

# THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON IV, THIRD QUARTER, INTERNATIONAL SERIES, JULY 26.

Text of the Lesson, I Sam. xv, 13-23.  
Memory Verses, 20-22—Golden Text,  
I Sam. xv, 22—Commentary Prepared  
by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

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13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul  
said unto him: Blessed be thou of the  
Lord. I have performed the command-  
ment of the Lord.

In our previous studies in this por-  
tion of Scripture, in 1889 and 1895, we  
began at verse 10; now we are advised  
to study from verse 10, so it is prac-  
tically the same. Concerning the  
Lord's repentings (verses 11-15) note  
verse 23, "The strength of Israel will  
not be nor repent," and Num. xxiii, 19,  
"God is not a man that He should lie,  
nor the Son of Man that He should re-  
pent." God never changes His mind,  
but always does just what He knew  
from all eternity that He would do.  
He knew how Saul would turn out,  
how long He would have to bear with  
him, and when He would put David in  
his place. He comes to a place always  
foreseen when He changes His line  
of action, and to us He is said to re-  
pent. Man, on the contrary, repents  
when he changes his mind and does  
what he had not intended to do. In  
chapter xiii we see how Saul began to  
do foolishly and by disobedience for-  
fettered the kingdom (xiii, 13, 14).

14, 15. The people spared the best of the  
sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto  
the Lord thy God, and the rest we have  
utterly destroyed.

The command was to utterly destroy  
all (verse 3), yet for professedly a good  
object he puts his own construction on  
it and disobeys the plain command.  
All things are naked and open to the  
eyes of Him with whom we have to do,  
and all sin, unless confessed, forsaken  
and forgiven, will be sure to find us  
out (Heb. iv, 13; Num. xxxii, 23; I  
Chron. xxviii, 9). Saul did not seem to  
understand that God wants nothing  
from the enemy either for service or  
sacrifice.

16, 17. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay  
and I will tell thee what the Lord hath  
said to me this night. And he said unto  
him, Say on.

Then he reminded him how when little  
in his own sight the Lord had anointed  
him king over Israel. It is a good thing  
always to be little in one's own estima-  
tion, for we remember how Uzziah was  
marvelously helped till he was strong,  
but then he fell (II Chron. xxvi, 15, 16).  
Our highest place is lying low at our  
Redeemer's feet that the Lord alone  
may be exalted. What a blessed man  
was Samuel, who talked with God and  
with whom God talked and who sought  
only to know the mind of God and do  
it. Why not say just now and stand to  
it, "My Father, I will, by Thy grace,  
seek henceforth in all things to know  
Thy will, and do as Thou hast said?"  
Why should not all believers in daily  
life thus walk with God?

18, 19. Wherefore then didst thou not  
obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly  
upon the spoil and didst evil in the sight  
of the Lord.

The Lord sent him and told him  
what to do, and it was his duty to re-  
spond, but obey. The reason of the com-  
mand given to Saul is found in Ex.  
xvii, 8-10, but being long suffering and  
not willing that any should perish He  
had given them 400 years in which to  
repent. Mercy always precedes judg-  
ment. All the failures in the Lord's  
service set before us in strong contrast  
Him who never failed and who loved  
to say so often, "The Father sent me."  
He could also truly say, "I do always  
those things that please Him" (John  
viii, 16, 18, 29, 29). It is our privilege,  
as it was Gideon's, to go day by day in  
the strength of these words: "Have not  
I sent thee? Surely I will be with  
thee" (Judg. vi, 14, 16). And it is for  
us simply and cheerfully to obey with-  
out questioning (Isa. i, 18, 19).

20, 21. And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea,  
I have obeyed the voice of the Lord,  
but the people took of the spoil \*\*\*  
to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in  
Gilgal.

He confesses to have saved the king,  
who was certainly included in the or-  
der to destroy, and yet insists that he  
had obeyed the voice of the Lord. It  
is the old story, so common today,  
of perverting the word of the Lord (Jer.  
xxiii, 36) and of thinking that He does  
not mean just what He says. Happy  
would it be for all Bible students and  
teachers if they would take the word  
of God to mean just what it says, and  
in the light of fulfilled prophecy read  
prophecy yet unfulfilled and be obedi-  
ent. God's thoughts are as far above  
ours as heaven is above the earth, and  
all our thoughts must be brought into  
captivity to the obedience of Christ  
(Isa. lv, 8, 9; II Cor. x, 5).

22. Behold, to obey is better than sacri-  
fice and to hearken than the fat of rams.  
The first thought in sacrifice is not  
our giving something to God, but God  
giving something to us, as in the insti-  
tution of sacrifice at Eden (Gen. iii, 21)  
when the Lord God by a sacrifice  
which pointed on to the great sacrifice  
on Calvary taught Adam and Eve the  
way of redemption. Man's thought,  
which is from the adversary, is that  
we must first give to God to propitiate  
Him, whereas we can give Him noth-  
ing until we first accept His gift to us.

We must first receive His mercy, then  
we can give Him ourselves a living  
sacrifice. See carefully Hos. vi, 6;  
Matt. ix, 13; xii, 7. Sacrifice from the  
disobedient is not acceptable to God.  
This is the teaching of Jer. vii, 21-23.

23. Because thou hast rejected the word  
of the Lord He hath also rejected thee  
from being king.

See also verse 26 and note that Saul  
is said to be guilty of rebellion and  
stubbornness. Whoever rejects the  
word of God makes Him a liar and  
cuts himself off from all light here and  
hereafter (I John v, 10; Isa. viii, 20 B.  
V.).

### Range War is Near.

News from Baker City says range  
war appears to be brewing in Grant,  
Malheur and Harney counties. No  
serious trouble is anticipated in this  
county. Both sides are reticent, and  
it is impossible to get any information  
in advance of the trouble.

The cattlemen have posted notices  
in certain localities threatening death  
to sheepmen, but no hostilities have  
broken out yet. Several encounters  
have actually taken place in remote  
districts, but no one has been killed  
unless when encounters result fatally  
both sides hide the facts.

A sheepman of Idaho who has  
rented 60,000 acres of land in Mal-  
heur and Grant Counties says all is  
serene in his district, but it is known  
that he received threatening letters.  
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stand only so much.

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