Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

BY REV. J. H. VINCENT, D. D.

Fourth Quarter.

Lesson 5.—Nov. 4. 1 Sam. 12 : 13-25

SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.—1 Sam. 12. 24.

13. *Behold the king*—After a brief recital of the events during his own administration. Samuel introduces to the people once more the king, who was now his successor, though still in a measure under his inspired direction. *The Lord hath set a king over you*—The thought is brought out still more strongly, that Jehovah had fulfilled the desire of the people. Although the request of the people had been an act of hostility to God, yet Jehovah had fulfilled it.

14. *Continue following*—On condition that ye rebel no more, God will take you and your king under his merciful protection, and he and his kingdom shall be confirmed and *continued*. *Then shall the hand of the Lord*—You shall have no advantage in that point by the change of government, nor shall your kings be able to protect you against God's displeasure.

15. *If ye will not obey*—Samuel sees very plainly that in changing the outward forms of government, the people have not changed their hearts, but are likely to fall into their old sins and to suffer their old penalties. *As it was against your fathers*—The allusion to the fathers is very suitable here, because the people were looking to the king for the removal of all the calamities, which had fallen upon them from time immemorial.

16, 17. *Stand and see*—By standing he intends not the posture of their bodies, but the consistency of their minds, by serious andfixed consideration. *This great thing*—Rain in the time of harvest was a strange thing to a Hebrew. Prov. 1. *I will call*—He speaks with the consciousness of the power that dwelt in a righteous man's prayer. Jame 5. 16, 17. *He will send thunder and rain*—Samuel, that son of prayer, was still famous for success in prayer. *That ye may perceive . . . your wickedness*—That by this unseasonable and pernicious storm you may understand that God is displeased with you; and also how foolishly and wickedly you have done in rejecting the government of that God at whose command are all things, both in heaven and in earth. *In asking you a king*—Their wickedness was not in the mere fact of their asking for a king, but in the manner and spirit with which they urged the matter, and in which they ungratefully cast reflections on the marvelous deliverance of God.

18. *The Lord sent thunder and rain*—When God sent thunder and rain on that day in answer to Samuel's appeal to him, this was a miracle of divine omnipotence, intended to show to the people that the judgments of God might fall upon the sinners at any time. *Greatly feared the Lord*—They dreaded his terrible majesty, and they feared Samuel, perceiving that he had so much power with God.

19. *Pray for thy servants*—Samuel plays the same part as mediator which Moses did. Exod. 9. 28; 10. 17; 20. 19. *That we die not*—They had seen the Philistines overwhelmed when Samuel's cry brought thunder and rain upon them, and now they feared a like fate for themselves. *We have added . . . this evil*—The outward miraculous token made an impression upon them which all of Samuel's earnest words failed to make. *To ask us a king*—It is no sin to have a king; a good king is one of the greatest blessings of God's providence; but it is a sin to put a *man* in the place of *God*.

20. *Fear not*—Do not yield yourselves to inordinate terror, for even after all your rebellions, if now ye serve him with all your heart, he will be found plenteous in mercy. *Ye have done*—It is true that you have done wickedly; but still God will be gracious if you hereafter follow him. *Turn ye not*—"Only turn not." The past you may lament, but you cannot reverse. The future, however, you can devote fully to God.

21, 22. *After vain things*—That is, idols; which he calls here by the same expression found in Gen. 1. 2. *The Lord will not forsake*—He will not as yet cast you off, though you have deserved it. *For his great name's sake*—He does not preserve you on account of your goodness, for you are great sinners, but in order to secure his glory, and the salvation of souls who must be lost if his name is lost from among men. *To make you his people*—The emphasis lies upon *his*. This the Israelites could only be when they proved themselves to be the people of God, by serving Jehovah with all their heart.

23. *God forbid that I should sin*—It is a sin against God not to pray for the Israel of God, especially for those of them that are under our charge, and good men are afraid of the guilt of omissions. *In ceasing to pray for you*—What a grandeur and sublime excellency of character! Though rejected by an ungrateful people, yet for them shall his prayers unceasingly ascend. To do otherwise would, in his mind, be to sin against Jehovah. *I will teach you*—They asked him only to pray for them, but he promises to do more for them, not only to pray for them, but to teach them; though they were not willing to be under his government as a judge, he would not, therefore, deny them his instructions as a prophet.

24. *Fear the Lord*—In verse 20 the Israelites are directed to fear not, and in verse 24 they are exhorted to fear Jehovah. The first kind of fear mentioned is slavish awe, such as they feel who do not believe in the mercy of God; the secoed is the filial awe with which we should approach such holiness and majesty. When it is said that perfect love casts out fear, the inspired writer refers to slavish and unbelieving fear, and not to reverence. *Serve him*—Consider him your Lord and Master, consider yourselves his servants. *In truth*—Be ever honest, ever sincere with all your heart, have every affection engaged in the work of obedience; act not merely from a principle of duty, but also from a pious, affectionate sense of obligation. Act toward your God as an affectionate child should act toward a tender and loving parent. *Consider how great things*—Review the history of your fathers, review your own life, see what interpositions of power, mercy, goodness, and truth God has displayed in your behalf. Not by causing it to thunder and rain at Samuel's prayer, but by giving them a king.

25. *Ye shall be consumed*—Mark the decree: By disobedience and sin even the Lord's anointed, as well as the chosen people, shall most certainly perish. Surely a most impressive warning with which to close the prophet's last public address to the assembled nation. *Both ye and your king*—If you do wickedly you shall be destroyed, your kingdom destroyed, and your king destroyed.

ASHBURNHAM, MASS., Jan 14, 1880.

I have been very sick over two year. They all gave me up as past cure. I tried the most skillful physicians, but they did not reach the worst part. The lungs and heart would fill up every night and distress me, and my throat was very bad. I told my children I never should die in peace until I had tried Hop Bitters. I have taken two bottles. They have helped me very much indeed. I am now well. There was a lot of sick folks here who have seen how they helped me, and they used them and are cured, and feel as thankful as I do that there is so valuable a medicine made.

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