

BIBLE COMMENTARY

By E. M. ZERR

VOLUME TWO

Containing Explanatory Notes and Comments on 1 Samuel,
2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra,
Nehemiah, Esther, and Job

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Bible Commentary

1 SAMUEL 1

General remarks: This book may properly be considered as the beginning of the major history of the Jews as it is found in the Bible. It should be noted that two of the men listed as judges, Samuel and Eli, are reported on in this book instead of the one bearing the name of Judges. The service of these men overlapped two periods somewhat, and the student will do well not to become confused by statements that might seem to bear on either.

Verse 1. The term Mount Ephraim included more than just a mountain, it included a territory extending down as far as Bethel. Ramah is an abbreviation of Ramathaimzophim; the exact location of the place is uncertain. Elkanah was a citizen of Ephrath, the ancient name of Bethlehem.

Verse 2. Plurality of wives was suffered (not "permitted") in those days, and Jesus explained it by saying it was because of hardness of heart. (Matt. 19:8.) That particular instance, however, pertained to the putting away of a wife for various causes, but the same principle applied to plurality of wives. This man Elkanah had two wives at the time of our story; one was barren, thus being unfortunate according to the feeling of mankind in ancient times.

Verse 3. By reference to Deut. 16: 16 we learn that all males of the children of Israel were required to go to the place of the ark three times each year. While only the males were required to make this journey, others were permitted to go and as a rule many did. At the time of our story, the tabernacle and its services were at Shiloh, which was a city in the possession of Ephraim. Eli was the high priest and hence his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were the common priests and the ones charged with the manual work pertaining to the sacrifices.

Verse 4. *Portions*. This word means rations. In Deut. 12: 17, 18 we learn that while the males were engaged about their duties with the sacrifices, the others would be partaking of meals in recognition of the goodness of God. It is said that Elkanah gave provisions for this purpose to Peninnah and her children.

Verse 5. *Worthy*. The literal meaning of this word is "anger," but the R. V. renders it "double portion." This is in agreement with the circumstances; the man loved Hannah as a man is supposed to love his wife, and he showed her this partiality by doubling his gift to her. See a like exhibition of partiality by Joseph in Gen. 43: 34. This favoritism shown to Hannah provoked the other wife to anger, therefore the writer used this peculiar word in describing the ration Elkanah gave to Hannah. Since the Lord had closed the womb of Hannah, the sympathy of the husband would be all the more in evidence.

Verse 6. Reference to Ch. 2: 3, together with all the factual context, indicates the "adversary" was the other wife. It was a reproach in those days not to be able to bear children. Thus we can understand why the more fortunate woman in this case would have occasion for her unkind attitude toward the other wife. This circumstance is like that of Jacob and his two wives. (Gen. 30: 31.)

Verse 7. The antecedent of "he" is "Lord" in the previous verse. There it states that the Lord shut up the womb of Hannah; here it means that the Lord continued to keep her thus from year to year. This would be brought out each time they went up to the house of the Lord, since that was the time Elkanah's partiality for Hannah was shown by the double portion. Peninnah, observing this partiality, gave vent to her anger over it by reproaching Hannah with her barrenness. This was done so persistently that the unfortunate woman wept. She even refused to eat. We need not conclude this to have been in the spirit of sullenness. It is a known fact that any state of extreme grief or worry will affect the appetite, and Hannah certainly had cause for worry. Elkanah understood the cause of his beloved wife's conduct and tried to console her with the reference to his own love for her; while that was no little consideration, yet nothing could take the place of the natural desire for children.

Verse 9. Hannah and other unofficial persons had been engaged in a meal, as mentioned above, which was not in direct connection with the service of the temple (a name here ap-

plied to the tabernacle built by Moses). In order to go into the temple to pray she would come into the presence of Eli, the high priest, who would be sitting near the post of the building; from this position he could see her and observe her actions.

Verse 10. The earnestness of the woman was indicated by the fact that her praying was accompanied with sore weeping.

Verse 11. While vows were not generally commanded under the law, they were encouraged. When a person made a vow he was bound to keep it, and certain regulations were made for the observation of the same. One special kind of vow was the Nazarite, which was distinguished by the promise not to cut the hair during the term of the vow. The term of this vow might be for any length of time up to life. In her vow to God Hannah promised to devote her son to the Lord all the days of his life as a Nazarite, if he would grant her the favor of a son.

Verse 12. Eli marked or observed her mouth and could see that she was speaking.

Verse 13. Since Hannah did not speak out loud, only her lips moving, Eli concluded that she was drunk.

Verse 14. The command to "put away thy wine from thee" agrees with the following idea: wine was a slow intoxicant and required much time and continuous drinking to produce the condition sought; with this thought in mind, Eli used the words quoted.

Verse 15. The people of old times had certain other beverages with intoxicating effect, and some of them had a greater degree of alcoholic content than ordinary wine, hence we have the expression "strong drink" in a few places. The word "strong" is not in the original, however it is supplied by the translators from the word *SHEKAR*, which is defined by Strong, "an intoxicant, i.e., intensely alcoholic liquor." Thus Hannah meant that she was not using either wine or any other form of intoxicating drink, and instead of pouring out such for her own indulgence she was pouring out her soul to God.

Verse 16. *Belial*. This word is improperly capitalized here. It is not a proper noun in the Old Testament, but it is a descriptive word meaning one who is base, worthless, lawless. In the New Testament it came to be used as one name for Satan, and thus is a

proper noun there. Hannah considered drunkenness as an indication of such a character and was quick to deny the accusation.

Verses 17, 18. Eli, being also a priest and thus one of God's spokesmen, was able to pronounce a blessing that would be effective. He granted to the woman a promise that her request would be fulfilled. This encouraged her to resume normal habits of life.

Verse 19. *They* refers to the ones in general engaged in the services of this occasion. (verses 3, 4.) After completing the activities about the tabernacle, Hannah and her husband returned home and resumed their domestic life. In fulfillment of the promise made by Eli, when Elkanah knew his wife the Lord caused her to conceive.

Verse 20. *Time was come about*. See comments at Gen. 17: 21, 22. Strong defines the original word for Samuel, "Heard of God." Hannah reasoned that since it was her request that was heard, it would be appropriate to give the child this name.

Verse 21. *Yearly*. Ordinarily this would mean once a year, but it is here from the word *rowm* and defined by Strong, "Figuratively (a space of time defined by an associated term)." Thus the word is here used to mean that a certain sacrifice was offered every year. This sacrifice was required by the law and, in addition to it, a Jew could perform a vow that had been voluntarily made. On each occasion, therefore, when Elkanah went to the tabernacle to attend to the required sacrifice, he also performed his vow.

Verse 22. Since only the males were commanded to go to the place of national sacrifices (Deut. 16: 16), Hannah was wholly within her rights in deciding that she would stay at home until the child was weaned. The actual deliverance of the child to the Lord would not be expected until he was ready to be separated from his mother, and then the fulfillment of the vow would be due.

Verse 23. Elkanah agreed with Hannah's decision; he added his wish for the blessing of the Lord on her condition.

Verses 24, 25. These major sacrifices were not specifically required by the law in connection with the birth of a child (Lev. 12), yet they were always permitted, and the great joy of this woman because of her blessings prompted such an offering at this time.

Verses 26, 27. The acknowledgement that God's favor was bestowed on her is made, and it was in the form of a child born to one who was without the natural ability to become a mother.

Verse 28. Devotion of Samuel to the Lord for life was the substance of her vow.

1 SAMUEL 2

Verse 1. When *horn* is used figuratively it means power. Since Hannah did not previously have the power to become a mother, she attributed her present ability to do so to the Lord. In acquiring this power, she considered that she had triumphed over her enemies, just as in any other case of hostility. In this instance, however, the hostility referred to was the reproaches which had been heaped upon her by Peninnah, who was able to bear children naturally. In Hannah's day, this type of hostility was looked upon with more bitterness than that of actual warfare.

Verses 2, 3. When a rock was referred to figuratively, it meant a base for great expectations. The hope of Hannah in the matter of childbirth was based clearly on the power and goodness of God, and it was great in that it enabled her to win in her contest with the enemy who had been talking so proudly. Reference to 1: 6 shows that Peninnah had been sneering at Hannah because of her inability to become a mother, and that had been a source of great sorrow.

Verse 4. Most of the language of Hannah in this prayer is figurative. She was comparing her experience in social and sentimental matters to that of others in temporal and physical ones; therefore, she used terms that would apply literally to such contestants.

Verse 5. Being full at one time, and having to serve others for bread at another time, would be conditions of opposite character. Hannah used this as an illustration of her past and present condition. Seven is often used figuratively as meaning completeness. The fact that she was able to bear a child at all after being barren was so complete a change in her condition that she used this term. The complete triumph it gave her over the arrogance of her rival caused her to refer to Peninnah as "feeble."

Verses 6-10. All this has the same bearing as the preceding verses. The fact that Hannah could now bear a

child and thus contend with the other woman for God's favor, was the occasion for the passage. The words, *king*, *horn*, and *mounted* all refer to the power or ability which God had given her.

Verse 11. Samuel was left at the place of national service in Shiloh according to the vow of his mother. The fact that Elkanah is mentioned so much in connection with Hannah's vow indicates that he endorsed it. This was provided for in Num. 30: 6-15.

Verse 12. *Sons of Belial*. This is explained at Ch. 1: 16.

Verses 13, 14. Ex. 29: 31 and Lev. 8: 31 teaches us that certain portions of the beasts offered in sacrifice were given to the priests for food. This was to be attended to in an orderly manner, and the particular portion was to be observed. These wicked sons of Eli, had become so rebellious against the Lord that selfishness prompted their actions. They caused their servants to approach the offerings and seize whatever and as much as happened to cling to the instrument thrust into the vessel. In so doing they would secure more than was intended by the Lord. This caused the priests to come into possession of an excessive amount which made them "fat" as expressed in verse 29.

Verse 15. The various places that speak of the fat of these animals are too numerous to cite here, but it will be remembered that no one was permitted to make personal use of that part. The Lord's service pertaining to the burning of this fat was to be attended to in preference to the personal rights of even the priests, but the sin of these priests had become so great that no respect was being had for the dignity of the law. They persisted in obtaining what they wanted regardless of the proper observance of divine service.

Verse 16. Such violation of the law brought protests from those who beheld it. The protests were ignored and, furthermore, the servants threatened violence if anyone tried to restrain them from obtaining the object called for by the priest.

Verse 17. One deplorable effect of violating the ordinances of the Lord is that the reproach of the world is brought on the services. The New Testament recognizes such a fact. That is why the Lord admonishes his people to live in such a manner that his ordi-

nances will be honored. See Titus 2: 10 and other places.

Verse 18. Samuel was said to be a child. This is from a word that means one "from the age of infancy to adolescence." Hence he was old enough to be of bodily service at the direction of Eli the priest. Just what he did is not recorded, but the nature of his service called for the wearing of some form of girdle called an ephod.

Verse 19. Mention has been made more than once that all persons were permitted to come to the place of national service, but only the males were required to come. Hannah, however, would have a special motive for coming each year with her husband; she had given her son to the Lord. There is not the slightest indication that she regretted her act. In loving gratitude to God for the great favor bestowed on her in giving her a son, she continued to "lend" him to the divine service; but her mother's heart prompted her to provide him a new coat each year to wear in addition to the girdle.

Verse 20. *Loan* and *lent* mean "a petition." God had blessed Hannah with a son and she in turn had "loaned" him to the Lord as she had promised. Because of her faithfulness, Eli promised Elkanah that he shall have more seed by Hannah. With this promise, the man and his wife returned to their own home.

Verse 21. Several years are covered by this verse. In fulfillment of the promise made by Eli, Hannah gives birth to three sons and two daughters.

Verse 22. The age of Eli is not mentioned as justifying the wicked conduct of his sons, but it would be rightly considered as a special reason why he should have been concerned with the character of the men who would soon take his place. The inspired writer tells us that Eli knew of the conduct of his sons, and therefore was responsible for the same. Women were permitted to come to the national services and usually they did so. These wicked sons of Eli took advantage of the occasion to commit immorality with them.

Verses 23, 24. The sinful conduct of Eli's sons was a matter of public knowledge, and when the report came to his ears he pleaded with them to change their ways. The word *transgress* is explained in the margin as meaning to "cry out"; in other words,

the sin of these men was so great that the public outcry resulted.

Verse 25. In this verse Eli makes a distinction between sins that are between men and men, and men and God. Sins between men and men would be treated appropriately by the judge appointed for the purpose. The sin which his sons were committing, however, was one against the Lord and was being done, not only by the Lord's official servants, but in the place of the Lord's assembly. For such a sin there was no excuse, and thus no one could entreat the Lord to have mercy on them. In spite of this complaint from their father these sons continued their sinful conduct. The last sentence in the verse might be a little confusing to the reader as it sounds as if God's determination to slay them was why they continued their sinful life. But the meaning is as if it said they rejected the word of their father "and for this cause the Lord would slay them."

Verse 26. Many times the conduct that will win the favor of God will not win favor with men, and then sometimes it is the other way. In the case of Samuel his conduct received the favor both of God and men as he grew up.

Verse 27. A man of God in those days could be any person whom the Lord called on for any special form of duty. Such a person would be inspired to say the right thing to the one hearing him. The one sent to Eli reminded him of the history of his people in Egypt. "Thy father" refers to Aaron, from whom the priests came and who was, therefore, the official ancestor of Eli.

Verse 28. The question form of this language should not be misconstrued. It is just one form of a positive statement of fact, but used here in a manner that would rivet the attention of Eli on the important facts being considered. Not only was the house of Aaron to have exclusive charge of the priesthood, but was to receive the special parts of the animals offered in sacrifice by the other Israelites.

Verse 29. To kick at the ordinances of God meant to rebel at the lawful regulation concerning them. Not only was such being done, but such disorderly deeds were for the purpose of financial gain to make the families of the priests "fat" or prosperous.

Verse 30. This is a general threat

of the wrath of God to be poured out upon the house of Eli. Since it had dishonored the Lord he will dishonor it, and thus will get honor for himself at the hands of the sinful men.

Verse 31. The word *arm* means force, and the thought is that the days would come when the force of the family of Eli would be reduced. This was to apply not only to the immediate physical strength of his sons and their descendants, but would also affect their vitality to such an extent that they would all die prematurely.

Verse 32. In spite of the wealth and resources of the house of God, there would be such affliction that Eli would be a witness of it, and one result would be the death of the members of his family before they reached old age.

Verse 33. The very persons who will be the occasion of Eli's grief will be those connected with the service of the altar. The threat is repeated that his people would die in the flower of age; just when they became mature men they would be cut off.

Verse 34. As a special signal that he was no impostor, the man of God stipulated that the two sons of Eli would die on the same day.

Verse 35. This man of God logically would be able to make inspired predictions. Thus in direct connection with the rejection of Eli's house in the priesthood, he makes a jump of many centuries to the time when the final priesthood was to be ordained. This same prophecy is made in a different connection in Zech. 6: 13. Here we have the comprehensive thought that as Eli, one prominent representative of the Mosaic priesthood, was to be set aside because of his personal wrongs, so the whole national priesthood was to be rejected. This new priesthood that was to supplant the one rejected, is the burden of the book of Hebrews. The introduction of the word *anointed* signifies that the priest in the final institution was to be a king as well as priest. This also is seen in the reference in Zechariah.

Verse 36. The literal significance of this verse would seem to predict an attempt to get into the priesthood for the temporal advantage therein. While doubtless there were actual instances of such action, yet the prediction signifies something far more important. This last priest would be an Israelite and would primarily serve his people. The unqualified members of the family

are pictured as asking for the same advantage with regard to personal favors as those enjoyed by the officials. It is similar in thought to the request of the Gentile woman for crumbs. (Matt. 15: 27.)

1 SAMUEL 3

Verse 1. The service or ministration of Samuel was under the supervision of Eli. The word of the Lord was precious, which means it was rare. The reason given for it was that there was no open or frequent vision; that is, the services of inspired men were not had often at that time. That called for special intervention of the Lord when he had some special message he wished to convey to his people.

Verses 2, 3. Since Eli was very old even to the extent of losing his eyesight, the Lord concluded it was time to introduce the next inspired prophet. The particular time selected for the revelation was while Eli was resting in his bed, but near the end of the night. This is indicated by the words "ere the lamp of God went out." This will be better understood if Ex. 27: 20, 21; Lev. 24: 2, 3 is consulted. In those passages we read that the candlestick in the tabernacle was to burn through the night only, and to be trimmed in the morning, by which time it had burned out. The revelation which Samuel is about to receive, therefore, came while the lights were still burning but near the time for them to go out. Just why the Lord selected that particular hour is not known.

Verses 4, 5. The Lord called Samuel. Of necessity we conclude the Lord mentioned his name, else Samuel would not have made the personal response to the call of the voice. Thinking it was his master Eli who had called him, he went to do his bidding; being told that Eli had not called him he was further told to lie down again.

Verse 6. The voice called again. There was no mistaking the person wanted this time for Samuel was called by name. Again the child responded to the call by going to Eli to do his bidding, but was again told to lie down as the master had not called him.

Verse 7. The statement that Samuel did not *yet know* the Lord cannot be restricted to the idea that he did not know him in the sense of being his prophet. The thought in the additional statement in the last of the verse

teaches us first, that Samuel did not know what it was to be a prophet of God and, second, that he had not yet learned the truth about the existence of the God of the tabernacle service. We do not know just how old he was, except that he was old enough to serve about the tabernacle and to do the kind of service that called for a girdle. But in spite of that fact he did not know the Lord. It is interesting to consider Heb. 8: 11 in this connection. That passage deals with one difference between the old covenant and the new: in the latter it will not be necessary for one brother to tell another the knowledge of God, for he will have learned about him before becoming a brother; but in the former, a babe eight days old became a full brother to others upon circumcision, then when he became old enough he would have to be told about God just as Eli was here telling Samuel.

Verse 8. Upon the third instance Eli realized what was happening.

Verse 9. Eli expressed two important ideas; it was the Lord who was speaking, and Samuel was his servant. We might add the thought that when the Lord speaks, it is the duty of the servant to hear.

Verse 10. Samuel's sweet obedience to the command of the aged prophet is impressive and is a fine example of devotion to the Supreme Being.

Verse 11. Since Eli was a prophet of God and had been given revelations of his will in other instances, it would have been in order to have told him directly of this coming event. He had already been warned of it (Ch. 2: 27) through the instrumentality of "a man of God" who was doubtless commissioned specially for the occasion. Now it is time to start Samuel out in his great life work of teaching God's people, and he is introduced to the work by the announcement that a great surprise is about to come to the ears of the nation.

Verse 12. This passage indicates that previously the warning had been given as a prelude; now the final phase is about to begin.

Verse 13. In Chapter 2 we read how Eli spoke to his sons about their evil conduct, but that was all he did about it. Inasmuch as he was judge as well as prophet, he had the power to remove them from office had he been so disposed; but, seeing he did nothing more than talk to them about it, he

must be brought to feel the weight of the Lord's wrath against his neglect of duty. It is not enough to cry out against a condition of wrong—we must also oppose that wrong with all the power we have.

Verse 14. A condition of evil may become so serious that nothing can be done to avoid the punishment of God. The nation in later years became so corrupt that all of the reformatory work of Hezekiah and Josiah could not head off the great captivity, as will be learned when we come to that part of the Bible.

Verse 15. Since the house of the Lord at that time was the tabernacle, which had curtains at the entrance, we might become confused by the reference to doors. The Septuagint in this verse gives us *thura*, and one definition Donnegan gives of the word is "an opening in general," and one meaning of the word "open" is "to loosen"; therefore, we can understand that Samuel pushed back the curtains. He was going about the daily tasks and was hesitating to tell Eli the sad news, but the aged prophet knew that something had been said to the young prophet that was important. He also sensed the state of mind of the lad.

Verses 16, 17. If Samuel was hesitating to tell Eli his vision, it was because the prophecy was unfavorable to Eli. "God do so" is a peculiar expression used in various places in the Scriptures. The meaning is, "if you keep back the news of the evil to come, then may God do the same thing to you that he has threatened against me."

Verse 18. At this, the young prophet told the aged one all of the Lord's prediction; Eli respected it and submitted to the divine will.

Verse 19. God will never forsake his faithful servants. When a prophet or other inspired person is instructed to communicate anything to the people, God will see to it that all will be carried out as revealed. As Samuel grew in stature and mind, his service as a prophet grew and God confirmed his words properly. This same principle was shown in his dealings through the apostles. (Mk. 16: 20.)

Verse 20. The city of Dan was at the northern extremity of Palestine, while Beer-sheba was at the southern. The expression "Dan to Beer-sheba" came to be a figurative one, meaning the extent of the country. The fulfillment of Samuel's words from time

to time convinced the people generally that he was destined to be an established prophet of God.

Verse 21. The Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh, which was the place of the tabernacle and the headquarters of the national worship. It is significant to read that God revealed himself to Samuel by his word. That means he did not merely cause Samuel to feel some sensation and depend on him to interpret it, but he made his will known to him by words. God has always dealt thus with his inspired men.

1 SAMUEL 4

Verse 1. *Came to all Israel.* The marginal reading here gives, "came to pass," and the connection agrees with it. Samuel had warned of the coming misfortune of Israel, so now his predictions to the people are going to come to pass before their eyes. They are about to launch upon their long career of warfare with their prominent enemy, the Philistines. Eben-ezer and Aphek were places not far from each other and not far from the headquarters of the children of Israel.

Verse 2. In the first battle the Israelites were defeated; thus was begun the downfall predicted by Samuel.

Verse 3. It was not the purpose of God that the ark should be removed from its proper place in the second room of the tabernacle. It never does any good to make the wrong use of even a good thing. The children of Israel mistook the use of this sacred vessel, which they finally learned to their sorrow, but since they had already forfeited the favor of God and started on their downfall, they were suffered to proceed.

Verse 4. The people removed the ark of the covenant from the tabernacle and took it into battle with them; it was never returned to its place in the tabernacle. It will be interesting to keep track of the holy article from now on. To assist the reader in that matter, the various places where it is mentioned will be cited from one to another, and the same may be marked in the Bible as a chain of references. In this place the reference should be made to Ch. 5: 1.

Verse 5. The sight of the ark cheered the Israelites and caused them to make a resounding shout.

Verse 6-8. The first effect of this demonstration on the Philistines was

one of consternation. They concluded that defeat was sure to come to them; they acknowledged it to be a circumstance without parallel and considered it to mean their ruin.

Verse 9. The Philistines recovered from their panic and cheered each other. *Quit yourselves like men* means, "act like men." The battle cry was spurred on by the suggestion that if they gave up they would become servants of the Israelites or "Hebrews."

Verse 10. The rallying cry had the desired effect. The army of the Israelites was routed and fled; thirty thousand men were lost.

Verse 11. The most significant item of bad news was the loss of the ark, and the death of the priests who cared for the article. That was a fundamental blow since the very life of the nation spiritually was centered in it.

Verse 12. The demonstration here described was an ancient way of showing grief at some calamity. This man had come to tell the sad news to the aged priest, Eli, and to the inhabitants of the city, since all were awaiting news from the battle front.

Verses 13, 14. In justice to Eli it should be said that his chief concern was still the ark of God; he showed that concern by faithful vigil. Hearing the tumult among the people, he made inquiry and the man just back from the battle front came into his presence.

Verses 15-18. The messenger gave to Eli the details of the battle that had just been lost by the Israelites. No one doubted the accuracy of the report since the man had just come from the battle. It seems that Eli showed no emotion during the recital until the messenger came to the item of the ark. Even the death of his sons did not move him; he had been expecting something along that line, but his greatest concern was for the ark. This was very commendable in him, and gives us an example of preferring the things of God to even our flesh and blood. At the mention of the ark, Eli slumped and fell backward off the seat. The fall broke his neck which caused his death. Here is another place in the chronology of the judges; the period of forty years should be noted.

Verse 19. The daughter-in-law of Eli was very much affected by the sad news. She was grieved over the death of her husband, of course, but mention of the ark was also a shock to her.

The pains of childbirth, which doubtless were about due, came upon her.

Verses 20-22. She passed through the ordeal unconsciously, then recovered to the extent that she could speak. She was able to give a name for the child that was appropriate to the occasion. She, like Eli, considered the ark as being a symbol of the glory of God, and since the ark had fallen into the hands of the enemy, thus the glory was gone. At this circumstance she died of shock.

1 SAMUEL 5

Verse 1. This is another place to mark a link in reference to the ark. Make it to verse 10.

Verse 2. The people of ancient times were generally idolaters, and their idols were of three classes: the artificial, such as those made of stone or metal or wood; the natural, or those of the planets and animals and other things in nature; the imaginative, such as Baal and Ashtoreth and others. Dagon was one of the imaginative idols and one worshipped by the Philistines who had a temple erected in his honor. To this place they brought the ark which they had captured from their enemy, the Israelites, in battle. It was significant that representative objects of the rival religions were brought together in this manner.

Verse 3. The test was made the first night. Which god will prove to be greater? In the morning the image of Dagon was fallen, face downward. But that might have been an accident not connected at all with the ark, so they set the image up again.

Verse 4. On the morrow the image was fallen down again. This time it could not be from accident, for the head and hands were severed. That meant that his ruling ability was overcome and that his power was taken from him. The Philistines were convinced that the ark was the cause of the calamity.

Verse 5. Like all false religionists, these people were superstitious. Attributing their misfortune to the presence of the ark, they were fearful of the place where it had been and refrained from stepping on the threshold of the room thereafter.

Verse 6. God punished the people of that city because of their possession of the sacred instrument by afflicting them with emerods. This is from a word that means "tumor." The eme-

rods were hemorrhoids or bleeding piles. *Destroyed*. This need not be interpreted to mean that people died because of the emerods. The word is from SHAMEM, and Strong defines it, "to stun (or intransitively, grow numb), i.e., devastate or (figuratively) stupify (both usually in a passive sense)." The emerods would cause them terrible suffering, yet leave them conscious of their condition and able to account for it.

Verse 7. Concluding that the ark was the cause of their afflictions, the Philistines determined to get rid of it.

Verse 8. They called upon their leading men and counseled with them on what disposition to make of the ark. Their decision was to take it to Gath, a city in the possession of Benjamin.

Verse 9. When the ark was brought into the city of Gath, God decided to show his disfavor of the treatment the sacred article was getting. He smote those people with the same ailment he had put on the people of Ashdod.

Verse 10. The ark was next taken to Ekron, another city of the Philistines. Here is the place of another link in the chain of references to the ark; make it to Ch. 6: 1. When the ark came into Ekron the people of that place feared its presence might bring them death. Doubtless the experience of the other cities was known to them and they were unwilling to have it in their midst.

Verse 11, 12. The statement that the men who did not die in the destruction brought by God were smitten with emerods, indicates that such affliction was not fatal.

1 SAMUEL 6

Verse 1. Make reference to verse 15 for the chain on the ark. There is a general statement here concerning the time the ark was in the Philistine country.

Verse 2. The Philistines called their priests and diviners together to determine what to do with the ark. The sad experiences suffered thus far had taught them that the God represented by the ark would not suffer the sacred vessel to be mistreated without showing his disfavor in some way. The people were advised to send the ark away.

Verse 3. It must never be forgotten that the Patriarchal Dispensation of religion had been in force since the

days of Adam. While about all mankind had departed from its principles, it is reasonable to conclude that some remnants of the usages thereof were still in their memory. Besides, the history of the Israelites would doubtless shed some information abroad on the subject so that the nations would know that the God represented by the ark often received offerings as a tribute of regard, and therefore it might avail to offer such now. The suggestion was made, therefore, that they should not send the ark away empty, but place in it a trespass offering to appease God that he might remove their affliction from them.

Verse 4. The Philistines concluded that a fitting offering would be one that harmonized with the circumstances. They acknowledged that their afflictions were brought about on account of the insult to the God of the ark, so the return offering should be significant of that. The emerods represented the affliction put on their bodies, and the mice represented the ravaging of their fields. This little creature spoken of here was not any specific kind, but stood for any of the ones that destroyed their crops. By making images of these two things, they were admitting that the misfortunes brought on both land and person justly came to them because of their trespass.

Verses 4, 5. The final plan was to make five images of the emerods and five of the mice to represent both the lords and the people. They were exhorted to be diligent about it and not suffer the punishment for stubbornness as others had suffered. Again we have an insight into the general knowledge the nations had of the history of the Israelites.

Verse 6. The Philistines had detailed knowledge of the experiences of the Israelites in Egypt. We may gather another lesson here. If those heathen nations had such itemized information of the actions of the children of Israel, we should conclude that it was a settled custom, even in that far-off time, to make records of events for general information. If so, it should not be difficult to believe that records were faithfully kept of the actions of God's people.

Verse 7. The Philistines concluded to make a sort of test of their performance. Usually the ox was the beast used for the service of the vehicles, but milk cows were selected in this case. That was because the Philis-

tines wished to use their calves in the test. While they did sometimes use the female of the cattle for bearing of burdens, in this case they selected those not having been used before, and to make the test certain, they separated their calves from them and brought them home.

Verses 8, 9. These cows were not to be driven or guided, but permitted to go according to their own choosing. If they went in the direction of the Israelite country, the conclusion would be that God had been responsible for their afflictions. These cows belonged to the Philistines and had no interest in the country of the Israelites. If they voluntarily went in that direction, it would be evidence that a higher power than nature was directing the affair.

Verses 10-12. The beasts did what the Philistines expected and feared, and the fact that they were lowing for their calves at the same time not veering to either side in the journey, proved that God was directing their course.

Verse 13. When the people of Beth-shemesh saw the ark they rejoiced, because they were Israelites and interested in the holy article of furniture.

Verse 14. Instead of using the image in worship to God, these Israelites performed the kind of service that had been revealed in the law; they used the wood of the cart to make fire and the kine for a sacrificial offering.

Verse 15. Here is another place for a link in the chain of the ark; make reference to verse 21. The images sent by the Philistines represented actual value to the Israelites instead of being gods to worship, and in thankfulness for the substantial offering and in gratitude for the return of the ark, the men of Beth-shemesh made a sacrifice to God again.

Verse 16. This action of religious service was performed in sight of the lords of the Philistines, after which they returned home.

Verses 17, 18. This paragraph gives us a more detailed view of the Philistines' plan to represent their people with the images. The emerods stood for the lords of five of their chief cities, and the mice for the villages of the country.

Verse 19. There is no indication that the people of Beth-shemesh had anything but respectful feeling for the ark since it represented their own religion, but their error was in allowing

their curiosity to lead them to look into the ark. In punishment for that error over fifty thousand of them were smitten with death.

Verse 20. The community was filled with terror and they asked who would be able to stand before the ark. They, too, wished to get rid of the instrument.

Verse 21. Make reference to Ch. 7: 2 for another link in the chain of the ark. Kirjath-jearim was another city of the Israelites and the men of Beth-shemesh wished to put their trouble upon the shoulders of that community; they asked the men of Kirjath-jearim to take the ark to their city.

1 SAMUEL 7

Verse 1. The men of Kirjath-jearim responded to the request of the people of Beth-shemesh and brought the ark into their midst. Reference to 1 Chr. 13: 6 indicates that Kirjath-jearim was in the land of the tribe of Judah, and hence that the ark was now in the care of a chief tribe of the children of Israel. Smith's Bible Dictionary says that Abinadab was a Levite and that would make his son a proper person to care for the ark.

Verse 2. Make another reference in the chain to Ch. 14: 18. The ark is destined to remain in its present location for twenty years. *Lamented after the Lord*. This means that they assembled or gathered after him. The ark was the highest symbol of the presence of God, and the article was the only part of the tabernacle service in that part of the country.

Verse 3. Samuel was now recognized as a prophet of God and authorized to speak to the people. Image worship was still practiced by the children of Israel, and Samuel charged them to put the image away. He called them "strange gods." That meant they were gods outside the proper kind. They were thus not merely to serve the Lord, but to serve him *only*. God will not accept a mixed service.

Verse 4. Baalim was the male god of the heathen and Ashtaroth the female. Each of these deities, represented by images made out of metal, were used in idolatrous worship. Upon the exhortation of Samuel these images were put away from among the people.

Verses 5, 6. Samuel proposed a gathering at Mizpah for the purpose of religious activities and for prayer. The prophet was to pray for the people but

they were to participate and show their sincerity by fasting. As the giving up of food in fasting indicated a sacrifice of something serviceable to man, so the pouring out of water on the ground would also be the giving up of something valuable to them. Here it is stated that Samuel judged the children of Israel. He was the last man to be considered in that classification.

Verses 7, 8. The Philistines were persistent enemies of the Israelites. When they heard of the gathering at Mizpah they advanced to that place to make war. Then the people appealed to Samuel to take their cause on him and pray for them.

Verse 9. In those times the offering of a yearling was acceptable to God. Some irregularity in the service will be discovered here. The national sacrifices were to take place on the altar of burnt offerings which at that time was at Shiloh, but inasmuch as the whole system had been interrupted anyway, the Lord was very lenient with the people. We are told that the prophet was heard and the specific fact that proved this is recorded in the next verse.

Verse 10. While the Israelites were gathered near Samuel and he was in the act of offering the sacrifice, the Philistines gathered to make war against them. But the Lord will protect his divine service. He caused the enemy to hear a great thunder which "discomfited them"; this means they were thrown into confusion—as a result, they were smitten in great numbers by the Israelites.

Verse 11. The men of war among the Israelites then gave chase to the Philistines and smote them all the way to Bethcar, which was some distance from Mizpah.

Verse 12. This historic circumstance gives us the occasion for the expression, "here I lay my Ebenezer," found in one of the old hymns. Songs are supposed to be based on Scripture truth, and when they are sung the sentiment should be used intelligently. But that cannot be unless we know the connection in which the thought was brought out.

Verse 13. The last half of this verse must be taken as explanation of the first. The Philistines were enemies of the Israelites for many years after this, but while Samuel was living they were kept subdued.

*Verse 14. The immediate effect of the good work of Samuel was the restoration of the lands that had been taken by the Philistines. The Amorites are mentioned here as they have been in numerous places. They were a distinct people, yet were so wicked and influential that the name was frequently used for other wicked nations.

Verse 15. The era known as the reign of the judges continued about 450 years, according to Paul (Acts 13: 20), but two of the judges, Eli and Samuel, are recorded in the book we are studying.

Verses 16, 17. This paragraph gives the name of the resident city of Samuel, and the three other cities he visited each year in his work as judge.

1 SAMUEL 8

Verse 1. There was nothing official in the judgeship of Samuel's sons. They are not referred to as judges when that subject is under consideration by an inspired writer. Samuel left the burden of the task to his sons in a sort of delegated arrangement, and, as might have been expected, they took advantage of the situation.

Verse 2. They became like modern "politicians" in their governing of the people by taking bribes in return for favoritism in their ruling.

Verses 4, 5. There could not have been any criticism due the people had they only protested against the evil conduct of the sons of Samuel and demanded some relief, but they used the occasion to express a desire which was independent of the corruptions of these sons. In their request to Samuel, their actual motive was revealed in the four words "like all the nations." There is no indication that other nations had changed their form of government on account of the wickedness of a former ruler. The truth of the matter was that the Israelites had become influenced by what they saw, and wished to imitate it. They wanted an excuse, so they seized on the situation caused by the wickedness of the sons of Samuel; a condition that was plain to be seen, and hence not to be denied. The desire to keep up with the world has been the downfall of God's people in many instances.

Verse 6. It is gratifying to note Samuel's reaction; he did not base his displeasure alone on the fact that he had been rejected, but on the idea of their being dissatisfied with the Lord's

arrangement, and wanting to be like other nations.

Verse 7. When the Lord's constituted leaders in any age are rejected by the people, it is the same as rejecting the Lord. It frequently occurs that the professed children of God rebel against the scriptural rulers or leaders without realizing that in so doing they sin against God. Samuel is consoled in this truth and is told to let the people have their wish in this matter. Sometimes men have to learn a lesson in the school of experience that will not be learned elsewhere. When the people rashly wished to die in the wilderness (Num. 14: 2), God suffered them to have their wish. Now that a rash wish for a king has been made, God will suffer them to have their way in the matter, but to their sorrow. Had they observed the teaching of their inspired law (Deut. 17: 14-20), they would surely have profited by the implications therein. They should have gathered the warning couched in that passage and then would have hesitated about calling for a king lest he disobey those directions.

Verse 8. The Lord further consoles Samuel by showing him that the present case of rebellion is not new. From the birth of their nation down to the present time the Israelites had been inclined to disobey God and have their own way.

Verse 9. With all the evil of the people of God, he still was the merciful Being he always had been. While their request was to be granted, he did not take advantage of their ignorance of the future. They were informed of what they might expect if they had kings appointed over them; they could not say they had not been warned.

Verses 10-17. These verses need no special comment. Let the reader ponder well the various items of oppression that the king was destined to wage against this people. The history, as we shall see, confirms all these sad predictions.

Verse 18. Samuel warns them that after they have rejected the Lord and have been given their request for a king, it will be too late to complain. He predicted here that such would take place, and that the Lord would not change it then until they had fully received the effects of their rebellion.

Verses 19, 20. These warnings did not cause the people to change their minds; instead, they repeated their de-

mand for a king. It is noticeable that in the response they made no mention of the wickedness of the sons of Samuel. That was not their real motive in the first place; they wished to be like others and engage in military operations.

Verses 21, 22. Samuel was the spokesman between the people and God. The response made by the people to Samuel's warning concerning the predicted oppression, was repeated to the Lord, but it did not alter the divine decision to grant a king to the people. The thing must be attended to, however, in a systematic manner. The people were dismissed for the time and told to go to their respective cities. This indicates that a general assembly had been formed, and that an uprising had been threatened.

1 SAMUEL 9

Verse 1. The significance of this verse may not be apparent now, but it should be observed that the first king will be from the tribe of Benjamin; no other was ever taken from this tribe.

Verse 2. *Goodly* is from an original word that has a wide range of meaning. It is not restricted to the character of the person considered, but applies also to his physical appearance. It is so used in this instance. Saul was evidently an attractive man in his personal appearance, and one to draw upon the admiration of his subjects. Hence, in selecting him for the first king, no fault could be found with the Lord by saying he intended to make them dissatisfied with their request for a king because of his outward appearance.

Verse 3. We are not always informed as to why the Lord uses certain plans for carrying out his decisions. He could have told the eunuch directly what he wanted him to know (Acts 8), but chose to use an indirect method. In the present instance he could have sent Samuel directly to the house of Kish for a king, just as he did the next time for David. God's ways are not man's ways. Were we to attempt an explanation of this circumstance we might be led into speculation.

Verse 4. Mount Ephraim has been explained to refer to an area greater than a mountain. It was a general territory south and west of Jerusalem. The various districts mentioned here indicate that God had a hand in the present situation. The beasts were

induced to go so far away that it took the young man a great distance from home, and this would eventually bring him into contact with the man needed to bring about the Lord's purpose.

Verse 5. According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, Zuph was a city not far from Jerusalem, so the men were near that city when they gave up finding the lost beasts. It is evident that they had come a considerable distance from home from the statement of Saul about his father's anxiety. Perhaps it would be more accurate not to refer to Zuph as a city, but rather as a community in which was located the city of Ramah, the residence of Samuel.

Verse 6. A man as prominent as Samuel would be known by almost every person, so it was not strange that Saul and his servant were aware of the existence of the place. Being at their wit's end, Saul's servant suggested that they consult the man of God for the purpose of obtaining information concerning the whereabouts of the beasts.

Verse 7. We should not get the idea that prophets had to be "paid" for their services. It has always been customary to remunerate the servants of the Lord for their work, as a matter of respect, as well as for the actual benefit of the gift. Not having left home with the present situation in mind, Saul was not prepared to give the man of God the consideration he thought deserving.

Verse 8. This small piece of money would be very valuable from a material standpoint, but it would be an expression of appreciation, and that is what means more to God than actual temporal value.

Verse 9. The meaning of seer is, "one who sees." The inspired prophets could see into the future, hence they were sometimes called by this name in much the same way that one who does things is called a doer.

Verse 10. The suggestion of the servant was approved by Saul and they proceeded to enter the city to consult the seer.

Verse 11. The word *draw* here is from SHAAB, and defined by Strong, "to bale up water." In Gen. 24:11 is an account of this work. Wells were depended on for drinking water, and the women often were the ones who attended to that service. In the case of Saul and his servant it seemed to happen that they came near the city

just at the right time to meet their informants. Upon meeting the young women they asked about the seer, whether he were there. We will recall the statement in Ch. 7: 15-17. Since the prophet had such a wide territory of operations, it might be that he would not be at home at the present time, hence their question of the maidens.

Verse 12. In view of their knowledge of the program about to be carried out, they gave Saul an affirmative answer. The language of this verse will be understood when it is recalled that a sacrifice was not always something burned on the altar. Deut. 12: 21-25 gives us the information that solemn feasts to the Lord were provided for in the law. Some place of elevation was usually selected for these public feasts, very much on the principle that people would wish some convenient place for a public meal today.

Verse 13. This spot or high place was evidently near the city, yet not exactly in it. Since it was about time to go to the particular spot, the women urged Saul to go at once in order to intercept the seer before he moved on. The people were waiting for the prophet to come to bless the sacrifice or meal. This did not mean he would do anything to the food to change its nature; the word means to bless or thank God for the food as a blessing from him. It agrees with the thought expressed by Paul in 1 Thess. 5: 18 and 1 Tim. 4: 4, that thanks should always be given for the blessings received from God.

Verse 14. Sure enough, when they entered the city they met the prophet on his way to the place of the feast.

Verses 15, 16. The prophets of God were to be inspired for the special duties of the time. It appears as an accident that Saul and Samuel met on this occasion, but we understand it was not just a happening by chance; the Lord had prepared the prophet for the occasion and was now bringing the two men together.

Verse 17. The instructions given Samuel previously were general as to the person involved. Now he is given specific information concerning the individual and told that he is before him.

Verse 18. Saul was not personally acquainted with Samuel, hence the inquiry.

Verse 19. An unexpected invitation to take part in the feast was now given to Saul. He was told also that the desired information would be given him on the morrow.

Verse 20. They are proceeding toward the place of the feast as Samuel begins to give Saul some preliminary information. For one thing, he will be able to appreciate the feast better if his mind is relieved about the lost beasts; therefore, the prophet tells him they have been found, but proceeds to inform Saul that a much more important subject is at hand, and that concerns his coming position with the people. Saul is informed that he is to be the fulfillment of the desire of the people for a king.

Verse 21. It would have been good for Saul and the people had he always maintained the humility here expressed. He represented his family as an unimportant one, and from one of the smallest tribes. The dignity of being a favorite of the whole body of the Israelites would suggest that the man should belong to a great tribe, thus the matter was indeed a surprise to Saul.

Verse 22. The trio reached the place of the feast, and entered the parlour or room appointed for some specially invited guests, number about thirty. In this room Saul and his servant were given the choice of seats.

Verses 23, 24. The word *left* does not mean a scrap, but something reserved. Having known that these special guests would be present, Samuel had instructed the cook to set this choice serving aside for them. The feast was then observed and Saul was the guest of Samuel that day.

Verses 25-27. This language is somewhat indefinite as to the time, but it should be understood to refer to the day after the feast. There was some conversation on the house top, a place often used in those times since the roofs were flat, and as the conversation drew near the close they were proceeding toward the edge of the city. It was then the time for Samuel to give to Saul the important message for which this whole meeting had been arranged by the Lord. At this point the servant was told to pass on from them in order to give opportunity for privacy; the word of the Lord was to be made known to Saul.

1 SAMUEL 10

Verse 1. Olive oil was used by the people of Old Testament times, and it was the practice to pour it over the head of persons to be recognized in any special position. It was also poured over inanimate objects which were to be set apart for a special purpose. See Gen. 28: 18; Lev. 2: 1; 8: 12; 10: 7; 21: 10; 2 Ki. 9: 6. This practice gave rise to the figurative use of oil as being poured on one's head, as in the case of Heb. 1: 9. Saul was told that he was anointed to be captain over the Lord's possessions.

Verses 2, 3. Reference to Gen. 35: 19, 20 will help us locate the scene of these events. The minute details concerning coming events which were given to Saul could only have been known by an inspired prophet and their fulfillment would convince Saul of that fact. It is easy to make circumstantial predictions, but only after they are fulfilled do they become evidence. On this thought see Ex. 3: 12 and Luke 21: 13. The importance of the office that Saul is about to assume requires that no doubt be left as to the legality of the appointment.

Verses 4, 5. Here are some more details. In addition there is mention of some other persons of importance; a group of prophets and a garrison of the Philistines. Since these people were the enemies of the Israelites, against whom Saul was destined to be pitted in war most of his life, it was fitting to have this demonstration take place here. These musical instruments mentioned were used in connection with prophetic statements of the men of God.

Verse 6. Inspiration required the special impartation of the spirit of the Lord. To be turned into another man means that he was to be changed from an uninspired to an inspired man.

Verse 7. In a general way Saul was told to act as directed. No particular instructions were needed further than are about to be given him on the spot. The reason for his assurance of proper guidance was that God would be with him. This is similar to an assurance Jesus gave his apostles recorded in Mark 13: 11.

Verse 8. Since Samuel was an inspired prophet and the one empowered to act with reference to Saul, his commands at present are equivalent to those of God. With this in view, Samuel gave directions for his conduct

in the near future. In order to get the full import of this verse it must be observed that the command of Samuel had two phases, and they may be seen by dividing the words as follows: first, seven days shalt thou tarry, and second, till I come to thee. This distinction is not always made by the reader, and evidently was not observed by Saul. Hence his great downfall to come later.

Verse 9. The meeting of Samuel and Saul was now ended. After they had separated, events began to happen just as Samuel had said they would, and Saul received another heart from the Lord.

Verse 10. The company of prophets met Saul just as Samuel had foretold, and the spirit of God came upon him so that he prophesied. There is proof here that when the people heard him they recognized him as a prophet. Since no time had yet passed for the fulfillment of a prediction, we must conclude that prophesying then, as now, did not always require foretelling future events. The word is from NABA and defined, "a primitive root; to prophesy, i.e. speak (or sing) by inspiration (in prediction or simple discourse)"—Strong. But the character of the discourse was such that it was recognized as coming from an inspired man, as will be seen in the following verse.

Verse 11. These people had known Saul previously but had never heard him speak in this manner. In a somewhat surprising gesture they formed the question that became a kind of familiar saying.

Verses 12, 13. The insignificance which Saul himself expressed in Ch. 9: 21 was in the minds of the people, and that was the occasion for their surprise. One from so humble a source would hardly be expected to manifest this talent, hence the established saying, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" It reminds us of the statement of Jesus in Matt. 13: 57.

Verse 14. The lost beasts belonged to the father of Saul. The uncle was aware of the absence of the young man, but did not know the cause for it and asked about it. Saul innocently explained that he had gone in search of the beasts, and not finding them had contacted Samuel.

Verse 15. Naturally, the uncle wanted to know about the conversation; he knew the importance of Samuel and

desired to know what communication he had given the young man.

Verse 16. *He told us plainly that the asses were found.* These are the words of Saul spoken to his uncle. All the rest of the verse are the words of the writer, and given to the reader to explain the attitude of Saul. Saul is still humble on the subject of his appointment; he is not boasting about it.

Verse 17. Following the anointing of Saul, Samuel went to Mizpeh and called the people together in a special meeting before the Lord.

Verse 18. The Israelites were reminded of the great deliverance which God had brought for them. Attention is now called to the most significant statement that it was from the kingdoms "that oppressed you." The idea should always be borne in mind that when God endorsed the action of war on the part of his people, it was always a defensive one. An aggressive war was not favored in ancient times and would not be so today. If our country should embark on a war of aggression, then a citizen could consistently be a "conscientious objector"; if a defensive one, then he could not.

Verse 19. About the same thought is found here that is in the preceding verse. In using them as instruments of war, God saved them from their tribulations, which is the same as waging a war of defense. In spite of all this help from God, they had become dissatisfied with divine guidance and called for a king. Their wish had been granted, so now they are directed to present themselves and prepare for the appointment.

Verses 20, 21. In some manner not detailed to us here, the selection among the tribes and families was made, and the lot fell on Saul. Now Samuel had already known who the king was to be since he was the one who had anointed him for that very office, but the present ceremony, whatever it was, was to show the people publicly just who was to be the man of their choice. The purpose of the action which Samuel took was evident, for the young man had followed the same humility as had already been manifested in him and had hidden himself from the public.

Verses 22, 23. Inquiry was made of the Lord and the hiding place was revealed. When the candidate was brought before the people he was "head and shoulders" above all. His

physical appearance was thus imposing, and if he does not "make good" as a king they cannot lay the disappointment on the claim that God put them off with an inferior individual as a retaliation for their sin in asking for a king.

Verse 24. The comments on the preceding verse are verified here by the description which Samuel makes of their king. The response was favorable and the established way of acceptance was used by the exclamation, "God save the king."

Verse 25. In Deut. 17: 15 it was stipulated that if a king was ever to be chosen, they were to receive the one whom the Lord designated. In the present verse we see that God also decided the style of kingdom they were to have. And, that no misunderstanding might occur, the description of it was written down.

Verse 26. The word *touched* is from *NAGAH*, and part of the definition of Strong is, "to lay the hand upon." The thought is that God had personally designated a group of men to be associated with Saul in this important work now starting. The attitude of these men was favorable, as will be seen by the contrary one in the next verse.

Verse 27. The first word of this verse shows that these men were just the opposite in their attitude to those of the preceding verse. The sons of Belial were men of a very low and wicked type. The word is a descriptive one and not a proper noun. The term as used in the O. T. could be applied to any very wicked person. *Brought him no presents.* The last word is from an original that means "tribute." When used in cases like this, it means a formal acknowledgement of greatness or authority. In old times we will read of frequent instances where the use of the term carried such meaning. If a writer says that certain persons refused to bring presents to another, it means that the person involved was not recognized as being important. On the other hand, if the presents were offered, it was to indicate a favorable attitude as being pleased with the other, and wishing to have his good will. A few outstanding references will be given here for the reader's information. Gen. 32: 13; 43: 11; Judg. 3: 15; 1 Sam. 9: 7; 1 Ki. 4: 21; 10: 25; 15: 19; 2 Ki. 16: 8; 2 Chr. 17: 11. Saul was not disturbed by this sentiment of the wicked men. He knew that

since the prophet of God had anointed him to the office, he had the sanction of God; therefore, it was not reasonable to be upset by the condition. Had he always been conscious of this great fact and acted accordingly, how much happier he would have been.

1 SAMUEL 11

Verse 1. The Ammonites were among the old enemies of Israel. It will be recalled that Jephthah had to fight them (Judg. 11), and now they are here to threaten the men of Jabesh-gilead. The people of the city seemed to be frightened and expressed willingness to make a league with them. This would have been contrary to God's will, for the command had been given before (Deut. 7: 1, 2) not to make any covenant with the nations around them.

Verse 2. The leader of the enemy agreed to a league on the condition that the men of Jabesh-gilead sacrifice their right eyes. Such a condition would not only be a physical misfortune, but also a reproach or disgrace. One of the prominent instruments of war then was the bow and arrow. The loss of their right eyes would disable them for war; therefore, if they submitted to this shameful proposition, it would be considered a great military disaster.

Verse 3. The children of Israel asked for a truce of seven days for the purpose of securing reinforcements. It was granted.

Verses 4-6. The king was rightfully appealed to in their distress, and he was moved with anger at the impudence of the enemy and prepared to make war.

Verse 7. Sometimes it is necessary to rouse people with some kind of visible demonstration. We can see an instance of this in Judges 19: 29, 30. The method Saul used brought the desired result.

Verse 8. The distinction between Israel and Judah seems premature since it was a long time afterward that an actual division came in this sense, but an inspired writer could see the distinction when others could not. No formal distinction was made in the activities connected with the war, hence we should not consider the expression otherwise than given here.

Verse 9. Having raised a good military force, they sent the encouraging news to the city that had been threatened, and it was gladly received.

Verse 10. With the favorable news to cheer them, the men of Jabesh-gilead answered the besiegers that on the morrow they would expose themselves to them to take whatever they were able to impose upon them. This apparent submission was a feint and intended as the particular method for joining battle with the enemy.

Verse 11. The attack was made "on the morrow." It was done also in the "morning watch" which had to be before six o'clock. Hence we incidentally learn that at least in some instances the day was not considered as beginning at sunrise. This thought is further confirmed by the statement that the slaughter continued until the heat of the day, which meant the time of day for the sunlight. The destruction of the enemy forces was so complete that no two could be found in one place.

Verse 12. Another phase of human weakness was now shown. After Saul had given them military success they were eager to "come to his defense" by slaying the objectors, which indicates that had he been unsuccessful in this battle they would have turned against him. It agrees with the conclusion that people are friends of the one who is a winner. This too often is the case whether right or wrong.

Verse 13. Samuel quelled the clamor of the people with the statement that while Saul was the divinely chosen leader, yet the victory was from the Lord, and no retaliatory measures were to be permitted in the case.

Verses 14, 15. No man could actually be made king the second time unless he had been excluded from his throne for some reason, therefore the language in this paragraph must mean that Saul was recognized again and acclaimed as king. This idea agrees with that of making Christ king a number of times. One of the grand songs of the religious world is "Coronation." Critics have objected to this on the ground that we cannot crown Christ as king since that was done centuries ago. The criticism is not well founded. Every time a man recognizes him as king he "crowns" him in the same sense that the people made Saul king at Gilgal.

1 SAMUEL 12

Verses 1, 2. This paragraph might be considered as a prelude to a farewell speech, although Samuel will not leave them for a time. He wishes the

people to realize their own responsibility, now that their request for a king has been granted. In order that no pretext could afterward be made as justification of their unlawful demand, by reference to any deficiency in his leadership, he makes a challenge.

Verse 3. The challenge mentioned in the preceding verse follows. Samuel called upon them specifically to state if he had come short of doing what was right in his treatment of them and government over them.

Verses 4, 5. The people answered that no charge could be made against him. The expression, "Lord is witness against you" means that an oath was taken in their statement. And if afterward they should ever bring up any accusation along this line it would be admission of falsehood in their former declaration.

Verses 6, 7. At this point Samuel gave God the honor of all success. In the case of Moses and Aaron, the Lord was doer of all success; it will be the same in the present time with them. Therefore they should give heed to what Samuel wishes to say to them since he is the man of God now, even as Moses was in former days.

Verses 8-11. Their divine deliverance from the oppressor in former times was now mentioned to them because of its relation to their present situation.

Verse 12. An implied doubting of God's ability to care for them further was seen in their calling for a king at the approach of the Ammonites. If the Lord could lead them out from their enemies in the former time he certainly could do so again; hence their call for a king indicated a weakening of their faith.

Verses 13, 14. Since a king had been asked for and granted, they are to make the best of it. While God was displeased at their request for a king, after granting one for their use both they and the king will have the blessing of God on condition that they obey his voice and walk in his ways.

Verse 15. On the principle set forth in the preceding paragraph, the rebellion of the people will bring the curse of God upon them and their king as surely as will their obedience bring the blessing. History proves all of this to be true.

Verses 16-18. Their lack of faith will be further emphasized by a physical demonstration of divine power. Samuel

called upon the Lord to show his power and goodness by sending rain for their crops. It was done and the statement is made that they feared the Lord and Samuel. The word "fear" is here used in the favorable sense. It means that they were made to have great regard. It is significant also that they feared the Lord *and* Samuel. It was on the principle that no one can either regard or disregard an authorized leader for God without doing so to him.

Verse 19. As a result of the demonstration and speech of Samuel the people were convicted of their great mistake and made acknowledgement of the same. No attempt was made to excuse themselves nor to lessen the extent of their guilt. They even admitted guilt of previous sins as well as the mistake of asking for a king.

Verse 20. Samuel agrees with them that they have been wicked but reminds them that it was a thing of the past. Now it is proper for them to serve the Lord, and the kind of service expected is the cooperation of the people with God in the new arrangement.

Verse 21. Their calling for a king implied a need for something in addition to the help of God. If they now turn from the king given to them and trust outside sources, they will be as unsuccessful with a king as they thought they were going to be without a king.

Verse 22. When a person espouses another as his choice for any reason, then the reputation of the former is somewhat connected with that of the latter; therefore it is desirable to uphold the chosen person as long as possible. God had taken the people of Israel from among the nations of the world as his own. As long as it can be done he will sustain them. This would not be for the sake of Israel only, but also for the good name of God thus joined with his chosen people. Samuel declared that God would not forsake Israel for the sake of his own name. See the following passages for this thought: Josh. 7: 9; Ps. 23: 3; 106: 8.

Verse 23. There was no resentment in the heart of Samuel. In asking for a king the people had rejected him as well as God, but he will not cease to be interested in their welfare and will continue to pray for them. But prayer alone will not suffice. The people must be taught the right way of life and this was what Samuel promised to do

for them. No specific ordinances were to be added to the established law of God already given to them through Moses. There will come times, however, when the proper application of that law will require inspired guidance; the prophets of old were for that purpose.

Verse 24. To serve the Lord in truth meant to serve him according to truth and not just as their own imagination might suggest.

Verse 25. To be consumed did not mean to be annihilated physically, but to be destroyed as a nation. This great threat was fulfilled. See 2 Kings 24 and 25.

1 SAMUEL 13

Verse 1. The peculiar language of this verse means that nothing much of importance occurred in the first year of Saul's reign, but after the second year his activities are reported by the inspired writer.

Verse 2. Saul made a selection of three thousand chosen men of Israel to be used in battle with the Philistines, the constant enemies of the people of God. He divided these forces between himself and his son Jonathan, who is here mentioned for the first time. After this draft the other people were sent to their homes.

Verse 3. The Philistines had a military post at Geba, and Jonathan showed his talent in battle strategy by smiting this post. The report of the event came to the ears of the Philistines, and Saul also saw to it that the people of his own nation heard about it.

Verse 4. When a deed is accomplished by an inferior officer, the credit in theory goes to the superior. It might have been on this basis that it is stated the Israelites heard of Saul's success, although they knew that Jonathan was in immediate command at Geba. But judging from the conduct of Saul afterward, it seems that the proper credit for Jonathan was left out of the report. There is a similar situation recorded in secular history that illustrates this condition of jealousy. In the war of the United States against Spain, a great naval victory was accomplished by the valor of an inferior officer in immediate command. Due credit was at first allotted to this inferior officer; the superior officer did not happen to be present when the victory was achieved. His jealousy led him to cause such a disturbance in government circles that

the officer who actually had accomplished the feat was robbed of his credit. This kind of action is condemned by the Scriptures where it is taught that honor should be given to those deserving it. (Rom. 13: 7.) And this saying of the inspired writer was used while considering secular governments. Another thing that suggests this unfavorable attitude in Saul's report is the fact that the people gathered together after him. The place of proposed action seemed to be Gilgal which was the place previously appointed by Samuel for their meeting.

Verse 5. The Philistines mustered a mighty force of chariots and horsemen. They pitched in Michmash which was not far from Gilgal, the place where the Israelite forces were assembled and hence would be seen by them.

Verse 6. The sight of the enemy with such great strength frightened the children of Israel, and they seemed to forget all their former resolutions of faith in God. In their fright they sought shelter by hiding in caves and other places. (Heb. 11: 38.)

Verse 7. Some of the Israelites escaped even across the Jordan. Saul was yet at Gilgal and the people crouched after him in terror for a while, then indicated signs of desertion.

Verse 8. The reader's attention is referred to comments at Ch. 10: 8 in order to understand this passage. Saul tarried until the seventh day, but not until Samuel came. The desertion of the people from him misled Saul into sin. The same mistake is often made by people today. Too often man's dependence upon man is greater than that upon God.

Verse 9. In his discouragement and lack of faith, Saul proceeded to take some kind of action. It has been a popular idea that he was condemned in this case on the ground that he was not a priest, therefore he did not have the right to offer sacrifice. That is a mistake. There are numerous instances where men who were not priests offered sacrifices and were not condemned. (Ch. 6: 14; 7: 9; 2 Sam. 6: 18, 19.) The sin which Saul committed was in not waiting until Samuel arrived.

Verse 10. The margin gives us "bless" instead of "salute" and the lexicon agrees. After having disobeyed the command of Samuel, Saul has the

impudence to expect a blessing. Often today when men do something that they think is good they expect the commendation of God or God's people on the ground of having done something "good." But the teaching of the Scripture is that our great deeds will not be *accepted*, much less be *blessed*, unless they are done lawfully. (Matt. 7: 22, 23; 2 Tim. 2: 5.)

Verse 11. Saul offered three facts as excuses for his disobedience. They may be summarized as follows: people were scattered; Samuel had not yet come; Philistines had appeared. But none of these were logical in view of the full command of Samuel. God does not depend on the people, so let them be scattered; it was not yet time for Samuel to come since the day was not yet gone; enemies should not frighten them if they had faith in God. Hence the defense which Saul offered was insufficient.

Verse 12. The word *forced* is from APHAQ and Strong defines it, "a primitive root; to contain, i.e. (reflexively) abstain." Saul's meaning was that he just could not refrain or control himself and had to offer the sacrifice. The foolishness of such an excuse is proved by many instances of history and sacred teaching. In the first place, no one is actually forced to do wrong; he may be forced to accept some terrible alternative, but God will always be with the person who resists to the end. (Matt. 10: 28.)

Verse 13. It was Samuel who gave Saul the command to tarry at Gilgal, but it is here called the commandment of God. It is on the basis that all commands uttered by the constituted spokesman of God are the same as coming directly from him. The idea that upon obedience his (Saul's) kingdom would have been established forever meant that it would have continued throughout that age, among his family and lineal descendants.

Verse 14. *Thy kingdom*. This is said in the light of the preceding verse and its explanation. The particular family (and even tribe) of Saul will be deprived of a place as rulers in the kingdom. *Man after his own heart*. Much speculation has been done as to the meaning of this statement. Since it refers to David, who was guilty of the terrible sin about Bathsheba, it is asked how could such a man be after God's own heart. It is no answer to say that David had not yet been guilty of that sin when this was said. Such

a reply is an insult to the wisdom and foresight of God. Certainly the Lord knew that such a sin would take place and therefore uttered this description of David in spite of that. When David was charged with his sin he did not deny it nor even try to excuse it; he promptly acknowledged his sin and was willing to make any amends that God required. That is the kind of man that is after God's own heart. Here is another thing that must not be overlooked in this case. The main sphere of action that is under consideration is that of ruling God's people faithfully against the enemies. In this sense we know that David was faithful; such is indicated in this very verse by the reference to David as being captain over God's people.

Verse 15. After this painful circumstance, Samuel departed from Gilgal and went to Gibeah, another city in the inheritance of Benjamin. After Samuel left, Saul took an inventory of the men he had with him and they were six hundred; the others had departed for fear of the enemy.

Verse 16. Saul and his son both had their camps at Geba, a city of Benjamin, while the Philistines were at Michmash.

Verses 17, 18. The condition of panic among the Israelites gave the Philistines opportunity for looting. They formed three groups for this purpose and took a territory for each group.

Verse 19. Commercialism would not have kept the Philistines from plying their trade in the land of the Israelites under peacetime conditions, but under the state of affairs then existing they had withdrawn in order to hinder the progress of their enemies' military activities.

Verse 20. The children of Israel had to run the risk attached to getting work done in the land of their enemies. As the particular handicraft mentioned here was one requiring special qualifications, the Philistines were engaged in that business more extensively than the Israelites.

Verse 21. This verse merely names the minor tools that the Israelites had at the time; they were much handicapped in their defense with such tools as these.

Verse 22. The people in general felt the lack of equipment most severely. Saul and Jonathan had been successful in obtaining their weapons in the manner described in verse 20.

Verse 23. Due to the shortages in the forces of Israel, the post of the Philistines extended as far as here described.

1 SAMUEL 14

Verse 1. Jonathan was assigned a commission to himself, as we have seen previously; he now proposed to go into action as a faithful defender of Israel.

Verse 2. Saul had his present headquarters in his tent which was pitched under a pomegranate tree. His present force consisted of six hundred men; as we read in Ch. 13: 15; the others had deserted him.

Verse 3. It might be thought that Saul had one advantage in that he had a man with him of the priestly family who was authorized to wear an ephod. This is to be considered in view of the combined nature of that system which was both religious and civil in government. Verse 1 said that Jonathan had slipped away unknown to his father, and it was not understood generally that he was gone.

Verses 4, 5. It was the desire of Jonathan to constitute himself a sort of detachment from the main forces of his father, and to fight against their common enemy. His only help was the young man who attended him to carry his armor. This young man was faithful to Jonathan and ready to co-operate with him in all ways possible. The space between where Jonathan and the Philistines were, was taken up with two craggy rocks which served as a kind of screen so that his approach would not be entirely visible except as he desired to make it so.

Verse 6. Jonathan proposed to his young man that they make an attack on the enemy. It was true there were only two of them, but his reasoning was that if the Lord were for them they would be just as successful as if they had a host.

Verse 7. Like a true patriot the young man agreed to obey whatever was commanded.

Verses 8-10. In various instances we have seen that men of God would place their proposed action on some special test that was to indicate the will of the Lord about their conduct. (Judg. 6: 36-40; 1 Sam. 6: 12.) In all of such instances we should think of Heb. 1: 1. In the case at hand, therefore, Jonathan proposed to learn his proper course by the method described.

Verse 11. The rocky crags mentioned before served as a camouflage for Jonathan and misled the Philistines into thinking that the Hebrews were in hiding. With that kind of view they would not have a clear idea of how many were there. The very fact they were hiding thus indicated to the Philistines that their courage was down and therefore it would not be difficult to cope with them.

Verses 12. The ruse had the desired effect. *Show you a thing.* This was their boastful manner of challenging them to come on to the attack. But it was the signal to Jonathan that the Lord was approving their proposed attack and would help.

Verse 13. The strategy was further carried out by their method of advance. In creeping on their hands and feet it would not be discerned clearly how many there were of the Hebrews; also, they would not be seen at all until near the enemy. As a result they fell before the two with much slaughter, considering that only two did the work.

Verse 14. The word *acre* is from *MAANAH* and defined by Strong, "a furrow." It is the word for "furrow" in Psa. 129: 3. The R. V. renders this place "half a furrow's length in an acre of land." This wording is evidently correct. The thought is that Jonathan and his young man slew twenty Philistines in a row half as long as a furrow across a square acre of land. That should be considered as quite a feat.

Verse 15. This unexpected action upon the part of two lone Hebrews spread fear and consternation among the Philistines. Not only so, but the Lord also made good his promise indicated through the answer of the enemy when Jonathan and the young man showed themselves; he caused the earth to quake and tremble. This threw the Philistines into such confusion that they began attacking each other.

Verse 16. This demonstration was so great that the watchmen of Saul could see it.

Verse 17. The report of the conflict called the attention of Saul to the situation and he then realized that some of his forces had left his presence. He ordered search to be made to learn who was gone, and the fact was discovered about Jonathan and his man.

Verse 18. This is another link in the chain of the ark. The reference to be made is 2 Sam. 6: 2. Saul thought to be assisted in his battle by the presence of the sacred vessel and thus he called for it.

Verse 19. Saul directed the priest to withdraw his hand. The reason for the strange order was not stated, but it was stated that the tumult among the Philistines was on the increase. That could have indicated to Saul that the presence of the ark, under the jurisdiction of the priest, had had an immediate effect.

Verse 20. Approaching the scene of battle, Saul discovered that confusion and self-destruction was going on among the Philistines.

Verse 21. It is natural for men to wish to be on the winning side. Previous to the present time, some of the Hebrews had associated themselves with the Philistines; now that the tide of battle had turned in favor of the action of the Israelites they came over to them.

Verse 22. Others, who had been hiding in the country round about, now came out of their seclusion and joined the battle.

Verse 23. However, these men were not credited with success; it was given to the Lord instead.

Verse 24. The evil results of rashness are here seen. While it is true that it was not an uncommon thing for people of God to resort to seasons of fasting in times of great importance, and it would not have been wrong in principle for Saul to call for one at this time, but he should have safeguarded it with proper conditions, which he did not. Without seeking to get his instructions to all people affected, he declared under oath that any man who would partake of food before evening would be cursed. The people who were aware of the oath observed it.

Verses 25, 26. Coming to a wood the people saw honey so abundant that it was on the ground; they did not partake of it because of Saul's oath.

Verse 27. Jonathan did not know of the oath of his father. Under the conditions of making oaths or vows (Num. 30: 1-8) it was necessary that all parties hear the oath before being bound to it or affected by it. Since Jonathan was not present when this vow was made he was not morally bound by it. The word *enlightened* is

from an original that means "to shine." In view of the condition of exhaustion to be mentioned soon, and of Jonathan's comments on the case, we may see the whole subject in its true light. There was nothing supernatural in the effect the honey had on him. He, like the others, was faint and drooping from the weariness of the battle. Honey is one of the purest of foods; when he partook of it, his vitality revived and his eyes reacted to the nourishment.

Verse 28. The people then informed Jonathan of the curse pronounced by his father. The statement is made that people, also, were faint or weary.

Verses 29,30. Jonathan then reasoned, and correctly so, that his father had made a troublesome oath. Referring to the great help that a little honey had been to him in giving him strength, and the success which followed, he concluded that they would have had much more success against the enemy had the people been permitted to eat freely. No man can be at his best when exhausted by lack of food. Thus it was a foolish vow that Saul made and there is no indication that it had the sanction of the Lord.

Verse 31. The people were faithfully serving Saul even though they were faint, and they were successful. But that was not because of the oath; it was in spite of it, for God wished the enemy to be subdued.

Verse 32. When people are at the point of starvation, they become uncontrollable and act involuntarily. The Children of Israel had been obedient to the rash oath of Saul until a point of desperation was reached. When the battle finally exposed them to great quantities of food, their appetite led them to indulge. They were even so ravenous that they disobeyed the law of Moses and ate the blood, the part that must always be considered as belonging to the Lord.

Verse 33. The actions of the starving people were reported to Saul and he realized that the law had been violated. He applied their acts of disobedience to himself, however, more than to the Lord, for the word *transgressed* means to act treacherously, and referred to their rebellion against him. He was aware, however, that the law of God had been violated, and he proposed to appease God with a sacrifice. For this purpose he ordered them to bring him a great stone.

Verses 34, 35. Now the command

was given to go out among the people and provide animals for sacrifice to atone for the sin of the people in eating with the blood. That was indeed a grievous sin since the very basis of many of the restrictions in the commandments of the Lord was in the fact that the blood is the life. Saul does deserve credit for the distinction he made between his own vow and the law of God. The latter could not be atoned for by execution, as he afterward thought to do for his vow.

Verse 36. Saul seemed to have concluded that he had appeased God by his action with the sacrifices and now can go on with the war with success. He made a proposition to that effect, but the priest thought it would be better first to consult the Lord. After Moses was gone the priest was the lawful spokesman for the people, hence the suggestion here was in order. (Mal. 2: 7; Lev. 10: 9-11; Deut. 17: 9.)

Verse 37. Acting on the advice of the priest, Saul made inquiry of the Lord but did not receive any answer at that time.

Verse 38. This indicated that something was wrong. It was somewhat like the case in Josh. 7, where the failure of the army was attributed to sin in the camp. Saul directed that an investigation should be made.

Verse 39. In another rash outburst, Saul named his son as being the possible guilty person and declared that even he would not escape. The people did not say a word, they knew that Jonathan was the "guilty" person, but had too much regard for him to expose him to the wrath of the king.

Verse 40. An indefinite classification was first made in which Saul placed himself and his son on one side, and all the people on the other. The arrangement was agreeable to the people.

Verses 41, 42. The lot was one means sometimes used by the Lord in old times to show decisions. See Prov. 16: 33. By this process the lot fell between Saul and his son, then finally upon the son, only it did not show just what had been done.

Verse 43. The confidence Saul had in the truthfulness of his son was shown in that he left it to him to state what he had done. In a very sincere manner Jonathan told Saul what he had done, and in a declaration of submission concluded that he must die.

Verse 44. *God do so* must again be explained to mean that God would do

to Saul what should be done to Jonathan were he (Saul) to disregard the oath. The fact that he was the son of Saul should not have provided any protection for Jonathan had the oath been a righteous one, but it had not been duly established in the first place.

Verse 45. Unlawful or irregular vows are not morally binding on anyone; neither is it necessary to suffer such rashness to be carried out. All such restrictions are automatically void, hence the people were wholly within their rights in protecting Jonathan from the wrath of his father. There is no indication that Saul tried to press his contention.

Verse 46. There is a lull in the warfare of the Israelites against the Philistines.

Verses 47, 48. The general conduct of Saul was faithful to the children of Israel, for he fought their enemies and waged successful warfare.

Verse 49. The principal point of interest to us in this enumeration of the family of Saul is the mention of his daughter Michal, because of what we will hear of her later on in the history.

Verses 50, 51. Let us note the name of Abner, for we shall read much of him in the chapter to follow.

Verse 52. The Philistines had been, and were destined still to be, long and bitter enemies of the Israelites. Saul was always eager to fight them and took opportunity to strengthen his forces by drafting all men who appeared to be strong.

1 SAMUEL 15

Verse 1. As the priests have been shown to be the authorized executors of the law, and the proper consultants in connection with the services, so the prophets were the ones through whom the Lord made known many of the specific commandments. At the present time the prophet Samuel addressed himself to Saul the king and instructed him. He told Saul that what he was about to hear would be the words of the Lord.

Verse 2. This reminder refers to the record found in Ex. 17. At that time God decreed that the very remembrance (visible memorial) of Amalek was all to be blotted out.

Verse 3. This command included everything that would have left a sign of the existence of the Amalekites, and

would have fulfilled the decree mentioned above.

Verses 4, 5. With a force of over 200,000 Saul came to a *city* of Amalek. The term emphasized will be explained in the following verse.

Verse 6. Seeing certain ones among the people of the city, he warned them to leave in order not to suffer with the rest. They took his advice and left. This accounts for the seeming discrepancy regarding the complete destruction of all the people except the king of the Amalekites. It means all of the ones immediately encountered. These people who took his advice and fled the city would include some remnants of the people of Amalek and they will show up in the book of Esther. This is the reason for the words pointed out in the preceding paragraph.

Verse 7. Saul covered a great deal of territory in his war against the Amalekites. However, it was indicated by the specific reference to "a city" in verse 5 that he did not make a "clean sweep" of all the places. This is another fact to be considered in the same connection with the book of Esther mentioned in verse 6.

Verse 8. The remarks in the preceding verse are not disproved by the statement that Saul destroyed all the people. That would be true of the particular group with whom they found the king. The motive in taking Agag the king alive could have been a good one, for it was usually considered a great feat to capture a leading enemy alive. Good motives, however, do not justify disobedience, hence the action of Saul will be found to be sinful.

Verse 9. With the same kind of motive that saved the king, the best of the beasts escaped destruction also.

Verses 10, 11. Samuel being the present national prophet, the word of the Lord for Saul will soon be revealed through him. *It repenteth me.* This calls for a repetition of the definition of the word repent. The outstanding principle always present is expressed by the word "change." Whether God or man is spoken of as repenting, the idea of change must be retained. The difference between them is this: when man repents he *changes* his will; when God repents he wills a *change*. In both cases a change is required by the word "repent." In the present case it means that God will change Saul from being king.

Verse 12. The word *place* refers to some kind of mark that Saul set up at Carmel in honor of his supposed great work against the Amalekites. Having accomplished that action he passed on to Gilgal, the noted place of his first sin. (Ch. 13: 8.)

Verse 13. The writer does not tell us whether Saul knowingly made a false report to Samuel; his motive might have misled him to think that he had actually performed the will of the Lord.

Verse 14. The sound of the beasts was evidently heard. There is no indication that Saul had tried to prevent Samuel from knowing he had saved them, hence the conclusion that he probably thought his action would be praised instead of condemned.

Verse 15. The use that Saul proposed to make of the animals was a lawful one. It was established as a part of the service under the law to offer beasts in sacrifice to God. The best of all such only would be accepted, therefore it seemed to Saul that his actions would be pleasing to God.

Verse 16. As a general introduction to what he has to say, Samuel told Saul to stay; that meant to be still and listen.

Verse 17. *Little in thine own sight.* See Ch. 9: 21 for the explanation of these words. Although he was insignificant in his own sight, according to his admission, he had been exalted to the high position of king over the people.

Verse 18. In his position as king, Saul was assigned the important task of destroying an inveterate enemy of the kingdom. He was not only to go against him, but continue his fight until he had utterly destroyed him. He had destroyed much of the enemy, but not utterly done so to the end.

Verse 19. Samuel placed the question squarely up to Saul as to why he took possession of the spoil instead of destroying it.

Verse 20. Saul seemed still to be saturated with pride over his great work, for he repeated his declaration of obedience to God. His claim that he had utterly destroyed the Amalekites could have been true as far as he went, but he was so eager to manifest what he thought to be an extra service to God in bringing back the king alive, that he failed to obey the letter of the command that the destruction was to be thorough.

Verse 21. The expression *should have been utterly destroyed* means that the said beasts would have been utterly destroyed had he not decided to make a better use of them. His plan was to sacrifice them to God on the altar at Gilgal.

Verse 22. Here we have a very famous declaration of Holy Writ. While no one of the commandments of God is more necessary than the others, yet when man thinks to make discrimination he generally chooses the wrong one. From that standpoint it is here declared that animal sacrifices are not so acceptable that they may be permitted to interfere with the positive commandments of God. Sacrifices must never be offered when some duty of an authoritative nature has been overlooked. This idea was taught by Christ in Matt. 5: 24.

Verse 23. Witchcraft and idolatry were generally considered by the Jews as great evils, which they were, but Samuel declares that rebellion and stubbornness are as bad as they. And the charge is not an arbitrary one. If a man is rebellious against the commandments of the God of Heaven there would be no logical reason why he should not turn his attention to idols. And stubbornness is another indication of self-gratification, which is the same as idolatry or self-worship.

Verse 24. The confession of Saul recognized the authority of Samuel the prophet in that he said he had transgressed the commandment of the Lord, "and thy words." This principle often has been set forth before the reader and doubtless will be again. It is so vital and yet so much overlooked by professed servants of God that it needs to be kept before the mind. When anyone disobeys the authority of God's constituted rulers it is the same as disobeying Him. Another weakness of mankind was acknowledged here. Saul said he had sinned because he feared the people. Many men who claim to be teachers of the Word will pervert it and refrain from preaching all of it because of a desire for popularity.

Verses 25, 26. Saul was eager to be restored to his former status and not only asked for the pardon of his sin, but that he might continue in the same favor of Samuel he had enjoyed before. That request was refused. Personally, he could have been forgiven of that sin, but his public trust had been twice violated already so he had

forfeited his right to it. Therefore his kingdom was to be taken from him.

Verses 27, 28. In a visible gesture Samuel tore Saul's mantle which signified that Saul's kingdom was to be torn away from him. But not in the same way as was indicated later when the garment of Jeroboam was torn into many pieces. (1 Ki. 11: 31.) Then it meant the kingdom was to be divided, here it meant the kingdom was to be torn from Saul and given to a neighbor or associate of his.

Verse 29. The word *strength* means victory but is here used figuratively in referring to God. That was because the continued success of God's plans was not to be set aside by the disobedience of one man. Instead, it was going to continue by placing the human side of the work in the hands of another and better servant. Then the last part of the verse is added as a reason for the first part. We have previously seen that the term *repentance* has one common idea whether pertaining to God or man. That idea is *change*. The Scripture says in many places that God repents, yet here it sounds as if he does not. But the proviso should not be overlooked, "not a man, that." It means that God does not repent as man does. That would not prevent him from repenting in his own way. And so, since God had declared that Saul must be dethroned because of his great sins, he was not going to will a change in that decree.

Verses 30, 31. While God will not change his decree about the kingdom, yet his mercy is great toward penitent sinners. The man of God honored Saul to the extent of letting him worship the Lord in his presence as an inspired prophet. Sometimes a man will sin so grievously and frequently that confidence is destroyed, but that need not prevent him from performing the service called for in order that he might be saved. However, his activities should be done under proper supervision.

Verse 32. *Delicately*. This is from MAADANNAH and defined, "a delicacy or (abstractly) pleasure (adverbially, cheerfully)" — Strong. Since many others had been slain in this eventful time and he had been allowed to live this long, Agag was foolish enough to conclude that all fear or bitterness of death was gone. Thus he came into the presence of Samuel in a cheerful mood, but his mistaken ease of mind was destined soon to be changed.

Verse 33. *Mother be childless.* This was virtually the same prediction that was made in Ex. 17: 18, and fulfilled in the book of Esther.

Verses 34, 35. The king and prophet each went to his own city after this awful event in the affairs of the kingdom. The hostility of the enemy continued, but a lull was to come in the activities while an important move was being made. Samuel is said to have mourned for Saul. Not necessarily that he was sentimentally grieving over him personally, but he lamented the deeds of the wicked king. At the same time the Lord was holding out in his determination to remove the kingdom from Saul.

1 SAMUEL 16

Verse 1. This verse follows in thought the one at the close of the preceding chapter. Samuel was bidden to drop the matter of his lamentation over Saul's rejection. The thought is as if it read, "How long will you mourn at seeing my rejection of Saul?" As much as to say that it is time to be about doing something to replace the rejected king. The horn was a kind of flask to contain oil. Its use was brought about in those days by the custom of pouring oil over a man at his appointment as king, or in recognition of any other excellence. (Ch. 10: 1.)

Verse 2. The command to go to Bethlehem brought fear to the mind of Samuel. Saul had gone to Gibeah which was not far from this city and he might learn of the presence of the prophet. Saul's disgrace over his sins had been punishment coming through the hand of this very man, Samuel, and he might try to obtain vengeance at his expense. That is, he might do so for fear that Samuel was in that community for further acts of humiliation against him. It really was the thing about to take place. The humiliation would not be direct, it is true, but the appointment of a successor to the wicked king would have such an effect. Samuel was directed to offset the threat of harm from Saul by performing a sacrifice; that is, one of those religious feasts already described. There would be nothing untrue or unlawful in this. Reference to Deut. 12: 21 will inform us this sacrifice was not a burnt one but was a religious feast. That was entirely proper, especially as it was to be in

connection with important affairs of the kingdom.

Verse 3. Jesse was to be invited to this sacrifice and during the time the Lord would show Samuel further what he was to do.

Verses 4, 5. The state of unrest that was then in the country made people have a feeling of uncertainty at the appearance of one from outside their community, so these people were fearful until Samuel made the announcement that God had suggested. He ordered them to make the necessary preparation for attending a religious feast. This had special application to Jesse and his sons.

Verse 6. Eliab was the oldest son (Ch. 17: 13) and naturally Samuel concluded that he was to be the new king. That would have been the usual and logical procedure.

Verse 7. The remarks of the Lord here were to be applicable in general, and not to the first son only. Hence the fundamental direction not to judge one's desirability for service to God by outward appearance. In temporal kingdoms the physical appearance is an important item; however, it is not the only one, nor the most important. A man might be qualified from that standpoint yet be lacking in some other sense. And since God was directing this choice it will not be necessary to depend on the outward appearance.

Verse 8. Samuel did not again think of judging by the mere appearance. He was to be shown expressly by the Lord which was the choice. Having said nothing in favor of this son, Samuel stated that he had not been chosen.

Verses 9, 10. Jesse caused seven of his sons to pass in turn before Samuel, yet no one of them was selected.

Verse 11. There was no indication of doubt in Samuel's mind as to the instructions he had received that a king would be found among these sons. His inquiry was in the form of a call for other members of Jesse's family to be presented. Jesse had not been informed of the purpose of Samuel's visit that we know of, hence he had not called the youngest son from the necessary work of tending the sheep. So now he was told to call him.

Verse 12. This rosy faced young man came into the presence of the group. The description given of him was very favorable and the reader might be confused into thinking of it

as a contradiction of verse 7. Not so if closer attention is given to the whole context. It was true that David was a man of good appearance. But it is not said here that God chose him on that account. The reason he was selected was that the Lord could see the heart (verse 7) and David had the kind of heart that was pleasing to Him. (Ch. 13: 14.) So the command was for Samuel to anoint him *for this is he*.

Verse 13. The usual formality was observed. Oil was poured on the head of David, which made him the "king elect" to succeed Saul. He will not actually take office while Saul is living. Howbeit, the spirit of the Lord now came upon him. This qualification will be useful in more than one instance as we shall see in the history to follow. Having accomplished his mission Samuel departed.

Verse 14. The word *evil* is from *aa* and Strong defines it "bad or (as noun) evil (naturally or morally)." The word has been rendered by such as adversity, affliction, calamity, distress, grief, and many others. Hence it does not mean that God caused him to have a sinful disposition. He already had shown that. Rather, that a spirit of affliction was sent upon him to punish him for his sins. The fact that music would relieve him proved that his condition was not of a moral character. The particular form of this affliction was that of troubling and terrifying him. Most of us know from experience what a profound effect it has upon one to be terrified.

Verses 15, 16. The affliction of Saul was such that it affected his appearance through his nervous system. That made it apparent to the ones around him. The suggestion was made, therefore, that someone be procured who could play well on a harp. This was the national musical instrument of the Hebrews according to Smith's Bible Dictionary. It was usually made with ten strings and played with an attachment for the fingers. Others were made of eight strings and played directly with the hand. Such was the kind David used and thus the suggestion was made that hand playing be done. This kind of instrument when played with skill would produce the soft tones that would soothe the nerves of one who was all wrought up with terror.

Verses 17, 18. Saul called for a man to perform the desired service. One of his servants described a man whom

he had observed. This man possessed many talents besides that of playing the harp; the description pleased Saul as we shall see.

Verse 19. Being a king, Saul could properly call for the services of this son of Jesse. In order that no mistake could be made, the specification was given that the son caring for the sheep was the one Saul wanted.

Verse 20. Making offering of gifts in those days was a way of showing recognition for another. Saul was the king and Jesse was a subject, and his son was now to appear in the presence of the king. A respectful attitude was shown which contrasted with that shown by some others. (Ch. 10: 27.)

Verses 21: 22. The appearance of David was pleasing to Saul and he not only took him for a musician, but placed him near in military service. Upon this decision he sent word to the father that he wished to obtain the services of his son for continuous relationship.

Verse 23. The primary object in calling David was for his service upon the harp. It did the thing desired and the music of the strings soothed the nerves of the troubled king, for the time being. This affliction is not to be thought of as a permanent one; it came periodically, whenever the Lord saw fit to bring it upon him.

1 SAMUEL 17

Verses 1-3. The lull in hostilities was over and war activities started again. The opposing armies pitched in a possession of Judah with just a valley between them.

Verse 4. Goliath is nowhere directly called a giant although we know he was one in physical stature. The word sometimes signified more than mere physical or bodily size. In the present instance the bodily proportions were the phases that the writer is concerned about. Goliath was about ten feet in height.

Verse 5. This verse describes the metallic covering the champion wore, called "coat of mail." It was made of brass and weighed 5,000 shekels. The tables of weights and measures used in ancient times are so variously given by the authorities that no definite statement is sure of being correct, but from all sources it is certain that this covering weighed many pounds.

Verse 6. The greaves are defined by Strong, "a shin-piece." It was a special

protection for the lower part of the legs. The R. V. gives us javelin in place of the target, and the lexicon agrees. However, the context indicates that it at least might have referred to some kind of shield that he wore between his shoulders to protect his heart and lungs.

Verse 7. The great size of the spear with its staff indicated the physical might of this champion. He was further protected by a bodyguard who preceded him with a shield.

Verses 8, 9. The challenge that Goliath made is what is known as a "challenge to single combat," and was recognized as a legitimate way of settling military disputes. It had a retaining influence in the duels practiced later on in defense of "honor." It was considered a fair way of deciding an issue. But such contests were conducted on a stricter basis than could have been possible here. Even in the game of prize fights, a man is not permitted to enter the contest unless he is known to possess at least some show of equality to his antagonist. But Goliath knew there was no such man among the Hebrews to be compared physically to him. Hence his challenge to such a contest, as belonged only to men of equal chance, was just a pretense.

Verses 10, 11. The appearance of this mighty creature and his arrogant defiance of Israel made a profound impression on the people and filled them with dismay. The challenger appeared from day to day without having his proposition accepted.

Verse 12. All Bible students understand that much of the inspired writings will not conform to the chronological order of events. This fact should be considered in the case at hand. Verses 19-23 of the previous chapter, and verse 2 of chapter 18, should be placed after the events of this chapter. The personal identity of David and the description of his talents and influence are there given.

Verses 13, 14. Following the practice of nations in warfare, the oldest sons of a family were sent into the field of battle, while the others would be retained at home for family duties. Thus these three sons of Jesse were in the field of battle.

Verse 15. A brief explanation will be in order here in view of the remarks in a preceding paragraph. The main body of this narrative belongs

before the permanent drafting of David for personal service under Saul. In the meantime there is indication that David had been sent for at special times just for his service as musician, and then he would be permitted to return to his daily task as a shepherd. So this verse is a sort of interpolation into the regular trend of things.

Verse 16. The period of constant terror lasted forty days in which no one had the courage or ability to accept the challenge of Goliath.

Verses 17, 18. Jesse was interested in the war, and especially interested in the welfare of his sons as all natural fathers would be, and for their benefit he wished to send supplies to them and their superior in battle. *Take their pledge.* The last word means, "token of safety." It signified that Jesse wanted to have some assurance that his sons were safe.

Verse 19. This verse gives us the information that while no one had accepted the challenge of the champion, yet the war otherwise was going on.

Verse 20. David obeyed his father and took the stuff to the area of the battle. He came to the trench, which means the field headquarters, where the stuff would be kept. Just as he arrived the unit was leaving with shouts of war to make an attack.

Verses 21, 22. Upon hearing and seeing this, David placed his carriage (the things he carried) in the hands of the regular custodian of those things and went into the area of the battle.

Verse 23. As he came into the midst of the soldiers, the champion made one of his accustomed appearances with the challenge and David heard it.

Verse 24. The people shrank away from fear at this, but no sign of fear upon the part of David was shown.

Verse 25. So helpless did the children of Israel feel in the matter of Goliath that great inducements were offered to urge someone to accept the challenge. His reward was to consist of money, marriage, and permanent freedom from all servitude.

Verses 26, 27. David thought he overheard the announcement of proposed reward for the conqueror of Goliath, but perhaps he was mistaken. He made personal inquiry and was told after the same words that he had thought he overheard.

Verse 28. This speech of Eliab was

certainly inspired by jealousy. He spoke what was untrue about David's purpose for coming there as the record shows. David did not know anything of what he would find when he left home. But it often happens in this world that true greatness in one person is so evident that others who do not possess like qualities will envy him and try to weaken the situation by false accusations. The fact that none of the regular army had the courage to even maintain good order in the hearing of the champion, while this youth was not only unafraid but making personal inquiry, roused Eliab to the jealous speech.

Verse 29. David in effect denied the petty accusation. His question meant, "Is there not a reason for my being here?" And the reader will answer that in the affirmative by referring to verse 17.

Verses 30, 31. David did not let the little conduct of his jealous brother cause him to drop his interest. He turned from him to another with the same inquiry and was given the same answer as before. This conversation finally came to the ears of Saul and he sent for him.

Verse 32. David evidently knew that legal battle action even in time of war must be taken under proper enlistment or commission, therefore he offered his services to the king and agreed to take up the challenge of the champion.

Verse 33. Considering the subject from human knowledge and appearance, Saul thought of the offer as being out of the question. The great difference between the physical qualifications of the two would make the contest one of mere sacrifice for David.

Verses 35-36. David was not discouraged, yet he was respectful and proposed to furnish concrete evidence of his ability to cope with the monster. He cited the case wherein he killed a lion and a bear. There was no speculative theory about such evidence. If he could thus overcome those vicious and strong creatures, he surely can this other enemy. And the greatest of motives was present in this case. The challenger had defied the armies of the living God. That expresses a principle that holds good today. Whoever defies God's work should be regarded as an enemy of God's people.

Verse 37. In this verse David gave the secret of his hopes for victory. It

was the Lord who had given him the victory in the other contests and would do so again. With this argument Saul was convinced and told the young man to go with the Lord's help.

Verses 38, 39. The word *armor* here means clothing or wearing apparel. Saul put it on David and then also put the metal covering on him. Then David further equipped himself by attaching his sword to the outfit. The word *assayed* is from *YAAI* and its outstanding definition is, "to undertake as an action of volition." The word *proved* is from *NACAH* and is defined, "to test." The thought in the passage is that David had a willingness to go in this outfit, but it had been willingness only as to his attitude of mind and not a final conclusion actually to go. As soon as he realized that he had not tested the equipment he concluded it was no time to wear an outfit that had not been tested by him; he put them off from him.

Verse 40. The critic may ask why David took five stones if he had so much faith in God. Well, David knew that the Lord helps those who help themselves. He did not know how many attacks would be required before victory would be given to him; therefore, the logical thing to do was to be prepared to cooperate with God.

Verse 41. The challenger and his armor bearer came on to the attack, the latter going before his master as his protector.

Verse 42. Goliath disdained him which means that he had a belittling feeling toward him. He thought him to be an inferior antagonist because of his youthful appearance, being ruddy and fair in complexion.

Verse 43. Verse 40 stated that David took his staff in his hand. This was merely a walking stick and not intended as a weapon at all. But the Philistine thought (or pretended to think) that he was intending it as part of his equipment for battle and thus he felt insulted. A man might take a club if he were going after a brute beast, but surely not if against a dignified fighter like this challenger. With such a feeling he called for the curses of his god upon David.

Verse 44. This is the language of a braggart and bully and not that of a brave man.

Verse 45. In this verse David contrasts the equipments of the antagonists. His mention of a spear throws

light on the comments at verse 6. The giant depended on the physical strength of his armor and weapons while David relied on the very God whose armies had been insulted and defied.

Verse 46. David prefaced his warning of destructive victory over the Philistine with his reliance on the Lord. With this assurance he announced that his combatant would be disarmed and his body given to the same beasts mentioned in the boast of the giant. And the glorious motive for all this is revealed in the last words of the verse.

Verse 47. If the challenger is killed he will not realize his defeat, but the assembly will, and will be forced to know that the Lord does not rely on human means for his victories although he uses them through man. That is because he wishes man to have a part in the divine work.

Verses 48, 49. The attack now went forward. David did not wait for the giant to make the entire move but ran toward the army since the contender was in that position. The word *smote* is from נָקָה and defined by Strong, "a primitive root; to strike (lightly or severely, literally or figuratively)." I have quoted this definition to assist in understanding the passage, as it is sometimes made to be confusing as to whether the stone actually killed him or that it was the sword that did it. But it is not necessary to be specific on the subject. The word strictly means only that the stone struck the Philistine in the forehead. But as the result finally was his death, it could be said that the stone killed him. And yet it is stated that he drew the sword and slew him. The proper view of the whole matter is that all of the items involved in the action should be given proper credit for the death of Goliath.

Verse 50. By falling the giant with the stone David prevailed over him. But the mere fact of bringing him to the ground might not alone have brought his death. There would remain the work of making sure by beheading him. That would require a sword, something David did not have since he had discarded all such weapons upon discovery that he could not use the outfit offered him by Saul.

Verse 51. The Philistine was down and helpless. David therefore ran and stood upon him. We have previously learned about a practice of placing the feet in the necks of the enemies. Here

is a similar action. The severing of the head from the body would be conclusive evidence to the Philistines of the defeat of their champion even had the work of the stone not been fatal. At the sight of it they fled. But there is no indication they intended to comply with the terms of the challenger, for he had stipulated that if he were killed then his people would submit to the Israelites.

Verses 52, 53. Israel and Judah are named again as being distinguished. See comments on this at Ch. 11: 8. The defeat of the giant had thrown the Philistines into a rout with panic and the pursuing Israelites wounded many of them in the flight. This made the present action very decisive in the war between the two peoples.

Verse 54. Bringing the head of the fallen foe into the city of Jerusalem was very much on the principle of the "triumphs" often carried out in ancient times by victorious warriors, while the act of depositing the armor of the foe in his tent was in the nature of storing a trophy as a keepsake.

Verses 55-58. For explanation of this passage please see the comments at verse 12.

1 SAMUEL 18

Verse 1. This describes a personal attachment that sprang up between David and Jonathan which continued undiminished as long as they lived and will figure largely in the history to come.

Verse 2. Again let the reader read comments at verse 12 of previous chapter.

Verses 3, 4. This exchange of apparel and weapons was only a demonstration of the deep affection which Jonathan had for David.

Verse 5. Saul, having taken David into his permanent service, sent him out on various missions. The words *behaved* and *wisely* are from the same original word סָכַל and defined by Strong as follows: "to be (causatively, make or act) circumspect and hence intelligent." The margin here gives us the word prospered. This is a true conclusion as to the result of such behaviour, for verses 14, 15 and 30 indicates such a conclusion. But the idea should be retained that the inspired writer in this verse wishes to state the manner of David's actions. And as a result of this conduct he was acceptable in the sight of the people

generally. This fact will be evident in more than one way later on in our story.

Verses 6-8. This passage signifies the beginning of the enmity between Saul and David. The terms of the number of slain are figurative since neither of the men had slain the number stated, but the comparison was what angered Saul and filled him with the feeling of envy and pride. It also indicated to him that perhaps the time might come when popular sentiment would call for David to be king.

Verse 9. The word *eyed* means, "to watch (with jealousy)" according to Strong.

Verses 10, 11. This evil spirit that came on Saul was the affliction described at Ch. 16:14 which see. The word *prophesied* here means that Saul was singing while David was playing on the harp. But the playing of David this time was not sufficient to allay the feeling of terror so he attempted to kill him with a javelin, which was a small spear. He intended to pin him to the wall with the weapon and made two moves for that purpose. But David was too quick for him and escaped both times.

Verse 12. Saul was afraid of David. This was a kind of regard for his influence and a recognition of his superiority. And this feeling was important since it was based on the observation that God was with David and not with Saul.

Verse 13. In his fear of David, also his jealousy, Saul removed him from his personal service and demoted him from the rank credited him by the women and gave him a command over a thousand men.

Verse 14. This did not cause David to swerve from his proper conduct which continued to bring him prosperity in his endeavors.

Verse 15. See comments at verses 5 on *behaved* and *wisely*. When Saul saw that David was successful on account of his prudent conduct, it made him all the more afraid.

Verse 16. *Israel and Judah*. See Ch. 11:8 on this expression. David was loved by the people because he was evidently doing them faithful service.

Verse 17. The enmity of Saul for David was never cured although at times he professed it to be. He was ever plotting his downfall although he declined to destroy him personally if it could be accomplished otherwise. As

a preliminary for such an end, he made an offer of marriage with his elder daughter. It was the rule for the elder daughter to be given in marriage first and thus it might seem to be a sincere action to make this proposition of honor to the young soldier. The inspired writer is telling the reader what was in the mind of Saul as he was making the proposition. This is what is meant by the last sentence of the verse.

Verses 18, 19. David believed Saul to be in earnest about the offer of marriage, but declined the offer as being unworthy of the honor. That is, he felt that his social standing did not entitle him to the place in the family of the king. And as he thus declined the offer of marriage, the daughter was given to another man to be his wife. There was no indication that she was interested in the match with David anyway.

Verse 20. But in some manner it was known that another daughter, Michal, loved David. This fact was revealed to Saul, although no evidence was present that David knew anything about her sentiment in his favor. But it suggested to the hypocritical mind of Saul that a still better opportunity would be furnished through her than it would have been through the other daughter.

Verse 21. *And Saul said*. But he did not say this outwardly. See comments on the latter part of verse 17. So he again proposed marriage for David and at this time suggested that one of his other daughters become his wife.

Verses 22, 23. The match was to be effected through the servants. They made the offer to David on behalf of the king and he declined on the same basis that he did the first time, when it was made by Saul personally.

Verses 24, 25. The servants had not told David all of the propositions yet, but now they did so. It was customary in those days for a man to give a present to the proposed wife which was called a dowry. According to Smith's Bible Dictionary this was to confirm the betrothal, hence it furnished a seeming occasion for the proposition of Saul in this case. David had professed his poverty and hence unworthiness of being related to the king. Now he is told that no money will be expected. Instead, he could meet the usual custom by an act that would not satisfy the social demand

only, but also fit in with what was supposed to be a matter in which they both were interested; the destruction of their common enemies, the Philistines. However, Saul will not trust to the mere report that a hundred Philistines have been slain. He might be deceived as to their actual death. So if he required the foreskins, that would be evidence that the men had been slain. His expectation, however, was that in attempting to take the Philistines David would himself be slain, and that was what Saul wished.

Verse 26. The outward appearance here is that David wished to be son-in-law to the king, while the inner motive was that he had the desire to attack the inveterate enemies of his God. *Days were not expired.* This means that the offer made in verse 21 still was standing.

Verse 27. Upon the proposal from Saul the next thing was to make the attack. David took his men with him and doubled the required number by slaying two hundred of the Philistines. He brought the mutilated parts to Saul. There was now no pretense for refusing his daughter, and the match was made and Saul was again defeated in his wicked designs against David.

Verses 28, 29. All this confirmed the fears of Saul that David not only was loved by his wife, but that the Lord was with him. This increased his enmity for him and he continued ever after to be his enemy.

Verse 30. Even the prince of the Philistines recognized the superiority of David's conduct and success. *Set by.* This is expressed in the margin as "precious." That is, the very mention of the name David brought forth respect even from his enemies.

1 SAMUEL 19

Verse 1. Saul knew that his son and others were nearer to David now than he, and would have more opportunities to do him bodily harm. In his wicked jealousy he asked them to kill him. Nothing but the lowest depths of evil rage could have caused this.

Verse 2. Jonathan had no intention of obeying his father's orders, but he knows the hatred Saul has for David and considers that he is in constant danger from him personally and should always be on the alert. He warns David accordingly.

Verse 3. However, Jonathan proposed to make a test of the case on

the morrow to see if Saul's rage had abated any. This he would do by bringing up the subject directly while in the field where David would be hiding. If it should be that his father had seen his wrong and was willing to treat him as he should, it would be an easy matter to show it, since he would be near and could come from his hiding.

Verses 4-7. The experiment worked out as Jonathan planned. He spoke to his father about David and cited the fact that he had been true and faithful as a servant, and had always been friendly toward him. Also that he had even risked his life in his fight with the champion of the enemy people. Saul agreed with the plea and David was called from his hiding and permitted to be in the presence of the king again for a time.

Verse 8. Another action now came in the war, and, as before, David went out and slew so many of the Philistines that they fled from his face.

Verses 9, 10. But the spirit of envy was ever present with Saul. And the spirit of affliction that we have already learned about was sent upon him as his punishment. When that condition came upon him, his faithful servant, David, was called to allay his terror with the harp. While the playing of the harp might soothe his afflictions, it was not intended to change his moral conduct. Hence, even while David was administering to his physical or nervous suffering, he was mindful of the superiority in conflict shown by the player. This roused his envy again and he forgot all his good promises. With the javelin or spear which he held he attempted to kill David; the attempt failed and David escaped.

Verse 11. In the night David came to his own house and prepared to repose. But Saul sent his men to the place intending to capture him in the morning. His wife was aware of the danger and warned him to flee, even from his own house.

Verse 12. She showed the sincerity of her warning by assisting him to escape by a window so that he could flee.

Verse 13. Michal expected them to come finally to take him by force. Perhaps, if she could make them believe that he was sick, they would have the heart to leave. For this purpose she took an image. This is defined by Strong as "a family idol." It

was an object in the form of a human being and she placed it on a pillow of goat's hair and made it appear as if it were David there in the bed.

Verse 14. Sure enough, the servants of Saul came to take David and upon her report that he was sick they left and returned to Saul with the report. All this gave David more time for getting away to a place of safety.

Verse 15. The wickedness of Saul would permit no sympathy; he commanded that the sick man be brought to him in his bed. How different this case from that of the palsied man brought in a bed to Jesus; that was for his recovery, this for destruction.

Verse 16. The servants attempted to obey the orders of their chief, but had to report to him their disappointment.

Verse 17. We know from the language of the preceding verse that Michal made a false statement here. On this kind of situation see comments at Joshua 2. Another thing to be considered here is that David was in war with the Philistines and his life and services were needed for the conflict. Thus on the basis of strategy it would be just for Michal to deceive her father.

Verse 18. David escaped and came to Samuel and related his experience. On such information they fled and went to Naioth.

Verses 19, 20. Saul learned of the whereabouts of David and sent messengers to take him there. But upon the approach to the place they found that he was in the company of Samuel and that other prophets were there also. At this point the spirit of God came upon them and they joined in the activities of Samuel and the other prophets. This is a similar circumstance to that of Balaam in Numbers 23.

Verse 21. The report came back to Saul, but he was not discouraged in his evil designs and sent other messengers. This was like the act of Balak in Numbers 22: 15. But these other messengers were taken over by the Lord also.

Verse 22. Saul still is not convinced of his folly. This time he thought to carry out his plans more successfully by going himself. Coming into the neighborhood, he asked for and received information as to the location of David and Samuel.

Verse 23. The spirit of God that came upon Saul was not the evil one

of affliction already known to us. It was the one directly of the Lord that inspired him to prophesy. This is not the only instance where God forced a wicked man to speak the truth. See the case of Balaam in Numbers 23. At various times in the past, God has used characters who were not his true servants, and at times those who were not even professed servants, to carry out his plans. But it should be borne in mind that in no case did that forced service make any change in the moral status of that person either for good or bad. The Persian king Cyrus was already a good man before God used him and thus was not changed in character by the special use God made of him. Pharaoh was a wicked man before the evil deeds against the Israelites and therefore was not made to be an evil man by the service God brought from him. It was thus in the case of Saul. God used him here as an instrument to show his divine power, but it did not have any reforming effect upon him.

Verse 24. In olden times persons wore outer garments generally. The outer was for more complete comfort and protection, and the inner was worn alone in times of special activity. These inner garments also were worn alone in times of either distress or humility. (Ex. 32: 25). For information on this point a partial quotation will be made from Smith's Bible Dictionary, article Dress: "1. The inner garment was the most essential article of dress. It was a closely fitting garment, resembling in form and use our shirt, though unfortunately translated 'coat' in the A. V. The material of which it was made was either wool, cotton or linen. It was without sleeves, and reached only to the knees. Another kind reached to the wrists and ankles. It was in either case kept close to the body by a girdle, and the fold formed by the overlapping of the robe served as an inner pocket. A person wearing the inner garment alone was described as *naked*." This description would apply to Saul in this instance.

1 SAMUEL 20

Verse 1. David was weary of hiding out and decided to expose himself to any charge that could be made against him and take the consequences. For this purpose he came to Jonathan as his good friend and also the one to carry his case to Saul.

Verse 2. Jonathan's usual intimacy with the plans of his father prompted him to tell David that he was not in such immediate danger since nothing on the subject had been told him. On this basis he tried to comfort David.

Verse 3. David tells Jonathan that Saul certainly knows of their close attachment and for that reason he perhaps would not let Jonathan know his plans. Therefore, David still fears that death is only a "step" away.

Verse 4. Jonathan did not wish to resist the desires of his friend if he had any plans in mind for his own safety, thus he gave him permission to express himself.

Verse 5. The occasion for testing the plan David had in mind was the feast of the new moon. A reading of Num. 28: 11 will show that each new moon meant a time of religious activity among the Israelites. While the proper officials were performing their work at the altar, others would be engaged in feasts in their own homes in honor of the season. The significance of this period as to date will be noted more in later verses of this chapter. David knew that he would be expected to appear with the family at this feast, since he was at this time a part of the family circle of Saul, but he proposed to hide in a field nearby.

Verse 6. There would not be anything irregular as far as the law was concerned in the fact that David wished to be with his own family at this sacrifice or feast. (Deut. 12: 21.) However, since he was now in the personal service of the king it might be regarded as his duty to be at his feast, and if he should be missed and inquired for the answer proposed would be a test of the king's temper with reference to him.

Verse 7. The reply that Saul would make was to determine, for the time, what the prospects were of peace with David.

Verse 8. Even with the close personal friendship between David and Jonathan, it was not desired to lead Jonathan into any conspiracy against his father if there was any real charge against David. If that were the case he would submit his lot to Jonathan directly for execution.

Verses 9, 10. Jonathan affirmed his friendship for David again and promised to tell him everything pertaining to his interests. Then David asked for

more specific information as to when and how the plan was to be worked.

Verse 11. As the field was to be the place where the transaction would be put into effect, it was appropriate to go there for their present pact of friendship.

Verse 12. To sound his father meant that he would try out the plan mentioned in verse 6. If the reaction was favorable then he bound himself to show it to David.

Verse 13. If it should be unfavorable, still Jonathan declared that he would make it known to David. *Lord do so* is an expression often used in the Scripture. It meant that what the Lord would do to Saul as punishment for his mistreatment of David, he should do the like to Jonathan if he failed of his duty to David in telling him.

Verses 14, 15. Jonathan evidently expected David to survive the present distress and live on, even after the immediate families of Jonathan and Saul were gone. On such account he wished to provide for the future good treatment of their descendants by enlisting the friendship of David, and to do this it was necessary to help save him from the present wrath of Saul. The time did come when this service was performed for the house of Jonathan by David. (2 Sam. 9: 3, 7.)

Verse 16. The agreement was made that David was to continue kindness to the descendants of Jonathan. It was stipulated that if David broke the covenant, then the Lord would require it, or bring punishment on David through the instrumentality of his enemies.

Verse 17. The severe terms stated in the preceding verse were agreed to by David, and the reason he was willing to agree to them was his very strong love for Jonathan. This love never did abate toward him or his surviving family.

Verses 18, 19. The time for the scheme was near. Jonathan seemed to consider it would require the third day of absence to attract the attention of his father, hence he told David to come after that period to the place selected for hiding.

Verses 20-22. The casual performance of the lad with Jonathan and the arrows was to be the code agreed upon by the two.

Verse 23. This was merely another way of expressing the fact that an

oath for faithfulness was between them in the sight of the Lord.

Verse 24. The idea to be noted carefully in this verse is that it was the time of the new moon.

Verses 25, 26. All through the first day of the feast, David's seat was vacant. But Saul did not think very strange of it. The Israelites were not permitted to partake of the religious feasts if something had occurred to make them unclean, and the king just concluded that such was the case with David.

Verse 27. Saul did not wait until the third day, the day that was to terminate by waiting in the field, to express his feeling about David. Yet it would naturally require some time to make the further preparations with the lad for the plan, so the agreement was to wait until the third day for its completeness. In this verse is the thought promised in verse 5. We know from the connection that the events of this verse were the next day after the new moon. And yet it is called the second day of the month. This proves that the month was started with the appearance of the new moon. David was still missing. But now it could not be accounted for on the basis of uncleanness, for the provision was made in the law that a state of uncleanness need not continue longer than the evening of the same day. (Lev. 11: 24, 25, 27, 31, 32.) Therefore, Saul was induced to make inquiry of Jonathan since he knew of the intimate association between the two and Jonathan doubtless would know about David.

Verses 28, 29. The answer was given Saul which had been agreed upon by the two friends. Yes, it was a deceptive answer, to be sure, and no special blessing was ever pronounced upon David or Jonathan because of this kind of conduct. It was in spite of it. We must not forget that David is the anointed king to come next, and his preservation would come under the principles of war since Saul had been trying to destroy him. It was necessary to take some means for his safety. Another thing that should be kept in mind is this: in none of the cases where people were blessed, even though they had made false statements, did any good person suffer from the effects of the falsehood. In the eyes of secular law even, a perjury is not considered unless a falsehood resulted in the injury of someone. In this instance no

good person was injured, instead, a good man was benefited and preserved for the service of God.

Verses 30, 31. The reaction was as David feared. The word *woman* is in italics and not in the original. Neither is it appropriate in this connection. The language at the close of verse 30 indicates that no blame is laid on his mother, but rather that she is also disgraced by the conduct of her son. The correct rendering would be to say that Jonathan is a son or creature of rebelliousness. He further made the rash declaration that the destruction of David would be necessary in the interests of his (Jonathan's) political welfare. So Saul demanded that David be brought and slain.

Verse 32. Before giving up in despair for David's welfare, Jonathan tried to placate his father by placing him "on the spot," in calling for specific charges of misconduct in David.

Verse 33. Knowing that no such citation could be made, Saul showed his bitter feeling and determination of harm for David by attempting the death of Jonathan. This convinced Jonathan that nothing favorable for David could be expected.

Verse 34. Jonathan lost his taste for the feast and he arose from the table in anger, but did nothing more that day with regard to David.

Verses 35, 36. The plan with the lad and arrows was now arranged for the next day, which was the third day of the month. As a mere action of diversion he told the lad to bring the arrows back to him. The lad started to run to the supposed place of the target and, as he ran, Jonathan shot an arrow with aim that carried it beyond him, or overran his speed. Naturally the lad would be looking for the arrow, and, as a casual remark, Jonathan told him to go on further to find the arrow.

Verses 37, 38. Jonathan spoke to the lad as if he were eager for the arrows to shoot again, and for him to come back speedily. He obeyed his master, not knowing what all of the action meant.

Verses 38-40. Since the lad was unaware of the significance of all this, he would not think strange when given the artillery or instruments and told to carry them into the city. A question born of curiosity is sometimes asked here. Why did they go through with all this formality when no one was concerned in the affair but the two

friends? Why not just come together at the start and impart the information? We will not speculate very much on this for it is not important. When this plan was agreed upon between them it was not known who else might be present that would make it unsafe for David to show up, but he could get the warning by hearing the conversation between Jonathan and the lad. And when the time came, Jonathan would not know the exact spot where David was hiding, thus he could find him only by the plan used. Since this specific plan had been agreed upon, if Jonathan should alter it materially by leaving the lad and the arrows out of the case, David might be confused in his fright.

Verse 41. David had overheard all and came out of his hiding and met Jonathan. He performed the custom of the East by prostrating himself before him in recognition of his fidelity in carrying out the covenant. The emotions of David were more expressive than those of Jonathan.

Verse 42. It was agreed that David should leave that community, and Jonathan wished the blessing of the Lord upon him and reaffirmed the covenant that was between them concerning the future of their kindred.

1 SAMUEL 21

Verse 1. The city of Nob was in the possession of Benjamin and one of the places where the ark rested. There were many many priests there at our present time of the story, and for that reason it was called a sacerdotal city. (Ch. 22: 19.) Since verse 4 mentions the presence of men, the statement that no man was with David would have some special meaning. There was no man in any official or orderly capacity with him; the men mentioned below were some comrades unofficially associated with him.

Verse 2. Another instance of false statement appears here. Well, let the reader again consider the thoughts suggested at Ch. 20: 28, 29.

Verse 3. As David asked for a specified number of loaves we can justly conclude he had that many of these personal associates with him. They were hungry, and David requested the priest to give him of whatever he had.

Verse 4. This was the bread that had been on the table of shewbread. Consult Lev. 24: 5-9. This bread was replaced each Sabbath, and that which

had been on the table for a week then became the food for the priest who was in active service. This was the bread that was eaten in the present instance, and not the bread on the table. (Matt. 12: 3, 4.) While this bread had already served its original purpose by being on the table for a week, still it would be considered as hallowed bread. This was because its temporal use was considered the right of the priests only, but an emergency existed which would make it lawful for others to eat of it. This principle was recognized by Christ in the reference cited above. But this bread must not be used by any who have lately been connected with physical activities that rendered them ceremonially unclean. Such a condition would result from intimate relation with the opposite sex.

Verse 5. This verse has been rendered in various ways, but the thought evidently is that the young men were worthy to eat of the bread because they had not become unclean in the manner stipulated by the priest. As a physical reason for making the claim, David said it had been three days since they had left their homes and the women. Also, since the bread had been already used in the holy service it now could be considered in a manner common.

Verse 6. Upon the plea and explanation of David the priest gave him of this bread, and the statement was made that is explained in Lev. 24: 9.

Verse 7. It would appear just at this verse that nothing but an insignificant event was meant by the mention of this Edomite who was a servant of Saul. But its connection will come to our attention before long.

Verse 8. The statement of David as to his lack of military equipment agrees with remarks made at verse 1 of this chapter.

Verse 9. How Goliath's sword came to be in this place is not stated. After the duel with Goliath, David had taken Goliath's armor to his tent, but nothing was said then of this weapon or what was done with it. But when it was offered to him at this time he was pleased, and said it was unlike any other. Reflection on his victory over the champion was the motive for the remark.

Verse 10. Fear of Saul was still in the mind of David, and he fled to Achish, king of the Philistines, who

was located at Gath. Gath was one of the royal cities of the Philistines, and the city of the giant.

Verses 11, 12. When he came to this city the citizens recognized him and reported him to their king. They also referred to the fame concerning his accomplishments in battle. He overheard the remarks and took them under consideration. Since Achish was a Philistine and thus a friend of the giant whom David had slain, he might be resentful over the affair. This thought made him fear the king.

Verse 13. As a means of diverting attention from his ability in combat, David began the pretense of being mad or insane. He scrambled or marked on the gate posts; he also made as if he were frothing at the mouth.

Verses 14, 15. The king of Gath was convinced that David had lost his mind, and was glad to have him out of the community. This took place as we will soon learn.

1 SAMUEL 22

Verse 1. In speaking of the vicinity of Adullam, Smith's Bible Dictionary says, "The limestone cliffs of the whole of that locality are pierced with extensive excavations, some one of which is doubtless the 'cave of Adullam' the refuge of David." His father and brethren heard of his hiding place and went to him there.

Verse 2. The place became a resort for various classes of disgruntled persons. It is a common trait of man to become bitter against society over his own misfortunes, whether those be on account of his personal mistakes or otherwise. About four hundred of these folk fled to David and he assumed a place as captain over them.

Verses 3, 4. With such a mob of disquieted people with him he did not consider it a very satisfactory place for his father and mother, so he left the place long enough to make other arrangements for them. He went into the country of Moab to the city of Mizpeh and requested a place of safety for them until he could know the outcome of his present situation. The request was granted and his parents remained at Mizpeh all the while he was in the hold or the cave.

Verse 5. The prophet Gad came and advised David not to remain in this hold, but to depart and go into the land of Judah, which he did.

Verse 6. Saul seems to have been

at a loss to know David's whereabouts, but now it has been revealed to him where David and his men are. All the meantime Saul has been in a state of defense.

Verse 7. This is a plaintive cry for sympathy and bid for support on the basis of temporal advantages. It implies that citizens should support the man who could give them the greatest amount of money or land regardless of principles involved.

Verse 8. With what we have learned in the account, we know that Saul spoke what was not true against Jonathan; David's actions had not been instigated by Jonathan. It was true, however, that Jonathan recognized the wrong in his father's actions and the righteousness of David's, but it was false to state that he was helping David in any unlawful attempt against the king.

Verses 9, 10. This paragraph takes us back to the events of the preceding chapter. There it did not seem of much significance to mention the presence of this man Doeg, but his eyes and ears were open, and now we behold him as a talebearer. What he here stated was the truth, but told at a time and under circumstances that made a bad impression on Saul. As here reported it gave the appearance that the priest had acted in the interest of the king's enemies, whereas we know that it was not the case. In fact, David had led the priest to believe that he was there on behalf of the king. With that in view, it would make the motive of the priest in assisting him the very best. The whole circumstance gives us a signal illustration of how even a truth, when related without proper connections, may make a false impression.

Verse 11. Upon the report of Doeg, Saul summoned Ahimelech and all the other priests that were in Nob and they came to him. This fact should have convinced Saul that they had not designed any insurrection against him. Had they been doing so they would not have come to his presence; instead, they would have gone elsewhere.

Verses 12, 13. Upon arriving in the presence of the king, Ahimelech was accused in the matter of David, and asked for an explanation.

Verse 14. Ahimelech was still unaware of the gravity of his position. In explaining his attentions to David he reminded the king that David was

the most faithful of his servants, and that in assisting him he considered it as an act of regard for the king.

Verse 15. This verse means that he was so sure of the faithfulness of David to his master that he never once thought it necessary to make any investigation about it.

Verse 16. Following his form of action for the last few months, Saul became enraged and pronounced the sentence of death on the priest and all his associates.

Verse 17. The footmen here were the bodyguard of the king. The command from him to attack the priests was too awful for their approval, even though they were under the highest authority in the realm. They therefore refused to obey the cruel order.

Verse 18. This Edomite could have no logical objection to obeying the order of the king, since he had but lately shown such interest in him as to tattle about the affair at Nob. Therefore he obeyed and killed 85 men of the priestly family.

Verse 19. Saul was not satisfied with slaying these men of the priestly class who appeared before him in Gibeah; the city of the priests also was attacked and all of its inhabitants from adult to infant were murdered.

Verse 20. Frequently a statement of mass destruction will be made in the Scripture, and then an exception will be made. (Judg. 9: 5; 2 Ki. 11: 1, 2.) One man named Abiathar escaped in this general destruction.

Verse 21. Having escaped, Abiathar fled to David and told the awful news.

Verse 22. Now the memory of David goes back to the occasion of his coming to Nob. At that time he concluded that a report of the conversation would get back to Saul, although there was no reason for him to know what the full consequence would be. Now that it has borne fruit, David blames himself for the death of all the priests, and mentions it to Abiathar in a form of speech that could be interpreted as an apology.

Verse 23. David cannot bring back to life the priests who have been slain through an occasion of his, although he can partly atone for it by furnishing protection to the one remaining member of the sacerdotal class. With this idea in mind, he told Abiathar that their interests would be identical, and that with him there would be safety.

1 SAMUEL 23

Verse 1. David and his men had fled the cave of Adullam because of fear of the Philistines. Now word came to him that a certain city in Judah was being attacked, and the products of the field robbed.

Verse 2. He inquired of the Lord whether he should make the attempt to recover the city and was told to do so.

Verse 3. The language might mislead the reader into thinking that Keilah was not in Judah. The comparison the men made was not between *where* the attack was to take place. It was the thought, rather, of being *in Judah*, let alone becoming the aggressor against the Philistines.

Verse 4. This necessitated another inquiry of the Lord by David, and he was given assurance of victory over the enemy.

Verse 5. It turned out as the Lord had promised, for David defeated the enemy in the city of Keilah and saved it.

Verse 6. This verse belongs, chronologically, after the last verse of the preceding chapter. Abiathar had fled and was with David in Keilah. He arrived there about the time that the battle against the Philistines in the city took place. Being of the priestly group, he was entitled to have in his possession an ephod, which was part of the garments of their class.

Verses 7, 8. The news reached Saul that David was in the city of Keilah and he concluded that God had lured David into that place as a cage to give him opportunity to take him. Accordingly, Saul called for his people to compose a siege of it.

Verse 9. David was aware of the treacherous actions of Saul, and wished to have reliable information concerning his prospects. We have previously learned (Lev. 10: 11; Deut. 17: 9) that the priest was an authorized medium of communication with God; Abiathar was therefore brought into service for that purpose.

Verses 10, 11. David's first inquiry was merely whether Saul would come down to take him in Keilah, and he was told that Saul would come down.

Verse 12. The next point was whether the men of the city would turn him over to Saul, even though he had saved their city for them. He was told they would do so.

Verses 13-15. Having been warned

of the intentions of Saul, David fled from Kellah with his men and hid in dens in the mountains. Saul made daily search for him but the Lord shielded him. This was because David was righteous and Saul was unrighteous.

Verses 16-18. Jonathan heard of the whereabouts of David and went to him to give him encouragement. He assured him that his father would not find him and that he would be king; also that his father was aware of this fact. After this friendly visit with David he returned to his own house.

Verses 19, 20. The Ziphites were inhabitants of the town of Ziph, which was in the near vicinity where David was hiding. These people informed Saul of the presence of his enemy in their neighborhood. They promised also to assist him in capturing David.

Verses 21, 22. Saul was much built up over this show of sympathy for him, and asked the blessing of the Lord upon him. However, he requested more definite information be obtained as to his present location with the warning that David was reported to have acted very cunningly in his movements.

Verse 23. Saul did not want to lose any time or activities in chasing David. He wished these friends of his to run that risk, therefore he instructed them to make diligent search and take notice of all David's hiding places. Then, when they have actually found him, they should pass the information on to Saul and he would make a forward move.

Verse 24. While these conversations were going on, David and his men had gone into the wilderness of Maon, so that he eluded his pursuers.

Verse 25. David had feared that Saul and his bodyguard were pursuing and that was why he had fled to the wilderness of Maon.

Verse 26. The chase continued with Saul in pursuit of David, a mountain being between them.

Verse 27, 28. Saul was now diverted from his chase by report of an invasion into the land by the Philistines.

Verse 29. At this time David changed his hiding place, and came to the strongholds of Engedi, which will be noticed further in the next chapter.

1 SAMUEL 24

Verses 1, 2. Saul made a short chase after the Philistines, then resumed his

hunt for David. In this wilderness of Engedi were hiding places among the rocks and other kinds of surface of the earth. Saul had a force of three thousand men with him.

Verse 3. There was a cave in the community where David was hiding, and he took refuge therein. It happened that Saul went in there to attend to the call of nature, and David was hidden in the side of the cave unseen by Saul.

Verse 4. The men with David thought the situation was one purposely brought about by the Lord to help get the victory over Saul. It influenced David to the extent that while Saul was occupied with caring for the needs of the body, he slipped up privately and cut off part of the skirt of Saul's garment.

Verse 5. Afterward, David regretted doing even that much against Saul as will be explained in the next verse.

Verse 6. The motive for David's regret was that Saul was the Lord's anointed. He recognized the principle that as long as a man was in the authority of God's institution, he should be respected. The same idea is in the speech of Christ in Matt. 23: 1.

Verse 7. With this explanation, David prevented his men from doing Saul any bodily harm. Having finished his sanitary office of body, Saul arose and left the place.

Verse 8. David decided to use the circumstance as evidence to Saul that he was not his personal enemy, and that he did not intend any harm against him. After the distance between them made it safe, he called to Saul and got his attention.

Verses 9, 10. David made a general statement of the falsity of the reports that had come to Saul to the effect that he meant to do him harm. He further told Saul that his own men had bidden him smite him, and that he had prevented them from harming Saul.

Verse 11. General statements are not enough when so important an issue is at stake, therefore, David called Saul's attention to the part of the garment now in his hand. That would be positive evidence that he had been near enough to have killed him had that been his purpose. Apparently Saul had not missed the severed part.

Verse 12. We are not to conclude from David's treatment of Saul that he was excusing him in any of his

mistakes. That was not the case. But he still recognized Saul as being the Lord's constituted official, and therefore to be respected. Furthermore, he expected the Lord to bring the proper punishment on Saul when the time came. This same thought is taught in Rom. 12: 19.

Verse 13. David then quoted a proverb that had been said by ancient people. That proverb is not in the Bible and thus we have another instance where outside literature is cited in connection with the inspired sayings. For other like places see Josh. 10: 13; 2 Sam. 1: 18; Acts 17: 28. This gives us the authority of examples to refer to evidence not in the Bible when it confirms or explains some of its statements.

Verse 14. David's reference to a dead dog or a flea is merely his way of saying that Saul's notion of David's being his personal enemy is purely a creature of imagination.

Verse 15. In harmony with his previous statement, David said that he would rely on the Lord to bring him the justice due.

Verse 16. Saul recognized the voice of David, and necessarily had to know that he had escaped from him when he had it in his power to kill him. For the present he was made to feel ashamed, and he wept.

Verse 17. Saul admitted that David had returned him good for evil. This is in harmony with the teaching of Paul in Rom. 12: 21.

Verse 18. Saul accounted the situation as an act of the Lord, in bringing him into a position where David could have smitten him had he been so minded.

Verse 19. The question in the beginning of this verse is the same as a positive declaration. It is as if he said that a man will not let his enemy escape if he came upon him. David had come upon Saul and let him escape, therefore David did not count Saul as his personal enemy. Saul then called for the blessing of God on David.

Verses 20-22. Saul then declared his conviction that David was destined to be king, and be established as such. He requested assurance that when such was the case, David would not cut off his family descendants. David made the promise, and Saul then departed for his home for the present. But this circumstance did not cause David to relax his vigilance for safety. He and

his men got up to the hold, which means their hiding place.

1 SAMUEL 25

Verse 1. The mere act of lamenting over any cause of grief would naturally take place at the death of a beloved prophet like Samuel. So the gathering together of all Israel on the occasion of his death indicated some formal rites were performed in connection with the burial. Paran was the name of a considerable extent of territory on the south of Jerusalem, and in this general territory it is said that David went for the time.

Verse 2. Carmel was a city situated within the mountainous region of Judah, and was the location of a man of wealth. His wealth consisted chiefly of cattle or small animals, including sheep. At the time of our story he was shearing his sheep.

Verse 3. This verse describes the characteristics of the man and his wife as a preparation for the account to follow. The name of the man was Nabal, and that of his wife was Abigail. *Countenance*. This is from *roar* and defined by Strong, "outline, i.e. figure or appearance." We are to conclude, therefore, that this woman had a beautiful form of body in her general appearance. The man was churlish. This is from *qasheh*, and the simple definition Strong gives is "severe." The word has been rendered in the A. V. by cruel, hard, heavy, obstinate, rough, stiff, stubborn and others. So here is a mean and hard-hearted and stubborn man, with a wife that is beautiful in form and judicious in understanding. These facts will prepare us to appreciate more fully what follows.

Verses 4, 5. David was in the vicinity where Nabal was shearing his sheep, and decided to make a proposition of friendship to him in the name of the Lord. If men of some standing with the Lord's people are dwelling in the same community, it is always desirable to have an understanding as to each other's intentions. Hence David made the first move in this direction.

Verses 6, 7. Nabal dwelt at Maon and would not be present with his flocks except at the shearing time. So it was appropriate for David to inform this man of his attitude of friendship toward him, and that it was proved by the treatment he had accorded his herdsmen in the days past. Moreover,

he wished to express interest in his continued prosperity in all that he had.

Verses 8, 9. David was willing to stake the truthfulness of his claims on the testimony of Nabal's own young men. In verse 8 the expression *young men* is used twice in close succession, but refers, respectively to the young men of Nabal and of David. The commission of young men from David delivered their message as directed and paused.

Verse 10. Now the reader will please reread the comments at verse 3, and observe how this speech agrees with the description given above. When the servants of David delivered the friendly greeting to Nabal, he made this hard hearted answer. He pretended not to know about whom they were talking, although he betrayed his hypocrisy by referring to a servant breaking away from his master, which it was supposed that David had done.

Verse 11. With this pretended ignorance as to the worthiness of David and his men, Nabal refused even the acts of common hospitality toward them.

Verses 12, 13. The young men returned and reported their experience to David. Now the mere failure to receive food and other items of hospitality was comparatively minor to what else it signified. David understood the principles of peace and also those of hostility. To him this all meant that Nabal was in sympathy with Saul and would, sooner or later, make an attack upon him. Therefore he decided to make a move in his own defense. He ordered his men to arm themselves. Leaving two hundred men to guard the property at home, he led four hundred to the attack.

Verse 14. One of the young men told Abigail of the affair and how the men sent from David with friendly salutation for Nabal had been insulted by him.

Verses 15, 16. They gave her further report of treatment they previously had received from David's men all the time they were associated with them. Not only so, but David's men had actually been a shield for them from danger that might have come to them in the wilderness.

Verse 17. Now these men of Nabal had not heard any report from David after his men had returned to him. Judging from the circumstances, they concluded that something would be

heard, so they advised Abigail to do something about it. These men, even, described their master as being a man of bellal. For the meaning of this word see remarks at Deut. 13: 13.

Verses 18, 19. Abigail acted on the advice of her servants and made preparations to greet David respectfully, according to the custom of those times. That is, she would have a present to offer him which was the manner of expressing respect or acknowledgment of another's rank in life. (Gen. 32: 13; 43: 11; Judg. 3: 15; 1 Sam. 9: 7; 2 Ki. 16: 8.) As the gifts were to be a token of good will it was appropriate to have them borne in the front of the procession. She did not tell her husband about her plan; he was a wicked and foolish man and would likely have interfered with it.

Verse 20. David and his men met Abigail near a hill. But before that had taken place, David had formed a resolution. He had reflected on the ingratitude of Nabal; after they had favored him by caring for his shepherds in the wilderness, he had insulted David and his men.

Verses 21, 22. This is the resolution about to take place, and introduced by the idea set forth in the preceding verse. The expression *God do so* means that if the one making it does not perform the thing he is resolving to do against an unworthy person, then may God do so to him, the speaker. The thing in particular that David determined to do was to destroy all of the males before morning. The obsolete word used here to express the act of discharging the excretions of the kidneys is just the old Biblical way of referring to males. We know that to be true, because it is the natural method of a man thus easing himself, and because a female would not use that method. The reason why the males are so often the object of destruction is the fact that they are the ones used in war and other activities of defense for a nation or people.

Verses 23, 24. Upon sight of David, Abigail alighted from her beast and made the proper curtsy before him, and respectfully asked permission to speak. From the suggestions made to her by her servant, and considering the character of her husband, she had reason to believe that David would stop at nothing short of complete punishment upon Nabal and all his house. With this in view she wished

to convince him that only Nabal was responsible for the insult given.

Verse 25. Abigail requested David not to regard or take seriously the conduct of this man Nabal. She did not condone nor belittle his wickedness in the least, instead she charged him with being a man of bellial, which we have already explained. Also, he had the right name. The name Nabal is from the Hebrew word NABAL, which the reader recognizes as being spelled the same in the two languages. It is the word rendered "fool" in Psa. 14: 1, except that in that place it is a common noun while in this case it is a proper noun. The definition Strong gives of it is, "stupid; wicked (especially impious), dolt." Since her husband was such a character, she did not want David to take him seriously, although she did not excuse the wrong done. She declared that she did not know at the time of the presence of the young men sent from David.

Verse 26. This verse is her way of predicting some unpleasant end to Nabal, and the same to come to the enemies of David. She applied her intervention further, against David shedding the blood intended, as the work of the Lord; that is, she believed that the Lord had used her in preventing David from shedding this blood.

Verse 27. She had learned of the arrogant refusal of her husband to grant the young men the necessities of life asked for, and which were certainly due them considering the services they had rendered to the young men of Nabal. She now made up for that with the presents she had brought along with her by the hands of her servants.

Verse 28. Abigail accepted part of the blame, theoretically, for the trespass done against David, since she was the wife of Nabal. Yet she asked forgiveness for it. She also predicted the blessing of the Lord upon him because he was fighting the battles of the Lord. The use of capitals does not always have a basis in the thought of the writer; however, in this verse they are properly used.

Verse 29. Abigail spoke further predictions in favor of David, because a man had risen to injure him; by this she meant her wicked husband. She believed that David would be safe because of being bound up with the Lord.

Verses 30, 31. If David will heed her request and not shed blood un-

necessarily, then he will not have any regrets after the Lord has given him the dominion over all his enemies. And when that happy time comes, she wishes him to remember her whom she here represents as his handmaid. To shed blood in cruel reprisal against rebellion is lawful, however, when the wrong can be righted legally without the extreme measures, it is to be preferred. This she was endeavoring to bring about with David.

Verses 32, 33. David recognized the hand of the Lord in these actions of Abigail, and blessed both the Lord and her. He made the significant remark that he had been kept from avenging with *mine own hand*. This allowed for the justice of vengeance on Nabal, and yet that it should not be done personally.

Verse 34. David repeats what he had threatened. See comments at verse 22 on the meaning of the language pertaining to males.

Verse 35. Had David carried out his previous purpose, it would have included the death of all that were near and dear to this woman. Now her voice has prevailed because of its good counsel, and her presence has pleased him so that he has respected her individually. With this announcement he dismissed her.

Verse 36. When she returned home she found Nabal engaged in a drinking party and in no frame of mind to be told anything.

Verse 37. When she told him the close call he had escaped it produced such a shock of surprise that he was stunned.

Verse 38. This condition continued with him until the Lord brought it to an end after ten days and smote him with death. Thus the vengeance that was due him was put on him by the Lord, and not by the hand of David.

Verse 39. When David heard about it he praised the Lord, not only for having put on Nabal the punishment he deserved, but also had kept him back from taking personal vengeance. He also remembered that he had been thus influenced by the good counsel of Abigail. Such a woman would be a desirable wife. We should bear in mind that in those times the Lord suffered (not permitted) men to have more than one wife. So that feature of this case is nothing new in the practices of the times. In making selections of women it is certainly commendable

for a man to have the motive of choosing those of good counsel. We do not know that David was so minded in all of his selections, but he was in this case. He communed with Abigail. That means he did not think of appropriating her to himself without her consent. At least that was the way he conducted this selection.

Verse 40. The communication mentioned in the previous verse was conducted through the servants of David. That was not altogether unusual in those days. Abraham sent his servant to obtain a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24), and Samson asked his parents to obtain a certain woman for his wife. (Judg. 14: 2.)

Verse 41. Abigail was "flattered" by the proposal. Her expression of inferiority was unusual. It was thus: David will be king; he will have servants under him; those servants will need the assistance of still lower servants to perform the office of feet-washing; she wished to be one of those lower servants. And evidently she was sincere. The most menial service, when performed for one who is loved and respected as Abigail surely loved and respected David, becomes a pleasure.

Verse 42. Without hesitation she made ready and journeyed to the place where David lived and became his wife.

Verse 43. What was said at verse 39 (see those comments again) on plurality of wives was to prepare the reader to understand this verse, and also, to help avoid confusion on remembering that David had been married previously.

Verse 44. This will not surprise us much when we recall that Michal had joined with her husband against her father as recorded in Ch. 19: 17. However, this is not the last we will hear about this woman. (2 Sam. 3: 13-16.)

1 SAMUEL 26

Verses 1, 2. Saul generally had spies who informed him about David. Now they told him of David's hiding place, and took three thousand men and went in search of him.

Verses 3, 4. Saul encamped at a certain place while being engaged in seeking for his prey. Word came to David that Saul was in search of him, but to make certain of the fact he sent out spies and learned that, sure enough, Saul was there after him.

Verse 5. Having this information it will not be necessary for David to come unexpectedly upon Saul, unprepared for his own safety. Thus he came near enough to the place where he was located to see the spot. Saul had his captain with him. That was Abner, of whom we will hear much. They lay in a trench. That was not a place dug in the ground, as the word generally means; it was a barricade composed of their wagons and other equipment. Not only did Saul have his captain with him, but his people also Ahimelech and Abishai. The latter also were pitched round him.

Verse 6. With the information as to Saul's exact location gained, David proposed to go near the camp and asked for volunteers to go with him. He made the proposal to Ahimelech and Abishai. The latter offered to go.

Verse 7. They reached the spot and saw that Saul was sleeping within the barricade described above. For immediate defense he had his spear stuck in the ground by him, near his bolster or pillow. As further guard, he had Abner and the people also lying round about him.

Verse 8. Abishai had only the personal interests of David in mind, and now proposed to take the life of Saul while he lay sleeping. So eager was he to make the attack that he assured his master he would not require more than one stroke.

Verses 9, 10. The distinction between a private individual and an official one was still the motive of David. The "Lord's anointed" was the basis of his consideration. That is a principle taught throughout the Bible. As long as a man is in lawful authority he must be regarded with respect, regardless of his personal shortcomings. See this principle set forth in Matt. 23: 1. David was determined to let fortune take its course with his personal enemy. It may be that the Lord will smite him (as he did Nabal), or that "his day will come to die," meaning the ordinary course of life and death, or that he might perish in battle; which actually did happen.

Verses 11, 12. However, David decided to furnish himself with positive evidence that he could have destroyed Saul had he that desire. For such purpose he directed Abishai to take the spear and vessel of water that were near the pillow. These would be unmistakable proof, since no question could be raised as to their identity.

The part God had in this performance was to depress the whole group with such a sleep that they were not awakened by this movement of David and Abishai.

Verses 13, 14. Verse 3 states that Saul had pitched in a hill. Now David took these articles and went over the space between this hill and the other, so that a safe distance was between them. From this place he cried so as to arouse them. Abner heard the cry and asked who was crying to the king.

Verse 15. The form of language here is what is known as irony. Abner was the captain of Saul's host, and was supposed to guard the body of his master. Thus, in this language of irony David chided him for his carelessness.

Verse 16. Ordinarily the rule would have been that Abner should be put to death for coming short of his duty to the king. We know why he did not awaken. However, it was appropriate to chide him thus, considering the unjust way his master had been treating David. To confirm the charge of neglect, he is invited to take notice of the articles of his master that are now in the hands of David.

Verses 17, 18. By this time Saul was awake and recognized the voice of David and made inquiry if it were true that it was his voice. David again confronted him with the accusation that he was pursuing a man he imagined was his foe.

Verse 19. David put the issue squarely up to Saul as to why he was thus pursuing him with hostile intent. If he had a reason from the Lord, then he was ready to meet the divine demands and make it right, but if he were being caused to do this by the influence of men, then may the curse of God be upon them. He charged that Saul's activity had driven him from the association of the Lord's people, and he was forced to fall among idolatrous ones who would have him join with them in the worship of their gods. Not that David really had done so, but that was the kind of people (the Philistines) he was forced to be with most of the time.

Verse 20. David knew that if one were to be guilty of deserting God and worshipping idols, he was liable to be smitten of the Lord for his sin. If Saul continued to force David to be with the idolaters, it would have the tendency to lead him into the sin that

would cause him to die before the Lord. He plead with him not to do that. He then likened his act in trying to capture him to a man pursuing a flea. The significance of the comparison is clear when we observe the definition of the word in the original. It is from פֶּאֶשֶׁשׁ and Strong defines it, "a flea (as the isolated insect)." Everyone knows about the proverbial flea that is always "not there" when an attempt is made to capture it. It is also like hunting a partridge in the mountains. Such an isolated place for a small bird would make capture impossible. As David is really not the personal enemy Saul thinks him to be, the Lord will care for him and make the search for him as fruitless as that for a flea.

Verse 21. When Saul was sober-minded and used his good judgment he was capable of wise conclusions. He realized that he had been foolish and that David was righteous. While in that frame of mind he invited David to return to him with the promise of protection.

Verse 22. However, David had been betrayed before, therefore he invited Saul to send a young man over to recover the spear.

Verse 23. Appealing to the Lord for justice, David declared that his reason for not attacking Saul that day, although providence had thrown him into his hands, was that Saul was the Lord's anointed.

Verse 24. *Life was much set by.* This is a Biblical way of saying that Saul's life had been regarded as of much worth. On that account David requested that his life be regarded by the Lord as having much value.

Verse 25. Saul was gracious enough to predict great things ahead for David; however, it was considered best to go each his own way, which they did.

I SAMUEL 27

Verse 1. When confidence has been betrayed it is difficult if not impossible to have it restored. More than once Saul had declared his regret at mistreatment of David, then betrayed him when an opportunity seemed to favor him. Now David came to the conclusion that, sooner or later, Saul would destroy him unless he got entirely out of his reach. For this purpose he decided to flee into the land of the Philistines. They were the people who were in constant war with Saul, and

naturally he would not venture to pursue him among his enemies.

Verses 2, 3. Acting on his decision, David took his group of men that had been with him since he left Kellah and went to the city of Gath and dwelt with Achish. He had with him also his two wives, Abigail and Ahinoam.

Verse 4. Word of David's flight to Gath was brought to Saul. Then it is stated that Saul ceased to pursue him. From now on to the death of Saul, his activities and those of David will be independent of each other.

Verse 5. Gath was a city of a king, and David did not want to make that his permanent residence. He then requested Achish to provide him some country town to be his regular dwelling place.

Verses 6, 7. Achish granted his request and Ziklag was given him for a possession, and was occupied as a residence by David for a year and four months.

Verses 8, 9. The military spirit of David would not rest. He must do something along that line. Thus, leaving his family in the city, he took his men of war and attacked the people of that land in the immediate vicinities of Geshur, the Gezirites and Amalekites. These were not pure Philistines, but were associated with them and thus would be considered friends of the Philistines. So after making complete destruction of these people, unknown to Achish, he returned to him.

Verse 10. As might be expected, Achish missed David and asked where he had made a road, or, on what road he had gone that day. David used military strategy and gave him an evasive answer. It would not do for Achish to know that he had been attacking the people who were his friends.

Verse 11. In order that no one would be left to bear news to Achish, David had made complete destruction of all the people who could have been witnesses. Should the information reach the ears of Achish he would conclude that as long as David was in that country he would be an enemy in fact, and thus would be objectionable. He wished to maintain a peaceable relation with Achish so that he could continue to live there away from Saul.

Verse 12. The story had the desired effect. Achish was led to believe that the Israelites had come to abhor David,

and hence he would be one to depend on for an ally. He then concluded to consider David as his perpetual servant. We can see in all this that David was at heart true to the children of Israel, although being compelled to take these inconvenient means of protection against the personal enmity of Saul.

1 SAMUEL 28

Verses 1, 2. There had been a sort of lull in the hostilities between Israel and the Philistines, but now another campaign was planned. As David was then with the last named people, he was offered service in their army, and the offer was accepted. This is a part of the story on the side of the Philistines.

Verse 3. On the other side were other conditions and activities. Samuel had died, and his absence was sorely felt. Saul had had a kind of change of heart, and had attempted to clear the land of the ones having familiar spirits. He knew that God did not approve of such characters, and had made an edict that all of them should be banished or killed.

Verse 4. The Philistines encamped in Shunem while the Israelites pitched in Gilboa. These places were about five miles apart. Here the strength of the opposing armies gathered for the great battle.

Verse 5. The sight of the hosts of the Philistines frightened Saul.

Verse 6. He was like men often are today. When their personal interests or safety are concerned, they turn to the Lord, but at other times they are unmindful of Him. This man had disobeyed the Lord so often and grievously that He had deserted him. Now he made an attempt to revive his standing with God, and appealed to him for instruction. The three channels formerly available for communication with God were: through inspired dreams; or by Urim, which signified communication by the instrumentality of the priest; or by inspired prophets. All three were now silent toward Saul.

Verse 7. In desperation he thought of conferring with a woman with a familiar spirit, otherwise called a witch. There was one such woman still living at a town called Endor. This woman was in hiding because of the edict that Saul had made against her class. In some manner the servants of Saul knew about her and told him about it.

Verse 8. Knowing that all such women would be afraid of him and refuse to have any communication with him, he disguised himself. Also, he chose the night-time for his visit, which would be an advantage to his plan of deception. Under this form of approach he was admitted into her presence and allowed to make a request. He wanted to have contact with Samuel, who was dead. There is no evidence that Saul would care anything about what information the woman would give from her own source of knowledge, but if she can get him in touch with the prophet, then the information obtained would be the truth. The word *divine* is from *qacam*, and Strong defines it, "properly to distribute, i.e. determine by lot or magical scroll." Those people engaged in this business used some mysterious process of various kind to mislead their patrons into thinking they had some supernatural power or wisdom. It is true that in the days of miracles, God suffered the devil to work through evil channels as a test, although such kind of agencies proved to be a mere trick. Saul was so desperate that he was ready to try any kind of means to be thought of for relief.

Verse 9. Naturally, the woman would be hesitant about trying her old tricks since she knew about the edict of Saul. She thought this man was playing a ruse for the purpose of detecting her as one of the condemned persons, and would turn her over to Saul.

Verse 10. There must have been a great deal of weight in those days placed on the value of an oath, because the woman was prevailed on by the force of one.

Verse 11. Being satisfied that she was safe again to practice her accustomed art, she asked whom he wanted to contact and was told to bring Samuel up (from the dead).

Verse 12. There is nothing said here about what the woman said or what she did. We are not familiar with the course of procedure generally taken by these characters. Whatever it was, she went through with the formality. Now let the reader take note that the inspired writer tells us that the woman "saw Samuel," not that she just claimed to see him. She actually saw him. Yet when she did, *she cried with a loud voice*. Now the appearance of a righteous man like Samuel never had caused anyone to be affected with fear or astonishment in this way,

therefore we cannot conclude that she was frightened by the nature of his appearance. No, it was the very fact that she saw him at all that affected her. All of which proves that she had not really expected to see him. And that fact proves that it was not the common experience of witches to accomplish actually what they claimed. Therefore, the success of this instance was an exception to the rule. Thus, instead of this circumstance being a proof of the genuineness of spiritualism, the theory of communicating with the dead, it is just the opposite. What happened is this: God decided to use this woman to carry out his purpose just the same as he used other evil persons for the like purpose. Other cases are the magicians in Egypt, and Balaam. And while causing Samuel actually to appear, contrary to the woman's real expectation, God also revealed to her the true identity of Saul so that she was made to be afraid. I do not mean that the woman knew the identity of Samuel, for that was to some extent still covered, but she did know that some actual presence was there from the unseen world, and could describe his outward appearance.

Verse 13. Saul assured the woman of her safety and inquired of the appearance that she saw. Her remark that she saw gods merely meant that she saw unearthly beings coming up from beneath.

Verse 14. Saul made further inquiry as to the appearance, and from her description he recognized it to be Samuel.

Verse 15. We should keep in mind that it is the inspired writer who is declaring what is taking place, and not just the claim of Saul. The writer plainly says that Samuel said certain things, and also that Saul did so, etc. Therefore, it was not any make-believe that was going on. It was another instance where God used an uncommon means of communication. (Heb. 1: 1.) The prophet chastised Saul for having disturbed him. Incidentally, we learn that when a righteous man passes to the next place of existence from the earth, he is in peace and rest. It will not do to say the language referred to his body. This took place at Endor while his body was buried at Ramah. (Ch. 25: 1.) Thus we are given the comforting information of the satisfactory state of the departed righteous. This all agrees with the story of Lazarus recorded in Luke 16: 25. Saul

explained that his purpose was to obtain instructions for his conduct, since God had refused to answer any of his inquiries.

Verse 16. The question of Samuel implied that he was a man of God. Otherwise, there would have been no inconsistency in turning from God to a prophet. And while Saul did not offer any explanation of this, that we are told of, yet we can form our own answer; it was the desperate action of a man at the end of his resources.

Verse 17. In the margin "to" is changed for "for" which makes it clearer. God had carried out his previous determination as had been expressed through Samuel, that was to take the kingdom from Saul and give it to David.

Verse 18. The reason for this revolution to come on Saul was his disobedience regarding the destruction of Amalek. (Ch. 15.)

Verse 19. Saul was a wicked man and Samuel a righteous. According to Luke 16, we know that the two kinds of characters do not dwell together after death in any direct sense. And yet in a general sense they are together since the name Hades is applied to the general state of the dead. Two men may be in the same province and not be in the same county. So, Samuel and Saul were to be in the same general state in that they both were to be in the intermediate place. In this way we may understand the statement of Samuel that "thou and thy sons shall be with me." The overthrow of the army of Israel was also predicted to come on the morrow.

Verse 20. This speech of Samuel so shocked Saul that he fainted and fell prostrate on the ground. He was already weak from lack of food, and now this news overcame him.

Verses 21, 22. The woman then behaved as a normal woman of humanity. Having risked her life in his hands and received no harm, she was disposed to administer to his physical wants, and offered him food.

Verse 23. At first he refused to eat. Then he was prevailed upon by his servants and the woman to submit. They *compelled* him in the sense of convincing him that he should accept food and accordingly he sat up on the bed.

Verses 24, 25. The woman already had a young animal which Strong defines as a male or steer. It was in

order for food and she used it as the base for a meal which she served to Saul and his servants. After this they went their way that night. There is no indication that Saul made any threat to disturb this woman afterward, although he had issued an edict against all such persons. But he had sworn protection to this woman. Besides, she had favored him with the desired information.

1 SAMUEL 29

Verse 1. The opposing armies were making movements for getting nearer and nearer to the attack which will prove so fatal to Saul and his hosts.

Verse 2. *Lords*. This word is defined by Strong as "peers." They were the leading men of the Philistines in point of rank and importance and made up the body of the army. David was in the immediate company with Achish and they were with the rearward, which means the rear division of the army.

Verse 3. The princes were men of still higher rank or authority than the lords. They saw David and his men in the midst of their army and were displeased. By reference to Ch. 28: 1, 2 we may learn that Achish had invited David to go with him and that he had gladly accepted the invitation. Moreover, the Philistine king then notified him that he would be a guardian for his personal safety for all of his life. Upon discovering David and his men with them, the princes of the Philistines made a complaining inquiry of Achish about the presence of *these Hebrews*. Achish explained that David had been with him for years and had been faultless all the time.

Verse 4. The princes made more vigorous protest against the presence of David. They knew that he was a fellow-citizen of Saul and that at the present time he was at variance with him. They also supposed that he was eager to be reconciled to his master, and that he would use any opportunity for effecting the reconciliation. Now then, if he were permitted to accompany the Philistines in battle against the Israelites, he might wait until the armies had come in sight of each other and at that point he would turn against the very men near him in the Philistine army. The sight of this would naturally please Saul and he would weaken in his variance against David.

Verse 5. This verse presents the further idea, that not only might David

be disposed to win his master over to him in the way indicated, but that he would be fully able to do so. For evidence of his success along that line they referred to the celebration he had been accorded by the women in their songs. That reputation was to the effect that he had slain more men than Saul.

Verses 6, 7. Achish yielded to the objections of his men with apologies to David in the form of words of praise for his faithfulness in the past. There was some difference between the rank of the princes and that of the lords, yet it was slight for Achish used both names almost interchangeably. At any rate, they were of such importance that he did not wish to incur their opposition just as they were entering what might be a decisive battle. He therefore requested David to return to his own city.

Verse 8. It might be expected that David would feel hurt over this turn of affairs. It implied to him that he had been untrue to the king of the Philistines. This was not the only reason for his disappointment. He wished to be engaged in warfare. Nor was that all of his motive. He wished to fight the *enemies of my lord the king*. We have read of his theory that no personal attack should be made upon the Lord's anointed. He never did excuse Saul's wickedness, but did not believe it right to oppose him as a private individual. He had made the remark once that perhaps he would perish in battle (Ch. 26: 10) and in that lawful way receive the just punishment for his deeds. Now it may be the time has come for that to happen. If David is enlisted in the regular manner in a war against Saul, and if in such an action he should assist in bringing about the downfall of his enemy, then it would be legal.

Verse 9. Achish still acknowledged the virtue of David and his faithfulness. Yet the leading men of his army objected, and as the success of an army depends much on unity, he did not wish to cause any dissension by retaining an objectionable soldier.

Verse 10. The Philistine king knew that David had some of Saul's servants with him. He then requested him to take them with him and depart.

Verse 11. David obeyed the request or command of Achish and returned into the land of the Philistines. The army of Achish, meanwhile, drew nearer the place of battle.

1 SAMUEL 30

Verse 1. This chapter will be a diversion from the regular story we have been reading. David was required to depart from the Philistine army and return to his city Ziklag. Upon arriving there he learned that it had been attacked while he was absent. The attack had been made by the Amalekites who had also burned the city.

Verse 2. They not only burned the city but captured the people therein, including the two wives of David. However, they had gone and were away from the community.

Verses 3-5. It would be expected that much consternation and sorrow would be caused by what they found upon returning to the city. The wives and children of the men were taken. It caused them to weep until they were exhausted.

Verse 6. In their bitterness, which is the marginal version of grief, they became unreasonable and threatened to stone David as being responsible for their losses, but it did not intimidate him for he took courage in his God.

Verses 7, 8. The mention of the ephod suggests the use of the Urim and Thummim that were provided with the priestly garments. (Ex. 28: 30.) This was one of the means of communication between God and the people at that time. Now, David wishes to inquire of the Lord for information regarding his proposed pursuit of the Amalekites. He was told to pursue and that he would succeed in his objective.

Verses 9, 10. David had six hundred men who started with him on this chase, but by the time they had reached a place called the brook Besor two hundred of them had become so faint that they had to stop. Leaving these to guard the stuff he took the four hundred men and pursued the enemy.

Verses 11 12. This Egyptian had been left behind because of his exhausted condition having had no food for three days. David's men gave him nourishment so that he regained his strength and was able to converse.

Verse 13. After the man was able to talk he told them of his nationality and of his reason for being in the present situation. He was a servant to one of the Amalekites and had been deserted because of his condition of body.

Verse 14. Through the conversation with this Egyptian David learned who had burned Ziklag and captured the people. A general invasion had been made by his masters which ended in the overthrow of this city of David.

Verse 15. Having recovered his strength he was able to assist David in identifying the people after whom he was pursuing. Upon guarantee that he would not be turned over to his master nor otherwise come to any harm he promised to direct David to the men.

Verse 16. The Amalekites evidently had paused in their activities after leaving the city of Ziklag and other points in the land of Judah and the Philistine territory. They were eating and making merry rejoicing over their success against the places which they had invaded.

Verse 17. David's attack upon the hordes that were scattered carelessly over the earth was doubtless a surprise. He continued his action against them for a whole day beginning his slaughter while it was yet dark and continuing until the evening. The destruction was so complete that none escaped except four hundred young men who made their getaway by the use of camels.

Verses 18-20. David made complete recovery of the persons, the cattle, and all of the goods that had been taken by the Amalekites. He took all of the Amalekites' own flocks and herds also, and it was counted as his personal spoil from the battle.

Verse 21. When David came to the brook Besor the two hundred men who had been left there went forth to meet him. Inquiries were made about the welfare of these who had been left behind because of their disability.

Verse 22. The four hundred men who went with David to the battle wished to make discrimination against the two hundred who did not go with them. They were willing to give back to each man his family, but not any of the spoil taken. The class of men among them that made this proposition are called men of belial. The A. V. puts the capital at the beginning of this word. However, in the Old Testament it is not a proper noun. This information has been given previously but will be given again now. It is from BELIAL, and the following is what Young says about it: "This should not be regarded as a proper name. It is generally associated with

the words 'man,' 'son,' 'daughter,' or 'children.' Hence 'son' or 'man' of Belial, simply means 'a worthless person.'" In the New Testament the form of the word is Beliar (BELIAR not BELIAL as given in the common version). Strong defines the word, "Without profit, worthlessness; by extension destruction, wickedness." The word has been rendered in the A. V. by Belial 16 times, evil 1, naughty 1, ungodly men 2, wicked 5. This description of the men will account for their selfish proposal to David.

Verse 23. The main idea to be noted in this verse is that the Lord was the one who had made their success possible anyway, therefore these men had no reason for their personal exultation.

Verses 24, 25. David declared that men who tarry by the stuff are as worthy as the ones who go to the war. He made it a statute for the future. That was right. In all times of war those who "keep the home fires burning" should be given credit along with the ones in battle. This is fair for all parties concerned. Why should men face the foes with risk of life on behalf of the home land if those at home do not preserve the home for them upon their return? It is true these men were not at home, yet the principle expressed here holds good. Moreover, David manifested this principle with regard to the home people in that he even divided his spoils with many of his fellow countrymen as will be reported in the following paragraph.

Verses 26-31. This paragraph names the places referred to in the preceding paragraph. The last verse gives the special motive for the selection of the places mentioned to receive these presents. They were the ones where David and his men were in the habit of passing time.

1 SAMUEL 31

Verse 1. This chapter resumes the main topic of the narrative. The Philistines and Israelites came together in fierce battle and the latter were being defeated.

Verse 2. This verse names the three sons of Saul, all slain in the battle.

Verse 3. *Sore*. The main difference is in the intensity of the meaning. The latter signifies a more complete or fatal condition, while the former means simply, "heavy."

Verse 4. This coincides with the preceding verse. Saul realized that he

was fatally wounded. However, he wished to make it appear that the enemy had not actually accomplished his death and asked his armorbearer to finish it. He would not do it because he was afraid. That did not mean that he was afraid of death as the next verse will show. But the whole situation was horrifying, and besides, he had the same feeling as David had, in that he hesitated to smite the Lord's anointed. Then Saul took a sword and fell upon it. This would be accomplished by standing the handle of the sword on the ground and then allowing the body of the man to slump down over it.

Verse 5. Let the reader take notice that the inspired writer tells us that the armorbearer *saw that Saul was dead*. No one can see something that does not exist. Yet the statement of inspiration is that the man saw that Saul was dead.

Verse 6. The statement of Saul's death is again repeated, and in connection with the death of the three sons of Saul, and his armorbearer. These facts will be useful in explaining some questions to come up in the next book.

Verse 7. The death of Saul and his sons caused such dismay among the Israelites that they fled from the cities of that section of the country. Then the Philistines came and occupied those cities.

Verse 8. After the day of battle the Philistines came to plunder the slain of their clothing and any other things of value to be found with them. In this action they found Saul and his three sons among the fallen ones.

Verse 9. The personal defeat of the king in battle would be a thing to cause great rejoicing among the victorious people. Therefore, the Philistines took the head of Saul and sent it and the armor of his body among their people. The victory was published in the house of their gods, which was a signal that they were mightier than the one whom Saul worshipped.

Verse 10. Ashtaroth was one of the female deities of those people and they had a temple erected for her worship. In this house they placed the armor of Saul as a trophy of war. Cities spoken of as fenced or walled meant the ones fortified. To fasten the body of the king of the Israelites to the wall of a city supposed to be prepared against the enemy would be a sort of "triumph," a gesture often resorted to in those days.

Verse 11. Jabesh-gilead was a city east of the Jordan and opposite of the site of the fatal battle between the Israelites and the Philistines. These inhabitants heard of the shameful treatment that had been accorded their fallen king and his sons.

Verses 12, 13. It was a night's journey from Jabesh-gilead to the place of the shameful treatment of Saul's body. The valiant or brave men of the city made this journey and recovered the bodies of Saul and his sons. They brought them back with them to Jabesh. The text here says that they burnt the bodies. The same event is recorded in 2 Chr. 16: 14, but there it says they made a great burning for them. Jer. 34: 5 speaks of burning odors for Zedekiah, and that is the meaning of the language in the verse here. This conclusion is justified by the language in the last verse which says that the bones were buried under a tree. The fast of seven days was one of the formalities used in ancient times in connection with periods of great grief.

2 SAMUEL 1

Verse 1. Chapter 30 of 1 Samuel gives the record of this slaughter, and it was going on while the Israelites were engaged with the Philistines in battle. This verse brings us two days later, and David has returned to his city, Ziklag.

Verse 2. On the third day after the battle came this man to David. The use of earth on the head and the rent clothes was a practice in the East, indicating great grief or anxiety. We shall learn that this man was pretending grief in this case. He also was feigning his respect for David when he fell to the earth.

Verses 3, 4. Upon inquiry, the young man related the fatal end of the battle between the Israelites and Philistines. He stated that Saul and Jonathan were dead. The inspired record says that Saul and all his sons were dead. So there was something questionable about the report to begin with.

Verses 5-7. Another inquiry brought from the man his story of Saul's calling on him as he "happened" to be passing. This word is in itself a strong indication that something was wrong in the whole story. The battle was in its decisive stage and very hot. It is not reasonable to believe that a casual passer-by could be thus engaged.