

The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Fourth Quarter-Lesson IX.—Dec. 2. ISRAEL UNDER JUDGES.—Judg. 2: 11 23.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.—Heb. 3: 12.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE ISRAELITES WERE PLACED. The government was a theocracy; i. e., God himself was the chief ruler, and there was no visible central supreme power. Each tribe was independent. The people were divided into hereditary clans, something like the clans of the Scotch Highlanders. Each village was complete and independent. The laws were the laws given them through Moses, and no new ones were made. The priests were the ultimate appeal in cases of dispute. There was no standing army, and no provision was made for war.

There was a central place of religious worship at Shiloh, for the whole nation. Here were the tabernacle, the ark, the altar for daily sacrifices; and at this place the tribes were to assemble three times a year for the great feasts. The Levites were intended to be scattered through the nation, as its religious teachers. In Samuel's times there were schools of the prophets in various places. The religious institutions bound the people together into one nation; and the Mosaic laws separated them from all other nations, thus intensifying the national idea.

In seeking to understand the history of Israel under the Judges, we must bear in mind that only 67 years before the death of Joshua they had been slaves in Egypt, and that a mixed multitude of Egyptian descent had come with them into Canaan. The effects of Egypt are plainly seen.

There seems to have been a great neglect of family training and family religion; for after the death of Joshua and his generation there "arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord." If the former generation had obeyed God's command to teach their children no such state of things could have arisen.

The Canaanites, though conquered, were only partially subdued. They remained in considerable force in the country. Then, too, the life and culture and wealth of the Canaanites would have a fascination to many of Israel, and lead them astray.

The Fascinations of Idolatry seem to have presented great attractions to many of the Israelites. Idols presented a visible, tangible representation of God, with a sensual ceremonial. In the revels of idolaters there was no restraint, no confession of sin but they could serve every evil in the name of their gods.

THE ISRAELITES FALL INTO IDOLATRY.—Vers. 11-13. And the children of Israel did evil. The Israelites failed to resist temptation, and fell into idolatry. They first forgot God, and then evil actions followed.—Practical infidelity follows swiftly upon the heels of speculative infidelity. Decay of morals inevitably follows decay of faith. In the sight of the Lord: evil that the Lord had forbidden. And served: The impenitent often think that by refraining from being Christians they escape service; while, on the contrary, they serve Satan. Baalim: Baalim is the plural of Baal, signifying owner, lord, or master. The plural, Baalim, is used either because of the multitude of idols and images of Baal; or it refers to the different offices and attributes of the god.

Baal was worshipped in the use of images of wood, stone, bronze, silver, and gold, and pillars of stone. These images and pillars were set up alongside of altars upon high places, and sometimes in temples. He was worshipped by kissing his images, enthusiastic dances, cutting of the person, and other ecstatic rites, by incense and sacrifices, but the choicest sacrifice was an only son.

And they forsook the Lord: probably not all, but enough to represent the nation. Which brought them out of the land of Egypt: who had done such wonders for them; to whom they owed their very existence as a nation. Bowed themselves unto them: "publicly worshipped." Provoked: did that which moved God to punish them. To anger: but to indignation and punishment. Ashtaroth: the plural of Ashtoreth, as Baalim of Baal, and probable for the same reasons. Ashtoreth, was the female deity corresponding to Baal, the moon or the planet Venus, as Baal was the sun.

Applications. Like the forsaking of God by these Israelites, our de-

partures from God show ingratitude for his mercies; foolishness, to make an enemy of the greatest Being in the universe; treason, to rebel against our true king. The Israelites fell before the difficulties and temptations, by overcoming which they might have been the leading nation of the earth. We stumble over the very steps God has given us by which to climb to glory.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR FALL.—Vers. 14, 15. And the anger of the Lord was hot. The Lord's indignation at their sins was intense, like a burning fire. He could not love righteousness and not be indignant at sin. The more intense the love, the more intense also the indignation. If feelings against sin do not flame and burn, then the love also is a feeble thing. He delivered them: for punishment. Their enemies were the instruments in the hands of God. Into the hands of spoilers: those who took the spoils of war; also robbers, plundering bands. Modern warfare is sufficiently horrible; but the ancient was tenfold more horrible. He sold them. As the judge was used to sell the criminal, or the creditor the debtor, for a slave. They could not any longer stand: in battle. The previous successes of Israel had been gained only by the favor of God; and when that favor was withdrawn, the nation was utterly weak. Sin and punishment are inseparable. Sometimes the punishment is a judgment from without, sometimes the natural outgrowth of sin within. In the case of Israel, both. From the root of idolatry grew up licentiousness, pride, etc., and ultimately God permitted invasion and conquest by idolatrous powers. The hand of the Lord was against them: his power and influence. God could not bless a disobedient people. As the Lord had said. Particular reference is had to Lev. 26: 15 17 and Deut. 28: 25, where these very judgments are expressly denounced against them in case they should thus apostatize. God is as true to his threats as to his promises.

WHAT GOD DID TO SAVE THE PEOPLE.—Vers. 16-19. Nevertheless: in spite of all the people's sins and although God sent the punishment. The Lord raised up judges: in various ways, by various means. The term Judges, which occurs here for the first time, does not signify a mere judicial officer. It is used for a succession of executive officers who, by the inspiration of the spirit of God, combined with great natural qualities, assumed the supreme control, and aroused them to throw off the yoke of oppression. The nation had no fixed capital, and the judge selected his own place of residence. They received no salary, imposed no tributes, made no laws, but merely exercised, for the deliverance of Israel, the personal ascendancy conferred upon them by "the Spirit of God." There were fifteen judges in all. Eight were military heroes, five seem to have led more peaceful lives; while Eli the high-priest and Samuel the prophet stand apart with peculiar missions. Out of the hand (the power) of those that spoiled them: took their property as a spoil of war. Yet they would not hearken: They were willing to be saved from the consequences of their sins, but not willing to leave the sins, at least only for a time. Then the Lord was with the judge: as he was with Moses and Joshua. All their victories were from the Lord, so that the people might be persuaded to return to their only hope. For it repented the Lord. He changed his method out of pity and love. God leaned to the side of mercy, and continued to try again and again the effect of deliverance from the sufferings. They ceased not from their own doings: the things which seemed pleasant to themselves although contrary to God's commands. Nor from their stubborn way: their hard way. It is the term applied to the obstinate and intractable conduct of Pharaoh. God does everything that infinite love and wisdom and power can do to save the individual and the world.

WHY GOD DID NOT DRIVE OUT THE NATIONS.—Vers. 20-23. That through them I may prove Israel. They would be scourges and instruments of wrath to punish and test the Israelites. God could have accomplished this end in other ways had the Israelites done their duty and driven out the Canaanites. But both objects were now accomplished at once.

PRACTICAL HINTS. When the people fail in training and instructing their children in religion and righteousness, the effect will appear in the crimes and sufferings of their descendants. The World, Money, Pleasure Self, are the Baals whom modern men worship.

THE BAR.

MRS. N. F. SLOUGHTON.

Why call it a bar? Say, whence is derived This name for a depot of spirits of evil? Was the name by some sly friend of virtue contrived, Or, like the thing named, did it come from the devil?

Be this as it may, 'tis a capital name, Short, easily said, and of meaning most pregnant; And I rather suspect from the devil it came; For 'e'en to his friends he is slyly malignant.

But what is its meaning? Why call it a bar? Because prima facie, it bars from the liquor; But that's not its full honest meaning, by far; Just jingle the money, the rum follows quicker!

I'll tell what it means—'tis a bar to all good, And a constant promoter of everything evil; 'Tis a bar to all virtue—that's well understood, A bar to the right and a fort for the devil.

'Tis a bar to all industry, prudence and wealth, A bar to reflection, a bar to sobriety; A bar to clear thought, and a bar to sound health, A bar to good conscience, to prayer, and to piety.

A bar to the sending of children to school, To clothing, and giving them good education, A bar to the observance of every good rule, A bar to the welfare of family and nation.

A bar to the hallowed enjoyment of home, A bar to the holiest earthly fruition; A bar that forbids its frequenters to come To the goal and rewards of a virtuous ambition.

A bar to integrity, honor, and fame; To friendship and peace and connubial love, To the purest delights that on earth we may claim; A bar to salvation and Heaven above!

—Wapping, Conn.

INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY.

'88 Winter Arrangement '89

On and after MONDAY, Nov. 26th, 1888 the Trains of this Railway will run daily, (Sunday excepted,) as follows

Table with columns for TRAINS WILL LEAVE ST. JOHN and TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT ST. JOHN. Lists train names, destinations, and times.

RAILWAY OFFICE Moncton, N. B. Nov. 20th 1888. D. POTTINGER, Chief Superintendent.

TEMPERANCE DIRECTORY.

NATIONAL DIVISION. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in various provinces like Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, P. E. Island, etc.

GRAND DIVISION S. OF T. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in the southern part of the province.

NOVA SCOTIA. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Nova Scotia.

NEW BRUNSWICK. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in New Brunswick.

P. E. ISLAND. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Prince Edward Island.

ONTARIO. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Ontario.

NEW JERSEY. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in New Jersey.

CONNECTICUT. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Connecticut.

MASSACHUSETTS. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Massachusetts.

MAINE. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Maine.

OHIO. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Ohio.

ILLINOIS. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Illinois.

RHODE ISLAND. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Rhode Island.

MISSOURI. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Missouri.

NEW HAMPSHIRE. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in New Hampshire.

WISCONSIN. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Wisconsin.

CALIFORNIA. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in California.

VIRGINIA. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Virginia.

TENNESSEE. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Tennessee.

MARYLAND, JR. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Maryland, Jr.

VERMONT. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Vermont.

SOUTH CAROLINA. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in South Carolina.

FLORIDA. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Florida.

VIRGINIA, JR. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in Virginia, Jr.

BAHAMAS. Lists names and addresses of temperance workers in the Bahamas.

Table listing temperance workers across various other regions including Kent, Kent Co., Kentville, etc., and other international locations.