "Now thy king-
dom shall not continue. The Lord
hath sought him a man after his own
heart." From that moment we can
trace Saul's downfall.*What was Saul's Sin?* Why should
Saul have waited for Samuel? (1)
It was God's command to wait, and
obedience to God's command never
involves a risk. (2) His disobedience
showed a distrust of God. (3) His
action exhibited a proud self-confi-
dence. (4) The sin received its
prompt punishment. Saul failed to
hold the army together (I Sam. 13:
15), and the Philistines took advan-
tage of his demoralization to raid the
country in all directions.SAUL'S RASHNESS AND JONATHAN'S
BOLDNESS.—I Sam. 14: 1-52. At this
desperate juncture, relief came
through an audacious attack upon an
outpost of the Philistines, made by
Jonathan with his armor-bearer. They
slew twenty of the foe; and Saul,
hearing the tumult, ordered a general
charge. In blind confusion, the Phil-
istines even killed one another; and
the result was an utter rout. The
pursuit was marred by Saul's folly.
Fearing his weary little army might
give up the chase to obtain food, he
made them swear not to taste food till
evening. A three-fold mischief re-
sulted. (1) The army was much less
vigorous in the pursuit. (2) Jona-
than, who had not heard of the pro-
hibition, coming to a forest where
honey was dripping from the trees,
ate of it. Saul, learning of this, con-
demned his son to death, and theyoung man was only saved by the in-
tercession of the people. (3) As
soon as evening came, the people flew
so ravenously upon the cattle which
they had taken that they ate them
with the blood, thus transgressing one
of the earliest laws which God had
given his people (Gen. 9: 4; Lev. 17:
10-14).SAUL'S COMMISSION AND HIS DISO-
BEDIENCE.—I Sam. 15: 1-12. The
threatening that the kingdom of Saul
should not stand, remained a dead
letter for several years. Possibly it
was eight or ten years after the war
against the Philistines that the events
of our lesson occurred. Samuel bore
to Saul a message from Jehovah to
destroy the Amalekites. The Amalek-
ites were a powerful tribe, roaming
over the wilderness between Sinai
and Southern Palestine. They had
harassed Moses and his host on the
way to Sinai, and Joshua had defeat-
ed them at Rephidim. When, after
the report of the spies, the Israelites
sought to go up into Canaan against
God's command, the Amalekites join-
ed with the Canaanites and defeated
them at Hormah. After Canaan had
been seized, the Amalekites aided the
Moabites and the Midianites against
the Hebrews. Because of all this,
both Moses and Balaam, through
divine direction, had prophesied the
future destruction of all the Amalek-
ites. It was this doom that Saul was
set to enforce. Saul set about this
task with zeal. With an army of
201,000 men he swept over the entire
country of the Amalekites, destroying
the people and their cattle. In direct
disobedience to God's command, how-
ever, Agag, the king of the Amalek-
ites, was reserved alive, together
with the best of the oxen and the
sheep.*The Justice of God's Decree* may be
shown by many arguments: (1) God,
who gave life, has the absolute right to
take it away. (2) God is all-loving
and all-wise, and we may be sure that
what he ordains is for the best. (3)
There are times when a signal demon-
stration of divine justice is needed
for mankind in the interests of mor-
ality. (4) It was the custom of the
age to destroy a family or a nation
as penalty for the wrong-doing of only
part of the nation or family, and God's
dealings with the world are always
accommodated to the spiritual stage
attained at the time.So the Christian church has a truce-
less war to wage against all iniquity.
Corruption must be exposed and pun-
ished. Infidelity must be fought to
the finish. Intemperance must be
wholly destroyed, nothing being kept
for ourselves because we imagine
there is wealth and revenue in it.God's displeasure with Saul because
of this infraction of his command was
not shown first to Saul, but to Sam-
uel, that the prophet's office might be
honored. After a sleepless night
spent in one of those agonies of in-
tercession so often to be noted in
Samuel's life, the prophet rose early
and sought the recreant king, finding
him at Gilgal.SAUL ADDS HYPOCRISY TO DISO-
BEDIENCE.—Vs. 13-15. There were
still deeper depths through which
Saul was to fall. *And Samuel came**to Saul, at Gilgal.* In the same place
where Saul's kingdom had been con-
firmed it was to be taken from him.
Saul's hypocrisy showed itself (1) in
a hypocritical greeting: *Blessed be
thou of the Lord.* A form of salu-
tation. He wanted to *appear* pious
rather than *be* pious. (2) in a hypo-
critical profession: *I have performed
the commandment of the Lord.* Could
Saul think that Samuel did not know
of the oxen and sheep that were
spared? *And Samuel said, What
meaneth then this bleating of the
sheep.* Saul's sin has found voices.
Saul's hypocrisy showed itself in an
attempt to evade responsibility: *The
people spared the best of the sheep.*
That was Adam's excuse in Paradise:
"The woman gave me of the tree, and
I did eat." *To sacrifice unto the
Lord thy God.* Even if Saul and the
people really intended sacrifices, it
must be remembered that the greater
part of the animals offered was eaten
by the worshippers in the sacrificial
meal.THE REBUKE OF DISOBEDIENCE.—
Vs. 16-21. Samuel burst out against
Saul in a torrent of righteous wrath.
The rebuke was a reminder (1) of
gratitude and (2) of *duty*, to both of
which he had been recreant. *Then
Samuel said unto Saul, Stay.* Do not
play the hypocrite longer! *The Lord
hath said to me this night. When
thou wast little in thine own sight.*
Samuel had in mind Saul's words of
humility when he was chosen king.
*Wast thou not made the head of the
tribes of Israel.* Samuel would have
Saul understand that his appointment
was due to God's gracious choice of
him. *And the Lord anointed thee
king.* That is, thou art in a position
of authority, and oughtest to have re-
strained the people. *And said, Go and
utterly destroy the sinners the Amalek-
ites.* God was simply using Saul as
his instrument to punish a sin that
richly deserved punishment. *Where-
fore then didst thou not obey the voice
of the Lord but didst fly upon the
spoil.* Expressive of eagerness, pas-
sionate craving. *And Saul said unto
Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice
of the Lord.* Saul has the audacity
to bring forward the very items of
his infidelity as if they were proofs of
obedience. *And have gone the way
which the Lord sent me, and have
utterly destroyed the Amalekites.* Saul
did not destroy Amalek, as he pro-
fessed to have done. Before many
years elapsed, these freebooters were
again plundering Judah. *But the
people took . . . the chief of the
things which should have been utterly
destroyed.* Saul now calls what was
spared the first fruits of that which
was devoted, which is of course an
absurdity. *To sacrifice unto the Lord
thy God.* Thy God, as if he had been
showing honor to Samuel, as well as
to God, when he was disobeying both.THE FATE OF THE DISOBEDIENT.—
Vs. 22, 23, and to the end of the chap-
ter. The prophet utters Saul's con-
demnation in bold words, which have
terrified the hearts of the disobedient
through all ages since. *And Samuel
said, Hath the Lord as great delight
in burnt offerings and sacrifices. To
obey is better than sacrifice.**Why Obedience is the Best Sacri-
fice.*—1. Because obedience is the giv-
ing up of our will to that of God,
and is therefore the offering of the
whole man. 2. Because it is a sacri-
fice that can be offered at any time
or place. 3. Because every man can

Lost Hair

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ful, and the gray hairs began to
creep in. I tried Ayer's Hair Vigor,
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offering such a prepara-
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such satisfaction. The
hair becomes thicker,
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secure in using such an
old and reliable prepara-
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send us one dollar and we will express
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of your nearest express office. Address,
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offer this sacrifice for himself; he
needs no priest or minister to act or
speak for him. 4. Because this sacri-
fice alone makes other sacrifices ac-
ceptable. Apart from a loving, obedi-
ent heart no service of God is pleas-
ing to him. *For rebellion* (against
God's will) *is as the sin of witchcraft.*
Witchcraft, that is, the worship of
evil spirits, was equivalent to a denial
of God. *And stubbornness is as in-
iquity and idolatry.* All conscious
disobedience is actually idolatry, be-
cause it makes self-will into a god.
*He hath also rejected thee from be-
ing king.* God rejects Saul from be-
ing king over Israel, since he had re-
jected God from being King over
Saul.*A Sham Repentance.*—The severity
of Samuel's rebuke, and the stern
prophecy which he uttered, moved
Saul to express repentance (I Sam.
15: 24-31), but it was a poor sort of
repentance. As the indignant prophet
turned away, Saul boldly laid hold
upon him, tearing his mantle. Samuel
made a symbol of it: "The Lord hath
rent the kingdom of Israel from thee
this day."Nevertheless, because the time was
not ripe for Saul's downfall, Samuel
associated himself with him in a pub-
lic sacrifice. Commanding Agag to be
brought, Samuel slew him with his
own hands, and then, departing to
Ramah, he never saw Saul again.Saul's career is a melancholy illus-
tration of the truth of the Saviour's
words. 'From him that hath not,
shall be taken away even that he
hath.' The kingdom given Saul was
like a rich farm; but he did not cul-
tivate it, and finally the noxious weeds
that he allowed to grow up poisoned
him to death.*Sure Regulators.*—Mandrake and
Dandelion are known to exert a pow-
erful influence on the liver and kid-
neys, restoring them to healthful ac-
tion, inducing a regular flow of the
secretions and imparting to the or-
gans complete power to perform their
functions. These valuable ingredi-
ents enter into the composition of
Parmelee's Vegetable Pills, and serve
to render them the agreeable and sal-
utary medicine they are. There are
few pills so effective as they in their
action.