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GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES, & PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

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BY CHARLES BAKER,

HEADMASTER OF THE YORKSHIRE INSTITUTION FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB;

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PREFACE.

The Series of Manuals to "The Book of Bible History" may require a few words to introduce them to those teachers who have been in the habit of using the Class Books in their Day and Sunday Schools, and to others who may adopt them independently of the Class Books.

The LESSONS are those of the Book of Bible History, the very few alterations introduced being chiefly verbal. The principle of Graduation is carried out in the Explanatory Notes, which will be found to increase in difficulty in each succeeding Gradation. The Notes, however, are not generally on the same subjects for each Gradation, but are varied so as to extend over the subject matter of the three Gradations.

The EXPLANATIONS are not confined to the mere meaning of words; they elucidate phrases, idioms, facts, customs, laws, ceremonies, prophecies, and doctrines; those of Gradation I., are very simple, those of Gradation III., convey that kind of information which is required for advanced pupils, while those of Gradation II., are of an intermediate character.

The QUESTIONS have the same practical tendency; the capabilities of pupils in different stages of advancement having been carefully studied.

The GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES in Gradation I., are chiefly designed for the Teacher's attention, that he may readily point out the localities on a map. In Gradations II., and III., such Notes are intended to form a part of the pupils' exercise.

The CONTEMPORARY CHARACTERS in Gradation III. will give scope to the exercises of the advanced pupils, and open to them an important additional subject of study.

The PRECEPTIVE LESSONS constitute the *practical instructions* to be derived from each subject. They are drawn up in language suitable for each degree of advancement.

The Explanatory Notes and Preceptive Lessons have been drawn from various sources, including the best commentators on the Bible History. Some are given verbatim, others have been simplified. To have placed the extracts within inverted commas, or to have given the authorities, would have encumbered the pages without any adequate advantage. It is therefore hoped, that this general acknowledgement of the benefits derived from the labours of others will be sufficient.

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TO THESE CLASSES OF TEACHERS, MORE ESPECIALLY, THE MANUALS OF BIBLE HISTORY ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

MANUAL
OF
BIBLE HISTORY.

PERIOD I.

FROM THE CREATION TO THE DELUGE.

B.C. 4004—BC. 2348.

1656 years.

Containing the History of the World before the Flood;—
The Creation—The Fall of Man—The first Promise of the
Saviour—The progress of Sin—and The Destruction of
Mankind (except Noah and his family) by the Deluge.

Lesson 1. The Creation and the Fall of Man.

God created the heavens and the earth and all things in them. He created man in his own image—good and holy. God created all things in six days, and rested on the seventh day and blessed it. He placed Adam and Eve in the garden of *Eden*. They disobeyed God, and he sentenced them to death. He then drove Adam and Eve out of *Eden*.

EXPLANATIONS.

God—our Maker, and our Heavenly Father.
created—made or produced.
heavens—the air, sun, stars, &c.
earth—the round world on which we dwell.
holy—pure in thought, word, and work.
disobeyed—did that which God had forbidden them to do.
sentenced—condemned; God is our Judge, as well as our Maker.
death—the punishment for Adam and Eve's sin.

QUESTIONS.

Who created all things?
 What is meant by *created*?
 Whom did God make in his own image?
 How was man like God?
 What do you mean by *holy*?
 In how many days did God make all things?
 What day did God bless?
 Where did God place our first parents, Adam and Eve?
 Did Adam and Eve continue always to be holy?
 Why did God sentence them to death?

Eden—supposed to have been situated near the Persian Gulf.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Adam was created holy, then he was happy. Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God, and became miserable. As long as we do good we shall be happy, but if we do wrong we shall be unhappy.

God blessed the sabbath day—that is, he made it a happy day, which it is to all who observe it.

2. Cain, Abel, and Seth.

Cain and Abel were the sons of Adam and Eve. They offered sacrifices to God. Cain brought of the fruits of the earth. Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock. God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's. Cain was wicked; he killed his brother. God gave Adam another son who was named Seth. He was a good man.

EXPLANATIONS.

Cain—the elder son; *Abel*, the second son.

offered—presented before God.

sacrifices—gifts; portions of their goods, which were burned on an altar, or a table of stone.

fruits—productions; such as ears of corn.

the earth—of that part of it which he had cultivated.

firstlings—the first-born.

flock—a number of sheep, goats, &c.

accepted—pleased with.

rejected—displeased with.

killed—put to death by violent blows.

QUESTIONS.

Who were sons of Adam and Eve?

What did they offer?

What are *sacrifices*?

What was Cain's offering?

What was Abel's?

What do you mean by *flock*?

What did God do with respect to Abel's offering?

Did he accept Cain's?

What do you mean by *accept*?

What means *reject*?

What sad proof of wickedness did Cain give?

Who was Seth?

What sort of man was he?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Cain was envious of Abel and slew him. He then became a miserable and restless man. Abel was faithful and obedient to God, and God loved him. Seth was a good man; all good people are children of God. God punishes all who sin; he loves and accepts all who are obedient to him.

3. Enoch. Methuselah. Noah. The Deluge.

Enoch was descended from Seth. He pleased God, and God took him to heaven. Methuselah was the oldest man that ever lived. Noah, his grandson, was a good man. When men became very wicked, God destroyed all people by a flood except Noah and his family. God saved them in an ark of wood that floated on the waters.

EXPLANATIONS.

descended—born in the same family.

pleased—he did right himself, and reproved the ungodly.

took him—bore him away from earth to heaven.

Noah—means ‘comfort.’

grandson—the son of any one’s child.

wicked—cruel, filled with unholy thoughts, forgetful of God, and proud.

destroyed—caused to die.

flood—a great body of water poured over the land.

family—his wife, and his sons, and their three wives.

ark—a house like a ship.

floated—rose on the surface.

QUESTIONS.

Who was descended from Seth?

What do you mean by *descended*?

What is said of Enoch?

What became of him?

Who was the oldest man?

Who was Noah?

What do you mean by *grandson*?

What does *Noah* mean?

Whom did God destroy?

Why did God destroy man?

What do you mean by *destroy*?

Were all destroyed?

Who were saved?

In what were they saved?

What is an *ark*?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Enoch believed God’s promises; his work on earth was finished, and his faith was rewarded. Noah warned the wicked people of their danger but they would not hear him. When they were destroyed he was saved. God will save the righteous, but he will punish the wicked.

PERIOD II.

FROM THE DELUGE TO THE DEATH OF JOSEPH.

B.C. 2347—B.C. 1635.

712 years.

Containing the History of Noah after the Flood;—The Building of Babel—The Dispersion of Mankind—The Call of Abram—The Destruction of Sodom—The Offering of Isaac—The History of Job—of Esau and Jacob—of Jacob's sons—of Joseph—and the death of Jacob and of Joseph.

4. History of Noah after the Flood.

When the waters were dried up, Noah and his family left the ark. Noah offered thanksgivings to God, and God promised never again to destroy the earth by a flood. The rainbow is the sign of that promise. Noah planted a vineyard, drank of the wine and was drunken. His son Ham mocked him, and Noah foretold that his descendants should be servants to their brethren.

EXPLANATIONS.

dried up—by the wind which God sent; the rain ceasing, &c.

thanksgivings—offerings showing their thankfulness for God's mercy.

rainbow—the coloured arch seen in the sky when the sun shines on falling rain.

sign—a token or mark. When you see God's sign in the sky, remember his promise.

vineyard—a garden for growing vines.

wine—the juice of grapes.

mocked—treated with disrespect.

QUESTIONS.

What was the cause of the waters *drying up*?

What did Noah do?

What did Noah offer to God?

What are *thanksgivings*?

Was God pleased with Noah's offering?

What promise did he make?

What sign did he give?

What is a *sign*?

What did Noah plant?

When he drank the wine what followed?

What is *wine*?

What did his son Ham do?

Then what did Noah foretell of his descendants?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We should always acknowledge with thankfulness God's goodness and mercy to us, as Noah did. Ham was undutiful to his father; his brother Shem and Japheth were dutiful sons. The descendants of Ham were punished for their father's sin. If we honour our parents God will bless us, as he has promised.

5. The Building of Babel. The Peopling of the Earth.

Some years after the flood the people dwelt on the plain of *Shinar*; they began to build a city and a tower, that they might be thought great, and not be scattered. God punished them, and made them speak different languages. They left off building the city, and were dispersed in various countries. The city was called Babel.

EXPLANATIONS.

city—a large number of houses built near to each other.

tower—a high building generally very strong.

great—they were very proud and very daring too.

not be scattered—this design was contrary to God's will.

punished—made them feel that he was offended with them.

different—not the same; so that they could not understand each other.

dispersed—sent hither and thither.

countries—distinct portions of the world.

Babel—means 'confusion.'

Shinar—an extensive tract of flat country, near the river Euphrates.

QUESTIONS.

What is a *city*?

What is a *tower*?

When did men begin to build a city and a tower?

Why did they commence these great works?

What caused them to wish to be thought great?

Why did their wish to keep together displease God?

Did God punish them?

What is meant by *punish*?

In what manner did God punish them?

What became of them then?

What were their buildings called? [*Babel*?

What is the meaning of

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The Builders of Babel opposed the will of God, but their bold attempt to set aside his will was useless, and they were thrown into a state of confusion and disorder. God thus punishes all who oppose his will.

6. Family of Terah. Call of Abram.

Abram was a son of Terah. He lived in *Chaldea*. God called him thence to possess *Canaan*. Sarai was the wife of Abram, and Lot was his brother's son. They all came to live in *Canaan*, and God promised Abram that he should have a son. God said, that the Saviour should be born of Abram's descendants.

EXPLANATIONS

called him thence—told him to leave Chaldea.

possess—to live in, and own.

brother's son—his nephew.

all—Lot and his wife, as well as Abram and his wife.

promised—to promise is to tell one of some benefit to be afterwards received.

son—a male child ; he had not any children at this time.

the Saviour—the Son of God, who should die to save man.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Abram's father ?

Where did Abram first live ?

Whither did God tell Abram to remove ?

What is meant by *possess* ?

Who was Abram's wife ?

Who was Lot ?

Did Abram remove alone into the land of Canaan ?

What did God promise Abram ?

What is it to *promise* ?

What did God also say ?

Chaldea—a country of Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris. See page 12.

Canaan—the ancient name of the promised land ; so named from a son of Ham.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Abram obeyed the *call* of God because he believed. Abram is called the *pattern of believers*, that is, one whom all believers should imitate. God fulfilled all his promises to Abram. He blessed all the nations of the earth in the Saviour, Jesus Christ, who was a descendant of Abraham. If we have faith like Abraham, we shall obey God in all things as he did.

7. Abram and Lot. Ishmael born.

The herdsmen of Abram and those of Lot quarrelled because there was not grass enough for their cattle. Abram told Lot to choose himself a part of the land, and Lot chose the plain of Jordan near Sodom. The men of Sodom were very wicked. Hagar was Sarai's handmaid: she had a son who was called Ishmael.

EXPLANATIONS.

herdsmen—men who take care of herds of cattle. Herds mean large numbers.

quarrelled—strove angrily with each other.

not grass—the cattle had eaten it, or the hot rays of the sun had burnt it up.

choose—to select. How good it was of Abram to allow Lot to make his own choice of the land.

plain—a level country.

handmaid—a familiar maid servant.

QUESTIONS.

What are they called who have the care of herds?

Whose herdsmen quarrelled?

What is it to quarrel?

Why did these men quarrel?

How was the strife checked?

What part of the land did Lot choose?

What do you mean by choose?

To what place did he go?

What sort of people lived at Sodom?

Whose handmaid was Hagar?

What is meant by handmaid?

What was her son's name?

Jordan—the chief river of Canaan.

Sodom—the cities of the plain were Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Quarrelling is wrong; we are told to "live peaceably with all men." Lot chose the most fertile part of the land, this was selfish. He went to live among wicked people; and was in danger of becoming like them, and being punished with them. We are warned in this lesson against quarrelling, against selfishness, and against keeping bad company.

8. The Destruction of Sodom.

God changed Abram's name to Abraham, and said he should be a father of many nations. He changed Sarai's name to Sarah. God told Abraham that he would destroy Sodom⁷ because the people were wicked. Two angels were sent to hasten Lot out of Sodom, which was then destroyed with fire from heaven.

EXPLANATIONS.

changed—altered; the addition gave it a higher meaning.

father of, &c.—this was the meaning of the new name.

Sarah—means 'princess' she was to be a mother of a multitude.

destroy—to bring to a fearful and shameful end.

angels—heavenly messengers.

hasten—to hurry; because the punishment of Sodom could not be delayed, the people were so very wicked.

fire from heaven—the Lord rained brimstone and fire from heaven upon the cities.

QUESTIONS.

Who changed Abram's name?

To what did God change it?

What did he promise that Abraham should be?

Was not Sarai's name also changed?

What was she to be?

What did God say he would destroy?

What does *destroy* mean?

Why did God say he would destroy Sodom?

Was Lot destroyed?

Who hastened Lot away?

Who sent those angels?

How was Sodom destroyed?

For what reason was Lot saved do you suppose?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Abraham's name was changed to honour him, because he was faithful. He prayed that God would not destroy Sodom. It is the duty of believers to pray for all men, even for those who are wicked. Surely "sin is a reproach to any people." Lot's wife did not turn away her eyes from beholding iniquity, and she was not saved.

9. The Birth of Isaac. Abraham's Faith.

Isaac, the son which God had promised to Abraham, was born. Ishmael mocked Isaac, and both he and his mother were cast out of Abraham's house. God commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham was about to slay his son, but God prevented him. God had provided a ram for the sacrifice instead of Isaac.

EXPLANATIONS.

Isaac—means joy or laughter; there was joy at his birth.
had promised—the Lord may delay, but he never forgets to fulfil his promises.
mocked—sneered, ridiculed; his mother Hagar encouraged him to do so.
cast out—sent away; thus were they punished for their disrespect.
commanded—told him with all the authority of a master.
offer—as he would offer a lamb or any other animal.
prevented—did not suffer him.
provided—had already at hand.
ram—a male sheep.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Isaac?
 Who mocked him?
 What is it to *mock*?
 Was Ishmael punished for so doing?
 Who was punished with him?
 What did God command Abraham to do with Isaac?
 Did Abraham refuse to obey this trying command?
 Who prevented its fulfilment?
 What was offered instead of Isaac?
 Who had provided the ram?
 What is the meaning of *provided*?
 What is a *ram*?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

“Be ye not mockers.” Ham mocked his father and he was punished, and Ishmael was cast out for mocking. The faith of Abraham was again tried by the command to offer up Isaac; but he was again found obedient. As a child trusts the promises of a faithful parent, we should trust the promises of a faithful God, and obey his commands.

10. The Marriage of Isaac.

Abraham had a faithful servant named Eliezer. He sent him from *Canaan*⁶ into *Mesopotamia*, to bring Isaac a wife from among Abraham's own kindred. He brought thence Rebekah, a daughter of Bethuel, who was a son of Nahor, the brother of Abraham. The brother of Rebekah was named Laban. Isaac married Rebekah.

EXPLANATIONS.

faithful—true to his word.
kindred—his relations who lived in the city of Nahor.
thence—from that place.
Rebekah—Abraham's great niece; she went with him of her own good will.
Bethuel—a nephew of Abraham.
married—he took her to be his wife, for he was not to take a wife from among the women of Canaan, because they did not worship God.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Abraham's faithful servant?
 What does *faithful* mean?
 Whither was he sent?
 Why did Abraham send him into Mesopotamia?
 What city did he come to?
 Whom did he obtain as a wife for Isaac?
 What was she to Abraham?
 How was Bethuel related to Abraham?
 Who was Laban?
 Why did not Isaac take a Canaanite woman?

Mesopotamia—a large level region of Armenia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris, called also Padan-aram or the plain of Aram. Ur of the Chaldees, in this country was Abraham's birth-place.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Eliezer rejoiced to fulfil his master's wishes because he was a faithful servant. He prayed to God to guide him right, and God answered his prayer. Servants should always feel glad if they are able to perform their duties, while they depend on God for his help to make them obedient and faithful.

11. The History of Job.

Job is said to have lived in *Idumea*. He was a good man. He had seven sons and three daughters; he had herds, flocks, and great riches. He was sorely tried and tempted, and lost his children and his riches. He bore his trials with patience. God afterwards gave him more children and greater riches than he had at first.

EXPLANATIONS.

good—benevolent, pious, and very submissive to God.

sons—grown up at that time.

flocks—numbers of sheep or goats, feeding in separate companies.

riches—wealth, consisting of gold, silver, merchandise, &c.

sorely—severely, painfully.

lost—taken from him; his children and sheep by death, and his cattle and camels by plunderers.

trials—troubles, for the loss of children and substance.

patience—calmness of spirit, absence of discontent.

QUESTIONS.

Who once lived in Idumea?

What sort of man was he?

How many children had he?

What had he besides?

Tell me what you mean by *flocks*.

What would you call the loss of children and wealth?

But besides these trials did he not suffer otherwise?

What does *sorely* mean?

Did Job retain his children and riches as long as he lived?

What did he lose by robbers?

Did he become impatient?

How was he rewarded for his patience?

Idumea—a country to the south of Canaan, called also Edom.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

If we have afflictions, such as loss of money, loss of friends, or sickness, we must remember that God afflicts the righteous for their good. We are not to say that men are wicked because they are afflicted, nor that God is unjust in afflicting the righteous.

12. The History of Isaac.

Isaac and Rebekah had two sons—Esau and Jacob. Esau was a hunter. Jacob bought from Esau his birthright for a mess of pottage. When Isaac was old he called Esau to bless him. Rebekah and Jacob deceived Isaac, so that he blessed Jacob instead of Esau. He then blessed Esau. Jacob fled to Laban, his mother's brother.

EXPLANATIONS.

hunter—a pursuer of wild animals; Jacob quietly reared flocks, while Esau delighted in the chase.
birthright—the right to the advantages which properly belonged to the first-born son.
mess—a dish, or sufficient for a meal.
pottage—probably composed of boiled herbs and meal.
Esau—because his father did not know that he had sold his right to possess it.
bless—this was to be the last and greatest blessing.
deceived—cheated; a wicked way of bringing about an act of justice.

QUESTIONS.

Who were Esau and Jacob?
 Which of them was a hunter?
 What does a *hunter* mean?
 What did Esau sell Jacob?
 What did Esau obtain for his birthright?
 What does *birthright* mean?
 Of what was the pottage made?
 Why did Isaac call Esau to him when he was old?
 What did Rebekah and Jacob do?
 What is meant by *deceived*?
 Why did they thus act?
 Was their conduct right?
 Did Esau receive a blessing?
 To whom did Jacob flee?
 Who was Laban?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Isaac loved Esau more than Jacob, and Rebekah loved Jacob. Rebekah's partiality led her and Jacob to deceive Isaac, and also led Esau to hate Jacob, and Jacob to fear Esau. It is wrong of parents to love one child more than another. Rebekah and Jacob were punished for their deceit.

13. Jacob serves Laban, Returns to Canaan.

Jacob kept the flocks of his uncle at *Padan-aram*. He married Leah and Rachel, the two daughters of Laban. Jacob had many children. God blessed him, and increased his riches exceedingly. Twenty years after, he returned to *Canaan*.⁶ On his way God changed his name to **ISRAEL**. Jacob met Esau, and was reconciled to him.

EXPLANATIONS.

kept—fed and minded.
Padan-aram—a long way from Jacob's early home; it was the country of his mother.
two—the practice of one man having two or more wives was allowed, though wrong. It is not permitted now.
riches—substance, consisting of flocks and herds.
Canaan—the country in which he lived with his parents before he deceived Isaac.
Israel—meaning a 'prince.'
reconciled—united again, in friendship to one another.

Padan-aram—the same country as Mesopotamia. See page 12.

QUESTIONS.

How was Jacob employed?
 Where did Laban live?
 Who were Rachel and Leah?
 Who married them?
 Is it right for a man to have more than one wife?
 Had Jacob any children?
 How long did he stay at *Padan-aram*?
 Whither did he return?
 What was Jacob's name changed to?
 Who met Jacob and was reconciled to him?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Laban selfishly deceived Jacob about his wives and his wages. But God protected Jacob, as he had promised, and made him prosperous and rich, and gave him many children. God had chosen Jacob as the father of his people Israel; and God always protects and blesses those whom he chooses, and fulfils his promises to them.

14. Benjamin Born. Joseph's early History.

Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son, was born at *Ephrath*; and Rachel, his mother, died there. Jacob loved Joseph more than his other children: but Joseph's brethren hated him, and sold him to some *Midianites*,³⁷ who took him into *Egypt*. He was a slave in the house of Potiphar. He was falsely accused, and cast into prison.

EXPLANATIONS.

Benjamin—'son of the right hand,' so called by Jacob.

loved...more—his good conduct was the cause of his father's love.

Joseph—he, as well as Benjamin, was Rachel's child, but Joseph was sixteen years older than Benjamin.

sold—gave for money, no man has a right to buy or sell his fellow man.

slave—one who has no liberty to do anything but as his owner commands.

accused—charged with crime.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Benjamin?

What does *Benjamin* mean?

Where was he born?

What else occurred there?

Who was both loved and hated?

Why did his father love him?

Who hated him?

To whom did they sell him?

Whither did the Midianites carry Joseph?

What is a *slave*?

Is it right to hold men as slaves?

What next occurred to Joseph?

Ephrath—in the south of Canaan, the ancient name of Bethlehem.

Egypt—an ancient and a celebrated kingdom of Africa.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Jacob's love to Joseph caused his brethren to hate him. They sold Joseph and deceived their father. They committed sin after sin, and other sins to hide their first. Their sin found them out; while Joseph was cast into prison innocent, and afterwards brought to honour, because God was with him.

15. The Exaltation of Joseph.

God prospered Joseph. He was brought out of prison to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh, the king. Joseph stored up much corn in *Egypt*.¹⁴ Jacob sent his sons into *Egypt* to buy corn. Joseph knew his brothers, and made himself known to them; he sent for his father and his brothers' families to live in *Egypt*.

EXPLANATIONS.

prospered—caused him to obtain favour and kindness from the keeper of the prison.
interpret—show the meaning.
dreams—the dreams of Pharaoh showed him that there would be first great plenty, and after that great famine.
stored—preserved; by putting into granaries or corn stores.
corn—wheat; large quantities were grown in Egypt.
buy—because the want of corn was felt in Canaan.
sent for &c—he did not forget his own family.

QUESTIONS.

Who prospered Joseph?
 What is meant by *prospered*?
 Did he remain always in prison?
 Why was he brought out?
 What is the meaning of *interpret*?
 What did Pharaoh's dreams show?
 Who stored up much corn?
 Who came to Joseph to buy corn? [come?
 Why and whence did they
 Did Joseph know them?
 Whom did he send for?
 Where were they to live?

•• A number after the name of a place refers to the lesson in which that place is described.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Here we learn that those who are taught of God have the only true wisdom, for Joseph was wiser than Pharaoh's wise men. We learn foresight, or providing for the future, from Joseph storing up corn; and we learn also to forgive injuries, and to do good to those who have done evil to us, from Joseph's conduct to his brothers.

16. Death of Jacob and Joseph.

When Jacob was about to die, he blessed his sons, and spoke of their return to *Canaan*.⁶ He charged them to bury him in *Canaan*. After the death of Jacob, Joseph nourished his brethren and their families as long as he lived. He told them to carry his bones with them into *Canaan*, when God should bring them out of *Egypt*.

EXPLANATIONS.

about to die—felt that death was near at hand.

blessed—gave his benediction.

return—God had promised it to Jacob's descendants.

charged—gave them a solemn command.

bury &c.—Joseph fulfilled this dying request of his father.

nourished—supplied them with necessary food, and every other comfort that they needed.

as long &c.—What a good man! never to return his brothers' unkindness.

bones—his last remains.

QUESTIONS.

What did Jacob do when he was about to die?

What did he speak about?

Why did he speak of their return to *Canaan*?

What charge did he give them?

Did Joseph continue to show kindness to his brethren after his father's death?

What do you mean by *nourished*?

Was Joseph right or wrong to forgive his brethren?

Did he give them any dying charge?

When were they to do this?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are here taught to regard the dying words of a good man; and that it is right to respect the last wishes of a kind father. We must esteem Joseph for taking such good care of his brothers and their families, and try to imitate the faith of both Jacob and Joseph in God's promises, which they knew would be fulfilled.

PERIOD III.

FROM THE DEATH OF JOSEPH TO THE DEATH OF
MOSES.

B C. 1597—B.C. 1451.

146 years.

Containing the History of the Bondage of the Israelites in Egypt;—Birth of Moses---His flight into Midian—His Call at Horeb—The Plagues sent---The Passover instituted ---The Departure of Israel---The Passage of the Red Sea---Manna sent---The Commandments given---The Calf worshipped---The Spies sent forth---their return---Rebellions of the Israelites----their wanderings---Moses beholds the land of Canaan, and dies.

17. Bondage of Israel. Moses' early History.

The Egyptians oppressed the Israelites and made them slaves. They also destroyed the male infants. The mother of Moses hid him for three months: she then placed him in an ark of bulrushes on the river. The daughter of the king found him and brought him up. God appointed Moses to demand the release of Israel from bondage. Aaron was the brother of Moses.

EXPLANATIONS.

oppressed—treated with great severity, cruelty & injustice.
Israelites—descendants of Jacob's twelve sons.
slaves—see "slave", Les. 14.
hid him—to try to save him from death.
placed—and thus trusted him to the care of God.
ark—a little boat.
bulrushes—plants, the long leaves of which can be interwoven or plaited.
demand—ask with authority.
release—liberation, freedom.
bondage—slavery, captivity.

QUESTIONS.

Who were the *Israelites*?
 Who oppressed them?
 What is it to *oppress*?
 Who were destroyed?
 Who was hidden three months from the time he was born?
 Why did his parents hide him?
 After that what did they do?
 What are bulrushes?
 To whose care did they commit him on the river?
 Who found him and brought him up?
 What was Moses appointed to do?
 Who was Aaron?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We should not act cruelly to those who are weaker, poorer, or younger than ourselves, or to those who labour for us. We must mark the wonderful providence of God in saving Moses, who was born, like the other infant Israelites, under a sentence of death, and exposed to the dangers of the river Nile, its savage animals, and the spies of the Egyptians.

18. The Plagues.

God sent plagues on *Egypt*.¹⁴ He turned the waters into blood—he covered the land with frogs—he sent lice on man and beast—he sent swarms of flies—a murrain on the cattle—boils on man and beast—he sent hail, rain, and fire—he sent locusts—and then a thick darkness. He then threatened to destroy all the first-born.

EXPLANATIONS.

plagues—severe punishments, —sudden as death.
blood—causing much suffering from thirst, and preventing personal cleanliness.
frogs—they crept into their beds, and cooking utensils.
murrain—a deadly disease.
boils—swelling sores on the skin.
fire—thunder and lightning.
locusts—flying insects which devour every thing green.
first-born—the eldest in each family.

QUESTIONS.

What are *plagues*?
 What country was severely punished by them?
 What was the first plague?
 What waters are here meant?
 What was the second plague?
 What was the third?
 What was the fourth?
 What was the fifth?
 What was the sixth?
 What was the seventh?
 What was the eighth?
 What was the ninth?
 What did God threaten?
 Who were the *first-born*?

The river of Egypt whose waters were turned into blood was the Nile. On the banks of this river Moses was found in the ark of bulrushes.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

In this lesson we see the punishment of a king and his people for stubborn disobedience. Pharaoh was hardened, that is, he was worse after punishment than before. Though his country, his property, and his people suffered, he still opposed God's will. He was self-willed. A self-willed child may become tyrannical and cruel.

19. The Departure.

God smote the first-born of the Egyptians. The Israelites had killed a lamb by God's command, and sprinkled the blood on the sides of their doors. When the angel of God saw it, he passed over their houses and slew only the Egyptians. In the night Pharaoh arose, and told the Israelites to depart, with their flocks and herds.

EXPLANATIONS.

smote—struck dead in one night. How dreadful!
first-born—of every rank, from the eldest child of the king, to the eldest of the poorest Egyptian.
killed—as a sacrifice to God; this was a religious duty.
sprinkled—an outward sign, of obedience to God.
angel—God's messenger, either of wrath or of mercy.
passed over—without doing them any injury.
night—the Israelites were all in readiness to be gone.

QUESTIONS.

Whom did God smite?
 Explain the term *smote*.
 Who were included in the first-born?
 Why did the Lord do this?
 What did the Israelites kill?
 Was this a religious act?
 What did they sprinkle on their doors?
 Who commanded them to do this?
 What good did it do them?
 Tell me what an *angel* is?
 When did the Israelites leave Egypt?
 What did they take with them?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Here we learn the blessings which attend obedience. The Israelites obeyed God; therefore their first-born were not slain with those of the Egyptians. God ordained their mode of escape from death. God accepts no service but such as he ordains, and he expects us to obey his ordinances.

20. Pharaoh's Host Drowned.

God led the Israelites, by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire. The Egyptians pursued them. The waters of the *Red Sea* divided and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground. The Egyptians followed them with their chariots and horses; the waters returned, and they were drowned.

EXPLANATIONS.

led—guided; showed the way.
pursued—went after them with the intention of bringing them into slavery again.
divided—if it had not, there would have seemed no hope for the Israelites.
through—the sea rose up like a wall of water on each side of the people.
ground—the bottom or bed of the sea.
followed—how rash they were!
chariots—cars for their fighting men.

QUESTIONS.

Who led the Israelites?
 How by day?
 How by night?
 Who pursued them?
 What do you mean by *pursued*?
 Through what did the Israelites escape?
 How were they able to get through the sea?
 Did any others enter the divided waters?
 With what were they provided?
 What happened to them?
 By what cause?

Red Sea—a long and narrow gulf or arm of the Indian Ocean; it separates Arabia from Egypt.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn from this lesson that God will lead us, if we will be guided by his word—that God will save us from all danger, if we trust in him. God, who was in the cloud and in the fire, is ever present with us. We see also that the hatred and revenge of the Egyptians were punished.

21. The Bitter Water. The Manna.

At *Marah* the Israelites murmured because the waters were bitter. The Lord told Moses to make them sweet by casting a tree into them. In the wilderness they murmured for bread, and God sent them manna. At *Horeb* they murmured for water. God told Moses to smite the rock; he did so and water came out.

EXPLANATIONS.

murmured—grumbled, complained, were discontented.
waters—wells of salt, and also of bitter waters are not uncommon in deserts.
sweet—that is, the natural taste of water; not sweet like sugar.
a tree—which God pointed out.
wilderness—a wild place where neither corn nor vegetables grow.
manna—light and nutritive food, wonderfully provided for them by the Lord.

QUESTIONS.

Where did the Israelites meet with bitter water?
 How did they endure thistrial?
 What is it to *murmur*?
 Did God relieve their distress?
 By what means?
 What do you understand by the waters being made *sweet*?
 What did the people murmur for next?
 What sort of food was manna?
 What did they murmur for at Horeb?
 How were they supplied?

Marah—in the Arabian desert, three days' journey from the Red Sea.
Horeb—the name given to a group of mountains in Arabia where God spoke to Moses from the burning bush.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We here see the wickedness of ingratitude, and the selfishness of the Israelites for not trusting in God, who had done so much for them. Children also murmur;—children forget their kind friends;—children, not in the wilderness, but in pleasant homes, are not thankful to those who provide for their wants.

22. The Delivery of the Law.

The ten commandments were delivered to Moses on *Mount Sinai*. They teach our duty to God, and our duty to one another. The people were round the mount, but were not allowed to touch it. The commandments were delivered to Moses amid thunders and lightnings. They were written on two tables of stone.

EXPLANATIONS.

commandments—rules for guiding us in our religious duties; which God, our King, and our Master has ordered us to obey.

duty—that which we owe, or are bound to perform.

to God—namely, from the 1st to the 4th commandment.

to one another—from the 5th to the 10th commandment.

to touch it—because the glory of the Holy God was upon it.

thunders, &c.—these signs filled the multitude with awe.

tables—slabs of stone.

Mount Sinai—the highest of the group of mountains called Horeb in the desert of Arabia.

QUESTIONS.

What are *commandments*?

How many commandments did God deliver to Moses?

Where did he receive them?

What duties do they teach?

Which of them teach our duty to God?

Which of them teach our duty to one another?

Where were the people at the time the law was given?

Why were they not allowed to touch it?

Amid what outward signs was the law delivered to Moses?

On what were the commandments written?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn from the four first commandments that we must love God above all other beings or things. If we love him we shall strive to keep his laws, and do nothing to offend him. From the six following commandments we learn that we must love all people as ourselves; and do good to all.

23. The Golden Calf worshipped. The Tabernacle erected.

While Moses was on the mount, the people caused Aaron to make them a golden calf. They then worshipped the calf. God was angry, and said he would destroy them. Many were slain for this sin. Afterwards the tabernacle was erected, and Aaron and his sons were appointed to be priests therein.

EXPLANATIONS.

While—he remained there forty days.

caused—entreated him ; he was but one, they were many.

calf—an image of the animal.

worshipped—bowed down before it respectfully—thus doing honour to an image.

angry—justly displeased.

slain—put to death by the sword of God's servants.

tabernacle—a moveable house in which God was to be worshipped.

priests—those who offered sacrifices for themselves and for the people.

QUESTIONS.

How long was Moses on the mount ?

During that time what occurred ?

When the calf was made what did the people do ?

What does *worshipped* mean ?

What was there wrong in this act ?

Who was displeased at this ?

How did God punish them ?

What place was erected after this ?

What was the *tabernacle* ?

Who were chosen priests ?

Where did they perform their offices ?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn from this lesson that the poor, ignorant Israelites, just escaped from slavery, in a land of idolatry, knew but little of the spiritual worship required by the True God. Aaron made an Egyptian god, and the people worshipped it. This sad offence was punished by the death of many, probably the worst offenders.

24. Nadab and Abihu slain.

Nadab and Abihu were consumed with fire from heaven for doing wrong in the tabernacle of the Lord. After this God commanded that the priests should not drink wine nor strong drink when they went into the tabernacle. God accepted the Levites to serve him in the tabernacle, and Moses consecrated them.

EXPLANATIONS.

Nadab and Abihu—they were priests, the sons of Aaron.
consumed—burnt up.

wrong—by worshipping God in a way that he had not appointed.

not drink—it is supposed that Nadab and Abihu had taken wine, and were drunk.

accepted—was pleased to take and appoint.

serve—by assisting the priests, preparing the incense and the sacrifices, instructing the people, &c.

consecrated—set apart by a religious service.

QUESTIONS.

Who were consumed?

What is meant by *consumed*?

Whence did the fire come?

For what offence were they consumed?

In what place did they do this wrong?

What command did God then give the priests?

When was it that this command should be scrupulously observed?

For what service did the Lord accept the Levites?

Who consecrated them?

What does *consecrated* mean?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are to worship God in the way that he appoints, not in the way we think best. Nadab and Abihu disobeyed God's ordinances. Those who conduct the worship of God, and those who attend that worship, must do so with sobriety and seriousness, being then more immediately in the presence of God; for God will not be mocked.

25. Quails sent. The Spies.

The people murmured for flesh, and God sent them quails. They were afflicted with a great plague, and many died. Twelve spies were sent forth to examine *Canaan*. They brought a large bunch of grapes, and said *Canaan*⁶ was a land flowing with milk and honey. Ten of the spies reported evil of the land.

EXPLANATIONS.

flesh—animal food.
quails—fat fleshy birds nearly as large as pigeons.
afflicted—put to sorrow, misery, and pain.
plague—a dangerous disease which spreads very rapidly.
twelve—one man for each of the tribes of Israel.
spies—men who went secretly to see and hear, and then report.
examine—look about narrowly, make inquiry, and search into.
bunch—a cluster on a stem.
grapes—fruit of the vine.
reported—gave an account.

QUESTIONS.

For what did Israel murmur?
 Did God gratify their longing?
 What sort of animals are *quails*?
 Did God send them in pleasure or in anger?
 What does *afflicted* mean?
 Did any of them die?
 Who were sent into *Canaan*?
 Why were twelve spies sent?
 What is the business of a *spy*?
 What were they to do?
 What did they bring with them on their return?
 What is a *bunch*?
 How many of the spies brought an evil report?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Again the Israelites murmured, and again they were punished. Here is another lesson for the discontented. The spies brought evidence that it was a good land, and yet most of them reported evil of it. They feared the giants; they had not yet learned to trust in God. Do we trust in Him?

26. The Sentence. Rebellion of Korah &c.

God said the Israelites should not enter *Canaan*,⁶ but wander forty years in the *Wilderness*. He said their children should possess the land ; but that the two faithful spies should enter *Canaan*. The unfaithful spies died of a plague. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebelled against Moses. The earth opened and swallowed them up.

EXPLANATIONS.

wander—hitherto they had journeyed towards Canaan ; now their *wandering*, backwards and forwards, commenced.

children—some were growing up to be men and women.

possess—have as their own ; and dwell therein.

faithful—they believed that God would overcome all difficulties for them ; so they encouraged the people.

rebelled—refused to obey, or be instructed by Moses.

swallowed—took in, destroyed.

Wilderness—the desert of Paran, and the desert of Zin.

QUESTIONS.

Did God bring the Israelites into Canaan ?

How long did he say they should wander ?

Where were they to wander ?

Who were to go into Canaan ?

How were they to *possess* it ?

Were any of the spies to be permitted to enter Canaan ?

How was their faithfulness shown ?

What befel the ten spies ?

Who rebelled against Moses ?

What is it to *rebel* ?

How were they punished ?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The people believed the report of the ten unfaithful spies rather than the sure word of God. Both parties were severely punished. Here is a warning for children who are more willing to believe bad companions than their parents or teachers. Think, too, of the rebels being swallowed up. Rebellion is a fearful sin both in the young and the old.

27. Fiery Serpents Sent.

The people murmured for water, and God commanded Moses to speak to the rock. He spoke angrily, and struck it twice; for which God said he should not enter *Canaan*. When the people again rebelled, God sent fiery serpents which bit them. Moses was directed to place a brazen serpent on a pole, and those who looked on it were healed.

EXPLANATIONS.

murmured—they peevishly complained when they should have prayed

water—deserts or wildernesses are very deficient of rivers, streams, springs, or wells.

speak—so as to show that the wonderful supply of water was the work of God.

angrily—in bad temper.

struck—with his rod, or shepherd's staff, which had been honourably called "the rod of God."

not enter—God punishes the disobedience of his own servants.

serpents—poisonous reptiles.

QUESTIONS.

Did the people again murmur?
What should they have done instead of complaining?

Of what necessary of life are deserts deficient?

Did God supply the people's need?

What did God command?

Did Moses obey strictly?

Why was God displeased with Moses?

How was he to be punished?

Did the people again rebel?

Did God punish them?

What are *serpents*?

What method of cure did God himself appoint?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Moses, the meek Moses, also provoked God. The angry murmurs of the people tried his temper, and God instantly sentenced him to punishment. None can escape. Again there was rebellion, but even the rebels who had been bitten, were healed, if they only looked, with the eye of faith, on the brazen serpent. A simple cure for a sore disease.

28. Balaam sent for. Idolatry in Moab.

Balak, king of *Moab*, sent for Balaam, a wicked prophet, to curse the Israelites. He came to *Mount Peor*, and God caused him to bless them. The Israelites were ensnared into idolatry with the Midianites in *Moab*; and many were smitten with a plague for this sin. They afterwards slew the Midianites in battle.

EXPLANATIONS.

wicked—he undertook to pronounce curses or blessings for money or hire.

curse—to wish them ill, to declare their ruin.

ensnared—caught, like birds taken in nets or snares, by a crafty stratagem.

idolatry—to show respect to idols—images of supposed gods.

smitten—caused to die quickly; 24,000 died.

slew—Balaam was among the slain.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Balak?

Who was Balaam? [ness?

How did he show his wickedness?
What did Balak send for him to do?

Where did Balaam come to?

What did he do on Mount Peor?

Why did this wicked man bless the Israelites?

Who fell into idolatry?

Who ensnared or enticed them?

How were the Israelites punished?

Were the Midianites punished?

Moab—east of the Dead Sea; its people were descendants of Lot.

Mount Peor—one of the mountains in the land of Moab.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

God knew that Balaam wished to curse Israel, but he can compel the wicked to speak his words;—the wicked prophet blessed them. We are not to do wicked things, even if people pay us for doing them, as Balak would have paid Balaam. Sin can be made to look pleasant and enticing, but “if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.”

29. The Death of Moses.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad asked Moses for the country which had been taken from Sihon, king of the *Amorites*, and from Og, king of *Bashan*, because it was a good land for cattle. God made it known that he had appointed Joshua to succeed Moses. Moses beheld the land of *Canaan*⁶ from *Mount Nebo*, and then died.

EXPLANATIONS.

tribes—distinct families regularly descended from—
Reuben—Jacob's eldest son, and from—
Gad—another of Jacob's children.
for cattle—for pasturing, or rearing them upon its rich grasses.
succeed—to come after him as leader of the Israelites.
beheld—he saw the fertile vale between the Jordan and Jericho.

QUESTIONS.

What do you mean by *tribes*?
 What tribes made a request to Moses?
 What request did they make?
 From whom was the country taken which they desired to have?
 Why did these two tribes ask for that country?
 What does this mean?
 What did God make known?
 From what height did Moses see the land?
 What part did he see?

Amorites—one of the nations of Canaan; the people were giants.

Bashan—east of the Jordan, it was celebrated for its oaks and pastures.

Mount Nebo—a mountain of Moab, "over against Jericho."

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We remember that Moses was not to enter Canaan, and the cause of this severe sentence. We must now admire the goodness and mercy of God, who allowed him to see that good land before he died. The Israelites who had left Egypt were now all dead, except Caleb and Joshua. For what were these two rewarded?

PERIOD IV.

FROM THE ENTRANCE OF THE ISRAELITES INTO
CANAAN TO THE ANOINTING OF SAUL.

B.C. 1451—B.C. 1095.

356 years.

Joshua succeeds Moses---Jericho taken---The Gibeonites—
Canaan conquered and divided---The Idolatries, Servitudes
and Deliverances of the Israelites---their Judges---History
of Ruth---of Eli---of Samuel---The people ask for a king.

30. Joshua succeeds Moses. Jericho taken.

Of the 600,000 men who left *Egypt*,¹ Joshua and Caleb were the only two who entered *Canaan*.⁶ Joshua sent two spies to *Jericho*; they were concealed by *Rahab* and assisted to escape. They promised to save her and her family, when the Israelites should take the city. Joshua received directions from God about taking *Jericho*. *Rahab* was saved when the city was taken.

EXPLANATIONS.

600,000—men, without the women and children.

Joshua and Caleb—were the two faithful spies. *Les.* 26.

concealed—hidden from those who had been sent to take them prisoners.

Rahab—she believed that the Israelites were the Lord's people, and that the Lord would give *Canaan* to them.

directions—orders; Joshua was not to trust in his own wisdom; God was their guide and captain.

QUESTIONS.

How many men left *Egypt* to go into *Canaan*?

Who of these alone were permitted to enter *Canaan*?

Who were sent to *Jericho*?

Who concealed them?

What do you mean by *concealed*?

What did she assist them to do?

Why did *Rahab* do all this?

What promise did the spies give *Rahab*?

By whose directions was Joshua guided respecting the taking of *Jericho*?

Jericho—a strong city with high walls, seven miles west of the *Jordan*.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The Israelites who were unfaithful, or who did not believe God's promises,—were not allowed to go into *Canaan*. Joshua and Caleb were faithful and they were rewarded. If we do not believe in God's promises we shall not enter heaven. *Rahab* showed kindness to the spies, and her faith was rewarded.

31. Achan's sin. Of the Gibeonites.

Achan coveted and hid silver and gold of the spoil of *Jericho*,³⁰ and was stoned for his sin. The people of *Gibeon* made a league with the Israelites, and deceived them, and were made hewers of wood and drawers of water. Five kings went against *Gibeon*, because the people had made peace with Israel; they were conquered.

EXPLANATIONS.

coveted—wished for; this feeling led him to steal.
hid—concealed; having obtained them unlawfully.
spoil &c.—all the goods found by the Israelites in Jericho.
stoned—a dreadful mode of death to which criminals were sometimes subjected.
league—a friendly agreement; to be observed for ever.
deceived—by pretending to be a distant people, which they were not, but near neighbours.

QUESTIONS.

What was the sin of Achan?
 Of what was the silver and gold a part?
 Why did he hide the goods?
 What is the meaning of *spoil*?
 How was Achan punished?
 What people made a league with Israel?
 What is it to make a *league*?
 Did the Gibeonites do any thing wrong?
 How were they punished?
 What did five kings do?
 Why?
 Who were defeated?

Gibeon—this city was situated on a hill about five miles from Jerusalem.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Achan wished for that which God had forbidden; his sinful longing led him to do wickedly. Let us not wish to enjoy anything which God forbids us to have. The Gibeonites feared the Israelites, and their fear led them to act deceitfully. We should never fear to speak the truth. "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD."

32. The Conquest and Division of Canaan.

Joshua did not conquer the whole of *Canaan*,⁶ The tabernacle was set up at *Shiloh*; and *Canaan* was divided among the tribes by lot, Forty-eight cities were given to the Levites. The bones of Joseph were buried in *Shechem*. Before Joshua's death he reminded the Israelites of God's great goodness towards them.

EXPLANATIONS.

divided—marked out into the necessary number of parts.

tribes—separate bodies, each comprised of the distinct families of the twelve sons of Jacob.

lot—a simple method of deciding by chance, to which of several persons, anything should belong.

48 *cities*—or towns. Space for gardens was also added.

bones—they had been brought by Moses out of Egypt in a coffin. Les. 16.

QUESTIONS.

Did Joshua not conquer all Canaan?

What was set up at Shiloh?

Among whom was Canaan divided?

In what manner?

What portion of land was given to the Levites?

What was done at Shechem?

By whom, and whence had they been brought?

What did Joshua do before his death?

To whom had God shown great goodness?

Shiloh—a town fifteen miles north of Jerusalem; near it Joshua resided.

Shechem—a city between the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim, near it was the plot of ground which Jacob gave to Joseph.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The Israelites were right in providing for the Levites, for they were the Lord's ministers. We should love and respect our religious teachers. Joshua spoke to the people of God's past mercies; in like manner we should gratefully keep in mind God's great goodness to us.

33. Disobedience of the Israelites.

The people of Israel took *Bezek*, *Hebron*, and other cities of *Canaan*,⁶ but did not drive out all the inhabitants. Othniel, the nephew of Caleb, took the strong city, *Debir*. The Israelites were reproved by an angel for disobeying God. They also forsook God, and worshipped idols; God then permitted the Canaanites to oppress them.

EXPLANATIONS.

not drive—yet God had commanded them to drive out all the—
inhabitants—or the heathens, who then lived in Canaan.
reproved—blamed them for not having done their duty.
forsook—left; departed from serving God in the right way.
worshipped—prayed to, paid honours to, and feared.
idols—images of beings or things, which they foolishly supposed to be gods.

QUESTIONS.

What cities in Canaan did the people of Israel take?
 Did they drive out all the former inhabitants?
 What was *Debir*?
 Who took this strong city?
 Who reproved the Israelites?
 Why did he reprove them?
 Who forsook God?
 What is the meaning of *forsook*?
 To what did they turn?
 Do you know what *worshipped idols* means?
 How were they punished?

Bezek—a city in the south of Canaan.

Hebron—an ancient and a celebrated city in the south of Canaan.

Debir—a strong city near Hebron; it was taken by, and given to Othniel.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

God made the Israelites conquerors, but they were unfaithful, and he was greatly displeased. It is not enough to keep part of God's commands; we should follow him fully. The Israelites soon sinned like the wicked people around them. We should shun sinful examples.

34. Micah's Idolatry. The Danites.

The mother of Micah made a molten image, and Micah obtained a Levite to be his priest. Some men of the tribe of Dan took away the idol and the priest, and set up the idol at *Laish*, which city they called *Dan*. The *Benjamites* were very wicked, and the whole tribe, except 600 men, was destroyed by the other tribes.

EXPLANATIONS.

molten—melted; formed in a mould by the metal founder.

image—a likeness of a man, or woman, or being, or thing to be worshipped.

obtained—Micah paid him for staying in his house.

took away—by force; but their lawlessness proved a great injury to the whole tribe.

set up—on a raised place; within a tent, or in a grove, but so public that all could see it and worship it.

QUESTIONS.

What did Micah's mother make?

What is a *molten image*?

Who obtained a priest?

Of what tribe was the priest?

Who took away both the image and the priest?

What did the Danites do with the idol?

What name did they give to the city of Laish?

Which tribe was very wicked?

How were they punished?

By whom were the Benjamites nearly all destroyed?

Laish or *Dan*—a city and small district in the north of Canaan.

Benjamites—descendants of Jacob's youngest son.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

If we remember our Creator in the days of our youth, it is not likely we shall forsake him, as Micah's mother did, when we grow old. Here we see that the mother led the son into error; that the Levite, born and educated to serve in the tabernacle, served before an idol;—that the Danites committed robbery, but that which they stole became their curse.

35. Servitudes and Deliverances of Israel.

God suffered the Israelites to be oppressed for their idolatry; but when they repented he raised up Othniel to deliver them. He permitted the king of *Moab*,²⁸ the *Philistines*, and the Canaanites to oppress them at different times; but whenever they repented and cried to him, he raised up valiant men to deliver them.

EXPLANATIONS.

suffered—allowed; no enemy could injure them so long as they served God.

idolatry—making use of images to remind them of God, though God had forbidden them to make a likeness of anything to worship it.

repented—were sorry for their sin and turned from it.

raised up—appointed; God alone is able to make any man great and useful.

valiant men—brave men, who fought in the name of the Lord.

Philistines—they inhabited the west and south-west coasts of Canaan.

QUESTIONS.

What is the meaning of *suffered*?

What evil did God permit to happen to Israel, and for what cause?

How long did he suffer them to be oppressed?

When they repented what took place?

What nations oppressed them at various times?

When were valiant men raised up by the Lord?

What does *valiant* mean?

For what purpose were they raised up?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

They who choose the service of sin shall surely come to feel their folly. "The wages of sin is death." The Israelites turned to God in the time of trouble; they should never have forsaken him. God was merciful to them—O how great is his mercy! They repented. All who sincerely repent, and cry earnestly unto God shall be delivered from their troubles.

36. History of Ruth.

·Naomi went to live in *Moab*²⁸ with her husband and her two sons, when there was a famine in *Canaan*.⁶ ·Ruth, a Moabite, married one of Naomi's sons. Naomi's husband and her sons died, and she wished to return to *Canaan*. Ruth loved her mother-in-law, and would not leave her, but came into *Canaan* with her; and God blessed her. Obed, the son of Ruth, was the grandfather of David.

EXPLANATIONS.

Naomi—a woman of Israel.
famine—caused by the plunder of their crops, one of the evils of war.
Ruth—she left her idolatrous friends, and joined herself to the true worshippers of God.
married—she became the wife of Chilion.
died—Naomi was now a widow and childless.
loved—regarded with respect.
mother-in-law—mother according to the law of marriage.

QUESTIONS.

Whither did Naomi remove?
 Who removed with her?
 Why did they remove?
 How was the famine caused?
 Did they all return to their own land again?
 Who returned with Naomi?
 Who was Ruth?
 Why did Ruth accompany Naomi into her own country?
 Was the Lord pleased with Ruth?
 How do you know that?
 Who was Obed?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Naomi and her family were compelled to live among idolaters; but Naomi did not cease to worship the True God. We must not give up the true religion for a false one. Ruth made a happy choice, she left her idolatrous relatives, and renounced the worship of idols. All who seek the companionship of the good will obtain God's favour.

37. Gideon Delivers Israel.

When the *Midianites* oppressed Israel. God raised up Gideon to deliver them with only 300 men. The *Ephraimites* slew two princes of *Midian*; and Gideon slew the kings of *Midian*, Zebah and Zalmunna, because they had slain his brethren. Gideon refused to be the ruler of the Israelites, saying, "The LORD shall rule over you."

EXPLANATIONS.

with only &c.—the Lord is able to give victory to the feeble and the few; the Midianites never recovered their former power after this discomfiture.

princes—chiefs or captains.

because—the law of retaliation—"an eye for an eye," &c., was then acted upon, but Christianity has set it aside.

ruler—a warlike king or chieftain to lead their armies.

rule—HE who had just saved them was the best ruler.

QUESTIONS.

Who oppressed Israel?

Who was Gideon?

What people did he conquer?

How many men had he with him at the time?

Whom did the Ephraimites slay?

Who were Zebah & Zalmunna?

What crime did they commit?

By whom, and how, were they punished?

What honour did Gideon refuse?

What reason did he assign for his refusal?

Midianites—a trading and warlike people of Arabia Petrea.

Ephraimites—descendants of Ephraim, Joseph's younger son.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The wicked often injure God's servants; sometimes their cruelties are permitted for a punishment. In the worst times God hears and answers prayer; he can deliver when all hope seems lost. If great men are wicked, they shall as surely be punished as poorer people. Those who are guided by the laws of God, have the Lord for their ruler.

38. Abimelech made king. Of Jephthah.

The men of *Shechem*³² made Abimelech their king. He slew all the sons of Gideon, except Jotham. Soon after, Gaal conspired against Abimelech, who was slain. The *Ammonites* made war against Israel; but God raised up Jephthah to deliver them. He made a rash vow, which he was to fulfil after he had conquered the Ammonites.

EXPLANATIONS.

slew—lest they should make his ill-acquired throne uneasy.

Jotham—the youngest son; he had hidden himself.

conspired—united together for the purpose of dethroning him.

slain—his cruelty to his brethren was now recompensed.

God raised—at the proper time the proper man appeared; surely Israel needed not a king like the nations round.

rash—hasty; without consideration or advice.

vow—a religious promise, solemnly made to God.

Ammonites—descendants of Lot; their country was east of the Jordan.

QUESTIONS.

What did the men of Shechem do?

How did Abimelech commence his kingly rule?

Who was Jotham?

Why was he not slain?

Did Abimelech long enjoy his ill-acquired honour?

Who conspired against him?

What did the Ammonites do?

Who delivered Israel from the Ammonites?

Who made a rash vow?

What is the meaning of *rash*?

What is a *vow*?

When was he to fulfil it?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Men sometimes choose bad rulers; but such rulers are often made the punishers of those who appointed them, while the rulers themselves also suffer. Abimelech's jealousy of his brethren ended in murder. We should be careful not to speak rashly; Jephthah brought great trouble on himself by a rash vow.

39. Of Samson, Eli, and Samuel.

Samson was born to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines.³⁵ Eli, the priest had two wicked sons, Hophni and Phinehas. He reprov'd them, but he did not restrain them from evil. Samuel, the son of Hannah and Elkanah, ministered to the Lord before Eli. All Israel knew that Samuel was appointed to be a prophet.

EXPLANATIONS.

deliver—to save; God set him apart from his birth to be a champion and a destroyer of Israel's oppressors.
restrain—keep them from evil by strong corrections.
Samuel—means 'asked of God.'
ministered—served, assisted the priest, Eli, in his several duties.
to the Lord—he served—not so much as Eli's assistant, but as the Lord's devoted servant.
knew—perceived in him the signs of future greatness.
appointed—not by Eli, but by the Lord.

QUESTIONS.

What was Samson born to do for Israel?
 What was Eli's office?
 What kind of children had he?
 What were their names?
 Did he reprove them?
 What did he not do?
 What do you mean by *restrain*?
 Who was Samuel?
 What is the meaning of *Samuel*?
 To whom did he minister?
 Under whose directions did he serve before the Lord?
 What did all Israel perceive?
 Are there any prophets now?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

God frequently raises up men to perform very important duties. When we see or hear of such men we may be sure they have God's permission for what they do; and that some wise purpose is thus fulfilled.

Parents must be firm in punishing their children for their faults, or they will have cause to regret their neglect of duty.

40. The acts of Samson.

Samson married a woman of the *Philistines*.³⁵ Her father deceived him, and gave her to another; then Samson destroyed the standing corn of the Philistines; he sent into it three-hundred foxes with fire-brands at their tails. At *Lehi*, Samson slew 1,000 Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass; he was then faint.

EXPLANATIONS.

deceived—cheated; Samson was thus punished for marrying a heathen.

destroyed—burnt down.

standing corn—unreaped corn.

foxes—wild and untameable animals of the dog kind; great destroyers of poultry, rabbits, &c. The Syrian fox was abundant, but jackals were more numerous, and some writers think these animals were jackals.

fire-brands—lighted sticks on which combustible matter had been smeared or fastened.

faint—fatigued, tired.

QUESTIONS.

Whom did Samson marry?

How did the woman's father act towards Samson?

Was Samson displeased?

What did he do that showed his displeasure?

How did he destroy their standing corn?

What is the meaning of *standing-corn*?

What are *foxes*?

What other animal, somewhat like the fox, is very abundant in Syria?

What are *fire-brands*?

What did Samson do at *Lehi*?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Samson was so guided in his choice of a wife as to lead him to begin to do that work for which God had sent him. God can order all things for his glory. The strength of Samson was so great that all men must have seen that it was given him for a great purpose—to punish the enemies of God's people.

41. Acts and Death of Samson.

The Philistines³⁵ compassed Samson in *Gaza*; at night he arose and carried away the gates. He revealed the secret of his strength to a woman. His strength left him—the Philistines put out his eyes, and cast him into prison. His strength returned, he pulled down the temple of *Dagon*, and was slain with many Philistines.

EXPLANATIONS.

compassed—surrounded; watched for him in several quarters.

arose—got up from sleep.

gates—the weighty doors of the city wall.

secret—that which was not generally known; the cause of his great strength.

left him—he had broken the condition upon which God had granted it.

put out &c.—a cruelty frequently inflicted in the East on dangerous prisoners.

Dagon—a Philistine deity.

QUESTIONS.

What did the Philistines do at *Gaza*?

What do you mean by their *compassing* Samson?

How did he escape?

What did Samson reveal?

What do you mean by *secret*?

What left Samson?

Why did his strength leave him?

How was he treated?

Did his strength ever return?

How did he show his strength?

What was *Dagon*?

Did he escape himself?

Gaza—one of the five principal cities of the Philistines.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

It is in vain for the wicked to lay snares for those whom God watches over. So long as we do as God commands, we may rest securely on his promises of protection.

Good men are sometimes led astray by foolish or wicked relations. Samson had a deceitful wife whose treachery ended in his death.

42. The Ark taken. Eli's death.

The ark of God was taken by the Philistines³⁵ in battle. The Israelites fled, and Hophni and Phinehas were slain. A man told Eli of these things, and he fell backward and died. The Philistines were afflicted as long as they kept the ark; they sent it away; it was brought to *Beth-shemesh*, and fetched thence to *Kirjath-jearim*.

EXPLANATIONS.

ark—a small box or chest, which contained several sacred things.

It was the principal article of furniture in the tabernacle.

battle—in imitation of Joshua at Jericho; but they had no Divine command to do this.

Hophni &c.—sons of Eli the priest, they lived wickedly.

slain—they fell because of their wickedness.

backward—the seat upon which he sat had no protection at the back part. Eli was very old.

afflicted—grieved, punished.

QUESTIONS.

What happened to the ark?

Who fled?

Who were killed in this battle?

Who were they?

Why were they slain?

Did their father hear of it?

What happened to him when he heard that the ark was taken?

Who were afflicted and for what cause?

What do you mean by *afflicted*?

How long were they afflicted?

What did they do with the ark?

Whither was it sent from Beth-shemesh?

Beth-shemesh—a city in the tribe of Judah, 30 miles west of Jerusalem.

Kirjath-jearim—a city of the Gibeonites, in Judah.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The Israelites trusted in the outward symbol of religion—the ark, but they lacked inward religion. We are not to depend on anything, however excellent, but on God. God punished his unfaithful ministers, young and old, with death. How severe, but how righteous are his judgments!

43. The People Repent. They ask for a king.

Samuel told the people to put away their strange gods, and serve the Lord. They obeyed him ; he prayed for them, and they confessed their sins. The sons of Samuel did not judge justly, and when he became old, the people wanted a king to rule over them. The Lord told Samuel to hearken to them, and to make them a king, as they had rejected God for their king.

EXPLANATIONS.

Samuel—being now old was acting as judge.
strange—foreign ; the stupid idols of the nations around them.
serve—obey, worship aright.
prayed—the prayer of a good man is acceptable to God.
confessed—owned ; we should not be so proud as to refuse to confess our sins before God.
sons—many good men have wicked and foolish children.
king—so as to be like other nations.
rejected—refused ; were not satisfied with the signs of God reigning over them.

QUESTIONS.

What did Samuel desire the people to do ?
 What is meant by *strange gods* ?
 Did the people obey ?
 What did Samuel do for them ?
 What did they do ?
 What is meant by *confessed* ?
 Who judged unjustly ?
 What did this lead the people to ask for ?
 Did God grant them their request ?
 In what way ?
 Whom had they thereby rejected ?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

As the Israelites obeyed Samuel, so should we obey our faithful ministers, who tell us of our sins, and warn us to forsake them.

It was wrong of Samuel's sons to act with injustice, but it was a greater wrong of Israel to reject God's rule and authority.

PERIOD V.

FROM THE ANOINTING OF SAUL TO THE DEATH
OF SOLOMON.

B.C. 1095—B.C. 975.

120 years.

Containing the History of the Monarchy;—The Anointing of Saul—His Disobedience—The Anointing of David—His Persecutions and Wanderings—The Death of Saul —The Accession of David—His Conquests—The Birth of Solomon —The Rebellions of David's sons—The Preparations for the Temple—The Anointing of Solomon—The Death of David—The Building of the Temple--The Wisdom, Prosperity, Offences, and Death of Solomon.

44. Saul is anointed King.

Saul, the son of Kish, was appointed to be the first king over Israel. Samuel anointed him at God's command, by pouring a vial of oil upon his head, saying, that God had chosen him to rule over his people. The people shouted, "God save the king." Samuel wrote the laws of the kingdom in a book. Soon after, Saul led the people against the *Ammonites*,³⁸ and conquered them.

EXPLANATIONS.

appointed—chosen and set apart; raised to the honour.
first—Abimelech was only king over the men of Shechem. Les. 38.
vial—a small bottle.
oil—used in the coronation, or crowning, of most kings.
shouted—loyalty, in this country, to the king or queen is expressed in the same way.
save—preserve from dangers; give him long life.
laws—selected chiefly from the laws of Moses.
conquered—defeated, subdued.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Saul?
 To what office was he appointed?
 What did Samuel do?
 How did he anoint Saul?
 What is a *vial*?
 What did Samuel say when he poured on the oil?
 What did the people say?
 What means God *save* the king?
 Who wrote the laws of the kingdom?
 What occurred soon after Saul's anointing?
 What does *conquered* mean?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

It is God who raises one man above another; but those who are lifted up should take heed lest they fall.

We should be loyal, or true, to our Queen, and heartily pray for her prosperity and safety, as the Israelites prayed for Saul. The best instructions for kings and people are in God's book.

45. Saul is Reproved. David is Anointed.

Saul disobeyed God by offering a burnt offering, which was only lawful for the priests to do. He again disobeyed by sparing the life of Agag, king of the *Amalekites*. Samuel mourned for Saul's disobedience. God sent Samuel to *Bethlehem*, to anoint David, the youngest son of Jesse, to be king. David was then taking care of his father's sheep.

EXPLANATIONS.

disobeyed—did not avoid what God had forbidden, nor do as God had commanded.
lawful—proper, allowable.
priests—descendants of Aaron.
sparing—saving from death, rescuing from punishment.
mourned—wept, grieved; he was sorry for Saul's departure from a right course.
David—he was not of Saul's family nor of his tribe. God had set them aside.

QUESTIONS.

Who disobeyed God?
 What is it to *disobey*?
 In what way had he sinned?
 Why was this wrong?
 How did he again disobey God?
 Who was Agag?
 Who mourned for Saul?
 Whither was Samuel sent?
 Who sent him thither?
 For what purpose?
 Who was David?
 What was David's occupation at that time?

Amalekites—a powerful people of Arabia who warred against Israel.
Bethlehem—a small town of Judah; the birth-place of David. See Ephrath, page 16.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We should learn from the disobedience of Saul to perform all lawful commands fully. Saul respected the great man more than God's commands. "God is no respecter of persons." Saul was set aside for one disposed to do God's will; David, the shepherd-boy, was found better qualified to become a king than Saul.

46. David slays Goliath.

Goliath was a Philistine giant who defied the armies of Israel. Saul promised to enrich the man who should slay him; and he also promised to give him his daughter in marriage. David went against Goliath with only his sling and five smooth stones. He slung a stone which smote Goliath. David then cut off the giant's head.

EXPLANATIONS.

giant—a man of great size.

Goliath was moreover very strong.

defied—challenged, dared, treated with contempt.

armies—various bands or bodies of soldiers.

enrich—to make rich by giving a liberal reward.

only—he had not on a coat of armour; nor had he a helmet, nor shield, nor sword, nor spear.

sling—a weapon used in warfare in early times, made of straps or strings, with which stones were thrown with great force and accuracy.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Goliath?

What do you mean by *giant*?

Whom did Goliath defy?

What do you mean by *defy*?

What is meant by *armies*?

What promises did Saul make?

Would it not be a great honour to a man to be married to a king's daughter?

Who went against the giant?

Of what ordinary weapons of warfare was he deficient?

What weapons did David carry with him?

What is a *sling*?

What did David do to Goliath?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Goliath gloried only in his great strength and despised God's people. God finds out the best persons for the performance of his will. Victory is granted to the defenceless if they trust in God, while those who rely upon their own strength and skill will surely fall.

47. Friendship of David and Jonathan. Saul's Enmity.

Jonathan, the son of Saul, loved David. The women of Israel praised David in their songs. Saul became envious of him, and attempted to slay him, but the Lord was with David. When the evil spirit came on Saul, he sought to smite David. Saul sent messengers many times to take him, but David always escaped.

EXPLANATIONS.

women—bravery in men is always esteemed by women, who dislike cowards.
praised—this is common to all nations, and to all times.
envious—he grudged him his honour, he hated him for his excellence and success.
slay—“wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who can stand before envy.”
evil spirit—of jealousy & rage.
smite—strike, so as to kill.
messengers; officers of his court.
always—at all times; because “the LORD was with him” —to protect him.

QUESTIONS.

Who loved David?
 Who was Jonathan?
 Who praised David?
 In what way did they express their praises of him?
 Why was Saul *envious*?
 Who showed envy to David?
 What did he attempt to do to David?
 By whom was David preserved from Saul's malice?
 What came on Saul?
 What did he then try to do?
 What were messengers sent to David for?
 Who sent them?
 Was David taken?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Good men should love one another whether they be princes or peasants. It is our duty publicly to show our gratitude to those who have risked their lives in defence of their country and people. Envy made Cain murderer, caused Korah's ruin, and now destroys Saul's happiness.

48. David flees to Nob. He escapes to Adullam.

David fled to Ahimelech the priest at *Nob*, and asked for bread. The priest had none but hallowed bread, which he gave to David. David took thence the sword of Goliath. One of Saul's, servants named, *Doeg*, was at *Nob* that day. David escaped to the cave of *Adullam*. He was then captain over four hundred men.

EXPLANATIONS.

hallowed—bread made holy by being presented before the Lord in his tabernacle. It was the privilege of the priests only, to eat hallowed bread, or shew-bread.

he gave—rather than that David should die of hunger.

sword, &c.—with which he had cut off the head of Goliath.

Doeg—he was the king's chief herdsman; an upper servant.

cave—a hollow place, or an opening in the rock.

captain—the leader and head of a company of soldiers.

Nob—a city in the tribe of Benjamin where many priests resided; the tabernacle was probably there.

Adullam—a city of Judah; its Canaanitish king was slain by Joshua.

QUESTIONS.

To what place did David flee?

Who was the priest?

What did David ask for?

What sort of bread was given to him?

What is the meaning of *hallowed*?

What else did David obtain?

Who was present all the time?

What situation did Doeg hold under Saul?

To what cave did David flee?

What is a *cave*?

What is a *captain*?

How many men had David?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

God sometimes suffers his servants to be sorely tried and afflicted. David was now in danger of death from the sword of Saul, and from want. He found a friend in the priest of the Lord; like him, the afflicted have generally found their best friends, in godly ministers of the Lord.

49. The Priests of Nob slain. David escapes from Saul.

Doeg told Saul of David's visit to *Nob*,⁴⁸ and spoke falsely of Ahimelech. Saul told Doeg to slay all the priests of *Nob*; one only, Abiathar, escaped and joined David. David wandered about to escape from Saul. Once, in the cave of *Engedi*, David found Saul sleeping, and might have slain him; but he only cut off a part of his robe.

EXPLANATIONS.

told—because he desired to injure David and his friends.

falsely—“what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?”

slay—What a horrid act! a king to command the Lord's ministers to be put to death for showing kindness to his daughter's husband! Saul was indeed a cruel man.

joined—became one of his company. Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech.

cut off—to let Saul, his enemy, know that he had been in his power.

QUESTIONS.

Who told Saul of David's visit to Nob?

Why did he do so?

How did he speak of Ahimelech?

For what was Doeg sent to Nob?

By whom was he sent?

Which of the priests escaped?

Whose son was he?

Why did David wander about?

Who was found sleeping?

By whom was he found?

What could David have done to him?

What did he do?

Why did he do so?

Engedi—a city of Judah, near the southern end of the Dead Sea.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Wicked Doeg sought to gain his master's favour by speaking falsely of the innocent, thus causing the death of many. Talebearing may arise from thoughtlessness as well as from malice. David might have killed his enemy, but he left his cause in God's hands. His conduct was generous and forbearing. We should “overcome evil with good.”

50. Of Nabal and Abigail.

Nabal had large possessions in *Carmel*. David and his men had protected Nabal's flocks, while they were in *Carmel*, and David sent to ask for refreshment for himself and his men. Nabal was making a feast for his shearers, but he refused. His wife, Abigail, took servants with her, and carried a large present to David; which he accepted.

EXPLANATIONS.

possessions—property in land, in sheep, cattle, camels, &c.
protected—kept safe from the hands of robbers. Had it not been for them, many of his flocks and herds would have been carried off.
refreshment—this was the least return Nabal could make.
feast—a great supper.
shearers—men who clip or cut the wool from off the sheep.
refused—What a worthless and unjust fellow!
present—she properly esteemed David's protection.

QUESTIONS.

Where did Nabal live?
 What were his *possessions*?
 What service had David rendered him?
 What did David ask for?
 At what time was the request of David made?
 Did Nabal grant his request?
 What do you understand by *shearers*?
 Who brought David a large present?
 Who was Abigail?
 Who went with Abigail?
 Did David accept her present?

Carmel—a small town in the south east of Judah, near the Dead Sea.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Nabal was ungrateful, hard-hearted, and selfish. Let us avoid such sins towards all people, especially towards those who have been our kind protectors and friends; and let us not forget the afflicted in the midst of our abundance. Abigail appeased the anger of David. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

51. David marries Abigail. Again spares Saul's life.

Nabal was very drunken when Abigail came home. He died soon after, and David married Abigail. David again found Saul and his guards sleeping; he reproved Abner, the captain, for not keeping a better watch on the king's life. David fled with six-hundred men to Achish, king of Gath. After that Saul sought him no more.

EXPLANATIONS.

drunken—drunkenness ruins many; like Nabal, they “add drunkenness to thirst.”

died—he could not take his possessions with him.

guards—body-guards, soldiers who stood around the king to protect his person.

sleeping—some of the guards should have kept awake.

reproved—blamed. See page 37.

watch—attention, wakeful observation, look out.

king's life—the kingly office, it would seem, exposes men to danger.

sought—pursued, hunted after.

Gath—one of the chief cities of the Philistines, and Goliath's birth-place.

QUESTIONS.

Who was very drunken?

When was he drunken?

What occurred to Nabal soon after?

What became of Abigail?

Who was again found asleep?

What is the office of a king's guards?

By whom was Saul found?

What did David do?

Why did he reprove Abner?

What was Abner?

Whither did he next escape?

How many men had he with him?

Did Saul pursue him thither?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

“Who hath woe? . . . They that tarry long at the wine.” Nabal was punished for his intemperance. As no man can carry his possessions with him into another world, so should he wisely improve them, for the benefit of the needy while he lives. David acted nobly to his enemy—Nabal churlishly to his friend. Only good examples should be imitated.

52. Saul consults a Witch.

Saul was afraid of the *Philistines*.³⁵ He wanted friends to give him counsel, but he had none, and he had slain the priests of the Lord. He went to a witch at *Endor*, and desired her to bring up Samuel. Samuel made known to him that the Philistines should conquer the Israelites, and that on the morrow he and his sons should die.

EXPLANATIONS.

afraid—he could not place his trust in God, for he knew that he had grievously offended him.

none—those who make friends of the wicked in times of prosperity, shall want friends in the time of distress.

witch—a wicked woman who pretends to tell what will happen in after times.

bring up—she could not do this ; but God permitted the spirit of Samuel to appear, and to reprove Saul.

QUESTIONS.

Of whom was Saul afraid ?

Had he no friends ?

What might they have done for him ?

What had become of the priests ?

To whom did Saul seek for advice in his distress ?

What is a *witch* ?

Whom did Saul desire her to bring up ?

Did God permit Samuel to appear to Saul ?

What did Samuel make known to Saul ?

Endor—in the tribe of Manasseh, a few miles south of Mount Tabor.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Cruel and suspicious people are not only unhappy, but they drive their best friends from them; so was it with Saul. Saul sought to obtain information unlawfully. We ought not to inquire curiously about the future. Witches and fortune-tellers are an abomination to the Lord.

53. Death of Saul and his Sons.

The *Philistines*³⁵ fought against Israel and conquered at *Gilboa*. Among the slain were three of Saul's sons. Saul was sorely wounded; so he fell upon his sword and died. Then the people of Israel forsook their cities. The Philistines exposed the bodies of Saul and his sons at *Bethshan*; but the people of *Jabesh-gilead* fetched them away.

EXPLANATIONS.

conquered—gained the battle.
slain—those who lay dead on the field of battle.
sorely—dangerously.
fell upon—he set the handle end of it on the ground, and holding the point towards his heart, he fell upon it.
cities—they fled because they knew the enemy would plunder their cities.
exposed—hung up, so that all might view them; this was very great dishonour.

QUESTIONS.

Who fought on Gilboa?
 Who were the conquerors?
 Who fell among the slain?
 Who was badly wounded?
 What did he do to himself?
 Who left the cities?
 Who exposed the bodies of Saul and his sons?
 What do you mean by *exposed*?
 Where were they exposed?
 What did the men of Jabesh-gilead do?

Gilboa—a range of mountains, west of the Jordan, near Bethshan.

Bethshan—a town twenty-five miles south of the Sea of Tiberias.

Jabesh-gilead—a city of eastern Manasseh, near the Mts. of Gilead

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

From the sad end of the envious and revengeful Saul, we should learn to guard against the first risings of our bad passions. As in the case of Saul and his sons, a wicked father often causes the ruin of his children. The grateful people of Jabesh-gilead, whom Saul had once protected, showed respect to his remains.

54. David's Lament. He is anointed King.

David mourned greatly for the death of Saul and Jonathan. The Lord commanded David to go up to *Hebron*,³³ and there he was anointed king by the people of Judah. He blessed the men of *Jabesh-gilead*⁵³ for the respect which they had shown to the bodies of Saul and his sons; and he said he would requite their kindness.

EXPLANATIONS.

mourned—What a generous heart had David, which could thus grieve for the death of Saul, his enemy!

commanded—gave directions; told him as a master would tell his servant.

anointed—Samuel had anointed him at his father's house; he is now publicly anointed.

Judah—one of the tribes of Israel. David was himself of this tribe.

respect—kind consideration.

requite—honourably repay.

QUESTIONS.

Was David glad when he heard of Saul's death?

Whose deaths did he mourn?

What did God command David to do?

What was done to him at Hebron?

What people anointed David king over them?

Why did David bless the men of Jabesh-Gilead?

How had they shown their respect to Saul?

What did David promise to do for them?

What is it to *requite*?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

God's long-suffering towards sinners is shown in the history of Saul; who wearied the Divine forbearance by continual rebellion. David had borne many trials; his patience and confidence were now rewarded by the throne to which he was appointed, and which he sought not by unlawful means. Right means only should be used to obtain right ends.

55. Ishbosheth proclaimed King. Abner's death.

Abner proclaimed Ishbosheth, the only remaining son of Saul, king. Soon after, Abner quarrelled with Ishbosheth, and joined David. Abner was treacherously slain by Joab. Ishbosheth was slain by two of his own captains, who took his head to David. David commanded that they should be slain for their wickedness.

EXPLANATIONS.

proclaimed—sent messengers to sound a trumpet to call the people together, and then to tell them aloud that Ishbosheth was king.

joined—united himself to David, as one of his friends.

treacherously—injuring a person while seeming to be kind and friendly.

Joab—one of David's captains.

head—to prove to David that their master was dead.

wickedness—in treacherously murdering their master, whom they were bound to protect at all risks.

QUESTIONS.

What is it to *proclaim*?

Whom did Abner proclaim king?

Who was Ishbosheth?

Who quarrelled soon after?

Whom did Abner join?

What treacherous act did Joab commit?

What do you understand by *treacherously*?

Who also fell by treachery?

Who killed him?

What did they bring to David?

Did David reward them?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Every attempt of Saul's family to hold possession of the throne was fruitless. No man can set aside the intentions of God. David refused the assistance of wicked men; he justly punished the murderers of Ishbosheth. Any cause that is furthered and sustained by crime must fail.

56. David again Consecrated. The Ark Removed.

When David was again anointed he had the ark of God brought up from *Kirjath-jearim*.⁴² God prospered David, and he smote the *Philistines*,³⁵ and burned their idols. When the ark was being brought up to *Jerusalem*, Uzzah was slain for touching it. David then left it in the house of Obed-edom for three months. It was afterwards brought up to *Jerusalem*.

EXPLANATIONS.

anointed—this was the third anointing. Now he was publicly made king over all Israel. Les. 45, 54.

up—that is up to Hebron.

from—it had remained there since it was restored by the Philistines after the death of Eli. Les. 42.

prospered—gave him success.

burned—so had the Lord commanded, “ye shall burn their graven images with fire.”

touching—none but the priests might touch the ark of God.

Jerusalem—the capital of the kingdom, called the “city of David.”

QUESTIONS.

Who was again anointed?

When had he been anointed before this?

What did he bring up?

From what place?

Did God bless David?

What did he do to the idols of the Philistines?

What did Uzzah do?

Why was it wrong?

How was he punished?

With whom did David leave the ark?

For how long? [brought?

After that whither was it

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn from the exaltation of David that God will not disappoint those who trust in him. In his prosperity David did not forget the service of the Lord. Love for God's house should fill our hearts. From the punishment of Uzzah we should learn not rashly to meddle with the duties which belong to others.

57. David resolves to build the Temple. His Prosperity.

David resolved to build a temple for the Lord; but Nathan, the prophet, was sent to prevent him, and to say that his son should build a house for God. David subdued all his enemies, and the king of *Hamath* sent him presents. A lame son of Jonathan, named Mephibosheth, was treated kindly by David for his father's sake.

EXPLANATIONS.

resolved—made up his mind to, settled within himself.

temple—a house for the worship of God, instead of the tabernacle, or tent, built by Moses.

subdued—beat down, made them feel his power and greatness.

presents—these were signs of submission or congratulation. Inferiors always send presents to their superiors in the East.

treated—dealt with, behaved towards.

QUESTIONS.

Who resolved on some good work at this time?

What is it to *resolve*?

What was his resolve?

What is a *temple*?

Was David permitted to build it?

Who forbade him?

What did Nathan tell him?

Whom did David subdue?

Who sent him presents?

Who was Mephibosheth?

How did David treat him?

Why did he so treat him?

Hamath—a city and a kingdom at the north of the land given to Israel.

• PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

David was denied the pleasure of building the Temple. Let us learn like him to submit with cheerfulness, when God prevents us from doing what we anxiously desire to do. God gave David victory over the enemies of Israel because he trusted in him. In his prosperity, David remembered the friendship of Jonathan.

58. David's Sin. Solomon is Born.

David took Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, into his house. Uriah was placed in the front rank in battle, to be slain. Bathsheba then became David's wife. God sent Nathan, the prophet, to David, to reprove him for his wickedness. David acknowledged his great sin. The child of Bathsheba died. Some time after, Solomon was born.

EXPLANATIONS.

took—this was unlawful; it was wrong both towards Bathsheba and her husband. “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.”
rank—line of soldiers.
then—how wicked to have a man killed, & take his wife!
acknowledged—confessed with deep sorrow of heart. He was not sullen and headstrong, but he humbled himself before God.
died—sorrow and punishment follow sin. David prayed that the child might live but his prayer was not granted.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Bathsheba?
 Who took her away into his house?
 Where was Uriah placed?
 Why was he placed there?
 What did Bathsheba then become?
 Was God displeased?
 Who was sent to tell David of God's anger?
 What was Nathan?
 Was David sorry for his wickedness?
 Whose child died?
 Why was this?
 Who was born soon after?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

It is a fearful thing to disregard any of God's laws. David broke God's command, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife”; and this sin led him to commit another and another. It is a fearful thing to give way to sinful desires. When we feel tempted to commit any sin, we should say as Joseph said, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

59. Of David's Sons. Amnon. Absalom's Conspiracy.

The sons of David caused him much sorrow. Amnon, one of them, did very wickedly, and was slain by Absalom, another of David's sons. Absalom won the hearts of the people, rebelled against his father, and was proclaimed king. Ahithophel, who was one of David's wisest counsellors, joined in the rebellion of Absalom.

EXPLANATIONS.

sorrow—"a foolish son is a grief to his father."

wickedly—yet God had commanded thus, "Commit not *any one* of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein."

slain by—by Absalom's servants at his command.

won—enticed over to love and obey himself instead of David.

rebelled—refused to submit to his father; he desired to be king himself.

counsellors—advisers.

QUESTIONS.

What does a foolish son cause to his father?

Who was grieved by the folly of his sons?

Which of them acted very wickedly?

Who slew him for what he had done?

What do you mean by *won*?

Who enticed the people to love him?

What else did he do against his father?

What was he proclaimed?

Who was Ahithophel?

What did he do?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

David destroyed the happiness of Uriah's family, and then caused Uriah's death. He is now punished by unhappiness and crime in his own house. Children, take heed not to covet the happiness which others enjoy. We abhor the baseness of Ahithophel; let us always act faithfully to our friends.

60. David flees from Jerusalem.

David fled from *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ with his own guard. As he went up the ascent of *Mount Olivet* he wept. David sent Hushai, one of his old counsellors, back to *Jerusalem*. He was to send word to David of all that was done. Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, slandered his master to David. Shimei cursed David and threw stones at him.

EXPLANATIONS.

fled—so great was the falling off of the people to Absalom.
ascent—from Olivet he could see every part of his city.
back—so that he might be of use to David, in the midst of those who were against him.
send word—send a messenger with a message.
steward—managing servant.
slandered—told a lie of him.
cursed—wished him greater troubles. This man was of Saul's family.

QUESTIONS.

Who fled from Jerusalem?
 Who accompanied David?
 What mount did he ascend?
 What did he do as he went up?
 Who was Hushai?
 Whither did David send him?
 Why was he sent *back* to Jerusalem?
 What was he sent to do there?
 Who was Ziba?
 What injury did Ziba do to his master?
 What do you mean by *slandered*?
 What did Shimei do?

Mount Olivet—on the east of Jerusalem, formerly noted for olive trees.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

David, who never turned his back upon the enemies of Israel, is now driven from his house and city by a rebellious son! He weeps, not only for his own sins, but for the wickedness of his son. What tenderness and love dwell in a parent's bosom, even for a disobedient child!

61. The Council at Jerusalem. The Battle.

Ahithophel advised Absalom to pursue David immediately. Hushai counselled that all Israel should be first assembled. Ahithophel's counsel was not followed, and he hanged himself. A battle took place in the *Wood of Ephraim*. As Absalom was riding under an oak, his head caught in the boughs, and Joab slew him.

EXPLANATIONS.

advised—as a man who knew what was best to do.
pursue—follow with his army.
counselled—recommended; thought it would be better.
first—while this was doing, David might escape.
assembled—gathered together.
hanged—foreseeing that God would overthrow the plans of Absalom.
battle—Absalom's army was routed with great slaughter.
caught—probably in a forked branch, as he was riding underneath the tree.

QUESTIONS.

What advice did Ahithophel give Absalom?
 What different advice did Hushai give?
 Whose advice was not followed?
 What was Hushai's object?
 What did Ahithophel do?
 Why did Ahithophel put an end to his own life?
 Where was the battle fought?
 What was the result to Absalom's army?
 What happened to Absalom?
 Who slew him?

Wood of Ephraim—a forest on the east of the river Jordan.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Here are three examples of the folly and wickedness of rebellion. 1. A wise man, who devoted his wisdom to evil, is confounded, and perishes by his own hand. 2. An army, which revolted from their king, is cut to pieces. 3. A son is miserably slain in open rebellion against his father.

62. David Returns to Jerusalem. Sheba's Revolt.

David mourned exceedingly for the death of Absalom. He returned to *Jerusalem*,⁵⁶ and forgave Shimei. About this time the men of Judah and those of Israel began to be jealous of each other. A new revolt took place, which was led by Sheba. Joab pursued Sheba who took refuge in *Abel*. The people of *Abel* cut off his head, and it was thrown over the wall of the city.

EXPLANATIONS.

mourned—because a good father is always grieved for the death of a wicked son. Absalom died in actual rebellion against his father.

returned—came back again. When the wicked leaders were dead the people submitted to David.

revolt—rebellion, outbreak.

Sheba—he was of the family of Saul, he did not like that the kingly honour should have passed from the tribe of Benjamin to that of Judah.

refuge—shelter, protection.

QUESTIONS.

Who mourned for Absalom?

To what place did David return?

What had Shimei done to David?

Did David now punish him?

Who were jealous of each other?

What is the meaning of *revolt*?

Who now headed a revolt?

What did Joab do?

Where did Sheba take refuge?

What does *refuge* mean?

What was thrown over the wall of the city?

Abel—or Abel-beth-maacha; this celebrated city was in the north of Canaan.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Good parents grieve when any of their children are cut off in the midst of sin. Children, grieve not your parents' hearts by self-willed tempers and conduct. Absalom's bad example was followed by Sheba. How true it is that, "one sinner destroyeth much good."

63. The Gibeonites Avenged.

Saul had slain many of the *Gibeonites*,³¹ with whom the people of Israel had made a covenant of peace. The Gibeonites required that seven of Saul's house should be hanged. Two sons of Rizpah, and five sons of Merab, were given up and hanged. Rizpah tenderly watched the bodies till they were taken down to be buried.

EXPLANATIONS.

had—when he was king.
covenant—see *league* Les. 31.
required—asked, demanded.
seven—as the number *seven* was at that time considered to be a perfect number, this satisfaction for Saul's cruelty would be esteemed complete.
hanged—the most dishonourable mode of putting to public death.
Two—five—sons and grandsons of Saul.
tenderly—with true motherly feeling; the sins of Saul thus interfered with the happiness of his children and other relatives.

QUESTIONS.

By whom had many Gibeonites been slain?
 Who had made a covenant of peace with them?
 In what capacity were the Gibeonites to serve by that covenant? Les. 31.
 What satisfaction for Saul's cruelty did the Gibeonites require?
 Who, of Saul's descendants, were given up to them?
 What was done to them?
 What is said of Rizpah?
 How long did she watch the bodies of her sons and those of Merab?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Although the Gibeonites whom Saul had put to death, were of the lowest and most servile class, yet his cruelty and tyranny must be avenged. We should learn to fear the justice of God when we are tempted to injure the poor or the stranger. "He forgetteth not the cry of the afflicted."

64. Charge to Solomon. Adonijah. Solomon Anointed.

David set masons to hew stones for the temple ; he also prepared iron, and brass, and timber. He charged Solomon to build the house for the Lord, and he prayed that the Lord would give him wisdom. Adonijah rebelled against his father. Then David had Solomon anointed king, by Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet.

EXPLANATIONS.

masons—men whose business it is to cut and prepare stones for building purposes, and to build them up.

hew—to cut out of the quarry.

temple—house for God's worship.

charged ; solemnly commanded.

prayed—without prayer to God for ourselves and others we have no right to expect that HE will prosper us.

Adonijah, &c.—he wished to be king after his father.

Solomon—David's tenth son.

anointed—most kings in the East have a right of appointing their successors.

QUESTIONS.

What have workmen who are called *masons* to do ?

For what purpose did David employ masons ?

What is meant by the *temple* ?

Did David make any other preparations towards the building of the temple ?

What charge did he give to Solomon ?

What else did David do ?

Should we expect the Lord's blessing without prayer ?

What did Adonijah do ?

Why did Adonijah rebel ?

How did David prevent this ?

Who anointed Solomon ?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

If we cannot do all the good we wish to do, we should not refuse to do what may be in our power. God requires no more from us than he has given us the power to do. We should not forget to pray for the success of others, as David prayed for Solomon's prosperity.

65. Preparations for the Temple. Death of David.

David assembled the princes and told them that God had appointed Solomon to build the temple. He gave to Solomon the patterns of the temple, and of the vessels. The fathers of Israel gave, willingly, much gold, silver, brass, iron, and precious stones, and David rejoiced. David died full of days, and riches, and honour.

EXPLANATIONS.

assembled—called together to hear what he had to say to them.

princes—chief men of the tribes.

appointed—he who was chosen of all David's sons, as the most worthy for building the house of God, was the fittest to be made king,

patterns—plans of the building, and models of the vessels.

vessels—bowls, cups, spoons, &c.

fathers—heads of families, elderly men.

willingly—freely & cheerfully.

rejoiced—felt glad and thankful.

QUESTIONS.

Who were now called together?

Who were the *princes*?

What did David tell them?

What did he give to his son Solomon?

What do you mean by *patterns*?

Who were the *fathers* of Israel?

How did the fathers give of their wealth?

What effect had their liberality on David?

What is said of the death of David?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

To give what we can towards the support of God's worship is our duty and ought to be our pleasure. David *delighted* to make great preparation for the building of the temple, because he loved the Lord, and rejoiced in his worship. The "fathers" gave willingly: "God loveth a cheerful giver."

66. Solomon's Vision.

Solomon had a vision by night. God appeared to him, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon asked for an understanding heart to judge wisely. God promised to give him wisdom, and riches, and honour; and length of days also, if he kept his statutes. Adonijah again conspired against Solomon, and was put to death.

EXPLANATIONS.

vision—a remarkable dream.
appeared—showed himself in some visible form to Solomon's mind.
understanding heart—that he might be able to settle matters in dispute, and give a wise sentence.
wisdom—"length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches & honour."
riches, &c.—"riches and honour are with me, yea durable riches and righteousness."
statutes—commandments, laws
conspired—plotted, agreed with others.

QUESTIONS.

What is a *vision* ?
 Who had a vision ?
 Who appeared to Solomon ?
 What privilege did the Lord give to Solomon ?
 What did Solomon ask for ?
 Why did he ask for an *understanding heart* ?
 Did God promise to give him anything more ?
 What should Solomon continue to do to receive these blessings ?
 Who again conspired against king Solomon ?
 What was done to him ?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

While we are young we should resolve, like Solomon, to seek wisdom, both to guide ourselves, and for the good of others. Like him, we should ask God to grant us wisdom and understanding, if we desire to be prosperous and happy;—for wisdom saith, "riches and honour are with me."

67. The Covenant with Hiram.

Hiram, king of *Tyre*, at the desire of Solomon, procured cedar trees and fir trees from *Lebanon*, for the temple; Solomon agreed to give Hiram wheat and oil in exchange. Solomon also desired king Hiram to send him an artificer who was skilful to work in gold, silver, brass, and iron. He sent Hiram, a widow's son, to Solomon.

EXPLANATIONS.

cedar-trees—the timber of the cedar is very durable; many insects will not attack it.

agreed—this was a commercial agreement to which both the kings were parties.

wheat—one of the chief products of the land of Israel.

oil—obtained from the fruit of the olive-tree, also abundant in the land of Israel.

exchange—to give one thing and accept another.

artificer—a skilful workman.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Hiram?

What did he procure for Solomon at his desire?

Whence did he obtain them? For what was the timber intended?

What was Solomon to give Hiram in exchange?

What other request did Solomon make of Hiram?

In what kind of materials was he to be able to work?

Whom did king Hiram send?

Tyre—this celebrated city of Phœnicia was a place of commerce and art; and was visited by traders of all nations.

Lebanon—the mountains of Lebanon were on the borders of Syria and Canaan, and were celebrated for their fir-trees and cedar trees.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

When young people do what is pleasing to God, prosperity attends them in life; they “grow in favour with God and man.” Religious principle, modestly shown in the affairs of daily life, secures the esteem of mankind. Hiram was pleased that God had given David “a wise son.”

68. The Temple Built.

The temple was built on *Mount Moriah*. Within, it was overlaid with gold, and garnished with precious stones. It was seven years in building; and no sound of any tool of iron was heard within the house, while it was building. The ark of God, and the holy vessels were brought into the temple by the priests and Levites.

EXPLANATIONS.

was built—according as God had promised to David.

Within—the walls inside.

overlaid—covered.

garnished—made bright and beautiful, decorated.

stones—some of which were more costly than an equal quantity of silver or gold.

no sound—all the parts and works were planned, and the materials prepared before hand.

holy—because they were to be used in the service of the “holy, holy, holy, Lord GOD.”

QUESTIONS.

Where was the temple built?

With what were the walls overlaid within?

What is the meaning of *garnished*?

With what materials was the temple garnished?

How long was Solomon engaged in building it?

How do we know that the work was done quietly?

How was this accomplished?

What articles were brought into the temple?

By whom were they brought in?

Mount Moriah—was on the north-east of the city; after the temple was built it was included within the city walls.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

David, when forbidden to build the temple, was told that his son should build it; that promise is now fulfilled. Let us never doubt the promises of God; for if delayed, they will be fulfilled, and that in the best time. “There hath not failed one word of all His good promise.”

69. The Temple Dedicated and Accepted.

Solomon dedicated the temple to God. He assembled the elders of Israel and all the princes. They praised the Lord, and offered great sacrifices. The glory of the Lord filled the house, and the king kneeled down before all the congregation, and prayed for the people. God accepted the temple for his house of prayer.

EXPLANATIONS.

dedicated—set apart for the exclusive worship of the Lord.

praised—Whoso offereth praise glorifieth the Lord; therefore, “Sing his praise in the congregation.”

sacrifices—sheep and oxen, which the priests slew, and presented to God on the altar in the temple.

glory—a shining cloud.

congregation—the people who were assembled or congregated within the temple.

accepted—was pleased with.

QUESTIONS.

What was dedicated?

What is the meaning of *dedicated*?

Who came to assist in the dedication of the temple?

What did they do on this occasion?

What is praise?

What are *sacrifices*?

With what was the temple filled?

Who kneeled down?

Before whom did he kneel?

Should we be ashamed to worship God before others?

Was God pleased with Solomon's prayer?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

When men sincerely unite in God's worship, their prayers and praises will be favourably regarded by Him whose greatness and goodness they adore. We learn from Solomon's example, that the right position for prayer, is to kneel down on our knees; thus outwardly expressing our humility before God. “Let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker.”

70. The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon.

Solomon had a navy of ships which traded to many countries. The queen of *Sheba* heard of Solomon's greatness, and came to visit him, bringing him large presents. She asked Solomon many hard questions which he answered. She said she did not believe all she had heard of his wisdom, till she came and saw it.

EXPLANATIONS.

navy—ships and sailors.
traded—brought home the productions of distant countries, in exchange for goods taken to those countries.
queen—a woman who rules as sovereign with the same authority as a king.
hard—difficult, puzzling. She was considered to be a very wise woman, and she took this method of proving Solomon's wisdom.
answered—because God had given him wisdom.

QUESTIONS.

What does a *navy* consist of?
 Who had a navy at this time?
 What is the meaning of *traded*?
 What did the queen of Sheba do, and why?
 What did she bring with her?
 Why did she ask hard questions?
 What did the queen of Sheba say to Solomon's answers?
 Why was he able to answer?
 Why did she not believe all she had heard till she visited king Solomon?

Sheba—there is some uncertainty as to whether the country the queen of Sheba reigned over was in Arabia, or in Abyssinia.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The advantages of peace to a nation are shown in the condition of Israel under Solomon. Riches increase; trade prospers; learning is cultivated; religion is regarded. Let us love and promote peace. Solomon's answers to the queen of Sheba proved that God had given him wisdom above all men, as he had promised.

71. Solomon's Wisdom. His Offences.

Solomon's wisdom exceeded the wisdom of all other people. He had knowledge of all kinds of plants and animals. His people were as many as the sand by the sea-shore; and all were happy, and dwelt safely. When he became old, he forsook God, served idols, and married wives from strange nations. God became very angry with him.

EXPLANATIONS.

plants—all things that grow out of the ground. He knew their names, their properties, and their uses.

animals—living creatures of different forms, habits, and modes of life. Some remarkable for their beauty, others for their utility.

happy—if people increase, they need not fear the loss of happiness, or want of food, if they do right.

forsook—left the worship of God for that of idols, this was not the act of a wise man.

QUESTIONS.

In what respect did Solomon exceed all people?

Of what subjects had he knowledge?

Why is the knowledge of plants interesting?

What is there of interest in animals?

What is said of the number of Solomon's people?

What was their condition?

What ensures happiness?

How did Solomon sin when he became old?

Was all his great wisdom able to keep him from idolatry?

How did he also do wrong?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

God will not only bless those people who follow the peaceable principles of religion with fruitful seasons, but he will give them wise judges and teachers, and protection from their enemies. But prosperity has its dangers; and great learning does not prevent men from forgetting Him from whom all good things come. "Lean not to thine own understanding."

72. Solomon's Enemies. His Repentance.

Ahijah, the prophet, declared God's judgments against Solomon—that he would rend the kingdom out of his son's hand and give ten tribes to Jeroboam, his servant. It is supposed that Solomon repented of his sins before he died, and that he then wrote many warnings and admonitions for others. He reigned forty years over Israel.

EXPLANATIONS.

judgments—punishments.
rend—tear away by force.
out of &c.—the people should be so divided that he should not rule over them all.
his servant—that is, Solomon's servant.
repented—changed his thoughts and conduct; turned again to the Lord.
warnings—cautions; advice accompanied by threatenings.
admonitions—kind reproofs.
Israel—the Israelites, including all the tribes.

QUESTIONS.

What was Ahijah?
 What did he do?
 Against whom did he declare God's judgments?
 What were these judgments?
 What great punishment was to be sent on Solomon?
 Who was Jeroboam?
 Did Solomon repent?
 What is the meaning of *repentance*?
 What did Solomon then write?
 What are *warnings*?
 What are *admonitions*?
 How long did Solomon reign over Israel?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn from the decline of Solomon's piety that the greatest watchfulness is requisite. Those who are carefully brought up should endeavour to maintain their religious principles through life; thus to save themselves from God's anger, and from bitter sorrow and shame in their later years.

PERIOD VI.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

B.C.975 — B.C. 606.

369 years.

Containing the History of the two Kingdoms of the Hebrew nation ;—The Revolt of the Ten Tribes—The establishment of Idolatry in Israel—The successive Kings of Judah from the royal line of David—The successive idolatrous Kings of Israel—The Captivity of Israel—The alternate decays and reforms of religion in Judah—The final Captivity of the Jews.

73. Revolt of the Ten Tribes.

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, was proclaimed king over all Israel. The people came to him to complain; the old men advised him to answer the people kindly, but he forsook their counsel and followed that of his young friends. The tribes of Israel sent for Jeroboam, and made him king over Israel. Rehoboam then reigned over Judah and Benjamin only.

EXPLANATIONS.

all Israel—the twelve tribes.
complain—to tell him of their griefs, because of the hard rule of his father during the last years of his reign.
advised—gave counsel to; told him what they knew would be best to do.
kindly—“A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger,” and lead to quarrels.
that (the counsel)—which was to answer them roughly, and threaten them with heavy punishments.
tribes—ten out of the twelve.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Rehoboam?
 What was he proclaimed to be?
 Who made complaints to him?
 What sort of answer did the old men tell him to give?
 What is the effect of a “soft answer”?
 Did he follow this advice?
 Whose advice did he take?
 How many tribes sent for Jeroboam?
 What did they want him for?
 What tribes were left to Rehoboam to form his kingdom?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The errors of Rehoboam should lead us to have a greater respect for the advice of good aged persons, than for the rash opinions of the young and thoughtless. The ten tribes who revolted acted rashly, as well as Rehoboam, and they too had their punishment. “Do nothing rashly.”

74. Jeroboam's Idolatry.

Jeroboam wished to prevent the tribes of Israel from going up to *Jerusalem* to worship. He set up calves, as idols, at *Bethel* and at *Dan*.³⁴ He made priests of the lowest of the people, and offered sacrifices on an altar which he had made. A man of God came from *Judah* to *Bethel*; he reprovved Jeroboam, and cried against his altar, which was rent.

EXPLANATIONS.

prevent—stop; lest they should turn from him to Rehoboam.
worship—to present their offerings, fulfil their religious promises, called vows, and offer their prayers and thanksgivings.
calves—golden images of them
lowest, &c.—persons not of the tribe of Levi, who therefore had no right to the office.
man of God—a prophet.
rent—torn in pieces.

QUESTIONS.

What did Jeroboam wish to prevent the tribes from doing?
 Where did he establish places for worship?
 Where were these two cities?
 What kind of idols did he set up in them?
 Of what class of people did he make priests?
 What does this mean?
 How did he also offend?
 Who reprovved Jeroboam?

Jerusalem—here the temple now stood, and here Rehoboam had his court and palace.

Bethel—in the south of Israel, and in the tribe of Ephraim.

Judah—the tribe of Judah, in the kingdom of Rehoboam.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

God gave worldly honour to Jeroboam, but he feared its removal by doing that which was lawful and right. The surest way of losing such advantages is to use means, contrary to the will of God, for their preservation.

75. Rehoboam forsakes God. Shishak's Invasion.

The priests and Levites left their possessions in *Israel*, and resorted to Rehoboam. They came to Jerusalem to worship, and strengthened the kingdom, and for three years Rehoboam followed the good ways of David and Solomon. He and his people then forsook the Lord, and God permitted Shishak, king of *Egypt*¹⁴ to invade *Judah*, and to spoil the temple.

EXPLANATIONS.

left—because they could not worship God in Israel.

to Rehoboam—the temple worship was continued in his kingdom.

to worship—as prescribed by the law; not according to the idolatrous practices set up by Jeroboam.

strengthened—by their number, instructions, and example.

forsook—introduced idolatry.

permitted—to punish them.

spoil—to take away its gold, silver, and ornaments.

QUESTIONS.

Who left their possessions in Israel?

Why did they leave Israel?

Why did they prefer coming to Jerusalem?

How did they desire to worship God?

Whose kingdom did they strengthen?

How did they *strengthen* it?

What did Rehoboam do for three years?

Why did God permit Shishak to invade Judah?

What did Shishak spoil?

Israel—the kingdom—the ten tribes which revolted from Rehoboam.

Judah—the tribes of Judah and Benjamin formed the kingdom of Judah.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The good example of the priests and Levites may be followed by all people who find the pure worship of God changed into formal and half-idolatrous services. "Be ye separate, saith the Lord,...and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, & ye shall be my sons & daughters."

76. Abijah's Success. Asa Destroys Idolatry.

Abijah was king after Rehoboam. In his reign the people of *Judah*⁷⁵ prevailed against Israel, because they relied upon the Lord God. Asa reigned after Abijah, he removed all the idols out of the land. Jeroboam was succeeded in *Israel*⁷⁵ by his son Nadab. Baasha conspired against Nadab, slew him, and became king.

EXPLANATIONS.

reign—the time during which he lived and ruled as king.
prevailed—conquered; gained the upper hand in war.
relied—trusted; had confidence in; depended upon.
Lord God—these words mean, “the God who is Jehovah” in opposition to the idols called Baal, Ashtaroth, Milcom, Dagon, &c.
removed—took away; destroyed them altogether.
succeeded by—followed by; when he had ceased to reign.
conspired—plotted with others to kill him.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Abijah?
 Over what people did he reign?
 What do you mean by *reign*?
 Who prevailed against Israel?
 What do you mean by *prevailed*?
 Why was it that Judah prevailed?
 What is it to *rely* upon God?
 Who reigned after Abijah?
 What good thing did Asa do?
 Who succeeded Jeroboam?
 Who conspired against and slew Nadab?
 What did Baasha become?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

In a time of war, that army which has right on its side, and which goes forth to fight depending only upon God, has reason to expect victory. Let us pray, that whenever our country is at war, it may have no object in view, but the accomplishment of that which is just and right—according to the will of God.

77. Asa's Government.

Asa commanded all Judah to obey and serve the Lord. He was encouraged to rely on God, and he put away all the abominable idols in *Judah* and *Benjamin*. After this he did wrong by sending the silver and gold of the temple to the king of *Syria*, that he might assist him in his wars against Baasha. For this he was reproved.

EXPLANATIONS.

commanded—gave orders with all the authority of a king who must be obeyed.

obey—not partially but fully; not like the people of Israel, who worshipped God in a way of their own, and broke the commandments.

encouraged—stirred up; made bold or confident.

rely—lean upon; have faith in.

abominable; hateful, disgusting.

reproved—punished by wars, for not relying on God.

QUESTIONS.

What did Asa command?

What do you mean by *commanded*?

What was the sort of obedience he required?

On whom did he rely?

From among what people did he put idols away?

What is the meaning of *abominable*?

Did he always act rightly?

Why did he send the treasures of the temple to Syria?

How was Asa reproved?

Judah and Benjamin—the two tribes which constituted his kingdom.

Syria—this kingdom was north of the kingdom of Israel. Its first capital was Zobah, but Damascus became its chief city.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We should learn from Asa to do all we can to prevent the increase of irreligion, and to promote the true worship of God. After serving the Lord for many years, it is very sad to see Asa distrust the power and protection of God by seeking other help instead of relying upon Him.

78. Of Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab.

Baasha committed sins like those of Jeroboam. His son Elah reigned only two years; he was slain at a feast by Zimri, his servant. Omri, captain of the host, was then made king; he besieged *Tirzah*. Zimri then set fire to the palace, and was burnt in it. Omri built *Samaria*, which became the chief city of *Israel*.⁷⁵ His son Ahab reigned after him.

EXPLANATIONS.

likethose, &c.—endeavouring to mix up the worship of idols with the worship of the Lord, to keep the people from going to Jerusalem.

only—“the triumphing of the wicked is short.”

feast—the laughter was turned into mourning.

servant—captain of half his chariots.

besieged—surrounded with an army, and strove to break down its walls, and enter.

QUESTIONS.

Who was guilty like Jeroboam?

Who was Elah?

How long did he reign?

How was his reign ended?

Who was then made king?

What city did he besiege?

What does *besieged* mean?

What did Zimri do?

What city was now built?

By whom was Samaria built?

What did this city become?

Who reigned after Omri?

Tirzah—a city of Ephraim, and the residence of the kings of Israel from Jeroboam to Omri.

Samaria—this city was built on a hill; it was 40 miles from Jerusalem.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Jeroboam not only did wrong himself, but he left a bad example which others followed. His successors had no inclination to alter the irreligious customs which he had established in the kingdom. Thus, we have another example, that “One sinner destroyeth much good.”

79. Asa's Death. Jehoshaphat's Prosperity

Asa had a disease in his feet. When he died, his son Jehoshaphat succeeded him; and did that which was right. The Lord was with him because he kept his commandments. He sent his princes, and the Levites and priests, through all the cities of *Judah*,⁷⁵ and they taught the people the law of God. And no king made war against him.

EXPLANATIONS.

disease—thought by some to be gout,—a very painful disease.
sent—so that all the people might be taught the law of the Lord, every one in his own city or town.
law of God—observe, not the wise sayings of men, but the law of the LORD, which “*is perfect*,” and the statutes of the LORD, which “*are right*.”
no king, &c.—the Lord will establish those who are faithful to him; the fruits of righteousness are peace.

QUESTIONS.

What disease had Asa?
 Who was Jehoshaphat?
 Was he a good king?
 Who was with Jehoshaphat?
 Why was the Lord with him?
 Whom did he send through the cities of Judah?
 Why were they *sent*?
 Was it a good work for princes to be engaged in?
 What is said of the law of the Lord, and of his statutes?
 Did God give his kingdom peace?
 How is this stated in the lesson?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Great men should esteem it an honour to be employed in reading and distributing the Scriptures, and in teaching those who have but little knowledge. None should be above teaching the poor and ignorant. Even a child who has been taught of God may thus be a blessing to others.

80. Elijah's Mission to Ahab.

Elijah, the prophet, was sent to declare God's judgments against Ahab. He was then to hide himself from Ahab by the brook *Cherith*. After many days he was commanded to go and show himself to Ahab. At that time there was a famine in the land, for there had been no rain for years. God promised to send rain upon the earth.

EXPLANATIONS.

prophet—a messenger sent by the Lord to tell men of things that were about to take place.

was sent—he did not come of himself, nor did any man send him, he was God's messenger.

declare—speak with authority.

judgments—punishments on account of sin, such as war, sickness, famine.

hide—we are not to run into unnecessary danger, but we must not deny God, nor offend him, if wicked men should try to make us do so.

show—to prove that God had taken care of his servant.

QUESTIONS.

What was Elijah?

What do you understand by the term *prophet*?

To whom was Elijah sent?

Who sent him?

What was he sent to declare to Ahab?

What are *judgments*?

What was Elijah then to do?

What was he to do after many days?

Why was he to *show* himself?

What distress was then felt throughout the land?

What caused the famine?

What did God promise?

Cherith—a small brook which emptied itself into the Jordan, its exact situation is not known.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Wicked men are never suffered to go on to their ruin without receiving some warning from God, some advice from his ministers, or some punishment for their sins, to teach them their folly, and to show them what they may expect if they continue in rebellion against God.

81. The Sacrifice on Carmel.

·All *Israel*⁷⁵ was gathered to a ·sacrifice on ·*Mount Carmel*. The ·prophets of ·Baal were there, and Elijah also. The false prophets called on their ·gods, but they did not answer. Elijah called on the Lord, who ·sent fire from heaven upon his sacrifice. The people fell on their faces, and said that Jehovah was the True God.

EXPLANATIONS.

All Israel—the men of Israel.
sacrifice—an offering to the

Lord of some clean animal.

prophets—these were pretended prophets; the leaders of a false worship.

Baal—an idol or false god, which thousands of ignorant, foolish, and wicked people prayed to.

gods—the foolish heathens pray to many supposed gods, but they only worship aright who call upon the True God.

sent fire—thus acknowledging Elijah's sacrifice.

Mount Carmel—a mountainous ridge near the coast of Palestine, overlooking the Bay of Acre.

QUESTIONS.

For what was all Israel assembled?

On what place?

What class of people were there?

What other prophet came besides the prophets of Baal?

What did the false prophets do?

Did their gods answer them?

Who called or prayed besides?

On whom did he call?

How did the Lord answer?

Upon what did the fire fall?

What did the people do?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The prophets of a false religion pretended to do a great act, but they could not deceive the people on this occasion. Their followers must have seen the vanity of idols. The solitary prophet of the Lord wrought wonders in His name; showing, that "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

82. Elijah's Grief. Elisha is Called.

Jezebel, the wicked wife of Ahab, determined to put Elijah to death. Elijah went to *Beersheba*, and thence to *Horeb*.²¹ He was grieved, thinking that all *Israel* had forsaken the Lord; but God assured him that there were 7,000 men in *Israel*, who had not bowed the knee to Baal. At God's command he called Elisha to be a prophet.

EXPLANATIONS.

wicked—she hated the Lord and his people, and loved idols.

determined—made up her mind; resolved.

to put, &c.—as she was the king's wife she had much power which she employed for men's injury.

went to—in order to escape the anger of Jezebel.

grieved—pained and distressed at heart.

forsaken—left; turned away from praying to.

assured—told him positively, to a certainty.

bowed—worshipped as God.

QUESTIONS.

Who was the wicked wife of Ahab?

What do you understand by the term *wicked*?

What did she determine to do?

What is it to *determine*?

Where did Elijah go?

Did he go to any other place?

What is it said that Elijah was thinking of?

Did these thoughts distress him?

What did God tell him?

What does *bowing* the knee to Baal mean?

Who called Elisha to be a prophet?

Beersheba—a place of a well; in the wilderness of Judah.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Jezebel proved that the wicked hateth the righteous and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. When religion seems wholly neglected, God may be worshipped in spirit and in truth, by thousands of humble people, whose names are unknown in the world, but who are known to Him.

83. Benhadad Besieges Samaria.

Benhadad, king of *Syria*,⁷⁷ sent messengers to Ahab, to take from him the best of all things which he possessed. The elders advised Ahab not to consent. Benhadad then set his army in array against *Samaria*.⁷⁸ A prophet came, and assured Ahab of victory. Many of the Syrians were slain by the princes of Israel, others fled, but the king escaped.

EXPLANATIONS.

messengers—officers sent with a message in person.
take from—as though the king of Syria was master of Ahab, and owner of all he possessed.
elders—men of age, experience, and understanding.
advised—counselled; informed.
not to consent—not to obey the message which he had heard.
in array—in rank, or order.
assured—positively promised.
victory—success in battle.
slain—killed while fighting.
escaped—got clear off from being made prisoner.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Benhadad?
 To whom did he send messengers?
 Why did he do this?
 Did Ahab obey him?
 Who advised him not to obey?
 Who were the *elders*?
 What did Benhadad do then?
 What do you mean by *array*?
 What did a prophet say?
 What is it to *assure* one?
 What is *victory*?
 What did the princes of Israel do?
 What then happened?
 Who escaped?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Though Ahab was a wicked man and a bad king, yet as Benhadad was acting unjustly and cruelly towards him, God would not suffer him to prosper in his designs against Israel. God is the "King of kings;" and his righteous judgments are abroad in all the earth.

84. Benhadad's Return. Ahab's Covenant with him.

Benhadad returned with a large army, and went up to *Aphek* to fight against *Israel*.⁷⁵ A man of God came to Ahab and again promised him victory. 100,000 of the Syrians were slain, and a wall at *Aphek* fell upon 27,000. Benhadad fled, and hid himself. Ahab afterwards made a covenant of peace with him, and was reprov- ed.

EXPLANATIONS.

Benhadad—son of Hadad.
returned—came up again to try to conquer Ahab.
army—men carrying arms, a body of soldiers.
man of God—a prophet; one of God's earthly messengers.
promised him—not on his own word, but on the sure word, or promise, of the Lord.
covenant—an agreement between separate parties.
peace—friendship.
reprov- ed—blamed for making peace with the wicked.

QUESTIONS.

Who returned with an army?
 Why did he *return*?
 Where did he go to fight against Israel?
 What did the man of God promise Ahab?
 Were many Syrians slain?
 What occurred at Aphek?
 How many were killed in all—in the battle, and by the falling of the wall?
 Was Benhadad killed?
 What did Benhadad do when he escaped?
 What did Ahab afterwards do?
 Why was he reprov- ed?

Aphek—this city, in the tribe of Asher, was on the border of Syria.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Benhadad had been defeated once, but he thought his multitude must conquer. His warfare was unrighteous, and he was stubborn and proud. He knew not that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," and he was again defeated. Ahab, too, was punished, for making a covenant of peace with the wicked Benhadad.

85. Ahab Covets Naboth's vineyard.

Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard, but Naboth refused to sell it. Jezebel procured false witnesses, who swore that Naboth had blasphemed God and the king; and he was stoned. Elijah met Ahab in the vineyard, and made known the judgments of God—that dogs should lick Ahab's blood, and eat Jezebel, and that his family should perish.

EXPLANATIONS.

vineyard—a tract of ground planted with vines.
refused—because it was the inheritance of his fathers.
false witnesses—lying persons, who say they have heard or seen things, knowing that they speak falsely.
swore—they took an oath before the judges of the land of the truth of what they said.
blasphemed—spoken against, or reviled.
stoned—this cruel punishment could only be lawfully inflicted on notorious offenders.
judgments—severe punishments.

QUESTIONS.

Who was guilty of covetousness?
 What did he covet?
 What is a *vineyard*?
 Why did Naboth refuse to sell his vineyard to Ahab?
 What are *false witnesses*?
 What did the false witnesses do?
 What is it to *swear*?
 What is meant by *blasphemed*?
 What was done to Naboth?
 Who met Ahab soon after?
 What did he tell Ahab?
 Repeat his awful words.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Covetousness brought Ahab to the depths of crime, and caused the awful judgments of God to be pronounced against him and his wicked queen. If we would be happy, we must be content with such things as we have, and not desire those which belong to others. "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

86. Battle at Ramoth-gilead.

Jehoshaphat, king of *Judah*,⁷⁵ went with Ahab to battle against *Ramoth-gilead*. Ahab was disguised, but Jehoshaphat was in his robes. A man drew a bow at a venture, and smote Ahab in his chariot, and he was taken out of the battle. His blood flowed into his chariot, and dogs licked it up, as Elijah had foretold.

EXPLANATIONS.

went with—this good king went with bad company.

disguised—made a false appearance; concealed that he was the king by wearing common clothing.

robes—long flowing garments; his royal apparel.

a bow—the bow and arrow were much used in warfare at that time.

venture—without any particular aim, not intended to hit Ahab.

chariot—war-carriage.

dogs—the prophecy of Elijah was soon fulfilled.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Jehoshaphat?

Whom did he assist in war?

What did Ahab do?

What do you mean by *disguised*?

Could he thus hide himself from the eye of God?

Did Jehoshaphat disguise himself?

How did he appear in battle?

How was Ahab slain?

What is the meaning of this expression?

Where was Ahab then?

What flowed into his chariot?

When the dogs licked up his blood, what was fulfilled?

Ramoth-gilead—this famous city was in the mountains of Gilead, in the tribe of Gad; it had formerly belonged to Israel, but the Syrians had taken it.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The upright man is truly brave, the wicked man is a coward at heart. Fear made Ahab disguise himself, but the arrow of the Almighty found him. No further time for repentance could be given to this wicked king, who had sold himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.

87. Jehoshaphat Reproved. His Trust in God.

Jehoshaphat was reproved for aiding Ahab. Some time after, the *Moabites*²⁸ and *Ammonites*³⁸ invaded *Judah*.⁷⁵ The king proclaimed a fast, and prayed to God for help. In the morning they went forth to battle, in the *Wilderness of Tekoa*, and when the people praised God, their enemies began to destroy each other.

EXPLANATIONS.

aiding—helping; assisting.
invaded—attacked; entered the country for robbery and war.
proclaimed—sent persons to tell all the people aloud in the streets and markets.
a fast—a day when they should go without food.
praised—their spirits were wonderfully sustained by the devotions of the previous day and they gave thanks.
destroy each other—they were thrown into confusion and terror.

QUESTIONS.

Why was Jehoshaphat reproved?
 What is meant by *aiding*?
 What took place in Judah some time after?
 What do you mean by *invaded*?
 What did the king do?
 What is it to *proclaim*?
 What was done during the fast?
 What is it to *fast*?
 When did they go forth to battle?
 Where did they go to battle?
 What did the army of Judah do?
 While they were praising God how were they delivered?

Wilderness of Tekoa—about twelve miles south east of Jerusalem; there was a city near it of this name.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The wrath of God was upon Jehoshaphat for assisting ungodly Ahab. His country was soon after invaded, and to avert the approaching calamity he "set himself to seek the LORD." When his army went forth to battle, he thus exhorted them, "Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."

88. Elijah's Translation.

Elijah was about to be taken to heaven; Elisha went with him to *Gilgal*—thence to *Bethel*⁷⁴—thence to *Jericho*,³⁰ and thence to *Jordan*.⁷ Elijah wrapped his mantle together, and smote the waters, which divided, and the two prophets went over. A chariot of fire and horses of fire parted them, and Elijah went up to heaven.

EXPLANATIONS.

about—near at hand; the proper time had nearly arrived.

taken to heaven—in his proper person, without dying.

wrapped—folded up.

waters—the waves of the river which were flowing onwards.

divided—as they did in the time of Joshua, leaving a path of dry land between.

parted—separated the two prophets.

went up—in the fiery chariot.

Gilgal—the city on the east of Jericho, at which the Israelites encamped, after they had crossed the Jordan with Joshua.

QUESTIONS.

What do you understand by the words *about* to be?

What was about to happen to Elijah?

In what state was he to be *taken to heaven*?

Who walked with Elijah?

To what places—first?—second?—third?—fourth?

What did Elijah do when he came to the Jordan?

What took place when he smote the waters?

What parted the two prophets?

What then took place?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Elijah was wonderfully rewarded for his zeal in God's service. We must not expect to be carried to heaven, as he was; yet we shall certainly arrive there, if we love and serve God in purity and simplicity of heart. Impatience to get to heaven is not a good preparation for it; we must wait the Lord's time to take us to himself.

89. Elisha succeeds Elijah.

Elisha returned from *Jordan*⁷ to *Jericho*.³⁰ When the sons of the prophets saw him they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha;" and they bowed before him. Elisha healed the bitter waters at *Jericho*, by casting salt therein. From thence Elisha went to *Bethel*⁷⁴—thence to *Mount Carmel*,⁵⁰ and thence to *Samarina*.⁷⁸

EXPLANATIONS.

returned—passing through Jordan in the same way as before.
sons—they who received instruction were then called *sons* of those who taught them.
prophets—holy men of God who instructed the people.
spirit of Elijah—the same power and wisdom; Elisha was now in the place of Elijah.
doth rest—or remain on.
bowed—bent down their heads with respect.
bitter—unsavoury; a curse had been on Jericho from the time of Joshua.

QUESTIONS.

When Elijah was taken up to heaven what did Elisha do?
 Who saw him at Jericho?
 Who were the *sons* of the prophets?
 Who were the *prophets*?
 What did they say?
 What did they mean by the *spirit of Elijah*?
 What did they do?
 Why did they bow to Elisha?
 What did Elisha do at Jericho?
 What means *bitter* waters?
 How did Elisha heal them?
 What places did Elisha go to in succession?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

When the Lord takes away one of his more zealous ministers, we are not to imagine that religion must suffer. God is able to take care of his own cause, and he raises up men zealous for his glory. Let us be thankful for Christian ministers, who are appointed, according to God's command, one after another, to teach men the word of God.

90. Miracles of Elisha.

A widow who was in debt obeyed the instructions of Elisha, and she had her only pot of oil miraculously increased; she then sold the oil, and paid her debt. At *Shunem* Elisha restored to life the child of a good woman. At *Gilgal*⁸⁸ he healed the poisonous pottage. When he came to *Baal-shalisha* he fed a hundred people with twenty loaves.

EXPLANATIONS.

A widow—a woman whose husband is dead.
in debt—owing money which she was not able to pay.
obeyed—did exactly as she had been told to do.
miraculously—in a wonderful manner; in a way beyond the power of man to do or explain.
healed—cured; destroyed the poisonous quality of the herb which was found in the pot.
fed—by causing a small quantity to answer the purpose of a large supply.

QUESTIONS.

What is a *widow*?
 What is it to be *in debt*?
 Was she able to pay?
 Who gave her certain very useful instructions?
 Did she follow them?
 What is meant by *miraculously*?
 What did she do with the oil which was thus increased?
 Is it right that we should pay what we owe, when we have it in our power?
 What did Elisha do at *Shunem*?
 What cure did he perform at *Gilgal*?

Shunem—a city about five miles from Mount Tabor.

Baal-shalisha—in a part of Ephraim, called the land of Shalisha.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Though godly and laborious ministers cannot perform the wonderful things which the Lord enabled Elisha to perform, yet no one can fully know the value, temporal and spiritual, of those pious and learned men who are appointed to gather the Lord's flock, and to make known his will.

91. Naaman's Leprosy Cured.

Naaman, the captain of the host of the king of *Syria*,⁷⁷ was sent to Elisha to be cured of his leprosy. Elisha told him to wash in the *Jordan*⁷ seven times. He did so, and was healed. Elisha refused gifts from Naaman; but Gehazi, Elisha's servant, followed him, and asked for a present in his master's name, falsely. He was stricken with the leprosy of Naaman.

EXPLANATIONS.

to be cured—to have his disease removed.

leprosy—a very disagreeable disease of the skin.

wash—bathe himself.

He did so—at first he objected to this simple remedy.

followed—hastened after Naaman's chariot.

asked for—he coveted that which Elisha had refused.

his master's name—he said that Elisha had sent him.

falsely—untruly; deceitfully.

stricken—suddenly attacked.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Naaman?

To whom was he sent?

For what was he sent?

What is *leprosy*? [give him?]

What direction did Elisha

Did Naaman *do so* at once?

Did he afterwards obey?

Was he then cured?

Who offered gifts to Elisha?

Did he accept them?

What was Gehazi?

What did he do?

How was he punished for this act of deceit?

What is meant by *stricken*?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The most wonderful blessings follow upon simple and child-like obedience. God rewarded the obedience of Naaman by removing his disease. The act of Gehazi, and its punishment, should be a warning to us not to gain wealth by lying and other unlawful means. "The love of money is the root of all evil."

92. The Messengers from Syria.

Elisha informed the king of *Israel*⁷⁵ of the designs which the king of *Syria*⁷⁷ had formed against his kingdom. When the king of *Syria* knew this, he sent men with horses and chariots to *Dothan*, to take Elisha. The men were smitten with blindness. Elisha led them to *Samaria*⁷⁸—prayed that their sight might be restored—and then allowed them to depart.

EXPLANATIONS.

designs—intentions or plans.

The Lord had made them known to Elisha.

against, &c.—to conquer it, and make it submit to him.

When...knew—he was told that Elisha knew his plans.

blindness—they were unable to discern persons and places which they knew before.

led—into the midst of their enemies without knowing whither they went.

prayed—thus did Elisha show mercy and forgiveness.

QUESTIONS.

Of what did Elisha inform the king of Israel?

How was Elisha able to tell these *designs* to the king?

What were the king of Syria's designs *against* Israel?

Did the king of Syria know that Elisha was aware of his plans.

For what purpose did he send men and horses to Dothan.

What happened to the men?

What did Elisha then do?

At whose prayer was their sight restored?

Dothan—near Jezreel; twelve miles north of Samaria.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

A good man confers benefits even on the wicked in his neighbourhood or country. Thus Elisha befriended the irreligious king of Israel. We ought to serve our sovereign and our country whenever we can. We are also taught in this lesson to treat the army of an enemy, which may fall into our hands, with kindness.

93. Jehoram's wicked Reign.

After Jehoshaphat's death, his son Jehoram reigned alone. He slew all his brethren, and many of the princes. He encouraged idolatry, and followed the evil ways of the kings of Israel. His wife was a daughter of Ahab. The *Edomites*, and some of his own people revolted from him, and other nations warred against *Judah*.⁷⁵

EXPLANATIONS.

alone—he had before reigned three years in consort with his father.

slew—he was a cruel brother and a wicked king.

encouraged—he set the example and compelled the people to follow it.

followed—imitated; did after the same manner.

evil—wicked; idolatrous.

ways—conduct; behaviour.

his own, &c.—the people of Libnah—because he had forsaken the God of his fathers.

revolted—rebelled; refused to remain his servants.

QUESTIONS.

Who succeeded Jehoshaphat?

How had he reigned before he reigned *alone*?

What crime did he commit as soon as he began to reign?

What did Jehoram encourage?

What do you understand by *encourage*?

Whose ways did he follow?

What sort of ways were those that he imitated?

Who was his wife?

Who revolted from him?

What is the meaning of *revolted*?

What did other nations do?

Edomites—descendants of Esau, dwellers in Edom, or Mount Seir.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The wickedness of Jehoram was very great, he feared that his brothers would rise up against him, and he caused them to be slain. But he did not obtain a quiet kingdom by this wickedness, for God caused some of his own subjects to rebel against him, & whole nations to make war with him.

94. Siege of Samaria.

Benhadad and his host again besieged Samaria,⁷⁸ which caused a famine. Joram wickedly resolved to kill Elisha. Elisha told Joram that food should be abundant and cheap the next day. That night the Lord made the Syrians flee in fear; their spoil was brought to Samaria, so that food was both abundant and cheap, according to the word of Elisha.

EXPLANATIONS.

host—army; a well-disciplined body of warriors.
besieged—surrounded; tried to break through the walls.
caused—the people who had food to sell could not enter the city, and all the usual food of the people was gone.
kill Elisha—blaming him for causing the famine.
abundant—plentiful.
cheap—it would cost but little money to purchase it.
spoil—the goods of the Syrians, consisting of food, clothes, arms, horses, tents, &c.

QUESTIONS.

What place was besieged?
 What is it to *besiege* a place?
 What means Benhadad's *host*?
 What did the siege occasion?
 How was the famine *caused*?
 What did Joram resolve to do?
 What sort of resolve was this?
 What was told him by Elisha?
 What is the meaning of *abundant*?—and what—of *cheap*?
 How was this abundance and cheapness brought about?
 Who made the Syrians flee, and leave their spoil?
 Of what did the *spoil* consist?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The evils of war are very great. Crime, famine, and pestilence attend it. Let us pray earnestly, "Give peace in our time, O Lord." We see, by the wicked resolve of Joram, that he threw the blame of the famine on the good prophet Elisha. Sinners commonly blame others for the consequences of their own misdeeds, which greatly adds to their guilt.

95. Jehu anointed King. Jezebel's Death.

Jehu was anointed king of *Israel*⁷⁵ that he might destroy the house of Ahab. Jehu went to *Jezreel*. He slew Joram, and he smote Ahaziah, king of *Judah*,⁷⁵ who died. By Jehu's command, Jezebel was thrown from a window, and dogs ate her flesh as Elijah had predicted. Jehu came to *Samaria*,⁷⁸ and slew all the family of Ahab, and destroyed the worshippers of Baal.

EXPLANATIONS.

anointed—poured oil on him in the name of the Lord.

house—family or descendants.

slew...smote—though the kings had joined their armies, yet they could not resist God's punishing messenger, Jehu.

Jezebel—daughter of Ethbaal, wife of Ahab, mother of Ahaziah and Joram, mother-in-law of Jehoram, grandmother of Ahaziah, and great-grandmother of Joash.

thrown—God is sometimes slow to perform his threats, but his word is sure.

QUESTIONS.

Who was anointed king?

How was he *anointed*?

What was Jehu anointed for?

Whose house was he commanded to destroy? [*house*?

What do you understand by

Whither did Jehu go?

What did he do there?

Who was thrown from a window? [done?

By whose command was this

What did the dogs do?

Who had foretold this dreadful end of Jezebel?

Whither did Jehu then go and what did he do?

Jezreel—a city of Issachar, in the valley of Jezreel.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

God appoints men to various duties. Jehu's duty was a disagreeable one, but he was bound to perform it. The miserable end of Jezebel, and the destruction of Ahab's family, are examples of the severe judgments of God against impenitent sinners.

96. Athaliah's Reign. Joash Proclaimed.

Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, slew all the royal family of *Judah*,⁷⁵ except Joash, the infant son of Ahaziah, who was concealed. Athaliah then reigned, and encouraged idolatry. After six years, Jehoiada, the priest, proclaimed Joash king. Athaliah was put to death. Jehoiada ruled while Joash was young. The people covenanted to serve God, and the temple was repaired.

EXPLANATIONS.

royal—belonging to the king.
infant—a child recently born.
concealed—hidden in the house of God six years.
priest—he was the chief man of the nation, in all that concerned its religion.
ruled—performed the duties of a king instead of Joash.
covenanted—agreed; promised in the name of the Lord.
serve—obey; do that which God had told them to do.
repaired—those parts which had fallen to decay.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Athaliah?
 Of what wickedness was she guilty?
 How was it that the infant Joash was not slain?
 Who reigned over the land?
 What did Athaliah encourage?
 What occurred after six years?
 What was Jehoiada?
 What became of Athaliah?
 Did Joash rule the kingdom?
 Did Jehoiada rule well?
 What did the people agree to do?
 What word is put for agreed in the lesson?
 What place was repaired?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

One false step in life, if not immediately corrected, is sure to lead to other errors. God forbade his true worshippers to marry those who did not serve him; but good Jehoshaphat's son *did* marry the wicked Athaliah, a daughter of Ahab, and now we see what awful crimes followed this error.

97. Reigns of Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Jehoash.

Jehu followed the sins of Jeroboam. During the reign of his son, Jehoahaz, the kingdom of Israel was oppressed by Hazael, king of *Syria*.⁷⁷ Jehoash succeeded his father Jehoahaz. Elisha lay sick, and Jehoash went to see him; Elisha predicted that Jehoash should smite the Syrians thrice. This prophecy was fulfilled

EXPLANATIONS.

Jehu—he who had destroyed the idolatry of Baal became himself an idolater.

sins—worshipping the two golden calves. Les. 74.

oppressed—cruelly treated.

Hazael—the successor of Benhadad. Les. 94.

succeeded—sat on his throne; followed after him.

predicted—told him what should happen.

smite—put to rout; defeat in battle.

prophecy—a thing foretold.

was fulfilled—came to pass, as was said.

QUESTIONS.

How did Jehu conduct himself?

What were Jeroboam's principal *sins*?

Who was Jehoahaz?

What kingdom was oppressed in his reign?

By whom was Israel oppressed?

Of what place was Hazael king?

Who reigned after Jehoahaz?

Whom did he visit?

When did he visit him?

What did Elisha predict?

Was Elisha's prophecy fulfilled?

What do you mean by *prophecy*?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The difficulty of turning from bad customs is here seen. Jehu had performed the duty of punishing Ahab's family, for which he had been appointed king, but he fell himself into the idolatry established by Jeroboam. God requires that all his commands shall be obeyed.

98. Idolatry and Ingratitude of Joash.

When Hazael invaded *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ Joash gave him the hallowed things from the temple to purchase peace. After the death of Jehoiada, Joash and the princes of *Judah*⁷⁵ served false gods. Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, reprovved them, and was stoned by the king's command. Thus Joash remembered not the kindness of Jehoiada, but slew his son.

EXPLANATIONS.

invaded—marched his army against it, to fight with Joash's soldiers, and to rob the city and temple.
gave him—the riches of the Lord's house were not the king's to give away.
hallowed—holy or sacred ; used in the service of God.
peace—quietness ; so that there should not be war.
false gods—imaginary gods. How criminal for men who knew better.
remembered not—did not bear in mind. How ungrateful!

QUESTIONS.

What did Hazael do ?
 What do you mean by *invaded* ?
 Who gave him the hallowed things from the temple ?
 What do you understand by *hallowed* things ?
 For what did he give them to Hazael ?
 Did Jehoiada die before Joash ?
 What change then took place in Joash and his people ?
 Who reprovved them ?
 Who was Zechariah ?
 How did Joash take the reproof ?
 What did this cruel act prove ?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Many young people, like Joash, go on well while they are under the direction of older, wiser, and better persons, but they fall into error and crime in time of temptation, if their religious advisers are removed from them. The cruelty and ingratitude of Joash to his deceased friend and guide should warn us not to forget our benefactors.

99. Joash is slain. Amaziah Reigns.

Joash was slain by two of his own servants. His son, Amaziah succeeded him. He subdued the *Edomites*, and afterwards worshipped their idols. He declared war against *Israel*,⁷⁵ but Jehoash advised him to remain at home. Amaziah would not; he went out, but his army was defeated, and himself taken prisoner at *Bethshemesh*.⁴²

EXPLANATIONS.

was slain—God frequently punishes sinners in the way by which they offend him. Joash had slain Zechariah.
subdued—conquered; beat them in battle, and then made them his servants.
worshipped—prayed to; offered sacrifices to; praised.
declared—made his resolve publicly known.
Israel—the people of Israel and those of Judah were brethren. They were both descendants of Jacob, and not long before, one nation.
would not—he was proud and obstinate.

QUESTIONS.

How was the death of Joash brought about?
 Had Joash been guilty of any one's death?
 What do we learn from his being slain?
 Who succeeded Joash?
 What did Amaziah do to the Edomites?
 What is it to *subdue*?
 What offence did he commit?
 Against whom did he declare war?
 Who advised him to remain at home?
 Why would not he remain at home?
 How was he punished?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The ungrateful and wicked Joash was himself slain. How true is it that, "Evil pursueth sinners." Temptations accompany prosperity; Amaziah began well, but he was lifted up in the time of victory. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." We should pray that God would keep us humble; and of a reasonable temper.

100. Uzziah's Reign and Wars.

Amaziah forsook God, and was slain at *Lachish*. His son Uzziah then reigned. He prospered as long as he sought the Lord. He warred against the *Philistines*³⁵ and the *Arabians*. He built towers in *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ and in the desert, and digged wells; he had much cattle and husbandmen, and vine-dressers, for he loved husbandry.

EXPLANATIONS.

forsook—went away from; refused to obey.

prospered—became great.

sought—inquired of the ministers of religion what he should do.

towers—buildings for soldiers to watch and fight from.

desert—a place where the people were very few and the land uncultivated.

wells—that his cows, sheep, and horses might drink.

husbandmen—men who cultivate the earth.

vine-dressers—men who have the charge of vines.

Lachish—a city of Judah about 20 miles south-west of Jerusalem.

Arabians—the people of Arabia Petrea; this country was occupied by Amalekites, Ishmaelites, and Midianites.

QUESTIONS.

Who forsook God?

What do you understand by *forsook*?

Did he prosper after he had forsaken God?

At what place was he slain?

Who reigned after him?

How long did he prosper?

What do you understand by as long as he sought the Lord?

Against whom did he war?

Where did he build towers?

For what did he dig *wells*?

What are *husbandmen*?

What are *vine-dressers*?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Those who do not seek the Lord cannot obtain his favour; but he will direct the paths of those who acknowledge him. It is right when a nation is at peace to prepare for defence against enemies, and to encourage the arts of life, so as to increase the means of obtaining food, clothing, &c.

101. Prophecies of Hosea, Amos, and Joel.

Hosea said that God would put an end to the kingdom of *Israel*,⁷⁵ but that he would have mercy on *Judah*.⁷⁵ Amos predicted the captivity of Israel beyond *Damascus*; he exhorted them to repentance. Joel called on the people of *Judah* to repent: he predicted their captivity, their return, and their restoration to God's favour.

EXPLANATIONS.

God would—by sending his executioners to do it. God sometimes employs wicked men to punish others.
put an end—quite take away the king and people.
mercy—compassion; kindness.
captivity—carrying away, as prisoners and slaves.
exhorted—spoke to encouragingly and earnestly.
repentance—change of conduct from evil to good.
return—coming back; viz., to their own land.
restoration—being placed again under the divine blessing.

QUESTIONS.

What did the prophet Hosea say?
 How would God effect his threatening?
 What would he do with Judah?
 What is *mercy*?
 What did Amos predict?
 What is the meaning of *captivity*?
 Where were the Israelites to be carried captive?
 To what did he exhort them?
 What is it to *exhort*?
 What is *repentance*?
 What did Joel call on the people to do?
 Who were to be restored?

Damascus—the chief city of Syria; it is of very great antiquity.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

It is good even to *profess* the true religion; "Hold fast the *form* of sound words," is the apostle's advice. The Israelites, who set up the golden calves were to be rejected; the Jews, who did not set up another form of religion than that which God had given them, were not to be wholly cast off.

102. Jonah's Mission to Nineveh.

God commanded Jonah, the prophet, to go to *Nineveh*, and reprove the people for their sins. He was afraid, so he went in a ship another way. He was cast into the sea, and a great fish swallowed him; but he prayed to God, and the fish vomited him out on the dry land. He then went and cried against *Nineveh* and the people repented.

EXPLANATIONS.

commanded—ordered; bade; as a master orders his servant to do anything.

reprove—reproach, or chide, so as to make ashamed.

afraid—he feared to warn sinners; he feared to tell them of God's displeasure.

cast—thus did God punish him for disobedience.

vomited—threw him forth from its stomach.

then went—how much better it is to obey at once; and so escape trouble.

repented—turned from their wicked ways of living.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Jonah? [do?

What was he commanded to do? For what was he to reprove the Ninevites?

Why was he *afraid*?

What did he do then?

Was this right or wrong?

How was he punished for his disobedience?

When he was cast into the sea what happened to him?

What did he do when in the belly of the fish?

What did the fish do when Jonah had prayed? [that?

Did he go to Nineveh after

What did the Ninevites do?

Nineveh—the chief city of Assyria; it was on the river Tigris.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

God can punish us for being cowardly in his service. It is our duty to reprove those who use bad words or do bad actions. We should not fear their sneers nor their displeasure; it is wrong to offend God by being silent when it is our duty to speak, or to run away when it is our duty to go into danger. David's prayer to God was "Order my steps in thy word."

103. Of Amos and Hosea.

When Amaziah, the idolatrous priest of *Bethel*,⁷⁴ advised Amos not to prophesy; Amos told him that he had been a herdsman; and the Lord took him, and said, "Go, prophesy unto my people *Israel*."⁷⁵ Hosea spoke of the sins of the people of Israel; he said there was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

EXPLANATIONS.

herdsman—one who has the care of herds of cows, &c. God can make the most unlearned man useful in teaching his fellow men.
took him—urged him on, by putting great thoughts of duty into his mind.
spoke—publicly and solemnly, as faithful ministers speak.
no truth—all men spoke and acted falsely.
nor mercy—all were unkind to each other.
nor knowledge, &c.—the people refused to hear and practise the commands of God.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Amaziah?
 Where did he fulfil his idolatrous duties?
 What was his advice to Amos?
 What did Amos say to him?
 Who took him to be a prophet?
 What did the Lord say to him?
 Of what did Hosea speak?
 What good things did he say were not practised in the land?
 What is meant by *no truth*?
 What is understood by *nor mercy*?
 In what way is the *knowledge* of God to be obtained?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

False teachers contradict the words of God, and thus lead those who follow their teaching into sin, shame, and sorrow. The unlearned man who knows the Scriptures, who tells the truth, and who is zealous for God's glory, is to be preferred to false teachers. Amos was a prophet of God, though a poor herdsman. God fitted him for the prophetic office.

104. Kings of Israel. Uzziah's Transgression.

Jeroboam II., Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, and Pekahiah were successively kings of Israel after Jehoash. Uzziah, king of Judah, transgressed by going into the temple to burn incense. He was angry with the priests, because they said he did what was unlawful. He was smitten with leprosy for his transgression, and his son Jotham ruled the kingdom.

EXPLANATIONS.

successively—one after another.
transgressed—sinned; broke the law of God.

incense—perfume, which none should burn but the priests.

angry—sinners are generally displeased with those who reprove them.

unlawful—contrary to the law of Moses.

leprosy—those who had this disease were not allowed to dwell with others.

ruled—because the king was obliged to live alone.

QUESTIONS.

What kings successively ruled in Israel after Jehoash?

Who was Uzziah?

How did he transgress?

Was it wrong of him to burn incense?

With whom was he angry?

Why was he angry with them?

How was he punished?

How may we conclude that *leprosy* was a disagreeable disease?

Who ruled the kingdom for Uzziah?

Who was Jotham?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Long and happy life was promised to those kings who served God, but they who lived wickedly would be cut off, as these five kings were. In the case of Uzziah we see the danger of breaking through the order which God has appointed. We should keep to our own duties and not force our way into the office of others.

105. Jotham and Ahaz Reign. Isaiah prophecies.

Jotham became mighty because he did that which was right. His son Ahaz succeeded him; he followed the idolatries of *Israel*,⁷⁵ and those of heathen nations. The kings of *Syria*⁷⁷ and *Israel* invaded *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶ Isaiah, the prophet, lived at this time. He prophesied of the birth of Christ, and of his residence in *Galilee*.

EXPLANATIONS.

mighty—the kingdom flourished under his rule.

right—straightforward; just; fair; religious.

he followed—how grievous! that a good man should have an irreligious son.

heathen—people who were not Jews nor Israelites.

kings of, &c.—Ahaz was thus punished by the people whose wicked idolatries he had followed.

birth of Christ—the prophecies of Isaiah were plainer than the previous promises and prophecies of the Saviour.

Galilee—the northern part of Canaan; it was divided into two parts, Upper and Lower Galilee.

QUESTIONS.

Who became mighty?

What do you understand by *mighty*?

What reason is given for his increase in power?

Who was Ahaz?

What is said of him?

Who were the *heathen*?

How was Ahaz punished?

Why were these *kings* sent to punish him?

Who lived at this time?

Of whom did he prophecy?

What particulars did he foretell respecting Christ?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The Jews had a wicked king, but God gave them a great and good prophet. While Ahaz was encouraging idolatry, God promised the Jews a king who should reign in righteousness. We thus learn that in the time of the greatest darkness, the light of God's promises may arise.

106. Wickedness and Captivity of Ahaz.

Ahaz and many of his people were taken captive to *Damascus*¹⁰¹ for their sins. When he returned to *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ he sent the treasures of the temple and of the king's house to Tiglath-pileser, king of *Assyria*, to obtain his help against the kings of *Syria*⁷⁷ and *Israel*.⁷⁵ He came and overthrew *Damascus*, subdued parts of *Canaan*,⁶ and took the people captive.

EXPLANATIONS.

sins—sin is the cause of all our sufferings; “sin is a reproach to any people.”
treasures—ornaments; vessels of precious metal, &c.
came—as the instrument of punishment for the sins of Israel and Syria.
overthrew—entered the city and nearly destroyed it.
parts of Canaan—the northern parts.
captive—he took them into his own country. This was the first captivity of Israel.

QUESTIONS.

Into what trouble did Ahaz bring himself by his sins?
 Who were also taken captive?
 What new evil did he commit when he got back to his kingdom?
 Who was Tiglath-pileser?
 Why did Ahaz send him such valuable treasures?
 What aid did the Assyrian king render Ahaz?
 What *parts of Canaan* did he subdue?
 Whom did he take captive?
 Whither did he take them?

Assyria—an ancient monarchy of Asia, its chief city was Nineveh.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

When you read history it will tell you of many nations, which, for their sins, were cast out from their countries. If the children of England grow up wicked and rebellious, God may punish them by causing them to be destroyed, or by driving them away from their own happy land.

107. Hezekiah's Reforms.

After the death of Ahaz, his son Hezekiah began to reign. He put down all forms of idolatry, and restored the temple service. He exhorted the people to turn again to the Lord, and not transgress like their fathers and brethren. The people came to the temple gladly; the priests blessed them, and God heard their prayers.

EXPLANATIONS.

put down—would not allow.
forms—not only gross idolatry, but also outward signs of it.
restored—again established the proper way of worshipping God.
service—the [prayers, the praises, and the offerings instituted by Moses.
fathers—those who lived in the time of his father Ahaz.
brethren—the people of Israel who had no desire to establish the true worship.
gladly—cheerfully; with pleasure and thankfulness.
blessed—prayed to God to make them good and prosperous.

QUESTIONS.

Who reigned after Ahaz?
 What did he do that was right?
 What do you understand by *forms* of idolatry?
 What did he restore?
 In what did the temple *service* consist?
 What did he exhort the people to do?
 Whose bad example did he warn them against?
 How do we know that the people were pleased with Hezekiah's reforms?
 What did the priests do?
 How did the Lord acknowledge this great change?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

A good king or queen is a great blessing to any country, while a wicked ruler is a great evil. It is the duty of every one according to the station he fills in society, to do all he can for the good of others, but especially for their religious instruction. Thus good Hezekiah did; for which the Lord blessed him. We have reason to rejoice in our queen.

108. The Captivity of Israel.

Shalmaneser, king of *Assyria*,¹⁰⁶ cast Hoshea, the king of *Israel*,⁷⁵ into prison. He then besieged *Samaria*,⁷⁸ and carried the people away captive into *Assyria* and *Media*. God suffered the people of Israel to be thus taken captive for their sins. Shalmaneser brought men from *Babylon* to dwell in the cities of *Samaria*.

EXPLANATIONS.

prison—Israel was now tributary to Assyria, and Hoshea refused to pay the tribute.

besieged—this city of “rebellious children,” often suffered the horrors of war.

carried—this was the second captivity, the first took place 20 years before. Les. 106.

for their sins—thus God showed his displeasure against the people, unto whom he had given so many favours, by removing them from the land he had given to their fathers.

men—they were idolaters.

Media—an extensive country S. of the Caspian Sea, and N. of Persia.

Babylon—this city, the metropolis of Babylonia, was on the Euphrates.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The first captivity was a great warning to those who were left in Israel; but though they had time given them for repentance, they continued rebellious. God showed his forbearance by not removing them all at once, but now, He can spare them no longer. How sad it is to persist in wickedness. Children should take warning in time.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Shalmaneser?

What did he do?

What did he do to Samaria?

Whom did he take captive?

Whither did he carry them?

Was Samaria then left desolate?

How were its cities occupied?

Why did the Lord suffer them to be taken captive?

What does their captivity show us?

Were these *men* true worshippers of God?

109. Hezekiah resists Assyria. His Illness.

Sennacherib, king of *Assyria*,¹⁰⁶ came against *Judah*.⁷⁵ Hezekiah prepared for a siege, but he afterwards paid tribute to Sennacherib. Hezekiah became sick, and Isaiah announced to him that he would soon die. Hezekiah prayed and wept. God heard his prayer, and said he would heal him, and add fifteen years to his life.

EXPLANATIONS.

came against—as an enemy. He hoped to do to Judah as Shalmaneser had done to Samaria. Les. 108.

prepared—made every thing ready for resistance.

tribute—payment for permission to reign in quietness. This tribute showed that Sennacherib was more powerful than Hezekiah.

announced—told with authority as the Lord's messenger and prophet.

add—increase, or prolong; he thus knew what no other man ever knew, namely, when he should die.

QUESTIONS.

Who came against Judah?

What do you understand by his *coming against* Judah?

What did Hezekiah set about doing?

Did he resist the Assyrian king?

What did he consent to do instead?

What do you mean by *tribute*?

What occurred to Hezekiah?

What did Isaiah tell him?

Then what did Hezekiah do?

Did the Lord hear his prayer?

What was his gracious answer?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

They who neglect prayer to God lose the blessings which God sends in answer to sincere supplications. In answer to prayers of the heart, if we do not get the thing we ask, we get that which we need. Hezekiah prayed that the Lord would remember him. God exceeded his prayers, and granted him that which would be useful to the nation—a longer life

110. Sennacherib's Invasion.

Messengers came to Hezekiah from the king of *Babylon*; ¹⁰⁸ and he showed them all his precious things. Isaiah told him that his treasures and his sons also, should be taken to *Babylon*. Sennacherib again invaded *Judah*, ⁷⁵ but an angel of the Lord smote his army. He returned to *Nineveh*, ¹⁰² and was slain by two of his sons.

EXPLANATIONS.

showed them—he was proud of his prosperity.
precious—costly; valuable.
told him—this was the voice of God's displeasure.
treasures—riches, costly things.
sons—this prophecy was fulfilled.
angel—angels are the Lord's heavenly messengers, they execute his will on earth.
smote, &c.—it was struck dead as in a moment.
slain—what awful wickedness, for sons to murder their father!

QUESTIONS.

Whence did messengers come to Hezekiah?
 How were they received by him?
 What did he show them?
 Why did Hezekiah *show them* his treasures?
 What do you understand by *precious* things?
 What sad message had Isaiah to tell Hezekiah?
 Who again invaded Judah?
 How was this invasion disastrous to him?
 What sad end befel Sennacherib at Nineveh?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

When children are raised from sickness to health, their friends and acquaintances come to see them, and tell them how glad they are. Then they are in danger of growing proud and vain; but it would be better for them to keep humble, and to feel thankful to God for his great goodness. Temptations of this kind beset the old as well as the young.

111. Prophecies of Isaiah. Hezekiah's Prosperity and Death.

Isaiah prophesied of the coming of John the Baptist, as the messenger of Christ. He also prophesied of Christ's sufferings, death, and resurrection, and of the spread of the Gospel. Hezekiah had exceedingly much riches and honour. When he died he was buried in the chief of the sepulchres of the kings of *Judah*.⁷⁵

EXPLANATIONS.

messenger—to go before him to prepare for his coming.

Christ—the anointed or chosen one of God.

sufferings—pains; griefs; sorrows; afflictions.

death—crucifixion by violent and wicked hands.

resurrection—coming to life again; rising from the grave.

spread—extension; it would be preached in every place.

Gospel—the good news of salvation, through Christ.

honour—respect; regard.

chief—principal; best.

sepulchres—tombs; caves in which dead bodies are laid.

QUESTIONS.

Of whom did Isaiah prophesy? What did he say John the Baptist was to be?

What was to be the duty of the messenger of Christ?

What else did Isaiah foretell?

What is the meaning of *Christ*?

What is the meaning of *sufferings*?

What sort of *death* was the anointed Saviour to suffer?

What do you mean by *resurrection*?

What do you mean by *spread* of the Gospel?

What is the *Gospel*?

Where was Hezekiah buried?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

God made known to the Patriarchs, and more plainly to their descendants, the Jews, the blessings of the Gospel which we so richly enjoy. Let us not forget that the Jews were the means by which our blessings were procured; and let us pity those people whose forefathers rejected the Gospel, and were themselves rejected of God.

112. Manasseh's Idolatry and Repentance.

Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, restored all kinds of idolatry. He built altars for Baal, and worshipped the host of heaven. God suffered him to be carried in fetters to *Babylon*¹⁰⁸ for his sins. When he was in affliction he humbled himself, repented, and prayed to God, who brought him again to his kingdom. He then put down idolatry.

EXPLANATIONS

all kinds—the heathen did not set up one false god only; they had several gods.

altars—stone tables on which sacrifices were offered.

host of heaven—the sun, moon, and stars, as though they were gods.

fetters—chains by which the feet were bound.

humbled—bent down his proud heart before God.

repented—felt sincere sorrow for his sins against God.

brought, &c.—God is so gracious as to show mercy to those who repent; and to lift them up from their afflictions.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Manasseh?

What did he restore?

What are *altars*?

What do you understand by *all kinds* of idolatry?

What did he worship?

What is the *host of heaven*?

How was he punished?

What are *fetters*?

Did his affliction in Babylon do him any good?

What do you mean by *humbled*?

What is it to *repent*?

How did Manasseh show his gratitude to God?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

So long as the sound of God's mercy is heard by the sinner, he may be sure of forgiveness if he return from his evil ways. Manasseh repented, and was accepted. The best proof we can give of the sincerity of our repentance is, like Manasseh, to undo all the bad things we have done, so far as we can, and to do good. Restitution must follow true repentance.

113. Josiah's Good Reign.

Josiah was a very young king; he destroyed the images and altars of idolatry throughout the land. A book of the law of the Lord was found, and Josiah caused it to be read. Huldah, the prophetess, declared that the Lord would bring the evils on *Judah*⁷⁵ which were written in that book. The people covenanted to obey the Lord.

EXPLANATIONS.

young—only eight years old when he began to reign.

destroyed—broke them into pieces and burned them.

images—gods of the heathen.

throughout—many altars had remained, after Josiah's father put down idolatry.

A book—a single copy of the law. The law was written on a strip of parchment, and was rolled up.

read—if we read not the law of God, nor listen to it when others read, we shall fall into sin and danger.

the evils, &c.—the punishments that would befall the nation for disobedience to the law.

QUESTIONS.

How old was Josiah when he began to reign.

What good did this young king perform?

How did he *destroy* the images?

What do you mean by *images*?

What were those images and altars used for?

What was found?

What did the king cause to be done?

What was Huldah?

What did she declare?

To what evils did she allude?

What did the people do?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Josiah is an example of youthful zeal for God's service. Children, in general, cannot do all that Josiah did, yet every child can show respect to God's word, and do something towards checking sin, and encouraging religious conduct in its brothers, sisters, school-fellows, and playmates.

114. Prophecies of Zephaniah and Jeremiah.

Zephaniah prophesied against those who had turned back from the Lord, and those who had not sought the Lord. He also declared God's judgments against heathen nations. Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, a priest, was commanded to reprove the Jews for their idolatries, and to exhort them to repentance.

EXPLANATIONS.

prophesied against—told them of the punishments God would send upon them.

turned back—they had begun to walk in the right way, now they had broken the promise they had made.

not sought—some there were who kept back when Josiah invited them to return again to the Lord.

declared—spoke with boldness, as the messenger of God.

reprove—thus the Lord tried to bring back those wicked men to the ways of righteousness.

repentance—sorrow for sin.

QUESTIONS.

Against whom did Zephaniah prophesy?

From whom had they turned back?

What does *turned back* mean?

Against what other class of persons did he prophesy?

What did he declare against heathen nations?

What was Jeremiah?

Whose son was he?

What was Jeremiah commanded to do?

For what sin was he to reprove the Jews?

What else was he to do?

What is *repentance*?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Though backsliders will be severely punished for their wickedness, yet those who have never sought the Lord shall not escape. Some hardened sinners boast that they have never acted the hypocrite; but they glory in their shame—for it is a shame to them if they have never humbled themselves before God their Maker, their Preserver, and their Judge.

115. Josiah is Slain.

Josiah went out to fight against Necho, king of *Egypt*.¹⁴ Necho wished Josiah not to meddle in the war, as he was not at war with *Judah*.⁷⁵ Josiah would not return, he was wounded and died. All his people mourned exceedingly for him. Jehoahaz, his son, was made king by the people, but he was deposed by Necho, who made Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, king instead.

EXPLANATIONS.

went—he went from Jerusalem with his army into Samaria to meet Necho.

not meddle—he wished the king of Judah to be his friend.

not return—as the tributary of Assyria, he could not allow the foe of Assyria to pass through his kingdom.

wounded—by the archers in the neck.

died—at the age of 39 years.

mourned—he had restored religion, and made his people better and happier, therefore they felt his loss.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Necho?

Who went to fight against him?

What was Necho's wish?

Why did Necho wish Josiah *not to meddle* in the war?

Why would not Josiah return?

What happened to him?

Was Josiah's death regretted?

Who was Jehoahaz?

Who made him king?

Who deposed him?

Who was then made king by Necho?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The untimely death of a religious and just king, is an event which properly calls forth the mournful feelings of a nation. We read of no blemishes in the life of Josiah. By his removal he was mercifully spared the sight of those miseries which fell on Judah; for after his death God's judgments were poured out.

116. Predictions of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah predicted the speedy captivity of the Jews, and the desolation of their country. He also declared that Jehoiakim should die unlamented, and be cast forth from *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶ The priests and the people accused Jeremiah to the princes, but he called on them to repent. The princes would not consent to Jeremiah's death.

EXPLANATIONS.

speedy—quick as to time.
captivity—bondage; slavery.
desolation—wasted, neglected, and ruined state.
unlamented—not mourned after, his worthlessness should be so apparent to his people.
cast forth—as the carcase of an unclean animal is thrown out, and left unburied.
accused—brought complaints against him for speaking against their sins and of God's judgments.
princes—their hearts were not so hardened as those of the priests.

QUESTIONS.

What did Jeremiah predict?
 What is meant by *captivity*?
 What else did Jeremiah predict?
 What do you mean by *desolation*?
 What did Jeremiah declare of Jehoiakim?
 What do you understand by *unlamented*?
 In what way do you understand his being *cast forth*?
 Who accused Jeremiah?
 What answer did he make?
 Who would not consent to the death of the prophet?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

There was no sign of grief for Jehoiakim's death; his father died honoured and lamented, but this king was so worthless that no one grieved for him. Let us pray that God may always give us good kings, and withhold his severe judgments from our country.

117. Of Nebuchadnezzar.

Jeremiah again reproved the people of *Judah*; ⁷⁵ he declared that Nebuchadnezzar, king of *Babylon*, ¹⁰⁸ would destroy them, and make the land desolate. Jeremiah then wrote in a book the prophecies which the Lord had spoken against *Israel* ⁷⁵ and *Judah*. Nebuchadnezzar came against *Jerusalem*, ⁵⁶ as Jeremiah had foretold.

EXPLANATIONS.

again reproved—he did his duty but it was useless; they would not return to God.

desolate—empty of inhabitants, and the land uncultivated.

wrote, &c.—so that the people might know all that God had threatened against them and their city.

a book—Les. 113. That which Jeremiah wrote we can read.

prophecies—they were not Jeremiah's words, but the messages he had to deliver.

foretold—proving the truth of his predictions, and at the same time incurring the just punishment threatened.

QUESTIONS.

What did Jeremiah again do? Had his *reproofs* any good effect?

Who was the king of Babylon?

What did Jeremiah say Nebuchadnezzar would do?

What is it to make *desolate*?

Why did Jeremiah *write* his prophecies in a book?

Were the *prophecies* he uttered his own words, or those of the Lord?

What prophecy of Jeremiah now began to be fulfilled?

What was thus proved?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Many people do not know their blessings till they lose them. So was it with the Jews. Their captivity was a wise purpose to bring them again to God whom they had disobeyed and dishonoured, whose word they had rejected, and whose prophets they had persecuted. Nebuchadnezzar became to them the rod of the Lord's anger.

PERIOD VII.

THE CAPTIVITY AND THE RETURN OF THE JEWS.

B.C. 606—B.C. 400.

206 years.

Containing the History of the Babylonish Captivity ;—
of the Prophets in Babylon—of the Babylonish Kings—of
the Persian Kings—The Return of the Jews—The Rebuild-
ing of the Temple—The Exhortations of Nehemiah and Ezra.

118. Of Daniel and his Friends.

Daniel and his friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were chosen to be brought up in the wisdom of the Chaldeans. God blessed them, because they served him. Nebuchadnezzar besieged *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ again in the reign of Jehoiachin, and took him and the princes captive to *Babylon*.¹⁰⁸ He left none but the poorest people in the land. He made Zedekiah king of *Judah*.⁷⁵

EXPLANATIONS.

Daniel, &c.—they were now in captivity in Babylon.

chosen—out of all the young captives for their wisdom and beauty.

wisdom—learning. It was not of a very useful kind.

Chaldeans—these men pretended to know all things—present and future.

served—thus the Lord blesses and rewards his servants.

poorest—the few who were left were chiefly husbandmen and vine-dressers.

QUESTIONS.

What captives are here mentioned?

For what were they *chosen*?

What did the *Chaldeans* pretend to know?

By whom were the four Jewish youths blessed?

Why did God grant his blessing on the four Jewish captives?

What did Nebuchadnezzar do?

Whom did Nebuchadnezzar take captive?

What class of people only were left in the land?

Whom did he make king?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Wherever we may be carried, if we hold fast our trust in God, and our love for his laws, he will be with us, and will cause us to prosper. God gave Daniel and his three friends the wisdom and skill they asked of him, and he prospered them in Babylon, as he prospered Joseph in Egypt.

119. Jeremiah's Exhortations.

Jeremiah wrote to the Jews in *Babylon*;¹⁰⁸ and exhorted them to live in peace, and to be happy during their captivity; and that after seventy years they should return to *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶ He denounced God's wrath against the false prophets Shemaiah and Hananiah—whose prophecies made the people rebel against God's commands.

EXPLANATIONS.

wrote to—how good the Lord was, thus to cause his prophet to send messages of comfort to the captives.

live in peace—not to make a foolish effort to escape, nor to quarrel with the people among whom they lived.

happy—cheerful; to bear their punishment patiently.

return—God had not cast them off entirely. [ly.

denounced—threatened severe—*false*—lying. Lying teachers not only injure themselves but others also.

rebel—oppose; refuse to obey.

QUESTIONS.

Who wrote to the Jews?

Where were the Jews to whom he wrote?

For what did he write to them?

How were they to *live in peace*?

For how long were they thus to try to live in peace and happiness?

What promise did Jeremiah add to the advice he gave them?

What might they know from this promise that they should *return*? [God's wrath?

Against whom did he denounce?

What means *denounced*?

What sin had these false prophets committed?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

When we are suffering punishment for our sins we should meekly submit; for the correcting rod is intended to punish our errors, and to fit our minds for forgiveness. They who rebel against chastisement will receive more; but they who repent profit by affliction. Leaders of rebellion against God and against his appointments shall come to ruin.

120. Jeremiah Denounces the Princes.

Jeremiah was to tell Zedekiah that God would give *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ to the king of *Babylon*,¹⁰⁸ and it should be burned with fire; and that Zedekiah should be taken captive. He denounced the princes for bringing their bondmen into subjection after they had promised them liberty. Ezekiel prophesied to the captive Jews who were in the land of *Chaldea*.⁶

EXPLANATIONS.

tell Zedekiah—a post of danger for Jeremiah, but he was faithful to the command.
would give—God would no longer preserve the Jews from their enemies, but he would let them be punished.
taken captive—the king rebelled against his superior sovereign and against God.
bondmen—men bound to serve others till the money they owed was fully paid.
subjection—servitude; slavery.
after, &c.—to break promises is displeasing to God.

QUESTIONS.

What message had Jeremiah for the king Zedekiah?
 Did he *tell Zedekiah*?
 What did this show as regards Jeremiah?
 Should we imitate his faithfulness when we see our companions offending God?
 Whom did Jeremiah denounce?
 Why did he denounce them?
 What do you mean by *bondmen*?
 What crime were the princes guilty of, which deserved punishment?
 To whom did Ezekiel prophesy?
 Where were they captives?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Let us not sin against repeated reproofs. The last hour of God's sparing mercy to the Jews is now approaching. The princes showed no mercy to their fellow-men, they deserved none themselves. Do we not pray, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"? Let us apply this doctrine of forgiveness to all who offend us.

121. Zedekiah's Rebellion.

Zedekiah rebelled against the king of *Babylon*,¹⁰⁸ who again besieged *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶ Jeremiah again reproved the priests and the people, but they mocked him. He purchased a field, to show his faith in God's promises—that the people should return from the land of their captivity, and dwell once more in their own land.

EXPLANATIONS.

rebelled—he had been made king, on condition of paying tribute; he now refused to be tributary any longer. See *tribute*. 109.
reproved—for refusing to submit to the punishment which God had brought upon them.
mocked him—laughed at him, as though he talked foolishly.
purchased—bought for money.
faith—confidence that God's promises would be fulfilled.
return—at the end of the seventy years. Les. 119.
land of, &c.—Babylon.
own land—Canaan, which God had given them.

QUESTIONS.

What did Zedekiah do?
 Who had made him king? Les. 118.
 In what did his *rebellion* consist?
 What did Nebuchadnezzar again do?
 What painful duty had Jeremiah again to perform?
 For what did he *reprove* them?
 How did the people *mock him*?
 What purchase did Jeremiah make?
 With what view did he make this purchase
 When were the Jews to *return*?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We have here further examples of the folly of rebellion against our earthly masters, and of the awful wickedness of mocking God's faithful ministers who reprove sin. Yet there was hope for those whose hearts were humbled; Jeremiah performed an act which assured the few who believed that a better time would come, according to God's promise.

122. Jeremiah Accused and Imprisoned.

Jeremiah was accused of being friendly to the Chaldeans, and he was cast into a noisome dungeon. When *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ was taken Zedekiah fled, but he was overtaken by the Chaldeans. The princes of *Judah*⁷⁵ were slain, and Zedekiah's eyes were put out; he was carried in chains to *Babylon*,¹⁰⁸ and he was put into prison till his death.

EXPLANATIONS.

friendly—he had pronounced the judgments of God on the people and the land; and therefore they said he was an enemy to the Jews.

Chaldeans—the army of the king of Babylon.

noisome—filthy. The prisons of the East are wretched places.

dungeon—a dark prison.

fled—escaped, as soon as the city was entered by the Chaldeans.

overtaken—on the plains of Jericho; thence he was taken to Riblah, in Syria.

eyes...put out—this cruel mode of punishment is still practised in the East.

QUESTIONS.

Of what was Jeremiah accused? Why did his accusers say he was *friendly* to the Chaldeans?

What were these *Chaldeans*?

What was done to Jeremiah?

What is meant by *noisome*?

What is a *dungeon*?

What did Zedekiah do when Jerusalem was taken?

By whom was he overtaken?

Where was he *overtaken*?

What was done to him?

Where is this cruel mode of punishment of *putting out the eyes*, still practised?

What became of Zedekiah?

Who were slain?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

When wickedness abounds the righteous often suffer; the ungodly accuse them falsely, and procure their punishment. It is better to suffer, as Jeremiah did, "for well doing, than for evil doing." The judgments so long threatened against the king and the princes of Judah are at last fulfilled. Justice, though slow, is sure.

123. Gedaliah made Governor. Of Tyre.

Gedaliah was appointed governor of *Judah*⁷⁵ by Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah joined him. Gedaliah was afterwards slain by a man named Ishmael, who escaped to the *Ammonites*.³⁸ *Tyre*⁶⁷ was a place of great trade. The Tyrians rejoiced when *Jerusalem* was destroyed, but God threatened to destroy *Tyre*, and to make it desolate.

EXPLANATIONS.

governor—ruler. He was not a king, he ruled as the servant of the king of Babylon. The Jews had not now a king.

joined—united with as a friend; for Jeremiah had been set free by the Babylonians.

slain—a cold-blooded murder.

trade—business, in manufactures, shipping, &c.

rejoiced—it is wrong to feel glad for the troubles of others.

threatened—by his prophets. Their words were fulfilled.

desolate—without inhabitants, trade of any kind, or cultivation.

QUESTIONS.

Who was made governor of Judah?

How did he rule as *governor*?

By whom was he appointed?

Who joined him as a friend?

By whom had Jeremiah been set free before he *joined* Gedaliah?

Who slew Gedaliah? [escape?

To what place did Ishmael

What is said of Tyre?

What is meant by *trade*?

When did the Tyrians rejoice?

Was it right to *rejoice*?

What was threatened against Tyre?

What is meant by *desolate*?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

A school deprived of its teachers, an army of its officers, a nation of its rulers, soon comes to confusion and ruin. Let us pray that God would spare to us the blessings of lawful authority. We should learn from the punishment threatened against the Tyrians, not to rejoice over those who are brought down by affliction, but to pity and try to help them.

124. Of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship a golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and which he had commanded all people to worship. These three Jews were cast into a burning fiery furnace, but they came out unhurt. Nebuchadnezzar then blessed the True God, and promoted these three men to high honours.

EXPLANATIONS.

refused—because they feared to sin against the law of God, more than to offend against the word of man.
all people—those over whom he reigned.
furnace—a large fire-place enclosed nearly all round.
unhurt—unburnt by the flames. Thus did God reward them for their faithfulness.
blessed—praised and adored.
promoted, &c.—advanced; gave them higher places.
high honours—great titles, &c.

QUESTIONS.

What had Nebuchadnezzar set up?
 What had he commanded?
 Did all people obey?
 Who refused to worship it?
 Why did they *refuse*?
 What was done to them?
 What is a *furnace*?
 Were they soon burnt to ashes?
 What do you mean by *unhurt*?
 What do you mean by Nebuchadnezzar *blessing* God?
 To what did he promote the three Jews?
 What does *promoted* mean?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Like the three Hebrew captives we are bound to obey all the lawful commands of our rulers, but if they ask us to do what God has forbidden we must not obey. It is better to die with a good conscience than to live with a bad one. God will reward all who fear to offend him, and who are not afraid of what man can do to them for their zeal.

125. Nebuchadnezzar's Pride and Punishment.

Daniel interpreted the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar. One of them was to show that the king should be driven from men, and eat grass like oxen. Daniel advised the king to repent of his sins. The dream was fulfilled. After seven years Nebuchadnezzar's reason was restored; he again reigned over *Babylon*,¹⁰⁸ and he blessed God.

EXPLANATIONS.

interpreted—explained; told the meaning plainly.

dreams—thoughts during sleep. Dreams were once greatly regarded.

driven—shut out from society.

advised—he was a faithful counsellor, not like those who flatter and deceive princes.

fulfilled—proving that the dream was a message from the Lord.

reason—the power of thinking in a sensible manner.

restored—he had been out of his mind seven years.

blessed God—worshipped him from the heart, for he had been an idolater.

QUESTIONS.

What did Daniel do?

What does *interpreted* mean?

What was one of these remarkable dreams to teach?

How was Nebuchadnezzar to be degraded?

What advice did Daniel give the king?

What do we learn of Daniel's character, from his having *advised* the king to repent?

Was the dream fulfilled?

When was the punishment removed?

What do you mean by *reason*?

Did Nebuchadnezzar again reign in Babylon?

How did he now *bless* God?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We here learn the duty of taking proper opportunities for advising people to leave off sinning. If ever it be in our power to advise such persons, we should wisely warn them, for then they will be inclined to listen. Nebuchadnezzar, however, did not attend to Daniel's advice until he had been punished by seven years' insanity.

126. Belshazzar's Feast.

Belshazzar, king of *Babylon*,¹⁰⁸ made a great feast, and he and his lords drank wine out of the sacred vessels belonging to *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶ They praised their idols of wood and stone. A hand appeared writing on the wall. Daniel interpreted the writing; it showed that the king should be punished for his sins, and his kingdom taken from him. That night Belshazzar was slain.

EXPLANATIONS.

sacred—holy. Things are said to be sacred which are employed in the worship of God.

praised—gave thanks and glorified. The Lord was greatly displeased that the vessels of his house should be used in honour of idols.

writing—this message, which his wise men could not interpret, was from heaven.

taken from him—those who make a bad use of the honour and power which God has given them shall be punished.

That night—the offence was committed—the warning was given—and the punishment followed in the space of one night.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Belshazzar?

What is it said he did?

Who drank wine with him?

Out of what vessels?

What is meant by *sacred*?

In whose service had they been formerly employed?

What did the king and his lords praise?

What appeared on the wall?

Could Belshazzar's wise men interpret the *writing*?

Who did interpret it?

What did he say it meant?

How was it fulfilled?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are here taught not to put sacred things to common use, nor to make a jest of them, nor to repeat the word of God to encourage mirth and folly. We must beware of praising any power but that of the Most High. Messages and warnings from God, were delivered in various ways. The hand-writing on the wall was God's sentence against Belshazzar.

127. Daniel Accused. Decree of Cyrus.

Some of the enemies of Daniel caused him to be cast into a den of lions, because he had prayed to God, and disobeyed a decree which they had obtained from king Darius. The king was sorry, but God preserved Daniel, and his accusers were destroyed by the lions. The seventy years of the captivity being ended, Cyrus decreed that the Jews should return to *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶

EXPLANATIONS.

enemies—persons who hate and try to injure others.

a den—a cave; an open space securely walled in on all sides; the mouth was closed with a large stone, which was sealed.

lions—these animals were kept for the purpose of destroying criminals.

decree—command; law.

sorry—he did not wish to injure Daniel, but he could not alter his own decree.

destroyed—thus God punished the enemies of his servant Daniel.

QUESTIONS.

How did the enemies of Daniel show their hatred to him?

What is the meaning of *enemies*?

What is a *den*?

Why was Daniel cast into the den of lions?

Did the king wish that Daniel should be destroyed?

Why was the king *sorry*?

Who preserved Daniel?

How were his accusers punished?

What is here stated of the captivity of the Jews?

Who decreed their return?

Whither did they return?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

If wicked boys or girls mock us, or in any other manner seek to injure us because of our love to the house of prayer, we are not to try to please them by neglecting our duty. The "greatly beloved" Daniel was not afraid of what man could do to him. God faithfully fulfilled his word to the Jews, therefore we may trust in the promises he has given us.

128. Rebuilding of the Temple.

When the rebuilding of the temple was commenced the people praised the Lord. The work was delayed for fourteen years by the enmity of the *Samaritans*. Haggai prophesied that the glory of the second temple should be greater than the glory of the first. The Samaritans accused the Jews of being a rebellious people.

EXPLANATIONS.

praised the Lord—for bringing them back to the land of their fathers, where they could worship Him without fear.

The work—of rebuilding the temple.

delayed—hindered ; put off.

enmity—hatred and opposition.

greater, &c.—the second temple should be more highly honoured than the first.

first—built by Solomon and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

rebellious—saying they were not willing to submit to any king but their own.

QUESTIONS.

What place was now to be rebuilt?

What did the people do at its commencement?

Why did they *praise the Lord*?

What caused the work to be delayed for fourteen years?

What did Haggai prophesy of the temple?

By whom had the *first* temple been built?

Of what did the Samaritans accuse the Jews?

What did they mean by *rebellious*?

Samaritans—descendants of those people who were planted in Samaria by the king of Assyria. Lesson 108.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

It is our duty at all times to “praise the name of the LORD,” but more especially when we begin any good work. Neither the hatred, nor the opposition, nor the false charges of those who love not God, should prevent us from persevering in doing His will. For God “disappointeth the devices of the crafty.”

129. Vashti Deposed. Esther made Queen.

Ahasuerus, king of *Persia*, made a feast, and he commanded Vashti, the queen, to show the people and the princes her beauty. She refused. The king deposed her, and married Esther, a Jewess, who had been brought up by her kinsman Mordecai. Ezra was sent from *Babylon*¹⁰⁸ to appoint magistrates to rule over *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶

EXPLANATIONS.

to show, &c.—Eastern ladies cover their faces with thick veils.

refused—she felt that it would be improper for her to do that which other Eastern ladies would be ashamed of doing.

deposed—put her down from being his queen.

brought up—taken care of; supported; as a father provides for his children; she had neither father nor mother.

kinsman—a near relative; he was her cousin.

magistrates—rulers; they decided quarrels, punished crimes, &c.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Ahasuerus?

What did he do?

Who was Vashti?

What did Ahasuerus command Vashti to do?

Why did she *refuse*?

How did the king show his displeasure against her?

What do you mean by *deposed*?

Whom did the king marry?

Of what nation was Esther?

Who had brought her up?

How was he her *kinsman*?

For what purpose was Ezra sent to Jerusalem?

What are *magistrates*?

Persia—a large and celebrated country and kingdom of Asia; the kingdom was founded by Cyrus king of Media; it became a powerful empire.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The foolish command of Ahasuerus was given when he was intoxicated with wine. The queen would not consent to exhibit her beauty to the guests at the royal table. Her refusal was so directed by Providence, as to bring about the preservation of the Jews, which is recorded in the book of Esther.

130. Of Haman and Mordecai.

Haman was exalted above all the other princes in *Persia*.¹²⁹ The king's servants bowed to him, but Mordecai bowed not, and Haman was very angry with him. Haman obtained a decree from the king, to destroy all the Jews in *Persia*. Mordecai had made known a conspiracy against the king's life; he was promoted to great honour.

EXPLANATIONS.

exalted—raised higher in office or in rank; had more honour and power.

bowed—made obeisance.

angry—his pride was offended, because the Jew did not humble himself like the others.

obtained—procured by his influence.

a decree—an order, which could not be altered.

made known—it was written in the chronicles of the kingdom and read to the king.

conspiracy—a design or plot, formed by wicked persons.

promoted—placed in a situation of power.

QUESTIONS.

Who was exalted above all the other princes in Persia?

What do you mean by this?

How did the king's servants conduct themselves towards Haman?

Who did not bow?

What effect had Mordecai's conduct on Haman?

Why was Haman angry?

How did he act in order to gratify his anger?

Who had made known a conspiracy against the king's life?

What is a *conspiracy*?

How was Mordecai rewarded?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Religion should preserve us from envy and also from meanness; it should keep our minds in peace and uprightness. Nor should we allow the plots of the wicked to frighten us, for God can bring them all to confusion "he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh"; but, "blessings are upon the head of the just."

131. Haman is Hanged. Of Nehemiah.

Esther accused Haman to the king of having contrived the death of herself and her people, by the king's decree against the Jews; Haman was hanged. Nehemiah was cup-bearer to the king of *Persia*.¹²⁹ When he offered wine to the king he asked permission to visit *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶ The king granted Nehemiah's wish.

EXPLANATIONS.

accused—charged with a fault or crime.

contrived—artfully planned. By cunning schemes he drew the king into the sin of making the cruel decree.

hanged—the disgraceful punishment he had intended for Mordecai, and for which he had made preparations.

cup-bearer—the principal personal attendant on the king.

permission—leave; to be allowed.

granted—permitted; gave him time for the purpose.

QUESTIONS.

By whom was Haman accused?

What do you mean by *accused*?

Of what did she accuse him?

How had he contrived the death of the queen and her people?

What is meant by *contrived*?

What was done to Haman?

Who was Nehemiah?

What was the duty of a *cup-bearer*?

What permission did he ask?

Was his wish granted?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

“The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands”; this was the case with Haman. Those who contrive schemes for their own benefit to the injury of others shall be punished. If you think of doing any thing wicked by stealth or cunning, call to mind the fearful end of Haman.

132. Completion of the Walls of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah encouraged the Jews in their labours and protected them from the Samaritans.¹²⁸ When the walls of Jerusalem⁵⁶ were finished the people rejoiced and offered thanksgivings. Ezra instructed the people in the law; they made a solemn covenant to keep the commandments and not to forsake the house of their God.

EXPLANATIONS.

encouraged—spoke cheerfully to; bade them not be disheartened, but have confidence in God.
protected—kept their enemies from stopping them in their work, and defended them.
walls—those which surrounded the city.
instructed—he was a scribe, a man who knew the law of the Lord, and was appointed to teach it to the people.
solemn—very serious; grave; religious.
keep, &c.—in memory, and act accordingly.
the house—the true worship.

QUESTIONS.

Who encouraged the Jews?
 What is meant by *encouraged*?
 In what were they encouraged?
 What else did he do?
 From whom did he protect them?
 How did he *protect* them?
 When did the people rejoice?
 What *walls* are here meant?
 What did they do besides rejoice?
 What did Ezra do?
 What means *instructed*?
 Why was he appointed to *instruct* the people?
 What covenant did the people make?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Good Nehemiah is an example to all men who have power to do good. With good governors and zealous ministers a people cannot but prosper; let us therefore pray that God may not remove our teachers from us, nor suffer England to be deprived of upright princes.

FROM THE RETURN OF THE JEWS,
TO THE
COMING OF THE MESSIAH.

A period of 400 years elapsed from the time of Malachi's prophecies to the coming of Christ, but the Jews never enjoyed their former independence and prosperity, and they no longer received the direct tokens of God's favour which had distinguished their earlier history. The sacred fire of the altar which had burned from the time of Solomon's dedication of the temple, and had never been allowed to expire, was extinguished at the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar; and the Spirit of prophecy ceased after the death of Malachi. After the Jews returned from Babylon they never again sank into idolatry, though the zeal for the honour of God which they felt on their first return, abated after a few years. The Jews continued subject to Persia nearly 100 years. During this time the temple of the Samaritans was built on Mount Gerizim. The Persian empire declined, and under Alexander the Great, the Grecian rule was established. In all these great events the prophecies of Daniel were minutely fulfilled. The Jews enjoyed peace under Ptolemy I., and II., but were greatly persecuted by their successors, especially by Ptolemy V. (Antiochus,) whose cruelties and profanity were opposed by Mattathias, a priest, and his sons—John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan, known as the Maccabean princes, who became leaders of the Jews in their struggles against idolatry and oppression. Their history is related in the Books of Maccabees, but in these and the other apocryphal books, we have not the infallible guidance which the inspired writings afford. Several of the princes of the Maccabean family reigned as kings till the time of Herod. The persecutions of the Jews rekindled their religious zeal. In their succeeding troubles they sought the protection of Rome. Herod a cruel, but successful tyrant, married Mariamne, a princess of the family of the Maccabees, and became king of Judea. He occupied the throne under the emperors of Rome. During his reign the Messiah came upon the earth.

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