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The word or phrase in a lesson which is preceded by a dot is explained.

The names of Places, explained in the Geographical Notes, are preceded by two dots.

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By these references much repetition is prevented, and practically, as many explanations are added to the book as there are number references.



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.

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The three Series of Explanations and Preceptive Lessons are designed for the elucidation and illustration of the truths of our holy religion from the Historical Facts of the Bible; the doctrines to be believed, the moral and social duties to be performed, and the sins to be avoided. We cannot, in learning the Facts of the Bible, refuse to draw lessons from them any more than we can reject the instruction which a simple parable, a fable, or an event of common-life conveys; the lessons we thus draw from the Bible History are the Doctrines on which our faith is founded.

The conciseness observable throughout the Series is intentional. In the LESSONS, the pupil has the advantage of a short narrative, rather than a long one. In the EXPLANATIONS and PRECEPTIVE LESSONS, the teacher is furnished with Hints, which he may expand at pleasure. By this condensation of language, much more matter is brought within the compass of a page, than could have been given had the several portions been written with greater fullness and freedom. Those teachers who regard the whole as "Notes of Lessons" will easily amplify each portion as they teach it. Care however should be taken not to overload any subject. At the same time, the Manuals are *not* intended for those experienced teachers who have devoted their time and thoughts continuously through years to the laborious work of instruction, but for the increasing class of domestic teachers, including *mothers and governesses*—for the *pupil-teachers*,—now becoming so numerous in our public schools,—and for the patient and self-denying body of *Sunday School Teachers*, to whom teaching is only an occasional occupation.

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—B.C. 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.

Genesis i.—iii. 24.

God created the heavens and the earth and all things in them. On the first day God created light. On the second day God made the firmament. On the third day God divided the waters from the land, and created plants. On the fourth day God made the sun, moon, and stars. On the fifth day God created the fishes and the birds. On the sixth day God created the beasts, the cattle, and the creeping things; and lastly, He made man in his own image. God created all things in six days. He rested on the seventh day, and blessed it. God planted a garden in *Eden*; Adam and Eve, his wife, were placed therein to dress it and keep it.

God permitted Adam to eat of all the fruits that grew in *Eden*, except the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The serpent tempted Eve to eat of the fruit which God had forbidden, and she gave also to Adam, her husband, and he did eat. God sentenced man to death, but promised a Saviour. He then expelled Adam and Eve from *Eden*.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Eden—supposed to have been situated near the head of the Persian Gulf, where the rivers Euphrates and Tigris empty their waters; but several other situations have been assigned to the garden of Eden.

EXPLANATIONS.

God—the only truly GOOD ONE.
light—that wonderful thing by means of which we see.
the firmament—the surrounding air.
plants—grass, herbs, shrubs, trees; all things that grow out of the ground.
beasts—wild animals; as lions, tigers, foxes, hares, dogs.
cattle—domestic animals; as cows, sheep, swine, goats.
image—likeness; in goodness and purity.
rested—ceased from his work; and made that day a happy day.
dress—cultivate. Thus God taught man to be industrious.
the serpent—the devil, man's enemy.
Saviour—a Deliverer from death.
expelled—drove out.

QUESTIONS.

Who is the only Good Being?
 How did God show his mighty power?
 What was his work on the first day?
 What is light?
 What work did God perform on the succeeding days?
 What is the firmament?
 What are plants?—beasts?—cattle?
 What was God's last work?
 When did God rest?
 Who were placed in the garden which God had planted?
 For what purpose?
 Who tempted them to sin?
 How did God punish them?
 What great promise did God then give?
 What present punishment did he inflict?
 What is the general supposition as to the situation of Eden?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” This is the ground of our belief in the One God who created all things by his word, and who rules over all. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.” His “eternal power and Godhead” are “clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” The sabbath, and marriage were the two ordinances instituted during man's innocence; the punishment of death, was the just sentence for man's disobedience; faith in the promised Saviour was the merciful way of deliverance.

2. Cain, Abel, and Seth.

Genesis iv.; v. 3-5; vi. 2.

'Cain was the eldest son of Adam and Eve. His brother Abel was their second son. Abel was a 'keeper of sheep, but Cain was a 'tiller of the ground. They both brought 'offerings to God.¹ Cain's offering was of the fruits of the earth. Abel's offering was of the firstlings of his 'flock. God 'accepted Abel's offering, but he 'had not respect to Cain's offering. Cain became very angry, and his 'countenance fell.

Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and 'slew him. God cursed Cain, and said he should be 'a fugitive and 'a vagabond in the earth. Cain feared that some one would slay him. He went to live in the land of 'Nod.

God gave Adam and Eve another son who was called 'Seth. He was a good man. His 'descendants were called the children of God. The descendants of Cain were called the children of men. Adam and Eve had other sons and daughters. Adam lived nine-hundred-and-thirty years.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Nod—described as being "on the east of Eden." Les. 1.

EXPLANATIONS.

Cain—the first-born of all mankind.
keeper, &c.—a care-taker; a shepherd.
tiller—men who sow seeds in the earth, such as wheat or barley, are tillers, or cultivators.
offerings—gifts; portions of the wealth or riches which God had given them.
flock—sheep; they were Abel's riches.
accepted—showed he was pleased with.
had not respect, &c.—took no notice, because it was not offered with a holy mind.
countenance fell—discontent, envy, and hatred were visible in his face.
slew—killed. Let us beware of envy.
a fugitive—one who runs away.
a vagabond—an idle wanderer.
Seth—given instead of Abel.
descendants—offspring; children, grandchildren, &c.

QUESTIONS.

Who were Cain and Abel?
 What were their occupations?
 What does tiller mean?
 What did Cain and Abel present to God?
 What did Cain, and what did Abel offer?
 Did the Lord accept these gifts?
 Why had not God respect to Cain's offering?
 What effect had God's acceptance of Abel's offering on Cain?
 How did his anger show itself?
 What did God then do?
 What means a fugitive?—a vagabond?
 To what place did Cain go to reside?
 Where is Nod said to have been situated?
 Did God give Adam and Eve another son?
 Who were called children of God?
 And who were called children of men?
 Had Adam and Eve other children?
 What was Adam's age?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn from this lesson that from the earliest times men practised the arts of industry; that from the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, offerings of animals were divinely instituted; that God takes an interest in human affairs; that Adam's fall involved his race in sin; that wicked thoughts and feelings disturb the mind and lead to dreadful crimes, as shown in the history of Cain, the destroyer of his own happiness, the hater of his own brother, and the first murderer. We also learn that God gave Adam another son who was the ancestor of a race of true worshippers.

PERIOD I.] FROM THE CREATION TO THE DELUGE.

3. Enoch. Methuselah. Noah. The Deluge.

Genesis v. 6—vii. 24.

Enoch was a descendant² of Seth.² He pleased God, and God took him to heaven when he was three-hundred-and-sixty-five years old. Enoch had a son named Methuselah. He was the oldest man that we read of; he lived nine-hundred-and-sixty-nine years. Methuselah had a son named Lamech. Lamech was the father of Noah. Noah became the father of three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The wickedness of men increased in the earth. God said he would destroy mankind by a flood, but he would save Noah and his family, because Noah had found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God commanded Noah to make an ark of wood. Living creatures of every kind were to be preserved with him in the ark. Noah obeyed God, he also warned mankind of the flood for 120 years while the ark was building; hence, in the New Testament, he is called “a preacher of righteousness.” He went into the ark as God had commanded him. The waters increased on the earth forty days. All flesh died, except Noah and his family, and the living creatures that were with them in the ark.

EXPLANATIONS.

descendant—We are descendants of those who lived before us. Enoch was the sixth in order from Seth.
pleased God—“walked with God”; that is, his life and conduct were in accordance with God’s will.
took him—body and soul; for Enoch did not die as other men.
oldest man—when men were few on the earth they lived long; this was so ordered for the increase of mankind.
three sons—Shem, the eldest; Japheth the next; Ham the youngest.
wickedness, &c.—they only thought of that which was bad, and they did evil.
save—preserve from ruin.
grace—the fruit of faith and obedience.
an ark—a vessel like a ship, intended to float on the water,
warned mankind—told them of their danger, and bade them repent.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Enoch?
Explain the word descendant.
Where was Enoch taken to?
Why?—and at what age?
How did he please God?
What was his son’s name?
How long did Methuselah live?
Who was his son?
Who was Lamech’s son?
What is said of Noah?
Name his sons in order of age.
What increased in the earth?
Before the flood came whom did Noah warn, and for how long?
In what manner was Noah saved?
By whom was the ark built?
What increased forty days?
What was the consequence?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The history of Enoch teaches us the value of true religion, which is here spoken of as walking with God. The irreligious and profane are “without God in the world”; for, how “can two walk together, except they be agreed?” We are taught by this narrative, that “when the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth”; that though God is long suffering with sinners, the day of grace will pass, and will be followed by punishment, and that the only way of safety is in simple obedience.

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.

Genesis viii. ; ix. 8—27 ; xi. 10—14.

God sent a 'wind over the earth, the waters abated, and the ark³ rested upon the mountains of "Ararat. Noah sent forth a 'raven and a 'dove, that he might learn if the land was dry ; the raven did 'not return, but the dove 'returned with an olive leaf in her mouth. Noah sent forth the dove again seven days after, but she returned 'no more. Noah went out of the ark ; and he offered a 'sacrifice to God. God then promised that 'seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night should not cease. He promised never to destroy the earth by a flood. The 'rainbow in the cloud is the 'token of his promise.

After the flood Noah planted a vineyard and he drank of the wine and was drunken. His son Ham mocked⁹ him. When Noah awoke from his wine, he 'foretold that the descendants² of Ham should be 'servants to the descendants of Shem and Japheth, whom he blessed because they were 'dutiful. One of Shem's descendants was Eber, from whom the "Hebrews were probably named.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Ararat—a mountainous district near the centre of Armenia ; (Les. 5.) one of the peaks is said to be 17,000 feet above the level of the sea.

Hebrews—this term is generally used to denote the people who were descended from Abraham. It is derived either from *Heber*, an ancestor of Abraham or from *Eber*, "from the other side," that is, of the Euphrates.

EXPLANATIONS.

wind—to blow the waters into their channels once more.
a raven—a large bird of the crow kind.
a dove—one of the pigeon kind.
not return—but fed on that which floated on the water.
returned—she could not find proper food.
no more—because the flood was now off the earth.
sacrifice—a gift of gratitude offered by fire.
seed time, &c.—a general law should regulate the times and seasons.
rainbow—the "bow in the cloud"; a beautiful luminous meteor.
token—sign or pledge.
foretold—because God had put the words in his mouth.
servants—slaves ; inferiors.
dutiful—respectful to their father though he had erred.

QUESTIONS.

What was the effect of the wind which God sent ?
 What place did the ark rest upon ?
 What is stated of the mountains of Ararat ?
 What did Noah then do ?
 Did they ever return to him ?
 When was the dove sent again ?
 What did Noah do ?
 What is a sacrifice ?
 Who offered a sacrifice on this occasion ?
 What promise did God make ?
 What is meant by this promise ?
 Of what is the rainbow a sign ?
 Who planted a vineyard ?
 What did he also do ?
 What was Ham's conduct ?
 What did Noah foretel ?
 Whom did Noah bless ?
 Why did he bless them ?
 From whom were the Hebrews named ?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The good God who remembered Noah and his family in the ark, will not forget the humble who wait upon him. Noah waited God's own time for his release from the ark, and then offered the divinely appointed sacrifice of thanksgiving, which God graciously accepted. The assurance that whilst the earth remains seed time and harvest should never cease, enabled men to renew their industry and expect its reward. The unfilial conduct of Ham to his father, exemplifies the criminality of mirth at the faults or mistakes of the aged.

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

Genesis ix. 1-7; x.-xi. 25.

Some years after the flood many people settled on the plain of *Shinar*. They began to build a city, and a high tower, to make themselves a name, that they might be thought great, and to keep them from being scattered. They all spoke one language. God wished them to be settled in different parts of the earth. To punish them, and to stop their work, God made them speak various languages. They were then dispersed according to the languages which they spoke. They left off building the city, and the place was called *Babel*.

The descendants² of Shem dwelt in *Armenia* and *The East*. The descendants of Ham peopled *Canaan*, *Arabia*, *Egypt*, and *Africa*. The descendants of Japheth inhabited *Western Asia* and *Europe*. A son of Ham, named Canaan, had eleven sons, they lived in different parts of the land of *Canaan*, and their descendants were called Canaanites.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Shinar—the level country between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris.

Babel—the beginning of the kingdom of Nimrod; it was probably founded by him.

Armenia—east of Asia Minor, and stretching to the Caspian Sea.

The East—those portions of the earth which are east of Judea.

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

Arabia—this country, S. & E. of Canaan, was partly peopled by Ham's descendants.

Egypt—an ancient & a celebrated country and kingdom, which forms part of Africa.

Africa—one of the great divisions of the earth; "the land of Ham."

Western Asia—the portion of Asia known under the name of Asia Minor.

Europe—the smallest division of the earth and that part in which we live.

EXPLANATIONS.

settled—fixed their habitations; they had moved from place to place before this.

a name—that their great deeds might be known to future generations. And they are known, for we speak of them as a warning.

keep, &c.—this was opposed to God's will, and could not succeed.

one language—all the people on the earth then understood one another.

different parts—that the whole earth might be peopled.

various languages—every great nation has its own language.

dispersed, &c.—those who spoke the same language, went together, and were under one government.

QUESTIONS.

When was the plain of Shinar first peopled? What do you mean by settled?

What induced the first settlers to build a city and a tower?

What enabled them to act in concert?

How did God put an end to their labour?

Why did God intend them to be settled in different parts of the earth?

What was the consequence to them of their speaking various languages?

What is the consequence to different nations?

What led them to unite under distinct governments?

How were the different parts of the earth peopled?

Who was the probable founder of Babel?

What information is given respecting Armenia?—The East?—Canaan!, &c.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

This lesson teaches us that it is the duty of mankind to disperse themselves over the surface of the earth. This is the will of God, and obedience to his will ensures us his blessing. They who aim at obtaining a great name often come off with a bad name. Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered? God, who gave men the knowledge and use of language, now, in order to divide them into companies and colonies, confounds their speech; he does not take away the gift, but his interposition is just what is required to spread them abroad in the earth.

6. Family of Terah. The Call of Abram.

Genesis ix. 28,29; xi. 10—xii 9.

'Terah was a descendant³ of Shem. He had three sons, 'Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot. Terah lived at 'Ur, in 'Chaldea. Noah was alive when Terah lived in Chaldea. He probably lived in Armenia⁵ after the flood, and died there. Soon after the death of Noah Abram was born. Abram lived seventy-five years in Chaldea.

God called Abram out of Chaldea to come into Canaan.⁵ He gave Abram three great promises. 1. That he should 'possess the land of Canaan; 2. That he should have a son; 3. That the 'Saviour¹ should be born of his descendants.² Terah and his family first removed to 'Haran. At this place Terah died. Abram 'obeyed the call of God, and 'came into Canaan, together with 'Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son. God confirmed his promises when Abram came into Canaan. Abram built an 'altar to God, and soon after removed to 'Bethel.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Ur, Chaldea—Ur was a very ancient city in Chaldea, a country of Mesopotamia.

Haran—a place to the south of Ur, in Mesopotamia. Les. 10.

Bethel—this name, meaning 'house of God,' was given by Jacob to a place which was called Luz at first.

EXPLANATIONS.

Terah—he was the ninth in descent from Shem.

Abram—means 'father,' he was the father of the Hebrew nation, and of several other nations also.

possess, &c.—should enjoy life in it himself, and when his descendants were sufficiently numerous they should own it.

Saviour, &c.—so that all nations should at last be blessed through Abraham, "the Friend of God."

obeyed—he thereby proved himself a dutiful child of God.

came, &c.—to sojourn as a stranger among idolaters, in a strange land.

Sarai—means 'my princess.' Les. 8.

altar—a high table of stone on which to offer sacrifice.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Terah?

Tell me the names of Terah's sons.

Where did Terah live?

What is stated of Ur, and of Chaldea?

Who was now alive in Armenia?

Where was Abram born?

What is the meaning of Abram?

Of what great nation was he the father?

What caused Abram to leave Chaldea?

What great promises did God give Abram?

How was the first to be fulfilled?

Why was the second necessary?

Who was referred to in the third?

Where did Terah die?

Where was Haran?

Who came with Abram into Canaan?

When did God confirm his promises?

What did Abram build?

What is an altar?

What is stated respecting Bethel?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Abraham obeyed the call of God which brought him out of a land of idolatry; thus should we obey the call to quit evil companions however near or dear they may be to us. Abraham built an altar to the Lord wherever he rested; this is an example to us of both public and family devotion; *public*, since the religious services were not performed within his dwelling, and *family* worship, because the act was attended to more as a family duty than as a public duty. His habitation was necessary to preserve him and his family from the vicissitudes of the seasons—his altar to enable him to hold intercourse with that God who had called him.

7. History of Abram and Lot. Ishmael born.

Genesis xii. 10; xiii. 1—13; xiv.; xvi.

There was a famine in *Canaan*,⁵ and Abram⁶ went down into *Egypt*.⁵ After his return to *Canaan*, his herdsmen and those of Lot quarrelled, because there was not food enough for their cattle. Abram wished that there should be no strife between them. He told Lot to choose a part of the land for himself. Lot chose the plain of *Jordan*, near *Sodom*, because it was well watered. The men of *Sodom* were very wicked.

Four kings made war against the cities of the plain of *Sodom*, and took Lot prisoner. Abram pursued the four kings, defeated them, and brought Lot back. Melchizedek, king of *Salem*, met Abram and blessed him.

Hagar was Sarai's⁶ handmaid; she despised her mistress, and fled from her. The angel of the Lord told her to return, and submit to her mistress. He said she should have a son, and that his name should be Ishmael. Soon after this Ishmael was born.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Plain of Jordan—this region, once level, fertile, and watered by the Jordan, is now the Dead Sea.

Sodom—the principal of the five cities of the plain of Jordan. Lesson 8.

Salem—the most ancient name of Jerusalem.

EXPLANATIONS.

famine—shortness of food. Famines often occur in countries which are not regularly cultivated.
into Egypt—because the famine had not extended thither.
herdsmen—they led the cattle out to pasture, and protected them from wild animals.
no strife—strife between relations is most unlovely. Avoid strife.
told Lot, &c.—the right of choice was Abram's for he was the elder, and the land had been promised to him.
pursued—the pursuit of the kings, and the capture of Lot took Abram through the entire length of the country.
Melchizedek—called in the New Testament "King of righteousness."
despised—she thought herself a more honoured person than her mistress.

QUESTIONS.

Where was there a famine?
 What is a famine?
 What did the famine compel Abram and those who were with him to do?
 When they returned who quarrelled?
 Why did they quarrel?
 What is the business of a herdsman?
 Did Abram join in this strife?
 What did he tell Lot to do?
 Whither did Lot remove?
 What do we know respecting the plain of Jordan?
 What was the character of the men of Sodom? [Sodom?
 What evil occurred to Lot soon after?
 Who rescued him?
 Who met Abram on his return and blessed him?
 What sin was Hagar guilty of? [him?
 Who bade her return?
 What promise was given her?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

From the quarrels of the herdsmen we see that great riches cause disunion in families—"Give me neither poverty nor riches," was the prayer of a wise man. From Abraham's allowing Lot the choice of the land, we are taught that self-denial may preserve peace among relatives and friends. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare," was exemplified in the history of Lot. From Abraham's conquest of the four kings, and his recovery of Lot, we learn that "the righteous are bold as a lion," for they are sure of God's protection in what is right.

8. The Destruction of Sodom.

Genesis xvii.—xix. 26.

God renewed his promises to Abram,⁶ and said he should be a father of many nations. He then changed his name to Abraham. He also changed the name of Sarai⁶ to Sarah, and said she should have a son, and that she should be a mother of many nations. God said the name of Abraham's son should be Isaac.

Three angels visited Abraham, when the promise of a son was repeated. The coming destruction of the cities and people of Sodom⁷ was made known to Abraham, who interceded with God to save³ that city.

Two angels went to Lot, and he entertained them in his house. The men of Sodom wanted to do wickedly, and the angels struck them with blindness. The angels hastened Lot and his family from the city. God then rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from heaven, and overthrew the "Cities of the plain. Lot's wife disobeyed the divine command, not to look behind in her flight. She became a pillar of salt.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Cities of the plain—the five cities of the plain of Jordan were:—Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. Lesson 7.

EXPLANATIONS.

renewed—repeated, so that Abram's faith might not waver.
changed—the change in the names gave them a higher character.
angels—they came in the form of men, and appeared as travellers.
destruction—because of the wickedness of the people. Sin is man's ruin.
interceded with—prayed earnestly to.
hastened—lest they should be overwhelmed in the ruin of the cities.
family—only his wife and two daughters accompanied him; his daughters' husbands refused to go.
overthrew, &c.—except Zoar, which was spared at Lot's entreaty for his place of refuge. The Dead Sea occupies the place where they stood.
disobeyed—she looked behind with regret at leaving her home and friends.
a pillar—a monument of God's displeasure with the disobedient.

QUESTIONS.

What were renewed to Abram?
 What is the meaning of renewed?
 What did God say Abram should be?
 What was changed?
 What was Sarai's name changed to?
 What was she to be?
 By whom was Abraham visited?
 What promise was repeated to Abraham?
 What did God inform Abraham he would do?
 What did Abraham do?
 What is the meaning of interceded?
 Who came to Lot?
 Who were struck with blindness?
 What did the angels do after?
 What did God then do?
 What were the names of the cities of the plain?
 Which of them was not destroyed?
 For what purpose was it spared?
 Who became a pillar of salt?
 Why was she so punished?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

"With God all things are possible," this was the ground of Abraham's faith in God's promises, and in this we should imitate him; he believed it was possible that he should have a son when he was a hundred years old, and when Sarah was ninety; he believed it possible that the righteous might be saved when the wicked were destroyed at Sodom. He walked by faith and not by sight, and we should endeavour to walk in the steps of our father, Abraham. The saving of Lot teaches us that "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations."

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

Genesis xx. 1-7; xxi. 1-21; xxii. 1-14; xxiii.

Abraham went to *Gerar*. He deceived Abimelech, the king, by saying that Sarah was his sister. God reproved Abimelech, and told him to restore Sarah to Abraham.

The son which God had promised to Abraham was born. Abraham called the child's name Isaac. Ishmael mocked Isaac, for doing which, he and his mother were cast out of Abraham's house. Hagar thought Ishmael would die of thirst in the *wilderness*, but God provided water for them both. God promised Hagar that he would make of Ishmael a great nation. Ishmael grew up in the *Wilderness*.

God commanded Abraham to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham prepared to obey God. He went to a mountain which God had told him of. He built an altar there, and was about to slay his son. God thus tried his faith, and then prevented the sacrifice. Abraham offered a ram which God had provided for a sacrifice instead of Isaac. Sarah died at the age of one-hundred-and-twenty-seven years; she was buried in *Machpelah*.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Gerar—a royal city and country of the Philistines, near Gaza.

Wilderness—this was the wilderness of Shur, or Paran, in Arabia.

Machpelah—a field and cave which Abraham purchased for a burying place.

EXPLANATIONS.

deceived—even faithful Abraham sinned through fear of man.

reproved—spoke chidingly to.

restore—give back. He had taken Sarah from Abraham.

mocked—made sport of; treated with contempt.

wilderness—a wild uninhabited part of the country.

water—deserts and wildernesses are generally destitute of water.

a great nation—he became the father of the Ishmaelites, the Bedouin Arabs; who possessed themselves of Arabia.

slay—Abraham believed that God was able to restore his son to life. What mighty faith!

tried, &c.—proved his strength.

prevented—stopped his hand from giving the fatal blow.

QUESTIONS.

What do you know of Gerar?

Whom did Abraham deceive?

What caused Abraham to sin?

How was Sarah rescued?

Who was born soon after?

What offence did Ishmael commit?

How were he and his mother punished?

What nearly happened to Ishmael in the wilderness?

What did God do for them? [wilderness?]

What promise did God make to Hagar?

What sacrifice did God command?

Did Abraham or Isaac rebel?

Where was the sacrifice to take place?

Why was the sacrifice commanded?

Who prevented it?

What offering was then made?

How old was Sarah when she died?

Where was she buried?

What do you know of Machpelah?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn from this lesson the duty of avoiding the sin of deceit. Abraham, the father of the faithful erred through fear. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." From the birth of his promised son, we learn the duty of waiting God's own time for the fulfilment of his promises, which is always the best time. Grown up children should learn from Ishmael's conduct that acts of unkindness to younger children are displeasing to God. From the trial of Abraham's faith we perceive the duty of ready obedience to the commands of God, however painful to ourselves.

10. The Marriage of Isaac.

Genesis xi. 10,11.; xv. 2; xxiv.—xxv. 16.

When Abraham was very old, he called his faithful servant Eliezer unto him. He made him promise not to take a wife for Isaac of the daughters of the Canaanites. He told him to journey into Mesopotamia, and bring Isaac a wife from Abraham's own kindred. Eliezer obeyed his master's directions, and went to the city of Nahor, and brought thence Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, who was a son of Nahor. Eliezer brought Rebekah with her nurse into Canaan.⁵ She and her damsels rode on camels. Rebekah first saw Isaac when he was meditating in the fields. She became his wife, and Isaac loved her. The brother of Rebekah was named Laban.

Soon after Isaac's marriage, Abraham married Keturah, and had six sons. He died at the age of one-hundred-and-seventy-five years, and was buried in the cave of Machpelah.⁹ Ishmael became the father of twelve princes. Shem was the last of the race who had lived before the flood. He died at the age of six-hundred years.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Mesopotamia—a large province of Asia, situated between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris; a part of Mesopotamia was called the land of Shinar. Les. 5.

EXPLANATIONS.

faithful—he was honest and attached to his master; and he feared God.
daughters of, &c.—they were idolaters.
kindred—of his own 'kind,' that is, his own relations; the descendants of Shem. The Canaanites were descendants of Ham. Les. 5.
Rebekah—she was cousin to Isaac; Eliezer met her at a well.
nurse—a very important domestic in Eastern families.
damsels—young women.
camels—Eastern beasts of burden admirably adapted for travelling through deserts.
meditating—thinking devoutly; praying.
loved her—husbands are required by the Lord to love their wives.
six sons—who all became heads of tribes or nations.
princes—chieftains, heads of tribes. Les. 9.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Abraham's faithful servant?
 Why could he confide in him?
 What promise did Abraham require Eliezer to make?
 Why did he require this?
 Whither did he send Eliezer?
 Where did Abraham's kindred reside?
 Where was Mesopotamia?
 What city did Eliezer go to?
 Whom did he bring thence?
 Who rode on camels?
 Where was Isaac when Rebekah saw him?
 Was Isaac pleased with Rebekah?
 Who was Laban?
 Who was Keturah?
 How many sons had Keturah?
 At what age did Abraham die?
 Where was he buried?
 How many sons had Ishmael?
 How old was Shem when he died?
 How was he remarkable?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

This lesson teaches *parents*, that their children's future welfare should be, to them, a matter of great importance; it teaches *children* the duty of consulting their *parents'* wishes with respect to marriage; it teaches *young men* the utility of meditation and prayer; it teaches *husbands* to love their wives; *servants*, that they should faithfully perform their obligations to their masters, and it teaches *all persons* that the desire of living to a good old age in the service and fear of God is both lawful and proper.

11. The History of Job.

Book of Job.

Job is supposed to have lived in the time of Abraham. He lived at Uz, in Idumea. He was a very good man. He had seven sons and three daughters, and flocks, and herds, and great riches. He was sorely tried⁹ and tempted with loss of riches, and the death of his children. Job's faith in God remained unshaken in all his calamities. He meekly said, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." Job was afterwards smitten with a painful disease, and three of his friends, who came to comfort him, distressed him still more by telling him that his afflictions were sent as a punishment for some great sin. Job bore all his trials with patience and humbled himself before God. God afterwards healed Job of his disease, blessed him with greater riches than he had possessed at first, gave him another family of sons and daughters, and bestowed upon him a long life.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Uz, Idumea—south of Canaan. Uz, or Huz, was a son of Nahor, Abraham's brother.

EXPLANATIONS.

Job—honourably reputed as the 'most patient man.'
flocks, &c.—in patriarchal times these constituted the principal wealth of the rich.
tried—trials of our faith are not marks of God's anger.
unshaken—he did not let go his trust in God's goodness.
calamities—afflictions, sorrows.
gave—both riches and children.
smitten—so immediate it was like a sudden stroke.
punishment—here is a warning to us not to judge rashly.
patience—uncomplaining submission to the will of God.
humbled—"before honour is humility."
blessed him—thus his faith and patience were fully rewarded.

QUESTIONS.

When did Job live, as is generally supposed?
 Where did he live?
 What do you know of Uz?
 What reputation does Job bear?
 What is said of him?
 In what did his riches consist?
 How was he tried and tempted?
 What remained to him when earthly blessings failed?
 What do you understand by his faith being unshaken?
 In what remarkable words did he show his meekness and submission?
 With what personal affliction was Job visited?
 Who aggravated Job's sorrows?
 Before whom did Job humble himself?
 Did God come to his relief?
 What blessings did he bestow upon Job?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We see from Job's history that good men are sometimes sorely afflicted; but that it is their duty to bear their trials with meekness and patience. The error of Job's friends should teach us to avoid wounding the spirit of the afflicted, as well as the sin of rash judging. The only test we have of a man's sincerity is his *life*; we are not to judge him from the circumstances in which he may be placed. The deliverance which God granted his patient servant, is an assurance, "that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

12. History of Isaac. He blesses his Sons.

Genesis xxv. 20—xxvi. 1,6—11; xxvii.; xxviii.

Isaac and Rebekah¹⁰ had two sons. Esau was the first-born,¹⁸ and Jacob was the younger son. Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field. Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. Esau came from the field weary and faint. He asked Jacob for his pottage. Jacob would not give it to him except for his birthright. Esau thought his birthright was of little use, so he sold it to Jacob for a mess of pottage.

There was a famine⁷ again in Canaan,⁵ and Isaac went to Gerar.⁹ Isaac told the men of Gerar that Rebekah was his sister. The king reproved⁹ him for his deceit.

When Isaac was old his eyes were dim, and he could not see. He called his son Esau, to bless him. Rebekah wished Jacob to have the blessing, and she and Jacob deceived¹³ Isaac. Isaac gave Jacob the first-born's blessing. He afterwards knew that he had been deceived, and he blessed Esau also. Esau hated Jacob for having obtained their father's greatest blessing. He said he would slay Jacob. Jacob fled to Laban, his mother's brother, at Padan-aram. On his way thither God appeared to him at Bethel.³

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Padan-aram—a district in the northern part of Mesopotamia in which some of Abraham's kindred were settled. Les. 10.

EXPLANATIONS.

Esau—he was a hairy man, and he was very fearless.
field—the wide open country where wild animals were to be found.
plain—smooth of skin.
dwelling, &c.—he liked the occupations of home, rather than those which his brother followed.
tents—moveable habitations covered with coarse cloth or skins of animals stretched on poles.
weary, &c.—he had been unsuccessful in the chase during the day.
birthright—including authority over his brother; a larger portion of his father's wealth; and a religious supremacy over the family.
sold it—thus he despised the honour and blessing of being the first-born.
to bless him—to give him his prophetic and patriarchal benediction.
knew—yet he could not, nor would not recal Jacob's blessing.

QUESTIONS.

Who were the sons of Isaac?
 What was Esau's occupation?
 What was Jacob's character?
 Who came home weary and faint?
 By what great loss did he obtain food?
 Why did Esau sell this right?
 What three great advantages were comprised in the birthright?
 When did Isaac go to Gerar?
 What error did he commit there?
 When did Isaac call Esau to him to bless him?
 Who deceived Isaac, and obtained the first blessing?
 When Isaac discovered the deceit what did he do?
 What effect had Jacob's conduct on Esau?
 What did Jacob do?
 Where was Padan-aram?
 Where did God appear to Jacob?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Here we are taught to have respect unto the promise of future blessings rather than to present pleasures. The sin of deceit is again made a warning to us; let us not be found among those who both love and make a lie. In Rebekah's conduct the doctrine of divine retribution is plainly seen; Isaac taught her to act with deception at Gerar, now she deceives him at Beersheba. The methods adopted to obtain the blessing were such as God disapproved; we should seek good only by right means.

13. Jacob serves Laban. He returns to Canaan.

Genesis xxix. 15—xxx. 2,17—23,36—xxxiii. 16.

When Jacob came to *Padan-aram*¹² he kept the flocks¹¹ of Laban, his uncle. He agreed to 'serve Laban seven years for his daughter Rachel. Laban 'deceived him, and gave him Leah. He served again other seven years for Rachel. So he married both Laban's daughters, and he had 'many children.

God blessed Jacob, and his 'riches increased exceedingly. Laban and his sons 'envied Jacob, because of his great riches.

Jacob left Laban, and took with him his wives and children. Laban followed him, and overtook him on "*Mount Gilead*. Jacob reminded Laban that he had served him twenty years. Laban and Jacob 'covenanted not to do harm to each other.

The 'angels of God met Jacob at "*Mahanaim*. Esau¹² came to meet Jacob. When Jacob heard of it he 'feared to meet his brother. He sent messengers before him, with a present. At "*Peniel* God changed Jacob's name to 'ISRAEL. The two brothers met, and were reconciled to each other, and Esau returned to "*Mount Seir*.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Mount Gilead—the mountains of Gilead lie east of the Jordan. On one of these hills was Galeed, the heap of witness of Jacob and Laban.

Mahanaim—between Mount Gilead and the brook Jabbok; the name was given to it by Jacob, because the angels of God met him there when he was returning from Padan-aram into Canaan.

Peniel or Penuel—a place east of the Jordan near the ford of the brook Jabbok.

Mount Seir—the mountainous tract to the south of Canaan. The whole of the country was inhabited by the posterity of Esau, and was called Edom.

EXPLANATIONS.

serve—Jacob had no wealth wherewith to purchase a wife, but he gave his personal services.

deceived—as Jacob had sinned so was he now punished.

many—twelve sons, and one daughter.

riches—his wealth consisted in sheep, cattle, camels, asses, and a great many servants.

envied—grudged, hated.

covenanted—made a friendly agreement in a solemn manner.

angels . . . met—to strengthen and bless Jacob.

feared—because he had sinned against him in former years.

Israel—'the prince that wrestled and prevailed with God.'

QUESTIONS.

What was Jacob's employment at Padan-aram?

For whom did he serve seven years?

Did he obtain Rachel at first? [bless him?

With what temporal advantages did God

What circumstances caused him to leave

Where did Laban overtake him? [Laban?

What is stated of Mount Gilead?

Who made a covenant?

What incident occurred at Mahanaim?

Where was Mahanaim?

Who advanced towards Jacob?

What did Jacob do?

What honour was conferred upon Jacob

Where was Peniel? [at Peniel?

What does Israel mean?

What was the result of the meeting of the

What is known of Mt. Seir? [brothers?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

From this lesson we learn, that every sin has its attendant punishment, Jacob who practised deceit is in turn deceived. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." He did wrong under his mother's instruction, he suffers wrong from his mother's brother. From Laban's profitless envy of Jacob's prosperity we learn, that covetousness and envy cannot prevent the success of those whom God blesses. We realize from Jacob's conduct at Mahanaim, that, "when a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

14. Benjamin born. Joseph's early History.

Genesis xxxv. 6,7,16—20; xxxvi.; xxxvii.; xxxix. 1—20.

Jacob built an altar^s at *Bethel*³; at this place God had appeared to him when he fled from Esau¹² on his way to *Padan-aram*.¹² As Jacob journeyed from *Bethel* to *Ephrath*, Benjamin was born. Rachel died, and was buried at *Ephrath*. Esau became very rich, and had many children; his descendants² were called *Edomites*.

Jacob loved Joseph more than his other children, but his brothers hated him. Joseph dreamed dreams, showing that his father and his brethren should bow down before him. His brethren hated him the more for these dreams; and they sold him to some *Midianites*. They dipped his coat in the blood of a kid which they killed. When Jacob saw it, he believed that some evil beast had devoured Joseph. The Midianites took Joseph into *Egypt*,⁵ and sold him as a slave to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, king of *Egypt*. Potiphar made Joseph overseer in his house. Potiphar's wife spoke falsely of Joseph, and had him cast into prison.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Ephrath—the ancient name of Bethlehem; it was in the south of Canaan.

Edomites—their country was called Idumea, (Les. 11.) called also Edom, it extended to the eastern arm of the Red Sea.

Midianites—descendants of Midian, a son of Keturah, Abraham's second wife, their country was Arabia Petraea. Les. 10.

EXPLANATIONS.

had appeared—to comfort him as he slept on the ground, by repeating the promises he had given to Abraham and Isaac.
died—she was Jacob's favourite wife.
more than—because of his dutiful and pious conduct.
hated—those who are wayward dislike the obedient, because their conduct is a reproach to them.
the more—how foolish! Could their hatred frustrate God's purposes?
believed—again is Jacob deceived—and now by his own children.
slave—this cruel practice of slavery commenced at an early period. Joseph was not the first slave, for Hagar was Sarai's bondswoman.
overseer—because of his steady, upright, and respectful conduct.

QUESTIONS.

What did Jacob build at Bethel?
 Why did he regard Bethel with so much interest?
 When was Benjamin born?
 Where did Rachel die?
 What name was given to Ephrath?
 Did Esau prosper?
 What were his descendants called?
 What country did they occupy?
 Whom did Jacob greatly love?
 Did his brothers also love him?
 What occurrence increased their hatred?
 How did they show their hate?
 Who were the Midianites?
 How did they hide their wickedness from their father?
 What became of Joseph?
 Who was Potiphar?
 What did Joseph become?
 Who caused him to be imprisoned?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

In our *Bethel* or 'house of God,' let us, like Jacob remember the Lord's goodness and devoutly engage in his worship. Life is a changing scene—Jacob's rejoicing at Bethel is quickly turned into mourning by Rachel's death at Ephrath; let us "rejoice with trembling." Those children of a family who are more deserving than others should not be exposed to envy and ill-will by parental partiality. God over-rules the iniquity of men for his own purposes; he protects the innocent and blesses the sincere. Good men may suffer from false accusers but God will justify them in his own time.

15. The Exaltation of Joseph.

Genesis xxxix. 21—23; xli.—xlii. 26; xliii. 1,2,11,15; xlv; xlvii. 1—10.

God was 'with Joseph in prison and 'blessed him. Joseph was 'released from prison to interpret the 'dreams of Pharaoh. The king's dreams were to show him that there would be seven years of great plenty in *Egypt*^s; and then seven years of grievous famine.⁷ Pharaoh 'made Joseph 'governor over all *Egypt*. During the years of plenty Joseph stored up much corn. Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

The famine was sore in all lands, but there was corn in *Egypt*. Jacob sent his sons, except the youngest, from *Canaan*^s to *Egypt* to buy corn. Joseph knew his 'brothers, but they did not know him. He said they were spies, and put them in prison. He 'bound Simeon, and sent the others to *Canaan* with corn. They came the second time to *Egypt*, bringing with them their youngest brother; Joseph, then made himself known to them. He 'forgave them, and sent waggons for his father and his brothers' families.

Pharaoh received Joseph's father and brothers very kindly. He 'gave them the land of "Goshen to dwell in.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Goshen—this district was on the eastern side of the Nile, it had excellent pastures.

EXPLANATIONS.

with Joseph—God never forsakes those who act uprightly in all circumstances.
blessed him—made him feel happy, and enabled him to be useful in prison.
released—set free; Joseph was taken out for a great purpose.
dreams—in those times they were considered very significant.
made Joseph—because of his wisdom.
governor—he was next to Pharaoh himself in authority and dignity.
brothers—they bowed down before him as their lord. Les. 14.
bound Simeon—probably he had been the most forward of them in ridiculing Joseph's dreams of greatness.
forgave—What an example of forgiveness for our imitation!
gave, &c.—to keep them separate from the Egyptians.

QUESTIONS.

Did God forsake Joseph in prison?
 For what purpose was he released?
 Were dreams then considered important?
 What explanation did Joseph give of Pharaoh's dreams?
 What was done with Joseph?
 How was the wisdom of Pharaoh's appointment proved in him?
 Who were Joseph's sons?
 Who visited Egypt during the famine?
 How did Joseph treat them?
 When did he make himself known to his brothers?
 How did he manifest his brotherly affection and kindness?
 Was Pharaoh pleased with Joseph's father and brothers?
 What country was given them?
 What do you know of Goshen?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

"A conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men," can make us happy under false accusation and unjust punishment. God overrules and arranges all events for the good of his servants. Joseph's imprisonment contributed to his exaltation, and the severity of the famine caused the fulfilment of his dreams. "The LORD of hosts, . . . is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." Joseph's piety and fraternal love are conspicuous in this lesson. May we imitate him.

FROM THE DELUGE TO THE DEATH OF JOSEPH.

16. Death and Burial of Jacob. Death of Joseph.

Genesis xlviii—1.

When Jacob was about to die, he 'blessed the two sons of Joseph, and made them heads of 'tribes, like his own sons. He repeated the promises of God to his fathers—to Abraham, and to Isaac; and spoke of the return of his descendants to *Canaan*.⁵ He then assembled his own sons and blessed them. He 'predicted the coming of 'Christ in the tribe of Judah. He charged his sons to 'bury him with his fathers, in *Canaan*.

Jacob's body was 'embalmed in *Egypt*⁵ before it was taken into *Canaan*. The Egyptians mourned for Jacob seventy days. Joseph and his brethren went from *Egypt* to *Canaan* to bury their father. They then returned into *Egypt*.

After the burial of Jacob, Joseph repeated his forgiveness to his brethren who had feared his anger; Joseph spoke kindly, and said God 'intended their evil for good, to save much people alive. He nourished his brethren and their families while he lived; and before he died he charged his brethren to 'carry up his bones with them into *Canaan*, when God should bring them out of *Egypt*.

EXPLANATIONS.

blessed—in those days the final blessing of a dying patriarch was greatly valued.
tribes—distinct families; the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.
predicted—told beforehand.
Christ—'anointed' to save.
bury, &c.—this proved his faith in the promises of God to give *Canaan* to his descendants.
embalmed—preserved with balsams and spices from crumbling to dust, by methods known to Egyptian physicians.
intended, &c.—this was a pious and a considerate interpretation of their former unkindness.
carry, &c.—he too died in faith that God would give *Canaan* to the tribes of Israel.

QUESTIONS.

What favour did Jacob confer on Joseph's two sons?
What promises did he repeat?
Of what event did he also speak?
Whom did he then assemble and bless?
What did he predict?
To what tribe was Christ to belong?
Where did Jacob wish to be buried?
What belief did this wish imply?
What was done to his body?
Who carried out Jacob's request?
Did they remain in *Canaan*?
What generous act did Joseph perform on his return to *Egypt*?
How did he explain the former unkindness of his brethren?
What was Joseph's dying charge?
What faith did he thus manifest?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are here taught to reverence the last injunctions of a dying parent, especially, when that parent manifests his faith in the promises of God. We learn that even strangers treated Jacob with that respect which his steady principles and conduct called forth. We learn, from the apprehensions of Joseph's brethren, that they felt the injustice of their conduct and feared its consequences. We see the loveliness of brotherly kindness exemplified by Joseph, in removing the fears of his brethren, and in nourishing them.

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.

Exodus i. 8—ii. 15,23—iii. 10; iv. 14—16.

A new king ruled over *Egypt*.⁵ His name was 'Pharaoh, but he 'knew not Joseph. He 'oppressed the 'Israelites, and made them work like slaves. The children of Israel increased so much, that the king ordered their male infants to be destroyed. Just before this 'decree Aaron was born.

The parents of Aaron had another son born. His mother hid him for three months. After that, she placed him in an 'ark of 'bulrushes, on the brink of the river 'Nile. The king's daughter found the child, and called his name 'Moses.

When Moses was grown up, he one day saw an Egyptian smiting an Israelite, and he slew the Egyptian. The next day he saw two Hebrews⁴ quarrelling, and he reproved⁶ him that did the wrong. He knew that Moses had killed the Egyptian, and 'told him so. Moses then 'fled into 'Midian.

God remembered his promise(Les. 6.) to give the Israelites the land of *Canaan*.⁵ He appeared to Moses in a 'burning bush, and appointed him to go into *Egypt*, and demand the release of the Israelites. Aaron was 'to go with him to Pharaoh.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Israelites—the name given to the twelve tribes of Israel to the time of Jeroboam.

Nile—the river of Egypt; every year its waters rise and flood the country.

Midian—a country of Arabia Petrea; its people were descendants of Abraham.

EXPLANATIONS.

Pharaoh—all the kings of Egypt were called by this name.

knew not—he did not live till long after Joseph's time; probably sixty years.

oppressed—ruled with harshness, and laid burdens on them.

decree—order, law; the command of an eastern king, however cruel, is obeyed, none daring to contradict it.

ark—a small boat of wicker work.

bulrushes—those of the Nile grow about six feet high.

Moses—means 'drawn out.'

told him so—reproachfully and accusingly.

fled—he feared Pharaoh's displeasure

burning bush—though it was in flames it was not consumed.

to go with—because he was the better speaker of the two brothers.

QUESTIONS.

Who now ruled over Egypt?

What conduct did he pursue towards the Israelites? [Israelites?

How long were the twelve tribes called Israelites?
How did the king endeavour to prevent their increase?

Who was born just before this cruel decree?

Had his parents another son?

What did they do with him?

Who found the child?

What did she call him?

When Moses grew up what act of oppression did he witness?

What did he then do?

What occurred the next day?

Whither did Moses flee?

What do you know of Midian and its people?

How did God appear to Moses?
What did he command him to do?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

This lesson teaches us the short-lived nature of human gratitude, and points us to that reward which is laid up in heaven, as our motive to do good in our day and generation. It teaches us, moreover, that God "taketh the wise in their own craftiness" for the means which Pharaoh adopted for the extermination of the Israelites was overruled for their deliverance and his confusion. Lastly, the duty of acknowledging our brethren in the faith, though they be in circumstances of poverty and degradation, is here illustrated in the patriotism of Moses.

18. The Release Demanded. The Plagues.

Exodus v. 1-18; vii.-xi. 1,4-10.

Moses¹⁷ and Aaron 'demanded the release of the Israelites,¹⁷ but the king made their bondage the harder. They went again, at God's command, to require Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, but Pharaoh would 'not hearken to them.

God sent 'plagues to punish the king and his 'people :—

1. God turned the waters of *Egypt*' into blood.
2. God sent 'frogs, and when they died the land stank.
3. God smote the dust of the land, and it became 'lice on man and beast.
4. God sent swarms of flies, and the land was corrupted.
5. God sent a grievous 'murrain on the cattle.
6. God sent 'boils and blains on man and beast.
7. God sent 'hail, rain, and fire on the land of *Egypt*.
8. God sent 'locusts, which ate up every herb.
9. God sent a thick 'darkness over *Egypt* for three days.

The Israelites were free from all the plagues. During each plague Pharaoh promised to let the Israelites go; but after each plague was removed he refused. God then threatened to destroy all the 'first-born of *Egypt*.

EXPLANATIONS.

demanded—as the special messengers of Jehovah the God of Israel.
not hearken, &c.—not obey; paid no attention to their demand.
plagues—terrific judgments.
people—because they carried out the will of their cruel king.
frogs—they became an intolerable nuisance from their immense numbers.
lice—doubtless the numerous species which infest both mankind and the lower animals.
murrain—a disease which soon proves
boils and blains—painful sores. [mortal.
hail, &c.—hail and rain are seldom seen in *Egypt*. *Egypt* is one of the rainless districts of the earth.
locusts—a large species of flying grasshoppers, which devours and destroys vegetation.
darkness—so thick that it could be "felt."
first-born—the eldest of each family.

QUESTIONS.

What did Moses and Aaron demand of Pharaoh?
 How did the king answer their demand?
 Did the Lord's messengers go again before Pharaoh?
 What success had they?
 Whose wrath did Pharaoh provoke?
 How did God show his displeasure at Pharaoh's conduct?
 Why did God send plagues upon the people of *Egypt*?
 Enumerate the plagues which God sent upon *Egypt*.
 Why was the plague of hail and rain remarkable?
 Who were free from the plagues?
 Was Pharaoh's heart not at all moved by the plagues?
 What last plague did God threaten to inflict?
 What is meant by the first-born?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We here learn the value of combined efforts in important tasks; although Moses was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," he was "slow of speech," while Aaron, without such learning, could "speak well." The deficiency of each is supplied by their union. We see in the plagues of *Egypt* how God can humble the pride of those who dare defy His authority; the human heart cannot always be humbled by afflictive providences, but "will revolt more and more," as Pharaoh did, "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

19. The Passover. The Tenth Plague. The Departure.

Exodus xii. 1—39.

After the ninth plague God told the Israelites¹⁷ to 'prepare to depart from *Egypt*⁵; they were to kill a 'lamb, and sprinkle the blood on the sides of their doors; the lamb was to be 'roasted, and they were to be ready to depart when they ate of it. God said he would 'smite all the first-born¹⁸ in *Egypt*, but he would 'pass over the doors of the Israelites when he saw the 'blood of the lamb upon them. God commanded the Israelites to 'keep the Lord's passover as a memorial,²⁰ for ever. The Israelites obeyed God, and God smote the first-born of the Egyptians that night.

Pharaoh and all the Egyptians rose up in the night, and there was 'a great cry; for the first-born in every house was dead. Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and told them to depart with the children of Israel; and to take with them their flocks¹¹ and herds. The Israelites 'borrowed 'jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and 'raiment from the Egyptians. They departed from 'Rameses.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Rameses or Raamses—a treasure-city in Egypt which the Israelites built during their bondage; it is supposed to have been in the land of Goshen. Les. 15.

EXPLANATIONS.

prepare, &c.—the time of their deliverance from bondage was near.
lamb—the most acceptable of all sacrifices.
roasted—not raw, as the idolaters round them ate of the victims of their sacrifices.
smite—kill suddenly.
pass over—hence the name of the sacrifice, 'passover.'
blood—the Israelites, then, were saved, redeemed, or bought by blood.
keep, &c.—so that the memory of God's severity and goodness might never be forgotten.
a great cry—of alarm and of sorrow.
borrowed—obtained as presents.
jewels—personal ornaments made of the precious metals.
raiment—Egypt was early noted for its fine linen and embroidery.

QUESTIONS.

What did the Lord command the Israelites to do?
 Why was a lamb appointed?
 What directions were given as to the preparation of the lamb?
 Why were they not to eat it raw?
 By what sign was the destroying angel to know where those lived who worshipped and obeyed God?
 What feast was instituted to be thenceforward observed?
 Did God inflict the threatened death?
 What did Pharaoh and the Egyptians do?
 What did Pharaoh tell Moses and Aaron?
 What were they to take with them?
 What gifts did they obtain from the Egyptians that night?
 Whence did they depart?
 What is stated respecting Rameses?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn—THAT sinners who will not be corrected by reproof, shall assuredly be destroyed. THAT the punishment of the oppressor and the deliverance of the oppressed may be accomplished together. THAT the most urgent business is no excuse for omitting a religious duty. THAT the passover-feast is a type of Christ, our Passover, who is slain for us. THAT we should not refuse to perform those duties which religion and humanity enjoin, until we are compelled to do so by "the terror of the Lord."

20. The Pursuit. Pharaoh's Host Drowned.

Exodus xiii. ; xiv.

God commanded the Israelites¹⁷ to 'sanctify their 'first-born¹⁸ unto him, as a 'memorial of the destruction of the first-born of *Egypt*.⁵ Moses took the bones of Joseph with him from *Egypt*. God led the Israelites on their way—by day in a pillar of 'cloud, and by night in a pillar of 'fire.

The Egyptians 'repented that they had let the Israelites go, and Pharaoh and his host pursued them. They overtook them 'encamping by the 'Red Sea. By the command of God, Moses was to lift up his rod²¹ over the sea, and the water would divide, that the Israelites might pass through the midst of it. The 'angel of God then went behind the 'camp of the Israelites, and the cloud gave them light, but it was darkness to the Egyptians.

Moses stretched out his hand over the 'sea, the waters 'divided, and the children of Israel passed through the sea on dry ground. The Egyptians pursued, and went in after them, into the midst of the sea, with their 'chariots and horses. Moses, by the command of God, again stretched his hand over the sea; the waters returned, and Pharaoh and his host were drowned.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Red Sea—it separated Arabia on the east from Egypt and Abyssinia on the west; the western arm is about 190 miles long, and has an average breadth of 21 miles; the eastern arm is about 112 miles long, with a breadth of 15 miles; between these two arms is the peninsula of Arabia. Les. 5.

EXPLANATIONS.

sanctify—set apart for a religious purpose.
first-born—only those who were born after the destruction of the first-born of the Egyptians.
a memorial—a lasting record, that should be remembered for generations.
cloud—visible in daylight.
fire—visible in darkness.
repented—changed their minds; selfishness and revenge overcame their domestic grief.
encamping—pitching their tents.
angel—or, messenger of God.
camp—an assemblage of tents.
sea—the western arm of the sea, called the Gulf of Suez, was that they crossed.
divided—the waters stood up on each side till they had passed over.
chariots—war-cars, they generally contained two warriors and a driver.

QUESTIONS.

Who were to be sanctified in Israel, and for what purpose?
 What does sanctify mean?
 Whose dying request did Moses fulfil?
 How were the Israelites guided?
 When were the symbols of God's presence seen?
 Who repented of their conduct at this time?
 Was it a proper or a selfish repentance?
 What did Pharaoh and his people do?
 Where did they overtake the Israelites?
 Give me some particulars respecting the Red Sea.
 What was the command of God to Moses?
 Of what double benefit was the cloud to the Israelites?
 How did the Egyptians pursue them?
 How were they enabled to escape from their pursuing enemies?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

This lesson inculcates the duty of consecrating the best of all we possess to the glory of God—wealth, time, talents, and whatever we can exercise a control over. It sets before us an example of faithful attention to the dying request of a venerated ancestor. It exhibits the fatal consequences of unrestricted power and ungovernable rage to those who possess the one, and indulge in the other; and it presents a wonderful example of divine justice and mercy, for while God "dashed in pieces the enemy," in mercy He led forth the people which He had redeemed.

21. The Bitter Water. The Manna. Amalek Conquered.

Exodus xv.—xvii. 16; xix. 1—15.

After the destruction of Pharaoh's host, the Israelites¹⁷ sang a 'song of praise to God. When they had journeyed three days, they came to "Marah, where the waters were bitter. They murmured, saying, "What shall we drink?" The Lord 'showed Moses a tree, which he cast into the waters, and they were made sweet.

In the "Wilderness of Sin the Israelites murmured for 'bread. The Lord told Moses that he would "rain bread from heaven," and they were to gather it 'every day. On the sixth day they were to gather a 'double portion of the manna, because the morrow was the sabbath²² when there should be none.

The Israelites again murmured because they wanted water. God told Moses to smite the rock in "Horeb, and water should come out of it, that the people might drink, and Moses did so, and the Israelites drank. The "Amalekites came to fight with Israel at "Rephidim. Moses stood on the top of the hill, and held up the 'rod of God during the battle, and Israel conquered. After leaving Rephidim the Israelites came into the "Wilderness of Sinai. Moses went upon the mount, and the Lord commanded him to 'sanctify the people.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Marah—in the Wilderness of Shur, bitter wells are still found there.

Wilderness of Sin—the desert country between Elim and Sinai.

Horeb—the rocky and mountainous district in the Wilderness of Sinai.

Amalekites—supposed to be descendants of Ham, (Gen. 5.) the first people who attacked the Israelites on their route from Egypt to Canaan.

Rephidim—one of the encampments of the Israelites in the district of Horeb.

Wilderness of Sinai—the desert tract in the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai.

EXPLANATIONS.

song of praise—to thank God for their wonderful deliverance.
showed. . . tree—they were entirely dependant upon God's care and wisdom.
bread—because the dough they had brought from Egypt was used up.
rain bread—it was called 'manna.'
every day—to induce daily industry, and dependance on God's bounty.
double—that the sabbath should not be broken by gathering it.
rod of God—Moses' shepherd's staff.
sanctify—cleanse, purify by abstinence and religious discipline.

QUESTIONS.

How did the Israelites express their gratitude for their deliverance?
 What feeling did they give way to at Marah, and for what?
 How did God instruct Moses to correct the bitterness of the water?
 At what place did the Israelites murmur?
 What did God tell Moses? [for bread?
 What rule was given respecting the gathering of the manna?
 When was a double supply sent? Why?
 How was their want of water supplied?
 Who fought with the Israelites?
 What is stated respecting the Amalekites?
 What did Moses do?
 Whom was Moses to sanctify?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

When God is working deliverances for us we should attend to the divine command; "Stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD." When the deliverance is effected we should express our thankfulness and joy by songs of grateful praise. Illustrations of ingratitude and unbelief on the part of those who had been redeemed:—of faithful devotion to the best interests of a rebellious people, as exhibited by Moses; and of forbearance, goodness, and defence on the part of God are to be found in this lesson.

22. The Delivery of the Law.

Exodus xix. 16—xxiv. 18; xxxi. 18.

The 'ten commandments were delivered to Moses on "Mount Sinai.

The 1st commandment 'enjoins the 'worship of the true God¹—the 2nd commandment forbids 'idolatry—the 3rd forbids the taking of God's 'name in vain—the 4th requires the 'sabbath to be kept holy.

These four commandments show our duty to God.

The 5th commandment enjoins 'honour to parents—the 6th forbids 'murder—the 7th forbids 'adultery—the 8th forbids 'theft—the 9th forbids 'false witness—the 10th forbids 'covetousness.

These six commandments teach our duty to man.

The people saw the law delivered amidst thunders and lightnings. They were round the mountain, but were not allowed to touch it, because it was 'sanctified by the presence of God's glory. The glory of God was on Mount Sinai six days, and on the seventh day God called Moses up to the mount, where he remained forty days and forty nights. God gave him the two tables of stone, with the ten commandments written on them.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Mount Sinai—the celebrated mountain in Horeb, on which God delivered the ten commandments to Moses.

EXPLANATIONS.

ten commandments—called the moral law.
enjoins—teaches, commands.
worship—there is no God but one, and he only is to be worshipped.
idolatry—God cannot be represented by any image or idol.
name—it is "holy and reverend."
sabbath—or 'rest'; in commemoration of God ceasing from his work of creation.
 Les. 1. The first precept for the observance of the sabbath, was given with reference to the manna. Les. 21.
honour—respectful obedience.
murder—taking away life.
adultery—every unlawful and covetous desire or act, contrary to the divine institution of marriage.
theft—taking that which is not ours.
false witness—saying of another that which is not true of him.
covetousness—desiring to possess that which is another's.
sanctified—set apart for the display of the glory of God.

QUESTIONS.

To whom were the ten commandments delivered?
 What is the meaning of enjoins?
 What are the duties enjoined by the first commandment?—by the second?—by the third?—by the fourth?
 To whom are the above duties owing?
 What duty is enforced by the fifth?
 What sin is forbidden in the sixth?—in the seventh?—in the eighth?—in the ninth?—in the tenth?
 To whom do we owe these duties?
 What is the meaning of murder?
 What does adultery mean?
 What is theft?
 What is it to bear false witness?
 What is meant by covetousness?
 What was seen on the mountain?
 Why were the people forbidden to touch Mount Sinai?
 What does sanctified mean?
 Who was called up to the mountain?
 How long did he remain there?
 What did God give him?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are here taught our dependence upon God for instruction in the duties we owe to Himself, and in those we owe to our fellow-creatures. When any sin is forbidden in the commandments the opposite duty is enjoined, and when any duty is enjoined the opposite sin is implicitly forbidden. Our Saviour and the Apostles frequently quoted the commandments, and we therefore know, that though they were given to the Israelites, all mankind are bound to observe them. Our Saviour says, that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

23. The Golden Calf Worshipped. The Tabernacle erected.

Exodus xxxii.—xxxiv. 8,9; xl; Leviticus viii. 10,11.

While Moses¹⁷ was on the mount, the Israelites¹⁷ desired Aaron to make them 'gods to go before them, and to 'lead them. Aaron made a 'golden 'calf, and the people 'worshipped it. When Moses came down from the mount, and saw the people worshipping the calf, he was greatly grieved. God threatened to destroy the people. He commanded the 'Levites to punish the Israelites for their sin. Three-thousand of those who worshipped the golden calf were slain by the Levites.

Moses 'besought the Lord to pardon the sin which the people had committed in worshipping the golden calf. At first God refused to 'pardon the people. The people mourned for their sin, and Moses again entreated the Lord to forgive them.

The 'tabernacle was erected in the *Wilderness of Sinai*,²¹ and Moses 'consecrated it. The pillar of cloud²⁰ abode on it, and the glory of the Lord filled it. God chose 'Aaron and his sons to be priests.

EXPLANATIONS.

gods—idols; representations or emblems of God.
lead—by being carried in the front rank.
golden—the jewels of gold obtained from the Egyptians (Les. 19.) were melted.
calf—the Israelites became familiar with the worship of the calf while in Egypt; at this time they were little better than a nation of slaves just liberated from bondage.
worshipped—reverenced as an emblem of the great God.
Levites—this was the only tribe that assembled round Moses. He intimated to them, that God might bestow a blessing on them that day.
besought—prayed to with earnestness and great anxiety.
pardon—exempt them from the punishment due to idolatry. viz., death.
tabernacle—the Lord's tent before which sacrifices were offered, and the people devoutly worshipped.
consecrated it—anointed and solemnly dedicated.
Aaron—he was of the tribe of Levi.

QUESTIONS.

What request did the people make to Aaron?
 Did Aaron comply?
 What Egyptian idol did he make?
 Did the people worship it?
 Who saw their idolatry and was grieved?
 How did God show that he was displeased?
 What punishment did the Lord command to be inflicted?
 How did the Levites honourably distinguish themselves?
 What did Moses intimate to them?
 How many idolaters were slain?
 What did Moses do?
 Did God refuse to pardon the people?
 How do we know that the people were penitent?
 What did Moses again do for them?
 Where was the tabernacle reared?
 What were the signs of God dwelling in it, and thereby watching over it?
 Who were chosen to be priests?
 Of what tribe was Aaron?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We see in this lesson the sad effects of bad early habits, and consequently the advantages of early training in the way we should go. During the temporary absence of God's minister the Israelites fell into the idolatry of Egypt. The great mercy of God in forgiving their sin on the intercession of Moses shows us that a Mediator is as necessary for us. Moses was the mediator of the first covenant, Christ is the Mediator of the New Testament, who "ever liveth to make intercession for us." The construction of the tabernacle is an evidence to us of the divine source of human skill, while it shows us the divine origin of social worship.

24. Nadab and Abihu slain. The Levites Consecrated.

Leviticus x. 1-9; xxiv. 10-16,23; Numbers i. 1,50-54; viii. 5-26.

Two of Aaron's sons named Nadab and Abihu disobeyed God. They offered 'strange fire before the Lord; and there went out fire from the Lord, which consumed them. The people took the bodies of Nadab and Abihu, and buried them 'outside the camp.²⁰ God then commanded that the priests should 'not drink wine nor strong drink when they went into the tabernacle,²³ lest they should 'die.

A man 'blasphemed the name of the Lord and 'cursed. He was put into prison. Moses 'inquired of the Lord how he was to be punished. God said he was to die. The people took him outside the camp, and 'stoned him till he died.

The descendants² of Levi were called Levites.²³ When the children of Israel journeyed in the *Wilderness of Sinai*,²¹ God said the 'Levites were to serve him in the tabernacle. He accepted them instead of the first-born²⁰ of the Israelites. Moses consecrated²³ them. Their business was to instruct the people, to 'wait on the priests, and to take care of all things belonging to the tabernacle.

EXPLANATIONS.

strange fire—it had not been taken from the altar of burnt offerings which the Lord had kindled.
outside—thus teaching that interments should not be made near crowded human habitations.
not drink—hence we may infer that the sin of Nadab and Abihu was caused by intoxication.
die—God punished those who profaned his sanctuary with death.
blasphemed—spoke against with impiety and gross irreverence.
cursed—uttered wicked wishes.
inquired—the laws regulating punishments for such offences had not yet been given.
stoned—a popular mode of punishment now first made legal.
Levites—a whole tribe is taken, to be dispersed among the other tribes, and set apart to instruct them out of the written law of God.
wait on—while offering sacrifices.

QUESTIONS.

What did Nadab and Abihu offer?
 Who, and what were they?
 What is meant by strange fire?
 What punishment befel them?
 Where were they buried?
 What does this fact teach us?
 Did God establish any rule for the prevention of a similar calamity?
 What may we hence infer was the cause of Nadab and Abihu's sin?
 For what was a certain man placed in confinement?
 What do you mean by blasphemed?
 Why was he not punished at once?
 Where did they stone him?
 Who were appointed to the service of the tabernacle?
 Were not the first-born previously chosen for this duty? Les. 20.
 What were the duties of the Levites?
 How had the Levites previously distinguished themselves? Les. 23.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Those who engage in the worship of God should do so with a solemn and reverential feeling of the holiness of the Lord God of hosts and King of saints. Irreverence of God will surely be punished as well as the thoughtless presumption of rushing into his presence "as the horse rusheth into the battle." We should learn the danger of using the name of God lightly lest an ungodly use of it lead to the ruinous sin of blasphemy. Let the command "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain," sink deep into our hearts.

25. Miriam's Leprosy. The Spies Search Canaan.

Numbers x. 33; xi.—xiv. 1.

As the children of Israel journeyed from *Mount Sinai*²² they murmured for flesh. God was angry and sent them quails. The people ate them and were afflicted with a great plague; and many died. Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses,¹⁷ because he had married an Ethiopian woman. The Lord punished Miriam with leprosy.

God commanded that a man out of each of the twelve tribes should be sent to *Canaan*.⁵ So they went up, and searched the land, and after forty days they returned. They brought a bunch of grapes from *Eshcol*, so large that two men were required to carry it. All the spies said that *Canaan* was a good land,—a land flowing with milk and honey. Caleb and Joshua, two of the spies, wanted the people to go up at once and take possession of it; but the other ten spies told them they were not able. They said, The cities are strong, and the inhabitants thereof are giants. The people believed the evil report of the ten spies, and they lifted up their voice and wept that night.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Eshcol—a valley in the south of Canaan, so named from the bunch of grapes cut by the spies, which was so large that it had to be carried on a pole.

EXPLANATIONS.

journeyed—moved on from one encampment to another.
flesh—though they had flocks and herds, yet the supply of animal food which they afforded was insufficient for such a multitude.
quails—birds common in Arabia, similar to, but smaller than partridges.
afflicted—pained, tormented; probably from taking this food.
Miriam—sister to Moses and Aaron.
spake against—thus bringing the law-giver, mediator, and leader of Israel into contempt among the people.
Ethiopian—descended from Cush, one of the sons of Ham. She was a daughter of Jethro, the priest of Midian.
leprosy—a most distressing disease which breaks out on the skin in a loathsome form.
required, &c.—to preserve it uninjured.
wept—loud wailing is a customary mode of mourning in the East.

QUESTIONS.

When next did the people murmur?
 With what were they supplied?
 Why did they long for flesh?
 How did God show his displeasure?
 When they ate them what took place?
 Who spoke against Moses?
 For what cause?
 What effect would the conduct of Miriam and Aaron have on the people?
 Who were the Ethiopians?
 Who was the wife of Moses?
 How was Miriam punished?
 What is leprosy?
 How many spies were sent to survey Canaan?
 How long were they absent?
 What did they bring with them?
 What is stated of this bunch of grapes?
 What report was given by the spies?
 What was Caleb and Joshua's wish?
 What did the other ten spies say?
 Whose opinion was believed?
 How did the people express their grief?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The evil consequences of discontent are shown in this lesson. Let us therefore be instructed by it to be content with such things as we have, for he who supplied the Israelites has said to every believer, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." We should repress feelings of envy and strife, for where these are, "there is confusion and every evil work." Distrust of God's power and the fear of man are set before us in the history of spies, let us learn from their sin and punishment ever "to trust in the Lord, and do good," so shall we not fear what man can do unto us.

26. The Sentence on Israel. The Sabbath Breaker., &c.

Numbers xiv.—2—45; xv. 32—36; xvi. Exodus xxxi. 14,15.

The Israelites¹⁷ murmured against Moses¹⁷ and Aaron, and God threatened to destroy them with a pestilence. Moses prayed to the Lord not to destroy them. God then said they should not go into *Canaan*,⁵ but wander forty years and die in the wilderness, and that their children should possess the land. Joshua and Caleb, the two faithful spies, were to go into the land. The unfaithful spies died of a plague. The next day the people marched towards *Canaan*, but they were met by the *Amalekites*²¹ and *Canaanites*,³³ who defeated them and slew many of them. The Lord permitted the Israelites to be thus punished for their disobedience.

While the Israelites were in the *Wilderness of Paran*, a man was found gathering sticks on the sabbath day, and he was stoned at God's command. God had declared that all who worked on the sabbath²² should surely die.

Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On rebelled against Moses and Aaron. The earth opened and swallowed them up; and fire came and devoured 250 men who offered incense with them. The next day the people began to rebel, God sent a plague among them, and 14,700 died.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Wilderness of Paran—the wilderness to which Hagar and Ishmael went after they left Beersheba, and where they resided; it is in Arabia Petrea. Les. 9.

EXPLANATIONS.

murmured—because of the discouraging report of the ten spies.
not go—though they were now within a short distance of the land. Unbelief caused their rejection. Heb. iii. 9.
forty years—during which time a special providence should watch over them; they should be fed without a seed time or a harvest, and their clothes and their shoes should require no renewing.
marched towards—in a presumptuous spirit; but their courage and confidence were both late and false.
defeated—because God had forsaken them.
sabbath—the duty of observing the sabbath had been enjoined with new motives—derived from a remembrance of their hard bondage in Egypt.
rebelled, &c.—against their religious and civil supremacy.
incense—a fragrant composition of gums and woods used in their religious observances.

QUESTIONS.

What effect had the opinion of the ten spies on the people?
 Why did they murmur?
 What did God threaten to do?
 What did Moses do?
 How did God qualify his threatening?
 Were they not punished with death?
 How did the people then act?
 By whom were they repulsed?
 Why was their defeat permitted?
 What act of disobedience occurred in the wilderness of Paran?
 What do you know of this wilderness?
 How was the sabbath-breaker punished?
 What declaration had God made?
 Whose rebellion is next recorded?
 Against whom did they rebel?
 Were they punished?
 How were their companions punished?
 What is incense?
 Who next rebelled?
 How many fell by a plague?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Let this lesson teach us the duty inculcated by the apostle, "Do all things," which God has commanded, "without murmurings," lest if we give way to the sin, we be condemned among those who are "murmurers, complainers." We may imitate the fidelity of the faithful spies by not being faint-hearted in any Christian work. Here also is a lesson to sabbath-breakers, although such punishments are not now inflicted, God will assuredly punish those who despise his holy law. An awful example of rebellion against God's appointed ministers closes this lesson.

27. Moses displeases God. Aaron dies. Fiery Serpents.

Numbers xx; xxi.

At *Kadesh* Miriam²⁵ died and was buried. At this place also the people murmured for water. God commanded Moses to speak to the rock, and water should come forth. Moses spoke *unadvisedly* to the people and smote the rock twice, he thus *displeased* God; who told him he should not take the Israelites¹⁷ into *Canaan*.⁵ Moses sent messengers to the king of *Edom*,¹⁴ to ask him to allow the Israelites to pass through his land, but he *refused*. The people then journeyed to *Mount Hor*. Here Aaron died, and his son, Eleazar, was appointed *high priest*.

The Israelites again became rebellious, and God punished them by *fiery serpents*. They were sorry they had sinned. Moses was then directed to make a *brazen serpent* and put it on a pole. All those who had been bitten by the fiery serpents, when they looked up to the brazen serpent were healed.

Sihon, king of the *Amorites*, and Og, the king of *Bashan*, came against Israel with their armies. They were defeated, and themselves, with their armies, slain. The Israelites took possession of their countries.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Kadesh—a city on the borders of Edom (Idumea, Les.11.) and on those of Canaan.

Mount Hor—a mountain of Arabia Petrea, on the confines of Edom.

Amorites—descendants of Emer, (Amor) a son of Canaan, they lived E. of the Dead Sea.

Bashan—a fertile district of Canaan, east of the Jordan, it was celebrated for oaks.

EXPLANATIONS.

unadvisedly—he did not do according to the Lord's instructions, but spoke and acted from his own irritated feelings.

displeased God—because he did not honour Him before the people.

refused—they then turned away from him. God would not suffer any violence towards the Edomites, because they were the descendants of Jacob's brother.

high priest—the office of the high priest was the most honourable ever held by man on earth.

fiery—so called either from the bronzed or fiery colour, or from the burning sensation caused by the bite.

brazen serpent—he that turned himself towards it was not saved by that which he saw, but by the God and Saviour it represented;—it was therefore a sign or symbol only.

QUESTIONS.

Where was Kadesh?

What occurred there?

Explain the circumstance which led Moses to displease God.

What does *unadvisedly* mean?

Did God pronounce any sentence against Moses for this offence?

What request was made of the king of Edom which he refused?

Why did not the Israelites force a passage through Edom?

Where did Aaron die?

Where was Mount Hor?

Who succeeded him as high priest?

How were the Israelites next punished for rebellion?

Explain the appointed means of cure.

Of whom was the brazen serpent a symbol?

Who were the Amorites?

What is said of Bashan?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

When we see Moses, who was so meek, so faithful, fail of the reward of those who honour God in all their ways we have much reason to pray "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." We learn from the death of Aaron to rejoice in our privileges as Christians, for we have a high priest who "continueth ever," and "hath an unchangeable priesthood." In the punishment of the rebellious people we see the justice and mercy of God;—his justice in punishing—his mercy in appointing a means of cure to those who showed their penitence by obedience to his command.

28. Balak sends for Balaam. Idolatry in Moab.

Numbers xxii.—xxxi.

Balak, the king of *Moab*, sent for *Balaam* to curse the Israelites.¹⁷ At first God would not permit Balaam to go. Balak sent again, and Balaam was permitted to go, but he was to speak only that which God told him. On his way to *Moab*, the angel of the Lord met him, and he was again told not to curse the Israelites. When Balaam was come to Balak he blessed the Israelites, and foretold their greatness. He desired to die the death of the righteous. Balaam blessed them a second time, and Balak said to Balaam, Neither curse them, nor bless them, but he answered, "All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do." Balak then took Balaam to the top of *Mount Peor*, and there also he blessed them. The Israelites were then in the plains of Moab. At *Shittim* they were ensnared into idolatry with the *Midianites*,¹⁴ by the advice of the wicked prophet, Balaam. For this sin God sent a plague on them, and 24,000 of the people died. To punish the Midianites, God commanded Moses to take 12,000 men, and make war with them. The Israelites slew all the men of *Midian*,¹⁷ with their kings, but spared the women. Balaam was slain in this battle.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Moab—the part of Arabia Petrea on the east of the Dead Sea. It was inhabited by the descendants of Moab, one of the sons of Lot.

Mount Peor—one of the heights of the Abarim mountains.

Shittim—the place in the plains of Moab where the Israelites were ensnared into idolatry with the Midianites.

EXPLANATIONS.

Balaam—he was famous as an idol-priest and magician, and had the reputation of being in favour with the gods.
speak only—God knew that Balaam wished to curse Israel, but He is able to compel the wicked to speak His words only.
desired, &c.—the vain wish of many worldlings who yet despise God's people,
top—that he might have a view of the camp of Israel in the plain below.
ensnared—temptations were spread around them to make them forget God.
advice—Balaam knew that no enemy could prevail against Israel while God's pure worship was maintained by them; but that his anger would be stirred up against them if they yielded to idolatrous practices.

QUESTIONS.

Who was king of Moab at this time?
 For what purpose did he send for Balaam?
 Who was Balaam?
 Did God permit him to go to Moab?
 What restriction did God lay upon his speech?
 How was this command repeated?
 How did he disappoint Balak?
 What vain wish did he utter?
 When Balaam repeated the blessing a second time what did Balak say?
 What was Balaam's answer?
 Where did Balak then take Balaam and what was the result?
 Where were the Israelites then?
 Into what crime were they seduced?
 By whose wicked advice?
 What was their punishment for this sin?
 How were the Midianites punished?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

In Balaam's conduct we see the wickedness of evasion. Balaam did not dare to curse Israel, but he showed Balak how he might bring them under the curse of God. Balaam "loved the wages of unrighteousness," yet he wished for a happy death. Instead of wishing for a happy end, let us prepare for it, that we may be found ready when we are called to die. Many are the examples of God's severity against sin, even in his own people, let us beware of provoking God by weakly yielding to temptation, and strengthen ourselves, by saying, "How . . . can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

FROM THE DEATH OF JOSEPH TO THE DEATH OF MOSES.

29. Inheritance of the Reubenites. Death of Moses.

Numbers xxxii.—xxxiv. 13. Deuteronomy.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad asked Moses for the countries which had been taken from Sihon, king of the *Amorites*,²⁷ and from Og, king of *Bashan*,²⁷ because the land was good for cattle. Moses told them that *Canaan*⁵ must be first conquered; these tribes proposed to go with their brethren, to conquer *Canaan*, and then to return and possess their land.

The Lord appointed forty-eight cities to be given to the Levites. Six of them were to be cities of refuge, for those who had slain others by accident.

God made it known that he had appointed Joshua to succeed Moses. Before Moses died, he repeated the law to the Israelites; exhorted them to obedience; forbade idolatry; and prophesied of Christ. He foretold that Israel would worship idols after they entered *Canaan*; that they would be taken as slaves into a strange country; and after that be scattered over all the world.

Moses ascended *Mount Nebo*, and thence he beheld the promised land. He died and was buried in a valley of *Moab*.²⁸ Moses was one-hundred-and-twenty years old when he died. The people mourned for him 30 days.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Mount Nebo—one of the Abarim mountains in the land of Moab, near the Jordan.

EXPLANATIONS.

told them—he feared that their intention was to settle down, and let their brethren struggle for victory without their aid.
to go—leaving their wives, children, aged parents, and sick friends in possession, and under God's protection.
forty-eight cities—selected from all the tribes; hence the means of instruction were placed within the reach of the entire community. *Les. 24.*
refuge—shelter, protection; on the roads leading to those cities finger-posts bearing the word 'refuge,' were set up.
scattered—as they are at this day, having forfeited the privileges designed for them.
beheld—he saw its beauty, and admired its fertility.

QUESTIONS.

Who made a request to Moses?
When Moses heard the request what did he fear?
What proposal did they make?
Who were to be left behind?
What were the cities of refuge for?
How many were there to be in *Canaan*?
How many cities were the Levites to receive from their brethren?
What was the advantage of their being selected from all the tribes?
Who was Joshua?
What did Moses do before his death?
What did he foretell?
What part of the prediction is now under fulfilment?
What did Moses see before his death?
Where was *Mount Nebo*?
How long was Moses mourned for?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The beginning of this lesson shows the good effect which arises from plain-dealing; by telling the tribes of Reuben and Gad their duty, Moses brought them to do it without murmuring. We learn also the duty of providing for those who minister to us in holy things, in the provision ordained for the Levites. The refuge appointed for those who had shed human blood plainly shows us that inquiry and trial should precede the irremediable sentence of death. The predictions of Moses teach us the reality of his prophetic office, for they have all been fulfilled.

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.

PERIOD IV.] FROM THE ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN

30. Joshua succeeds Moses. Jericho is taken.

Exodus xii. 37; Deuteronomy xxxiv. 9; Joshua ii—vi.

Six-hundred-thousand Israelites¹⁷ left *Egypt*³ that were men, besides children; of this large number, only two—Joshua and Caleb—were 'permitted to enter *Canaan*.⁵ After the death of Moses, Joshua became the 'leader of the Israelites. He 'sent two spies to ''*Jericho*. Rahab concealed them in her house, and afterwards assisted them to escape. She, believing that God had given *Canaan* to the Israelites, begged they would save³ her life when they should take the city. The spies promised to spare her and her house.

The priests, carrying the 'ark of God, went before the people. The river ''*Jordan* divided,²⁰ and all the Israelites passed over. 'Twelve stones were set up as a 'memorial that the waters had divided for the Israelites to pass over. The tribes encamped at ''*Gilgal* and kept the passover.¹⁹ They ate of the 'old corn of the land, and the manna²¹ ceased falling.

"The captain of the LORD's host" appeared to Joshua before *Jericho*, and gave him directions about taking the city. These directions were obeyed, and the city was taken. Rahab and her family were saved.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Jericho—called the 'city of the moon,' also 'the city of palm-trees;' six miles

W. of the Jordan; the moon was probably worshipped here by the Canaanites.

Jordan—this river rises at the foot of Mt. Lebanon, and flows to the Dead Sea.

Gilgal—a city on the east of Jericho, and near to the Jordan.

EXPLANATIONS.

permitted, &c.—their reward for faithfulness. Les. 25.

leader—military commander. Joshua was now about eighty-four years old.

sent—to explore the strength of the city, and to report the result.

ark—the sacred box, which was kept in the innermost room of the tabernacle when Israel was encamped.

Twelve—one for each tribe.

memorial—a monument to preserve the memory of the event.

old corn—after being upheld forty years without a seed time and a harvest, they now become subject to the general laws and provisions of Providence.

QUESTIONS.

Who was the leader of Israel after Moses' death?

What favour was conferred on Joshua and Caleb?

Give me some account of Jericho.

With what intent were the two spies sent? Who concealed them? [to Jericho?

What did she ask, and they promise?

Who went before the Israelites when they were advancing into Jordan? [fall?

Where does the Jordan rise, and where How were they enabled to pass over?

What memorial did they erect of this great event?

What feast did the Israelites celebrate?

How long had they been without a seed time and a harvest?

Who gave Joshua directions about taking Jericho?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Joshua and Caleb were rewarded for their faith in God, "without faith it is impossible to please him." Through faith Rahab acted with kindness to the spies, it resulted in her deliverance from the destruction which fell on Jericho. Compliance with the instructions of the angel who appeared to Joshua, was an exercise of Israel's faith, which was duly rewarded. The manna did not fail till the supply of corn was at hand; when one means of support ceases, God will provide us with another, if we depend upon him, and keep ourselves in the path of duty.

31. Achan's Sin and Punishment. The Gibeonites.

Joshua vii.—xi.; xxii. 1—9.

Achan committed a trespass against God. He took from the spoils of Jericho,³⁰ a Babylonish garment, two-hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, which he hid in the earth, within his tent. For his sin, the Israelites were discomfited at Ai. Achan was discovered and put to death, and Ai was afterwards taken.

The inhabitants of Gibeon were afraid of the Israelites; they went to Joshua, in old shoes, and old clothes, pretending they had come from a far country. Joshua and the princes of Israel made a league with them. Three days after, they found that the Gibeonites had deceived them. The Israelites would not destroy them, but they made them hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Five kings encamped against Gibeon, because its inhabitants had made peace with Israel. Joshua went to assist the Gibeonites. The sun and the moon stood still at the command of Joshua, till the kings were conquered. The five kings fled to a cave at Makedah. They were taken and hanged. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh returned to the east of Jordan (Les. 27,29.) after Canaan was conquered.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Ai—a city of ancient Canaan, near which Abraham built an altar.

Gibeon—about five miles north of Jerusalem; it was the chief city of the Hivites.

Makedah—one of the principal cities of the Canaanites, in the plain of Judah.

EXPLANATIONS.

trespass—an offence, a sin.
spoils—goods of which the owners are deprived, or despoiled. [of clothing?
Babylonish garment—a very costly article
shekels—a shekel is probably about two shillings and ninepence of our money.
a league—a mutual agreement not to war against each other. [may come."
deceived—we are not to "do evil that good madethem, &c.—reduced them to servitude.
Five kings—of the Amorites—the most powerful distinct tribe of the Canaanites. Les. 27.
encamped—pitched their tents together, and formed themselves for battle.
assist—because of their mutual league.
sun and moon—in the ordinary course of nature the length of the day would have been thirteen hours, but, for a great moral purpose this law was suspended, and the length of the day was doubled.

QUESTIONS.

What trespass did Achan commit?
 What harm occurred to the army of Israel because of it?
 Was Achan's sin found out and punished?
 What favourable event followed?
 What is said of Ai?
 Where was Gibeon?
 What did the fear of the Gibeonites cause them to do?
 Who were deceived by them?
 What employments were assigned to them?
 Who encamped against Gibeon?
 Who assisted the Gibeonites, and why?
 How was daylight miraculously lengthened?
 Where was Makedah?
 What was done to the five kings?
 What countries east of Jordan are here referred to?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

In the conduct of Achan we are warned of the sin of covetousness and its consequences, which fell on his family. The sin of one man sometimes interferes with the happiness of many, as in this case: "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house." In the course adopted by the Gibeonites we see the evil of deceit; "a lying tongue is but for a moment"; a covenant of peace was obtained by false pretences, but as a covenant, it was binding on both parties; and must be kept; punishment however followed—perpetual bondage on the Gibeonites.

PERIOD IV] FROM THE ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN.

32. Canaan Divided. Joshua's Exhortations.

Joshua xii. 7—xiii. 1; xviii.—xxiv.

Joshua conquered thirty-one kings and their countries, but he did not conquer the whole of the land. The tabernacle²³ was set up at *Shiloh*, *Canaan*⁵ was then divided among the tribes by lot.⁴⁴ The cities of refuge, for those who had slain others unawares, were appointed, and the Levites²³ had forty-eight cities and the lands round given to them. The children of Joseph's two sons¹⁵ had two portions allotted to them. The bones of Joseph were buried in *Shechem*, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the Shechemites.

Before his death, Joshua reminded the Israelites¹⁷ of God's gracious goodness towards them. He warned them against idolatry. He told them of their former idolatries, and said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve"; . . . but "as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." The people answered, "The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." All these exhortations were delivered at *Shechem*; Joshua died soon after. The people served God during the days of Joshua, and of those elders who overlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord, which he had done for Israel.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Shiloh—in the southern part of Ephraim, twenty-five miles north of Jerusalem.

Shechem—a city of Ephraim, forty miles from Jerusalem, situated in a valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim.

EXPLANATIONS.

Joshua conquered—that which is effected by an army is attributed to him who plans the battle and leads on the men.
set up—permanently; in the wilderness it had been set up and taken down, according as they journeyed.
refuge—shelter, protection; till a fair opportunity of trial should be afforded, and till the death of the high priest.
forty-eight—thus allowing four cities to each of the twelve tribes. It is our duty to provide liberally for God's ministers.
parcel—portion; a small piece.
gracious—merciful, tender, loving.
warned . . . against—showed the danger of.
idolatry—the worship of any thing or creature, or any being, except God; as forbidden in the second commandment.
exhortations—encouraging speeches, mingled with kind warnings.
had done, &c.—since entering Canaan.

QUESTIONS.

Did Joshua conquer many kings?
 Where was the tabernacle set up?
 Where was *Shiloh*?
 Among whom was Canaan then divided?
 What peculiar cities were appointed, and for what purpose?
 What portion did the Levites receive?
 What lesson do we learn from this?
 To whom were two portions allotted?
 Where were Joseph's bones buried?
 Where was *Shechem* situated?
 What pastoral duty did Joshua perform just before his death?
 What was his resolve?
 What reply did the people make?
 Where did Joshua deliver these exhortations?
 How long did the Israelites serve God?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We see how God destroyeth one nation for its sins and setteth up another; and we should learn to improve the advantages which our own Christian land offers to its sons and daughters. The Levites had no inheritance, "the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance," but they were amply provided for, as a faithful ministry always should be; and the tabernacle was erected for the observance of public worship. Joshua's determination, to serve God, and Him only, should also be our's.

33. Adoni-bezek Slain. Disobedience of the Israelites.

Judges i.—iii. 6.

The tribes of Judah and Simeon took Adoni-bezek, at *Bezek*. They cut off his thumbs and great toes. He had himself cut off the thumbs and great toes of threescore-and-ten kings who fed under his table. *Hebron* and several other cities of the *Canaanites* were afterwards taken. Caleb promised to give his daughter, Achsah, to the man who should take the strong city, *Debir*. Othniel, the nephew of Caleb, went up against the city, and took it. The tribes of Israel did not drive out the inhabitants of many of the cities in *Canaan*.⁵ At *Bochim* they were reproved by an angel for thus disobeying God; and he told them that the *Canaanites* should be a snare to them. The people wept.

About fourteen years after the death of Joshua, the Israelites¹⁷ began to worship the idols of the *Canaanites*. They forsook God, and he delivered them into the hands of the spoilers, and they were oppressed. They also intermarried with the *Canaanites*, which God had forbidden.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Bezek—a city of the *Canaanites* where, the men of Judah slew 10,000 men.

Hebron—an ancient and a celebrated city in the territory of Judah, it was situated on an eminence about twenty miles south of Jerusalem.

Canaanites—the Philistines, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the *Canaanites*, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, the Arkites, the Hamathites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Zidonians.

Debir—called also Kirjath-sepher, a strong city near Hebron, the king was slain by Joshua. It fell by lot to Caleb.

Bochim—probably near to Shiloh.

EXPLANATIONS.

took—captured as a prisoner of war.

cut off, &c.—every act of cruelty and injustice shall assuredly be punished.

fed, &c.—not only had they been conquered, but they had been reduced to the condition of the lower animals.

give, &c.—as wife. It was not uncommon in early times to stimulate young men to daring acts by the promise of a wife.

a snare to them—the means of entrapping or seducing them into idolatry.

wept—men in eastern countries weep like women in seasons of calamity, without any reproach on their manliness.

“Jesus wept.”

worship—serve with supreme respect.

spoilers—plunderers, robbers.

oppressed—borne down, crushed by tyrants and brought into a condition of servitude.

QUESTIONS.

Where was Bezek?

What was done to Adoni-bezek?

On whom had he himself inflicted the same punishment?

How had he otherwise degraded them?

What do you know of Hebron?

What is said of Debir?

What was Caleb's promise?

Who was incited to take the city?

Who was Othniel?

What had the tribes of Israel omitted to do?

What event occurred at Bochim?

What did the angel tell them?

What is meant by their being a snare to them?

What several tribes were comprised under the name *Canaanites*? [death of Joshua?

What evils did Israel commit after the

How did God cause them to be punished?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Here is a picture of the reverses of life; the great king is made a captive and his cruelties are requited. The highest on earth should learn to act with justice and kindness to all. The Israelites failed in courage or in perseverance, they suffered the *Canaanites* to dwell among them, they fell away from the solemn covenant they had made with Joshua; they made leagues with the tempters, they intermarried with them, they worshipped their idols; we may be sure that one sin will lead to other sins. Let us pray that we may fall into no temptation.

PERIOD IV.] FROM THE ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN

34. Micah's Idolatry. The Idolatry of the Danites, &c.

Judges xvii—xx. 48.

The mother of a man of *Mount Ephraim* made a molten image, and her son, Micah, consecrated²³ one of his sons to be his priest. He afterwards obtained a Levite to be his priest.

The tribe of *Dan* sent out five men to seek an inheritance. They came to *Laish*; and they took six-hundred men to conquer it. On their way they went into Micah's house, and took away his image, and his priest. They took the city *Laish* which they called *Dan*; and set up Micah's image there. The Danites, as a tribe, thus commenced idolatry.³²

A Levite of Ephraim was returning home with his concubine. The inhabitants of *Gibeah* abused⁵³ her, and she died. The Levite sent to all the tribes; they assembled at *Mizpeh*. The Benjamites would not give up their wicked brethren. War was declared against the tribe of *Benjamin* by the other tribes. Benjamin was defeated, the city was destroyed, and the land desolated. Only 600 men of Benjamin, who had fled to the rock *Rimmon*, were left.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Mount Ephraim—the hilly portion within the allotment of Ephraim.

Dan—the portion occupied by the descendants of the fifth son of Jacob.

Laish—the city to which Abraham pursued the kings to recover Lot.

Gibeah—a city of Benjamin, a few miles north of Jerusalem.

Mizpeh—a city in Benjamin at which Saul was anointed king of Israel.

Benjamin—the district allotted to the descendants of Jacob's youngest son.

EXPLANATIONS.

consecrated, &c.—it was wrong of Micah to respect the image; and also for him, who was not of the family of Aaron, to appoint or consecrate a priest.

Levite—he who was brought up to serve in the tabernacle, now serves before an idol; What an unworthy exchange!

to seek, &c.—all the land which had been conquered, was already appropriated.

inheritance—land for themselves and their children after them.

took away—seized violently, according to the practice of war.

concubine—an inferior wife; a woman who habitually violated the seventh commandment.

would not, &c.—to screen the guilty from punishment is criminal.

desolated—made bare; ravaged.

QUESTIONS.

Who made a molten image?

What impropriety did her son commit?

Why was it wrong of Micah to consecrate a priest?

Who became Micah's priest afterwards?

What were the Danites in search of?

Whither did they send men to conquer an inheritance for them?

Why had they to seek an inheritance?

What city did they take?

How did they commence idolatry?

Tell me what inhumanity the people of Gibeah were guilty of.

Where was Gibeah?

How did the Benjamites act improperly?

What was the result of the refusal of the Benjamites to give up their brethren?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

This passage in the history shows the corrupt state of private and public morals and religion in Israel. Micah's mother hoarded silver to make an idol, Micah stole it. His mother cursed the robber, not knowing he was her own son; when he restored it, she blessed him instead of reproofing him. The idol was made; it was afterwards stolen by the Danites and led to the establishment of idolatry in the northern part of the land. We thus trace the progress of error from small beginnings till it becomes a mighty evil. We see how necessary it is to "train up a child in the way he should go," in the family, and also the great importance of the public morals and religion of a country being guarded and sustained by its government.

35. Servitudes and Deliverances of Israel.

Judges iii—v.

When the Israelites¹⁷ began to worship³³ other gods, the Lord caused them to be 'oppressed³³ for eight years by Chushan-rishathaim, the king of *Mesopotamia*.¹⁰ When they repented and cried³⁶ unto God, he 'raised up 'Othniel to 'deliver them.

For forty years the Israelites 'served God, after which they again did evil; God 'allowed Eglon, king of *Moab*,²³ to oppress them; but he raised up Ehud to be their deliverer. The 'Philistines were also permitted to oppress Israel; but God raised up Shamgar, who slew six-hundred Philistines with an 'ox-goad.

God then permitted Jabin, king of *Canaan*,⁵ who reigned in 'Hazor, to oppress the Israelites twenty years. They cried unto the Lord, and he raised up Deborah, a 'prophetess, and Barak, a valiant man of 'Naphtali, to deliver them. Sisera, who was Jabin's captain, was pursued by Barak, and he took refuge in the tent of Jael. He lay down to sleep there; and while he slept, Jael took a 'nail of the tent, and a hammer, and smote the nail into his 'temples and he died. Deborah and Barak then sang a song of praise to God for the deliverance of Israel.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Philistines—a people who chiefly inhabited the W., and S.W. coast of Palestine.

Hazor—a place in the north of Canaan of which Jabin was the king.

Naphtali—this portion was inhabited by the descendants of the sixth son of Jacob.

EXPLANATIONS.

oppressed—trouble and disgrace always follow sin. Surely "the way of transgressors is hard."

raised up, &c.—excited in him a spirit of brave resistance to tyranny.

Othniel—the first of the judges of Israel.

deliver—see *Joshua conquered*. Les. 32.

served God—observed all the ordinances of the law, according to the manner which God had commanded.

allowed, &c.—the heathen thus became the rod of God's anger to punish his people, Israel.

ox-goad—a long pole, shod or covered at the extreme point with iron.

a prophetess—a woman of extraordinary divine knowledge.

nail, &c.—tent nails are very large.

temples—the sides of the forehead; this was not an act of treachery, because she did it under a divine impulse.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Chushan-rishathaim?

How did he perform the will of God towards Israel?

By whom was Israel delivered?

Why was deliverance granted?

Did they again transgress?

Who was Eglon, and what did he do?

Who delivered Israel from Eglon?

What were the Philistines also permitted to do?

What parts of Palestine did the Philistines possess?

By whom was their yoke now broken?

Who was Jabin, and where did he reign?

In what part of Canaan was Hazor?

How long did Jabin oppress Israel?

Who destroyed his power?

Who were Deborah and Barak?

Who was Sisera, and how did he die?

Why was not this an act of treachery?

Who sang praises to God?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We see from this lesson that the tempters of Israel in time became their oppressors; that sin brings punishment; that chastisement causes suffering, and repentance; that God hears the cry of repentant sinners, and delivers them; that an illiterate husbandman, or a woman may be chosen for public duties, for God sometimes chooses "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." We learn also that national deliverances demand national songs of praise.

PERIOD IV.] FROM THE ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN

36. The Midianites' Oppression. History of Ruth.

Judges vi. 1—10. Ruth.

The Israelites¹⁷ again did evil, and God suffered the *Midianites*¹⁴ to oppress them for seven years. They cried to God for deliverance, and he sent a prophet to reprove them, by showing them all the good the Lord had done for Israel, but that they had not obeyed his voice.

Elimelech and his wife, Naomi, were Israelites, who, in a time of famine, went to reside in *Moab*.²³ They had two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Elimelech died. Naomi's sons married wives of the Moabites and died also. Some time after, Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, departed to go into *Judah*. Naomi wished her daughters-in-law to return to *Moab*. Orpah returned, but Ruth would not leave her mother-in-law. Naomi and Ruth came to *Bethlehem* in the beginning of barley-harvest, and Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz, a rich man, and a relative of the family. He afterwards married Ruth, and she became the mother of Obed, who was the father of Jesse, and the grandfather of David, from whom Christ was descended.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Judah—the province of Canaan which was allotted to the descendants of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob. It was the most populous of all the tribes.

Bethlehem—a small town of Judah at which Rachel, the wife of Jacob, died; it was at that time called Ephrath. Bethlehem was announced as the birth-place of the Saviour by the prophet Micah, 700 years before the event.

EXPLANATIONS.

cried—as children who rebel, find at last, that none love them so well as their parents; so the Israelites found that they had no protector, but the Lord.
prophet—a messenger from God who declared the divine will with authority.
his voice—the commands of God.
famine—one of the evils which follow war—the crops are destroyed or plundered, and the land is left untilled, for the husbandmen have become soldiers.
barley-harvest—about the time of the celebration of the Passover.
gleaned—gathered up the ears which occasionally fell from the reapers.
mother, &c.—thus the Jews and the Gentiles became united.
descended—see genealogy of Jesus Christ. Matt. i. 1—17. Luke iii. 23—38.

QUESTIONS.

Who next oppressed Israel?
 Whose help did they ask in their distress?
 What reproof did they receive?
 Who was Elimelech?
 Why did he and his family go to Moab?
 Why does a famine sometimes follow war?
 What were the names of Naomi's sons, and whom did they marry?
 Who died of this family?
 Who, besides Naomi, departed from Moab to go into Judah?
 Which of them remained in Moab and which accompanied Naomi?
 At what season did Naomi and Ruth come to Bethlehem?
 What do you know of Bethlehem?
 What did Ruth do in the fields of Boaz?
 What great blessing did this lead to?
 Who was Ruth's grandson?—great-grand-
 Who was descended from David? [son?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We should learn to bear patiently the reproofs of those who having witnessed our errors desire that we should amend. "Open rebuke is better than secret love." It is by reproofs and rebukes of various kinds that God corrects man for his iniquity. When a nation is under punishment on account of sin, those who are upright may suffer much inconvenience, but if, like Naomi, they honour God before men, their own afflictions will be lightened, or be made a blessing to themselves, and they will be blessed in their intercourse with others.

TO THE ANOINTING OF SAUL. [1451-1095 B.C.]

37. Gideon Delivers Israel.

Judges vi. 11—viii. 28.

*God appointed Gideon to deliver³⁵ Israel from the *Midianites*.¹⁴ The Lord gave him two signs to show that he would save³ Israel by his hand. Thirty-two-thousand men joined Gideon. Out of these only three-hundred men were chosen to deliver Israel. Every man had a trumpet, and also a pitcher with a lamp in it. The camp of the Midianites was attacked by night. The three-hundred men blew their trumpets and brake their pitchers to show their lamps and every man shouted, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon." The Midianites fled.

The *Ephraimites* chided Gideon for going against the Midianites without them. Gideon spoke of their "gleaning"—as better than his "vintage,"—for the Ephraimites had slain Oreb and Zeeb, princes of *Midian*.¹⁷ Gideon and his men then pursued the kings of *Midian*, Zebah and Zalmunna. He slew these two kings because they had slain his brethren. The people of Israel wished Gideon to be their ruler, but he refused, saying, "The LORD shall rule over you."

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Ephraimites—this powerful and warlike tribe were descendants of the younger of Joseph's sons; they are sometimes called 'the children of Joseph.'

EXPLANATIONS.

God appointed—had Israel chosen their own leader confusion and discomfiture would have certainly followed.
gave him—at his request, so that he might go forth confidently, as the Lord's chosen deliverer for his people.
signs—proofs that his call was from God.
a pitcher—a small earthen vessel.
fled—being surprised and confounded.
chided—they were jealous of the honour which Gideon had acquired, but his meek answer assuaged their anger.
gleaning—picking up stray ears; referring figuratively to the two princes they had slain.
vintage—the full harvest of the vine; a simile expressive of his victory over the Midianites.
He slew, &c.—he was, by law, the avenger of the blood of his brethren.

QUESTIONS.

What was Gideon appointed to do?
 How was he assured of this?
 What was the number of the army first assembled?
 How many were chosen to go to battle?
 What did they carry?
 How did they cause the routing of the Midianites?
 Who were displeased with Gideon?
 Why?
 How did Gideon appease their anger?
 What Midianitish princes had been killed by the Ephraimites?
 Who were the Ephraimites?
 Whom did Gideon and his men slay?
 Why did he slay them?
 What request did the Israelites make to Gideon?
 How did he show that they had a ruler?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Until God stirred up Gideon not a man raised his hand to call upon the people to resist the Midianites. Let us honour leaders of useful enterprises. "Honour to whom honour" is due. God rejected the thousands who rushed to Gideon's standard, and chose only a few for this arduous work; the Lord can "save by many or by few." We see the advantage of a good temper; Gideon answers the peevish Ephraimites with meekness, giving them the honour of *improving* the victory he had gained. In the case of the kings of Midian, we see that he "shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy." Gideon modestly declined the honour which would have encroached on God's sovereignty over Israel.

PERIOD IV.] FROM THE ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN

38. Abimelech made king. Of Jephthah.

Judges viii. 29—xi. 40.

Abimelech was a son of Gideon, but not a lawful son. He slew all Gideon's lawful sons except one. Jotham only, who had hidden himself, escaped. The men of Shechem³² made Abimelech their king. Jotham told the men of Shechem of all that his father had done for them, and of their ingratitude. Soon after, Gaal conspired with the Shechemites against Abimelech, but they were defeated, and Abimelech was slain by a stone from a fortress, which a woman cast upon his head.

Tola judged Israel twenty-three years. Jair was judge over Israel after Tola. The Israelites forsook the Lord and served idols. God suffered them to be oppressed³³ by the Philistines³⁵ and Ammonites for eighteen years. When they cried³⁶ unto the Lord, he reminded them of their many deliverances, and yet they had forsaken him. While they were confessing their sins the Ammonites came against them. God then raised up Jephthah to deliver them. Jephthah made a rash vow to God before he went to battle; to fulfil which he had to sacrifice his daughter, after he had conquered the Ammonites.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Ammonites—descendants of Ammon, one of the sons of Lot; they dwelt on the east of the Jordan, their chief city was Rabbah.

EXPLANATIONS.

lawful—right, legitimate.
slew all—a cruel practice, common formerly in eastern countries.
Shechem—the city of Abimelech's mother and her relations.
king—an honour which Gideon his father had declined.
ingratitude—they had shown themselves forgetful and undeserving of kindnesses.
conspired—plotted, planned to injure.
fortress—a strong tower for protection.
judge—he decided between man and man in cases of contention, and he led their armies against the enemy.
deliverances—from the Egyptians, from the Amorites, from the Ammonites, from the Philistines, &c.
confessing—publicly acknowledging.
rash—this hasty vow, brought great trouble on him.
sacrifice—to devote to God.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Abimelech?
 Whom did he slay?
 Who made Abimelech their king?
 Of what did Jotham tell the men of Shechem?
 Who conspired against Abimelech?
 What was Abimelech's end?
 Who was Tola? Who was Jair?
 What were the duties of a judge?
 What was the condition of Israel at this time?
 Who were the Ammonites?
 To whom did the Israelites cry in their distress?
 How did He answer them?
 What deliverances are here alluded to?
 What calamity befel them while they were confessing their sins?
 Who was raised up to deliver them?
 What rash vow did Jephthah make before the battle?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Abimelech's lawless ambition teaches us that we are not to violate the restraints of religion, the obligations of relationship, and the laws of social life, to gratify such desires. His sad end is a lesson that though wickedness may prosper for a while, our sins shall find us out. We see that the humble confession of sin is not disregarded. God raised Israel another deliverer. The rashness of Jephthah's vow should teach us to observe the Preacher's advice, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God."

TO THE ANOINTING OF SAUL. [1451-1095 B.C.]

39. Of Samson, Eli, and Samuel.

Judges xii. 7; xiii. 1-25; 1 Samuel i.-iii.

After the death of Jephthah, the Israelites¹⁷ again did evil in the sight of the Lord, and he delivered them into the hands of the *Philistines*.³⁵ The coming of Samson was made known by an angel to his mother. The angel told her that her son, who was to be a Nazarite⁴¹ from his birth, should begin to deliver³⁵ Israel from the Philistines.

Hannah, one of the two wives of Elkanah, prayed for a son. The Lord heard her prayer and gave her a son whom she called Samuel. After the child was weaned she brought him to the house of the Lord in *Shiloh*.³² She sang a song of thanksgiving to the Lord, and praised his goodness, wisdom, and power.

Eli had two wicked sons, Hophni and Phinehas. He reproved them, but they would not hearken. They did evil, and he did not restrain them. A prophet said that Eli's two sons should die in one day—that God would raise up a faithful priest in Eli's place—and that Eli's seed should come to poverty and want.

The child Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. The Lord revealed to Samuel by night his judgment on Eli's house, which Samuel made known to Eli the next morning. All Israel knew that Samuel was appointed to be a prophet of the Lord.

EXPLANATIONS.

again, &c.—How unstable were the Israelites! without a leader they could not resist idolatrous snares.
coming—approaching birth.
Elkanah—a Levite of the family of Kohath.
prayed—she was childless; but she knew that God could give her the desire of her heart.
thanksgiving—our mercies should always form the subjects of grateful praise and joy.
Eli—he was a descendant of Ithamar.
wicked sons—we should be faithful to God even by the punishment of offending members of our own family.
reproved, &c.—when reproofs fail strong correction should be applied.
poverty, &c.—this prediction was fulfilled.
revealed—made known, told.

QUESTIONS.

By whom was Israel next oppressed?
 Whose birth was announced?
 What great work did the angel say he
 Who was Hannah? [should begin to do?
 To what tribe did Elkanah belong?
 What special gift did Hannah pray for?
 How do we know that the Lord heard her
 prayer?
 How did she show her gratitude when
 she took him to the house of the Lord?
 Who were Eli's sons?
 What was their character?
 How did Eli neglect his duty?
 What did a prophet declare?
 In what pious work was Samuel engaged?
 With what express revelation did God
 favour him?
 What opinion did all Israel entertain of
 Samuel?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The continual sins of the Israelites were their reproach. Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered? Let us learn from Hannah's example to acknowledge with thankfulness and praise the mercies which God has conferred upon us. We are not to praise the gift, but the Giver. The obstinacy of Eli's sons, who refused to receive correction, is a warning to young people who set at nought the counsel of God. Samuel's early devotion to God's service teaches us that none can begin too early to seek the Lord; he says, "Those that seek me early shall find me."

40. The Acts of Samson.

Judges xiv.—xv. 20.

Samson desired to marry a woman of *Timnath*, of the daughters of¹⁰ the *Philistines*.³⁵ His parents did not wish it. But it was of the Lord; for the Philistines at that time had dominion over Israel. As he was going to *Timnath*, he slew a lion. On his return, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion, and he took some of the honey, and did eat of it. He afterwards proposed a riddle to the Philistines, at a feast which he had made; but they could not declare it. They asked his wife to entice her husband to tell her its meaning, which when she knew she told them; they then declared its meaning to Samson.

The father of Samson's wife, gave her to his companion. Samson then caught three-hundred foxes, and put firebrands to their tails, and let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, which was burnt up. The Philistines were angry, and burnt Samson's wife and her father with fire. He afterwards smote a great many Philistines, near the rock *Etam*; and at *Lehi*, he slew 1,000 Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass. After this slaughter he nearly died of thirst, but God clave the jaw-bone and water came out, of which he drank, and was refreshed.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Timnath—a town in Dan, which was occupied by the Philistines.

Etam—a city in Judah between Bethlehem and Tekoa; in its vicinity was the rock to which Samson retired.

EXPLANATIONS.

of the Lord—by his permission; as it would be overruled by Him for good.
dominion—lordship, rule.
lion—a ferocious beast of prey, commonly called 'the king of beasts.'
swarm—crowd, multitude.
carcase—dead body, skeleton; the birds and the beasts prey on the flesh, and the sun soon dries the bones.
a riddle—a puzzle difficult to explain.
she told them—thus she was unfaithful to her husband's interests.
companion—his friend or assistant at his marriage.
wife, &c.—an act of savage cruelty which soon had its reward.
clave, &c.—provided him with water by a miracle and thus sustained his fainting spirit.

QUESTIONS.

Tell me what Samson desired.
 Who disapproved of his choice?
 Had the Lord any design in it?
 How was Samson's strength displayed on his way to Timnath?
 What people then occupied Timnath?
 What discovery did he make on his return?
 On what occasion did he propose a riddle to the Philistines?
 How did they come to a knowledge of its meaning?
 What did Samson do which greatly offended the Philistines?
 Why did he do this?
 What cruelty did the Philistines commit?
 How was Samson avenged?
 What miracle was effected for Samson's preservation?
 What do you know respecting Etam?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Great strength of body is not an evidence of great strength of mind, as the follies and sins of Samson abundantly proved. His first triumphs over the Philistines were brought about soon after his marriage. We are not to boast of our feats of strength. Samson's wife acted deceitfully, and brought her husband into trouble. No marriage can be comfortable if the husband and wife do not feel, and repose confidence in each other. Samson's personal quarrels resulted in severe inflictions on the enemies of Israel.

TO THE ANOINTING OF SAUL. [1451-1095 B.C.]

41. Further Acts and Death of Samson.

Judges xvi.

Samson came to *Gaza*, and the Gazites compassed him in the city, and laid wait for him all the night, saying, "In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him." At midnight Samson arose, took the gate of the city and the two posts, and carried them away to the top of a hill. Samson loved a woman named Delilah. The *Philistines*³⁵ bribed her to entice Samson to tell her the secret of his strength. He revealed³⁹ to her that he was a *Nazarite*, and if he were shaven he should be weak like other men. While he slept she called a man and caused him to shave Samson's head. The Lord departed from him, and his strength left him. The Philistines then put out his eyes, and made him grind in prison.

Samson's hair began to grow in prison, and his strength returned to him. The Philistines brought Samson into the temple of Dagon,⁴² and they set him between the pillars. He prayed to God to strengthen him. He took hold of the two middle pillars of the temple, and bowed himself with all his might; the house fell upon all who were therein. About 3,000 people who were on the roof were killed. Samson and those within were slain.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Gaza—one of the chief cities of the Philistines which was about sixty miles south west of Jerusalem. It was taken from them by the armed men of Judah shortly after the death of Joshua; but was soon afterwards regained.

EXPLANATIONS.

laid wait—lay in concealed places watching for him.
day—they did not expect his departure before morning.
midnight—he thus evaded the vigilance of the watch.
bribed, &c.—gave her money to do what was treacherous and wicked.
Nazarite—the Nazarites vowed to let their hair grow, and to abstain from all intoxicating drink.
grind—by turning round one heavy circular stone upon another.
pillars—the main supports of the roof.
on the roof—the roof was flat.
Samson—he is included in the list of Old Testament characters who obtained a good report by their faith. Heb. xi. 32.

QUESTIONS.

What city did Samson come to?
 Give me some particulars respecting Gaza.
 What stratagem did the Gazites adopt?
 How did he baffle their designs?
 Who was Delilah?
 Who bribed her to betray Samson?
 What secret did he reveal to her?
 What particulars do you know of the Nazarites?
 What deceit did Delilah practise upon Samson?
 What result ensued?
 How did the Philistines afflict him?
 What sign of returning strength appeared while he was in prison?
 Whither was he brought?
 What judgment did God then permit Samson to inflict on the Philistines?
 How many were killed on this occasion?
 What became of Samson?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are not, like Samson, to thrust ourselves into danger or into the midst of enemies, Samson was raised up—to chastise the enemies of God and his people. The Gazites were disappointed in their intentions against Samson, thus illustrating the words of Eliphaz, God "disappointeth the devices of the crafty." Samson formed another improper marriage, and again felt its bitterness. The Philistines insulted the God of Israel by bringing Israel's champion within the temple of their idol to make sport for them; therefore God inflicted a terrible judgment on them.

PERIOD IV.] FROM THE ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN

42. The Ark Taken. Hophni and Phinehas Slain.

1 Samuel iv.—vii. 2.

The Israelites and the *Philistines*³⁵ went to battle near *“Ebenezer*. The ark³⁰ of God was brought into the camp. The Philistines were at first alarmed, but they continued to fight. The Israelites were smitten and they fled; for there fell of Israel 30,000 footmen; the ark was taken; and Hophni and Phinehas were slain. Eli was sitting by the way side; when he was told that Israel had fled, that his sons were slain, and that the ark was taken by the Philistines; he fell backward, and died.

The Philistines took the ark to *Ashdod*, and carried it into the house of *Dagon*. On the morrow *Dagon* was fallen on his face before the ark. The men of *Ashdod* sent the ark to *“Ekron*; a deadly destruction came on this city. The Ekronites made a new cart, and put two milch kine in it, and laid the ark upon the cart, and jewels¹⁹ and other offerings with it. They left the kine to take their way, and they went straight to *“Bethshemesh*. The Bethshemites were reaping their wheat harvest. The people looked into the ark, and many of them were slain. The inhabitants of *“Kirjath-jearim* came and fetched the ark from *Bethshemesh*, and brought it to the house of *Abinadab*, and they sanctified his son *Eleazar*, to keep it.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Ebenezer—‘stone of help’; the place was so named some years after this battle.

Ashdod—a city of Philistia in the tribe of Dan, near Gaza. *Les.* 41.

Ekron—a city and government of the Philistines.

Bethshemesh—a city of Judah to which the ark of God was taken by the kine.

Kirjath-jearim—called also Kirjath-baal, a city of the Gibeonites.

EXPLANATIONS.

brought—for the purpose of inspiring the people of Israel with courage.
camp—the place where the tents of the army were pitched.
taken—Israel’s chief glory, the emblem of God’s covenant with them, was now gone.
Dagon—or ‘fish-god’; the Philistines dwelt near the sea.
fallen—the dumb idol was thus made do homage before the sacred symbol of God’s presence.
deadly destruction—a disease raged in it.
new cart—hence not profaned by employment in common uses.
milch kine—milk-giving cows.
looked, &c.—this was an unlawful gratification of curiosity; they did not belong to the priesthood, and they had no right to meddle with the ark.

QUESTIONS.

Where was there a battle?
 Between whom?
 Why was the ark brought into the camp?
 What loss of men did Israel suffer?
 Who took the ark?
 What lamentable event happened to Eli when he heard the sad news?
 To what place was the ark carried?
 Where was Ashdod?
 What humiliation befel Dagon?
 Whither was the ark sent next?
 What is stated respecting Ekron?
 What evil came upon this city?
 What did the Ekronites do?
 What course did the kine take?
 Where was Bethshemesh?
 How were the Bethshemites engaged?
 What improper act did they commit?
 Whither was the ark next removed?
 What do you know of Kirjath-jearim?
 Who was Eleazar?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Israel made an idol of the ark, as many do of external observances in religion. Such are described as “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” We are to regard sacred things as the means, instruments, and channels of blessing. The awful end of Eli’s sons, and the death of the venerable old man himself is a warning to parents—“Chasten thy son while there is hope.” Children too should learn that it is their duty to submit to correction and reproof. In the judgment on the Bethshemites we have a warning to restrain sinful curiosity.

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

1 Samuel vii. 3—viii.

Samuel told the people to put away their 'strange gods, and serve the Lord only; they obeyed him. Samuel prayed for them, and they confessed their sins. As they were sacrificing to God, the *Philistines*³⁵ attacked them, but the Lord 'thundered with a great thunder; and the Philistines were smitten. Samuel 'set up a stone, in remembrance, and called it *Ebenezer*.⁴² The Philistines were subdued, and Samuel went 'from place to place, and 'judged Israel. When he became old, he made his sons judges in 'Beersheba. Their names were Joel and Abiah. They walked not in the ways of their father, but took 'bribes, and did not judge justly.

The 'elders of Israel assembled at 'Ramah, and asked for a 'king. God told Samuel to hearken to them, as they had rejected HIM for their king. Samuel explained to them how a king would 'oppress them; but the people persisted in their wish to have a king, to 'go before them and to fight their battles. The Lord then directed Samuel to make them a king, and Samuel told the men of Israel to go every man to his own city.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Beersheba—a place in the south of Canaan in which both Abraham and Isaac resided; it was the place where Abraham and Abimelech, king of Gerar, made a covenant of peace, its name signifies the 'well of the oath.'

Ramah—the town at which Samuel resided: it is supposed to have been the same as Ramathaim-zophim, at which place Elkanah, his father, resided.

EXPLANATIONS.

strange—whatever was not commanded in the law was strange worship.

thundered—this was an unseasonable phenomenon in wheat harvest.

set up, &c.—to mark the spot where God had saved them, so as to remember it.

from place to place—in order to rectify abuses and to administer justice.

judged—heard causes, explained the law, punished idolatries, &c.

bribes—gifts, for the perversion of justice.

elders—chief men, heads of the tribes.

king—they preferred a human to a divine government; they wished to see their king, his state and pomp; they cared more for the appearance of earthly grandeur than for heavenly guidance.

oppress—by taxation, for the support of himself and his army.

go before them—God had promised to lead their armies so long as they remained true and faithful to Him.

QUESTIONS.

Why were idols called strange gods?

Who were commanded to put them away?

How was their obedience rewarded?

How was the memory of this deliverance preserved?

How did Samuel fulfil the office of judge?

What did he do when he became old?

Were his sons just judges?

What do you mean by bribes?

Who came to Ramah?

For what purpose?

What did God tell Samuel to do?

What was their object in desiring to have a king?

Did Samuel try to dissuade them from having a king?

Was he successful?

What did the Lord then direct Samuel to do?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn from this lesson that the giving up of improper indulgences, forbidden practices, unholy tempers and desires, are the same with us as the putting away of idols was to the Israelites. Good men have not always the satisfaction of seeing their sons walk in their footsteps; so was it with Samuel; he who early served the Lord, had sons who feared not to sin; he who took no bribes had sons who dishonoured him by taking bribes, not remembering that "a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous."

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.

FROM ANOINTING OF SAUL TO DEATH OF SOLOMON.

44. Saul is anointed King.

1 Samuel ix.—xi.

Kish, a man of Benjamin, had a son named Saul. The asses of Kish were lost, and Saul was sent, with one of his father's servants, to seek them. Samuel met Saul, and told him that the asses were found, and that God had chosen him to be the ruler over Israel. Saul abode with Samuel that day. The next day before Saul departed, Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it on Saul's head. Samuel assembled the people together at Mizpeh³⁴; and it was shown them by lot, whom God had appointed to be king. Saul was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upwards, and when the lot fell on him, and the people saw him, they shouted, "God save the king." Samuel wrote the laws of the kingdom in a book, and sent the people away.

The Ammonites³⁸ made war against the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead. Saul raised a large army of Israelites,⁴⁷ and went against the Ammonites and conquered them. The people went with Samuel to Gilgal,³⁰ and made Saul king⁴³ before the Lord.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Jabesh-gilead—a city of Eastern Manasseh at the foot of the mountains of Gilead.

EXPLANATIONS.

asses—these animals are of much importance in the East; they are better kept, and are in many respects superior to our's.
met Saul—Saul had doubtless been led to Samuel by a directing Providence.
told him—this information would free Saul's mind from care, and leave it unoccupied for other and more important thoughts.
chosen him—this had been divinely intimated and confirmed to Samuel.
by lot—though apparently by chance; the decision by lot on all important occasions, was supposed to be overruled by Providence. Prov. xvi. 33.
appointed—chosen before of God, as evinced by the lot.
taller—to be of large size would be a recommendation to the people who looked for a martial leader in the person of their king.
book—a roll of parchment.
made Saul, &c.—he was now publicly accepted by the people.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Kish?
 Who was Saul?
 What were lost?
 Who was sent with a servant in quest of them?
 Who met him, and what did he tell him?
 What solemn act did Samuel perform the next day?
 Where did Samuel assemble the people?
 What appointment did God make known to them by lot?
 Describe Saul's appearance.
 What did the people shout?
 What did Samuel write?
 Against whom did the Ammonites make war?
 Where was Jabesh-gilead situate?
 What did Saul do?
 What solemn duty did the people perform after this victory?
 Where did this take place?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The circumstances which caused Saul to quit his father's house, and which brought him to Samuel's residence show how God does all things to promote his own purposes. Saul was a tall and majestic man, but we read nothing of his moral qualifications for his high office. The people were pleased with him, and God gave him still greater favour in their eyes by honouring him with a victory over their enemies the Ammonites. We learn that kings should be guided in their government by what is written in "the book."

45. Saul is Reproved. David is Anointed.

1 Samuel xiii. ; xv.—xvi. 13.

Saul gathered the people together at *Gilgal*,³⁰ and offered a burnt-offering to God.¹ It was not lawful for Saul to do this. When Samuel came he reproved³⁹ him, and said God had appointed another to be king. The *Philistines*³⁵ at this time overran the country.

Samuel commanded Saul to go and destroy the *Amalekites*²¹ utterly. Saul allowed the Kenites to depart, because they had shown kindness to the *Israelites*.¹⁷ He smote the Amalekites, but he spared Agag, the king, and the best of the sheep and oxen. When Samuel came to Saul he reproved him for his disobedience, and slew Agag, after reproaching him with his many cruelties.

Samuel mourned for Saul's disobedience. God told him he had chosen one of the sons of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, to be king. David, the youngest son, was then keeping his father's sheep. When Samuel saw him, the Lord told him to arise and anoint him. Samuel anointed him there, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David.

EXPLANATIONS.

offered, &c.—he thus early disobeyed God under pretence of seeking his favour, in place of patiently awaiting Samuel's coming at the end of seven days.

burnt-offering—the carcase of the animal offered was wholly consumed upon the altar.

another—Saul, as a worthless instrument, was set aside; and another, better fitted for the important kingly office, was in a course of training for it.

overran—traversed from one end to another, spreading devastation and sorrow in their course.

utterly—completely, sparing none. They were the first people who attacked the Israelites on their route to Canaan. L.21.

depart—they lived among the Amalekites.

reproved—blamed; accused him of departing from the instructions he had received.

chosen—selected; not from external appearance, "for the LORD seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

Jesse—the grandson of Ruth. Les. 36.

Spirit, &c.—such a spirit as would befit a king, and do honour to the Lord.

QUESTIONS.

Where did Saul gather the people together?

What act of presumption did Saul perpetrate?

Was it right for him to do so?

Under what pretence did Saul offer a burnt offering?

Who reproved him?

What ought he to have done?

Why was Saul set aside from being king?

What did Samuel tell him?

What did the Philistines do at this time?

What was the consequence of their inroads?

What did Samuel send Saul to do?

What have you previously read of the Amalekites?

Why were the Kenites allowed to depart?

How did Saul act towards the Amalekites?

Why did Samuel reprove Saul?

For what did Samuel reproach Agag?

What became of Agag?

Did Saul's disobedience grieve Samuel?

What did God tell Samuel?

How was David then engaged?

What was Samuel directed to do when he saw David?

Explain what is here meant by the spirit of the Lord.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We see in this lesson the danger of *first* acts of disobedience, we should not suffer any apparent necessity to drive us to do that which is not allowable for us to do. If we receive any important commission from those in proper authority we are not to deviate from it in any degree, else we shall be guilty, as was Saul. The good often mourn for the rebellious, and the thoughtless; Samuel, however, received comfort, for he was sent to appoint a king over Israel whom God had chosen.

46. Goliath defies Israel. David slays Goliath.

1 Samuel xvii.

The *Philistines*³⁵ were assembled to war against Israel. Their champion Goliath, a giant of *Gath*, was very strong, and was clad in a coat of mail, and he defied the armies of Israel. David heard Goliath defy them; and also that Saul had promised to give his daughter in marriage, and to enrich and honour the man who should slay this Philistine.

David came to Saul and offered to go against Goliath. He told Saul how he had slain a lion,⁴⁰ and a bear, which took a lamb out of his flock. He said the Lord, who had delivered him from the lion and the bear would also deliver him from this Philistine. Saul consented that he should go, and armed him with armour; but David put off the armour, and took five smooth stones out of the brook, and his sling in his hand. Goliath disdained David, and cursed²⁴ him. When he arose, David ran to meet him, and slang a stone, which smote the Philistine, and sank into his forehead, so that he fell upon his face to the earth. David took the sword of Goliath, and cut off his head.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Gath—‘a press,’ one of the five principal cities of the Philistines, and the birth-place of their champion, Goliath; it was about thirty-two miles west of Jerusalem. Gath was the most southern, as Ekron was the most northern city of Philistia.

EXPLANATIONS.

champion—one who proposes to decide a quarrel between two armies or nations by single combat.
coat of mail—a defensive covering formerly worn by warriors.
defied, &c.—challenged to fight any man among them.
heard, &c.—the language of Goliath filled David with holy indignation; while that of Saul caused him to feel a praiseworthy ambition.
told—not from vain boastfulness, but to allay Saul’s doubts as to his powers.
armour—plates of metal to protect him from injury.
disdained—despised, sneered at.
forehead—the accuracy of David’s aim indicates skill arising from early training and constant practice; at the same time David remembered who had delivered him from the lion and the bear.

QUESTIONS.

What people were assembled against Israel?
 Who stood forth as their champion?
 Explain what you understand by a champion.
 Of what city was Goliath?
 What do you know of Gath?
 Who heard Goliath’s challenge?
 What else did David hear?
 Did David offer to do any thing?
 What did he tell Saul which induced him to let him go?
 Had David any fear that Goliath would kill him?
 What former providences did he relate which showed he had no such fear?
 What did Saul put on David?
 Did David go with it or without it?
 With what weapons was David furnished?
 What did Goliath do when he saw David?
 Had David the appearance of a soldier?
 Tell me how the giant was conquered.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

When men defy the servants of God we are reminded of the impious boasting of the giant Goliath. In present difficulties we should gratefully think of former deliverances, and thus may we humbly take courage for the future. We learn from David’s victory and Goliath’s defeat, that the simplest weapons may foil the adversaries of the Almighty. Goliath’s fall also shows us the frail tenure of life, even when fortified by strength and by the devices of art; one small opening in the giant’s armour admitted David’s missile.

PERIOD V.] FROM THE ANOINTING OF SAUL

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

1 Samuel xviii.; x.x.

Jonathan, the son of Saul, loved David exceedingly, and made a covenant of friendship with him. The women praised David in their songs, saying, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." And Saul was very angry. An evil spirit came upon Saul, and he attempted to slay David with a javelin that was in his hand, but David avoided the blow. Saul became afraid of David because the Lord was with him.

Saul had promised to give David his eldest daughter, Merab, for his wife, but he gave her to another. Michal, his younger daughter, loved David, and Saul promised her in marriage to David, when he should have slain a hundred Philistines.³⁵ David went with his men, and slew two-hundred; and Saul gave him his daughter Michal. Jonathan told his father of David's goodness, but after David had again been successful against the Philistines, the evil spirit came on Saul, and he sought to smite David. David fled, and escaped to his house, and Michal let him down through a window; she told Saul's messengers that David was sick. David fled to Ramah,⁴³ and told Samuel all that Saul had done.

EXPLANATIONS.

women—the worst effects of defeat in war, fall generally upon helpless women and innocent children. By them therefore a successful hero or captain is greatly extolled; he being the means of preserving their homes and persons from rude assaults.

An evil spirit—a species of madness.

javelin—a spear, a short pike.

avoided—shunned, providentially escaped.

afraid, &c.—his conscience told him that David's heart was purer and nobler than his own.

he gave her, &c.—a dishonourable violation of a solemn promise. See Les. 46.

a hundred—thinking that his life would fall a sacrifice in this task of danger, and that thus he should be relieved of one whom he regarded as an enemy.

messengers—they were sent at night to watch David, and to slay him in the morning.

QUESTIONS.

Who made a covenant of friendship with David?

What did this covenant prove?

What circumstance influenced Saul against David?

To what length did Saul carry his envy?

What is a javelin?

Why did Saul fear David?

Was David married to Merab?

Which of Saul's daughters loved David?

Did Saul promise her to him in marriage?

What dangerous service had he to perform before Saul gave her to him?

What evil did Saul expect would happen to David?

Was Jonathan afraid to confess his love to David?

Tell me how Michal assisted David to escape.

Whither did David flee?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are here taught that moral worth secures respect and friendship. We should feel no discontent or jealousy at the success and prosperity of others. If injuries be attempted, let us be as unresenting as David, and as faithful as Michal was in this instance. We should cultivate that "charity which envieth not," for the spirit of malice and envy here caused Saul to violate a solemn engagement, and made him a murderer in intention, and almost in reality. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."

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

1 Samuel xxi.—xxii. 2; 1 Chron. xi. 16—19; xii. 8,16.

David afterwards fled to Ahimelech the priest, at *Nob*. He asked for five loaves of bread. The priest had none but hallowed bread, and he gave him some. Doeg, an Edomite, who was the chief of Saul's herdsmen, was at *Nob* that day. David took thence the sword of Goliath. He then went to Achish the king of *Gath*,⁴⁶ The servants of Achish knew him, and David was afraid, and feigned himself mad that he might be sent away. He then escaped to the cave of *Adullam*, and many who were in distress, and in debt, and discontented, came to him; and he became a captain over four-hundred men. Some valiant Gadites also joined him, and some of the children of Benjamin and Judah. At this time the garrison of the *Philistines*³⁵ was in *Bethlehem*,³⁶ and David wished for water to drink from the well at *Bethlehem*. Three of his mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines to fetch it. When they brought it, David would not drink it, but poured it out before the Lord, because these men had endangered their lives to get it.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Nob—a Levitical city of Benjamin, eighty-five priests of this city, and their families were slain by Doeg, the Edomite. Les. 49.

Adullam—a city of Judah whose king was killed by Joshua. In a cave near this city David hid himself from Saul.

EXPLANATIONS.

loaves—they were flat compared with ours, but much larger in circumference.
sword—it had been placed in the tabernacle, both as a trophy, and as a token of gratitude.
captain—he knew that God had chosen him to succeed Saul. Those who came to him placed themselves under his command of their own free will.
garrison—soldiers who held possession of the place.
water—in the wilderness, where he now lodged, water was scarce; and he doubtless thought with pleasure of the well where he had often quenched his thirst in his youthful days.
brake through—this was a service of great danger which these brave and faithful men willingly incurred for their captain.
before the Lord—as a token of gratitude and a memorial of deliverance.

QUESTIONS.

Who came to Ahimelech?
 What office did Ahimelech hold?
 Where did he reside?
 What do you know of Nob?
 For what did David ask?
 What sort of bread did Ahimelech give David?
 Where was Doeg that day?
 Who was Doeg?
 What did David take thence?
 To whom did David go next?
 When David saw that he was known what did he do?
 To what place did he escape?
 What do you know of Adullam?
 What manner of persons came to him at Adullam?
 Who else joined David?
 What wish did David express?
 Who sought to gratify him?
 What noble act of self-denial did David display when he received it?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

David's difficulties and personal dangers led him into an error of conduct; we are not to imitate him in this respect. Worthy people are sometimes driven into great perplexity, some by adhering to what is right, others by the changing circumstances of life. We are not to judge rashly of those who are in distress. However God's people may be maligned and ill-treated; they are not to be too anxious to justify themselves to the injury of their enemies, knowing that there is ONE who will bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noon day.

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

1 Samuel xxii. 6—xxiv. 7.

Doeg, the Edomite, told Saul of David's visit to the city of Nob⁴⁸; he also spoke falsely of Ahimelech, the priest. Saul sent for Ahimelech and all the priests of Nob; and when they came he charged them with conspiring against him. Ahimelech answered Saul meekly, but Saul said they should surely die. He told Doeg to slay all the priests. Saul also sent him to Nob to slay all their families and their cattle.

Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, escaped to David, who promised him protection. Shortly after, David was commanded to go to Keilah, and smite the Philistines.³⁵ David departed thence to the Wilderness of Ziph. The Ziphites told Saul where David was hiding; but when they went with Saul to take him, he was gone to the Wilderness of Maon. Saul followed him. David went thence to Engedi. Saul followed, and went into a cave at Engedi to sleep. David and some of his men were in the cave, and David might have slain Saul, but he only cut off a part of Saul's robe.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Keilah—a city of Judah, about twenty miles south-west of Jerusalem.

Wilderness of Ziph—a town of Judah near Maon and Carmel. David had escaped into the wilderness of Ziph when Saul sought him at Keilah. Jonathan visited David at Ziph, and made a covenant with him.

Wilderness of Maon—in the south of Judah; the city of this name was the residence of Nabal the churl, who had large possessions there and in Carmel.

Engedi—a city in Judah towards the southern point of the Dead Sea.

EXPLANATIONS.

told, &c.—he was one of those wicked men who "carry tales to shed blood." The Lord has forbidden tale-bearing. Lev. xix. 16.

conspiring—plotting, laying plans with David against him.

families—this was very cruel; even if the priests were deserving of death, their wives and children ought to have been spared.

escaped—he had probably been left in charge of the sanctuary; while his father and the rest of the priests went to Saul. He took with him the most important of the sacred vestments of the high priest—the ephod.

smite—kill in war.

told Saul—David considered these men as friends, but they acted treacherously.

were in, &c.—it was very large. Some caves would accommodate 400 or 500

robe—mantle, an outer garment. [men.]

QUESTIONS.

What did Doeg tell Saul?

Did he add any thing to his relation?

What did Saul do?

What is it to conspire?

Were the priests guilty?

What merciless act was Doeg commanded to do by Saul?

What further act of cruelty did he order him to perpetrate?

Who was Abiathar?

To whom did he escape?

What did David do at Keilah?

Give me some particulars respecting Ziph.

How were the Ziphites treacherous to David?

What wilderness next afforded protection to David?

Who fell into David's power at Engedi?

Did David kill him?

Where was Engedi?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

"The words of a tale bearer are as wounds"; the misrepresentation of Ahimelech by Doeg, caused the ruin of the priests of the Lord. We should learn to "hate every false way" for "lying lips are abomination to the Lord." When the Ziphites betrayed David's hiding place to Saul he humbly said, "Save me, O God, . . . Hear my prayer." "Behold, God is mine helper." And God delivered his servant. We may learn from David's conduct towards Saul to "overcome evil with good," and thus, by kindness, conquer the enmity of those who rise up against us.

50. Of Nabal and Abigail.

1 Samuel xxv. 2—35.

Nabal had large possessions in *Carmel*. His wife was named Abigail; she was a woman of good understanding; but the man was churlish, and evil in his doings. David heard in the wilderness⁹ that Nabal was making a feast for his shearers. He sent some of his young men to him to ask for refreshment, telling him how they had protected his flocks in *Carmel*. Nabal was churlish to them, and refused. They came to David and told him of Nabal's sayings, and he said to them, "Gird ye on every man his sword": he then went up towards Nabal's residence, in Maon, with about four-hundred men.

One of Nabal's young men told Abigail of David's request, and how his master had railed on David's messengers, and also of the protection which David and his men had given them while they were keeping the sheep. She got ready a large present for David, and sent her servants on before her, and went to meet David. She acknowledged the iniquity of her husband, and said she wished to prevent David from avenging himself by shedding blood. David blessed her, accepted her present, and told her to go in peace to her house.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

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

EXPLANATIONS.

a woman—sensible, clear in thought and judgment, and of a generous disposition.
churlish—niggardly, grudging, rude.
refreshment—not dainties, but ordinary food.
Gird—bind, put on the girdle in which the sword is carried.
One of . . . men—a trusty servant of the house. Even one of the servants of Nabal spoke to his mistress of his master's evil ways.
railed on—scolded, insulted. He possessed neither gratitude nor equity.
iniquity—injustice, ungenerousness.
avenging—dealing punishment towards him, by putting him to death.
shedding—spilling, pouring out.
blessed—praised her for her timely and proper interference.
peace, &c.—he would not execute his intended revenge upon her husband.

QUESTIONS.

Who had possessions in *Carmel*?
 What do you know of *Carmel*?
 What were the respective dispositions of Nabal and Abigail?
 What do you mean by a good understanding?
 What is the meaning of churlish? [ing?
 Where was David at this time?
 What did David hear of Nabal?
 For whom was the feast made?
 What did David do?
 Why did he make this request of Nabal?
 What did Nabal's refusal provoke David to do?
 How did Abigail hear of Nabal's conduct?
 What did she do to turn away David's anger?
 What did Abigail acknowledge?
 What does avenging mean?
 Was she successful in appeasing David's wrath?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The common-life lesson, that those who have shown kindness to others may reasonably expect kindness in return, is inculcated in this history; but we are also instructed not to be surprised if those to whom we have shown favours treat us with ingratitude; we should therefore bear patiently ungrateful returns from worthless men. Abigail's conduct proved that she was "a woman of good understanding," she allayed David's wrath, and spoke to him of the bitterness of revenge, and of the satisfaction arising from a peaceful conscience.

PERIOD V.] FROM THE ANOINTING OF SAUL

51. David marries Abigail. He again spares Saul's Life.

1 Samuel xxv. 36—xxvi. 16; xvii.

When Abigail returned home Nabal was feasting, and he was very drunken. In about ten days after, he died. When David heard that he was dead, he sent messengers to Abigail to commune with her, and he took her to wife. Saul had given Michal to another. The Ziphites again discovered David to Saul, and Saul went after him. David and one of his men found Saul and his guards sleeping. Abishai wanted to slay Saul, but David forbade him, and only took away the spear, and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster. David reproved Abner, for not keeping a better watch over the Lord's anointed.⁵⁴

David then fled with six-hundred men to Achish, king of Gath.⁴⁶ When this was told Saul, he sought David no more. Achish gave David Ziklag to dwell in, and David dwelt there a year and four months. David invaded many enemies of Israel while he abode at Ziklag, but he told Achish that he had invaded the enemies of the Philistines.³⁵

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Ziklag—a city of the Philistines in Simeon, from which David invaded several cities of the Philistines.

EXPLANATIONS.

feasting—Solomon saith, "a feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry."
very drunken—"Who hath woe? . . . They that tarry long at the wine."
commune, &c.—converse, to tell her what he wished, and to receive her assent.
wanted, &c.—because he saw that Saul was David's inveterate enemy.
forbade—would not permit.
spear—a weapon with a long shaft, pointed with iron.
cruse—a small vessel, a cup.
bolster—a cushion for supporting the head.
reproved—David acted nobly and wisely in all his dealings with Saul. "He committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."
invaded—entered their country hostilely.

QUESTIONS.

On Abigail's return in what state did she find her husband?
 When did Nabal die?
 What did David do when he heard of Nabal's death?
 Did Abigail marry David?
 What had become of Michal?
 Who again acted treacherously to David?
 How was Saul again found by David?
 What did Abishai desire to do?
 Who prevented him?
 What did David take away?
 Why did he reprove Abner?
 Who came to Achish?
 What place did David obtain from Achish?
 What did he do while he resided at Ziklag?
 To whom did Ziklag belong?
 What did he tell Achish?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We should learn from Nabal's intemperance not to abuse the bountiful gifts of Providence by eating or drinking to excess. His death is a warning to all who possess wealth, not to say to themselves, "take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"; for they know not how soon their soul may be required of them. We must beware of treachery; the Ziphites again excited Saul's persecution against David, but David continued to show his patient endurance of unjust treatment. We learn also that unbelief besets good men from David's fleeing to Gath for safety.

52. Saul consults a Witch at Endor.

1 Samuel xxviii. 3—19.

When Saul saw the 'host of the *Philistines*³⁵ assembled against him, he was afraid and his heart 'trembled. Samuel, the prophet, was dead; and the 'priests had been slain by Saul's own command, at *Nob*.⁴⁸ He was about to go to battle with the Philistines; and he had no vision, nor priest, , nor 'prophet, to counsel him, so he went to a witch, who lived at 'Endor, for 'aid. He 'disguised himself, and went to her by night. She asked him whom she should bring up. He desired her to bring up Samuel. She then knew Saul, and cried aloud from 'her fear, when she saw an old man before her. She described his appearance to Saul, who said it was 'Samuel; and Saul stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself, Saul told Samuel of his distress, because God had departed from him. Samuel said—that for his 'disobedience the Lord had given his kingdom to David; that the Philistines should conquer Israel, and that on the morrow, he and his sons should die.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Endor—a town in western Manasseh, a few miles south of Mount Tabor. Near this place the army of Jabin was routed by Barak.

EXPLANATIONS.

host—army arrayed for battle.
trembled—shook, shivered with dismay.
priests—they might have asked counsel of God, and advised Saul.
vision—a remarkable dream communicating advice and information; God had frequently made known his will by dreams.
prophet—to foretel what should happen, and to instruct him what to do.
aid—it was great presumption in Saul to consult those whom, according to God's law he had endeavoured to extirpate.
disguised—this circumstance shows Saul's abject condition.
her fear, &c.—her terror proved that the appearance was unexpected.
Samuel—the prophet who had anointed him king, and who had often counselled him for his good. How wise the admonition "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found." Saul had not done this.
disobedience—repeated acts of this kind characterized Saul's reign from the beginning to the end.

QUESTIONS.

What circumstance caused Saul to fear?
 What tended to aggravate his fear?
 What did he require at this time?
 For what did he go to Endor?
 Give me some particulars respecting Endor.
 Why did he seek this wicked woman?
 In what appearance did he go before the witch?
 How may we judge that this was a secret visit?
 How did the witch learn who Saul was?
 What proof have we that the appearance was unusual?
 How did Saul acknowledge Samuel's presence?
 What deplorable communication did Saul make to Samuel?
 Did Samuel counsel Saul?
 What did he say to the unhappy king?
 Why did all the troubles Saul experienced fall on him?
 What was Saul's *first* act of disobedience after he became king?
 Mention some of his other rebellious acts.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Saul's life verifies the saying, "There is no peace . . . to the wicked." He did not seek the Lord while he might be found. He who had slain the priests now wanted their guidance, he who had despised Samuel now wanted his counsel, but it was too late. "Because ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh." Saul's history warns us of the consequence of an evil course of life.

53. Death of Saul and his Sons. Their Burial.

1 Samuel xxxi.

At *Gilboa* the *Philistines*³⁵ fought against Israel; the *Israelites*¹⁷ fled, and many were slain on the *Mount of Gilboa*. Among the slain were Jonathan, Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, Saul's sons; and Saul was sorely wounded. Saul wanted his armour-bearer to thrust his sword through his body, but he would not. Saul then took a sword, and fell upon it. His armour-bearer also fell upon his sword, and died with Saul.

When the men of Israel saw that Saul was dead, they forsook their cities, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. The Philistines found the bodies of Saul and his sons; they stripped off Saul's armour and put it in the house of their idol Ashtaroth; and they fastened the bodies to the wall of *Bethshan*. When the inhabitants of *Jabesh-gilead*⁴⁴ heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went by night, and took the bodies of Saul and his sons from *Bethshan*, and brought them to *Jabesh*, where they burned them, and buried their bones.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Gilboa—this ridge of barren mountains was west of the Jordan and not far from Bethshan.

Bethshan—a city of western Manasseh, since called Scythopolis.

EXPLANATIONS.

fled—ran away in confusion.
armour-bearer—the principal attendant who carried the shield and sword, and other arms.
fell—death by one's own hand was of rare occurrence in Israel; by this final act Saul added self-murder to his other crimes.
cities—chiefly those near to the countries of the Philistines.
house—or temple. By putting the armour here it showed that they believed Ashtaroth had aided them in their victory over Israel.
inhabitants—they remembered with gratitude that soon after Saul's accession to the throne he had delivered them from the Ammonites.
burned—reduced them to ashes lest the Philistines should again obtain, and insult them.

QUESTIONS.

Where was the great battle with the Philistines fought?
 Where was Gilboa?
 Who were defeated?
 Were any of the princes slain?
 What was the sad end of Saul and his armour-bearer?
 Narrate the circumstances.
 What effect had Saul's death on the army of Israel?
 By whom were the bodies of Saul and his sons found?
 How did they treat them?
 What was put in the temple of Ashtaroth?
 What do you know of Bethshan?
 Were the bodies allowed to remain long exposed?
 Who dared to take them down?
 What did they do to them?
 Why were the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead prompted to this act of kindness to Saul and his family.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Saul died as a man who had neither the fear of God before him, nor hope in God's mercy. We perceive that the innocent may be cut off when found in concert with the guilty, and that many a wicked parent involves his children in trouble. The respect due to men in authority is seen in the refusal of Saul's armour-bearer to slay his master, who however followed his master's bad example, and slew himself. The conduct of the men at Jabesh-gilead is a pleasing instance of gratitude towards the remains of a former protector, the only bright spot in this dark history.

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

2 Samuel i.—ii. 6.

A man came to David out of the camp⁴² of Saul, and informed him of the death of Saul and Jonathan. When David questioned him, he 'acknowledged that, at Saul's desire, 'he had slain him after he had fallen; and he brought Saul's 'crown and 'bracelet to David. Then David mourned and wept, and 'fasted till even. David said to the young man, "How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the 'LORD's anointed?" And he told one of his young men to fall on him, and slay him. David then mourned exceedingly for Saul and Jonathan.

David 'inquired of the Lord, and was commanded to go up to *Hebron*.³³ There he was anointed king over Judah, by the men of Judah. He was told of the respect which the men of *Jabesh-gilead*⁴⁴ had shown to the bodies of Saul and his sons. He 'blessed them for their kindness to their lord, and said, "I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing."

EXPLANATIONS.

acknowledged, &c.—told it with boldness, hoping to procure David's favour.
he had slain, &c.—this was not true, but he foolishly imagined that David would reward any one who had killed his enemy, Saul.
crown—the kingly wreath which had encircled Saul's head.
bracelet—an ornament for the arm; this and the crown he found on the field of battle.
fasted—abstained, or kept from food, so sincere was his grief; fasting is evidence of grief and humiliation.
Lord's anointed—the Israelitish kings were thus spoken of.
inquired—asked through the priests.
blessed—he not only besought the Lord to reward them, but he promised to remember their kindness towards their lord.

QUESTIONS.

Who brought the news of Saul's death to David?
 What part did he say he had in Saul's death?
 What did he bring to David?
 Who mourned and fasted till even?
 Why did David cause the man who brought the crown and bracelet to be put to death?
 For whom did David mourn exceedingly?
 What did David do next?
 What answer did God give?
 What followed?
 Of what circumstance was he told at Hebron?
 How did he show his satisfaction with the conduct of the men of Jabesh-gilead?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

"He that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished." David mourned for the discomfiture of Israel, and for the death of his friend Jonathan. From David's sorrow for the death of his persecutor Saul, we learn that we must not glory when our enemy dies, but rather weep if he has died ignominiously and impenitently. The Amalekite who expected a reward, knew nothing of the honourable principles which true religion teaches; he expected commendation and protection—he received the punishment of a criminal. Like David, we must not fail to ask God's direction and blessing in all our removes and changes, for then shall our way be prosperous.

55. Ishbosheth proclaimed King. His and Abner's Death.

2 Samuel ii. 8—iv.

'Abner, the captain of Saul's host,⁵² 'proclaimed Ishbosheth, the remaining son of Saul, king, and brought him to *Mahanaim*¹³ in *Gilead*.

There was 'war between Ishbosheth and David, and the 'house of David 'waxed stronger, but that of Saul became weaker. Abner quarrelled with Ishbosheth, and soon after 'revolted to David. Abner found that the elders of Israel were willing to join David. But Joab was 'jealous of Abner, and told David that he came to deceive him. Joab sent messengers after Abner, and he took him aside 'to speak to him quietly, and slew him. David lamented greatly for the death of Abner; and he said, "The LORD shall reward the doer of evil 'according to his wickedness."

Two of Ishbosheth's captains smote him, and took his head to David. David was very 'indignant against them for their crime, having "slain 'a righteous person in his own house upon his bed." He commanded his young men to slay them.

EXPLANATIONS.

Abner—he was a Benjamite and Saul's cousin.
proclaimed—published abroad.
war—this sort of war is called *civil* war, because it is between citizens, or civilians of the same state. War between different nations is foreign war.
house—meaning the cause, or the friends, or party.
waxed—grew, became.
revolted, &c.—deserted, turned from.
jealous—envious, suspicious.
to speak . . . quietly—this was a treacherous act, he "shed the blood of war in peace."
according to—in a suitable manner, in the right proportion. Compare Exodus xxi. 12—14; 1 Kings ii. 28—34.
indignant—angry; he was disgusted with their baseness.
a righteous person—one who had done them no wrong.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Abner?
 Whom did he proclaim king?
 What struggle ensued?
 What is here meant by the house of David, &c.?
 Which party was the more successful?
 With whom did Abner quarrel?
 What did this lead him soon after to do?
 With what feelings did Joab regard Abner?
 What did he do to Abner?
 Why was this act of Joab doubly criminal?
 How did David feel on hearing of Abner's death?
 How did he express his sense of the wrong?
 By whom was Ishbosheth slain?
 How did David speak of their crime?
 What punishment was inflicted on them?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The opposition raised by Saul's family to David's rule shows us the weakness and wickedness of contending with the Almighty, for "his purposes shall stand, and he will perform all his pleasure." We should also learn to abhor war, which makes men prodigal of human blood. The death of Abner by the treachery of Joab, shows the danger of allowing unscrupulous men to occupy stations of great power and temptation. Baanah and Rechab, the murderers of Ishbosheth, thought that the end was justified by the means; such frauds are an abomination to good men who will not profit by treachery and crime.

56. David again Consecrated. The Ark Removed.

2 Samuel v. 1—21; vi. 1—12; 1 Chron. xiii. 1—4.

All the tribes came to *Hebron*³³ and anointed David king over Israel. At this time David said the ark³⁰ of God should be brought up from *Kirjath-jearim*.⁴² And David perceived that God had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake. The *Philistines*³⁵ came against him in the valley of *Rephaim*. David asked counsel of God, if he should go up against them. God said he should go; and he smote them, and burned their idols.

David gathered together his 30,000 chosen men to bring up the ark of God to *Jerusalem*. It was placed upon a new cart, and Uzzah, a Levite, who drove it, put forth his hand to steady the ark; for this God slew him, because the Levites²⁴ were not permitted to touch the holy things. David was afraid, and he left the ark in the house of Obed-edom, the Gittite, for three months. It was afterwards told David that the Lord had blessed Obed-edom, and all that he had; so David went and brought up the ark to *Jerusalem* with gladness.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Rephaim—the valley of Rephaim was near Jerusalem; it was so called from the race of giants who first inhabited it.

Jerusalem—called the "city of David," was the metropolis of the land of Israel. It is often spoken of in the Scriptures as the "holy city." It was in the southern portion of Canaan, and was situated partly in Judah, and partly in Benjamin. It is supposed to have been the city of Melchizedek, king of Salem.

EXPLANATIONS.

anointed, &c.—for the third time.
perceived—saw clearly from the success which God had given him.
established—firmly fixed.
exalted, &c.—lifted up, made great. God had promised to do this if Israel would obey the Lord.
for his people, &c.—not for the advantage of David merely, but for all Israel.
asked, &c.—he would not trust his own wisdom, he looked to God for direction.
new cart—this was an error in which the Philistines were excusable, (Les. 42.) but not the Israelites, for they had received an express command from God that it should be carried on the shoulders of the Levites, by the staves.
steady, &c.—it was not lawful for the Levites to touch the ark itself.
holy things—the ark and other articles or furniture of the tabernacle.
Gittite—he was born probably at Gath-rimmon, one of the cities of the Levites.

QUESTIONS.

By whom was David a third time anointed? What did he say should be done? [ed?]
 At what time had the ark been brought to Kirjath-jearim?
 Of what was David at this time satisfied? Why did he suppose God had exalted him? Where did he defeat the Philistines?
 What do you know of Rephaim?
 How did David show his zeal for God's true worship?
 Give me some particulars respecting Jerusalem?
 How many did David assemble to bring up the ark?
 What was the first error committed in bringing it?
 What was the second? [bringing it?]
 What melancholy occurrence took place in consequence of this error?
 Did David then bring it up?
 How long was the ark in Obed-edom's house?
 What did David hear respecting Obed-edom?
 What did he then do? [edom?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Ambitious men may lead people astray in the pursuit of a doubtful good. When those who marshalled Israel against Judah are removed, the people unite and acknowledge David as their king. David asked counsel of God before he went to war against the enemies of his country; in this respect kings, and nations, and private individuals should imitate him. In all our changes we should promote the interests of true religion, and maintain the public worship of God, yet we should fear the severity of God, if we do not approach him in the way he has ordained.

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

2 Samuel vii. 1—17; viii.; ix.

David resolved to build a temple to the Lord, for the ark³⁰ of God to be placed in. The prophet Nathan was sent to prevent him, and to say that God would set up his seed after him, to establish his kingdom, and that his son should build a house for God's name.

David subdued the *Philistines*,³⁵ the *Moabites*,²⁸ and the *Syrians*, and the Lord was with him. Toi, king of *Hamath*, sent his son to David with vessels of silver, of gold, and of brass; and David dedicated them unto the Lord, with the silver and gold, which he had obtained from the conquered nations. He governed his people with judgment and justice.

David inquired if any one of Saul's house was left; because he wished to show kindness to him, for Jonathan's sake. Ziba, a servant of Saul, told David of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, who was lame of his feet. Mephibosheth was at *Lodebar*. David sent for him, and told him that he would restore to him all the land of Saul, and that he should eat at his table. He then appointed Ziba to be steward to Mephibosheth.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Syrians—inhabitants of the several ancient and powerful kingdoms north of Canaan and eastward to the Euphrates.

Hamath—a city of Syria and the capital of a kingdom of the same name.

Lodebar—a city of Gilead supposed to have been on the border of the tribe of Gad.

EXPLANATIONS.

placed in—the tabernacle was now above 400 years old; but it had doubtless undergone many important repairs.
prevent—the only instance on record except one, (Les. 58.) in which David's wishes were rejected by God.
dedicated—set apart for the Lord's service.
nations—countries, people.
governed—ruled, directed. David's own words are, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."
justice—uprightness, not favouring one, nor acting with undue harshness towards another.
left—they had been lost sight of, and many had perished in war.
lame—when the news came of his father's death, (Les. 53.) his nurse fled with him, and in her haste let him fall, so that he became lame. He was then 5 years old.
at his table—like a son of the king.
steward—manager of his affairs.

QUESTIONS.

What did David desire to build for the ark?
 What was God's message to David by the prophet Nathan?
 What nations did David conquer?
 Who was Toi?
 What did he do?
 What do you know of Hamath?
 How did David dispose of these presents?
 Was David a good king?
 How does David say kings ought to rule?
 What is the meaning of governing with justice?
 What inquiry did David make?
 What did Ziba tell him?
 What do you know of Lodebar?
 What did he restore to Mephibosheth?
 By what accident was Mephibosheth's lameness occasioned?
 What other favour did he confer on him?
 What appointment was given to Ziba?
 What had Ziba to do?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

It is good when we enjoy the blessings of ease and abundance to fix our thoughts upon the accomplishment of some good work for the benefit of our fellow creatures and for the glory of God. If we design a great work which we may not be able to accomplish, let us do all we can to enable those who may come after us to carry it successfully forward. It is well to assist and relieve the needy who come in our way, but it is our more especial duty to raise up the children of deceased friends who may have fallen into distress. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

58. Rabbah Besieged. David's Sin. Solomon is Born.

2 Samuel x.—xii.

Hanun, king of Ammon, 'abused David's messengers; David then sent Joab, and all his 'mighty men against Ammon, and conquered the Ammonites³⁸ and the Syrians,⁵⁷ who came to help them.

David sent Joab to 'besiege 'Rabbah also. While he was away, David 'took Bathsheba into his house; she was the wife of Uriah, one of the captains of the army. David wrote a letter to 'Joab, telling him to place Uriah in the 'forefront of the battle, so that he might be slain. Joab 'obeyed this letter. Uriah was slain, and his wife mourned for him. After her mourning was past, Bathsheba became David's wife. But the thing that David had done 'displeased the Lord, and he sent Nathan, the prophet, to reprove him. Nathan spake a parable to show David his sin, and told him that he should be afflicted both in his kingdom and in his family. David acknowledged his wickedness, but Nathan told him that the child of Bathsheba should 'surely die.

Rabbah was taken by Joab; the king's 'crown⁵⁴ was set on David's head, and there was spoil in great abundance. The people in the city were put to cruel deaths. Soon after the taking of Rabbah, Solomon was born.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Rabbah—a city of the Ammonites in Gilead, it was near the source of the river Jabbok, and had been the residence of Og, king of Bashan.

EXPLANATIONS.

abused, &c.—insulted, treated shamefully.
mighty men—valiant men experienced in warfare.
to besiege—to surround and beat down the walls of a city or strong place with soldiers. In a siege the men on the walls fight against those who attack them.
took, &c.—yet David had several wives while Uriah had but one. How unjust of David!
Joab—David could confide in Joab's loyalty, though he knew him to be a wicked man.
fore-front—in the post of greatest danger to him.
obeyed—it is wrong to obey an unjust or a wicked command, even that of a king.
thing . . . displeased—David had been betrayed into covetousness, adultery, cunning, and deliberate murder.
surely die—David prayed that the child might live;—his prayer was denied.
crown—the royal cap or head-band ornamented with gold and precious stones.

QUESTIONS.

What dishonourable action was Hanun guilty of?
 How was he punished?
 What place did Joab also besiege?
 Give me some particulars respecting Rabbah.
 While Joab was away what great sin did David commit?
 What was Uriah?
 How did David effect his death?
 What became of Uriah's wife when he was dead?
 Who was displeased with David's actions?
 What successive sins was David led to commit?
 How did Nathan reprove David?
 What temporal punishment fell on David and Bathsheba?
 What prayer of David did God refuse to grant?
 What city was taken?
 What did David obtain by its capture?
 What was done to the people therein?
 When was Solomon born?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Wanton injuries merit severe punishment, laws are for the correction of offenders, but that which is right for a sovereign to do in defence of his subjects, is not always the rule which should be followed by individuals, that is, we have no right to take the law into our own hands. We ought never to take advantage of the unprotected, or try to get out of a difficulty, or to obtain what we desire by doing wrong to others. We here learn the fearful nature of sin, let us watch and pray lest we enter into temptation.

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

2 Samuel xiii.—xv. 12.

Absalom, the son of David, had a fair sister named Tamar. Amnon, another son of David, loved her at first, but afterwards hated her. Absalom made a great feast for his sheep-shearers. Amnon was invited to the feast, for Absalom was determined to avenge his sister. He told his servants to watch, and when Amnon's heart was merry with wine they were to kill him. Thus the afflictions, foretold by Nathan, the prophet, commenced in David's own family. After this Absalom fled to Talmai, his grandfather, the king of Geshur, and abode there three years.

When Absalom came again to Jerusalem,⁵⁶ he dwelt two years there without seeing the king. David was afterwards reconciled to him. The manners of Absalom were pleasing to the people. He won their hearts by inquiring into their troubles, and wished he were made judge, that he might do every man justice.⁵⁷ Some time after he asked permission of David to go to Hebron³³ to fulfil a vow; and he sent spies throughout all Israel, who, when they heard his trumpet, were to say, "Absalom reigneth in Hebron." He also sent for Ahithophel, one of his father's counsellors, who joined him.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Geshur—a district of Syria lying east of the Jordan and north of Bashan.

EXPLANATIONS.

fair—of agreeable countenance.
sister—she was not the daughter of Amnon's mother, but of Absalom's.
invited—asked. He artfully persuaded David to let him go.
determined—resolved, had firmly made up his mind.
to avenge—to have justice for the injury done his sister.
afflictions—the wickedness of his sons, and the conspiracies against him as king. These were foretold to David by the prophet Nathan, as the punishments which should fall on him. Les. 58.
reconciled &c.—made friends again.
manners—outward behaviour.
pleasing—owing to his studied civility.
wished &c.—thus he led the people to believe that his father's judges were not fair in their decisions.
vow—a solemn religious promise.
spies—secret friends among the people.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Tamar?
 What injustice did Amnon show towards her?
 When did Amnon and Absalom meet each other?
 What did Absalom command his servants to do?
 Why did he command them to kill his brother?
 Whose afflictions thus commenced?
 Who had told David that such judgments should fall upon him?
 Whither did Absalom flee?
 How long did he stay at Geshur?
 Did he return again to Jerusalem?
 Was he reconciled to his father?
 By what means did he seduce the people?
 Under what pretence did Absalom ask permission to go to Jerusalem?
 What did he do there?
 Where was he proclaimed king?
 For whom did he send?
 What was Ahithophel?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The threat that David should be afflicted in his own family and in his kingdom is here accomplished, yet it does not lessen the magnitude of Amnon's and Absalom's guilt. The violence and fraud which followed David's sin were a part of his punishment. Amnon was his first-born and favourite son. David was also too indulgent a father to Absalom. We are here warned against those plausible men who find fault with government to attain their own private ends, while we see the wickedness of a son's rebellion against his father and his sovereign.

TO THE DEATH OF SOLOMON. [1092-975 B.C.]

60. David flees from Jerusalem.

2 Samuel xv. 13—xvi. 14.

A messenger came to David, and told him that the hearts of the people were with Absalom. David said to his servants, "Arise, let us flee." David was accompanied by his own guard. All the people wept³³ as David left *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ and passed over the brook *Kidron*. Zadok and Abiathar were taking the ark³⁰ with the king, but he desired that it might be carried back. As David went up the ascent of *Mount Olivet* he wept; he had his head covered, and went barefoot. When David heard that Ahithophel was among the conspirators, he said, "O LORD, I pray thee turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." He afterwards sent Hushai one of his old counsellors, back to *Jerusalem*; he was to say he would be Absalom's servant, but he was to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, and to send word to David of every thing that was done.

When David had passed the top of the hill, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, met him with bread, raisins, fruits, and wine. The king inquired for Mephibosheth, and Ziba said he abode at *Jerusalem*. He also slandered Mephibosheth by telling David that he had said, "To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father." At *Bahurim*, one of the family of Saul, named Shimei, cursed David, and cast stones at him.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Kidron—this brook flowed through the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Mount Olivet—a celebrated mountain on the east of Jerusalem which is separated from that city by the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Bahurim—a village of Benjamin east of Jerusalem.

EXPLANATIONS.

hearts, &c.—Absalom, by art and flattery, had stolen the affections of the people, and they desired to make him king.
flee—before the multitude, with Absalom, could make prisoners of him and his friends. David was a man of great personal valour, but he felt that this affliction was from the Lord, in fulfilment of his word. *Les. 58.*
wept—thinking, doubtless of his own sins, which had brought this severe judgment upon him.
head covered—to cover the head is a sign of shame and sorrow.
barefoot—in deep penitence of soul he thus abased himself.
defeat—confound; to advise for David's safety, and to try to have his advice followed instead of Ahithophel's advice.
slandered—thus exhibiting the real selfishness and treachery of his character, at a time, too, when David would be most affected by such treason.

QUESTIONS.

What distressing news was brought to David?
 What was David's prompt command?
 As David went from Jerusalem how did the people show their sorrow?
 What brook did they cross?
 What was the course of this brook?
 What did David desire the priests to do?
 In what state of mind did he ascend Olivet?
 Give me some particulars of Mt. Olivet.
 How did his conduct show his grief and penitence?
 For what purpose was Hushai sent back to Jerusalem?
 In what way was he to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel?
 Who brought presents to David at this time?
 What falsehood did Ziba tell of his master?
 How did Ziba's slander exhibit his real character?
 Who met David at Bahurim?
 Where was Bahurim situated?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The hopes of parents respecting their children are often disappointed. Sin unsettles those who seem most secure in their wealth and honours. The respect of David's people towards him was weakened, but he found some who were faithful to him; we are not to despair in times of trial, but, like David, feeling that "Salvation *belongeth* unto the LORD, let us make known our difficulties and dangers in prayer to Him, and implore His aid."

PERIOD V.] FROM THE ANOINTING OF SAUL

61. The Council at Jerusalem. The Battle.

2 Samuel xvi. 15—xviii. 33.

When Hushai came to *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ he told Absalom that he would counsel him, as he had counselled his father. Ahithophel counselled the immediate pursuit of David; but Hushai advised that an army should be first assembled from all Israel, and that Absalom should lead them to battle. Absalom and all his friends thought Hushai's counsel was the best. Ahithophel went home and hanged himself when he saw that his counsel was not followed.

David came to *Mahanaim*.¹³ Barzillai, the Gileadite, and others were very hospitable to him, they brought beds, wheat, honey, butter, sheep, and cheese for him and his people. David charged Joab⁵⁸ and others who led his army, to deal gently with Absalom, for his sake. The battle between the followers of David and those of Absalom, was fought in the *Wood of Ephraim*, and Absalom's army was routed with great slaughter. In this wood the head of Absalom caught in the boughs of an oak, and his mule went from under him. A young man who saw it told Joab, who went with ten of his young men and slew Absalom.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Wood of Ephraim—an extensive forest on the east of the Jordan, which Joshua advised the tribe of Ephraim to cut down, when they had obtained possession of their inheritance.

EXPLANATIONS.

counsel—advise; kings require advisers or counsellors, because of the large amount of important business they have to perform.
lead, &c.—he probably perceived that Absalom would not make a good general in the field.
thought, &c.—thus the overruling power of God effected that for which David had prayed. *Les.* 60.
best—it was flattering to Absalom, but it was best for David, because it gave him time for preparation.
hanged, &c.—he foresaw that Absalom's government would be overthrown and David's re-established.
hospitable—kind and liberal in their entertainment of him.
deal gently, &c.—Who knoweth a parent's heart but a parent! Children, think of David's love for his rebellious son. Such pure love your parents bear to you.
slew—in his zeal for David, though contrary to David's express order.

QUESTIONS.

What false profession did Hushai make to Absalom?
 Why do kings require advisers?
 Who advised immediate pursuit?
 Who proposed delay?
 What reason did he give for proposing delay?
 Why did Hushai probably advise Absalom to act as general?
 Whose counsel was thought the best?
 Why was it best for David?
 What effect had this on Ahithophel?
 To what place did David come?
 Who treated him with great hospitality?
 What charge did David give his captains before the battle?
 What does this show us?
 Narrate the causes of Absalom's death.
 Where did the death of Absalom take place?
 Give me some particulars of this wood.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

As David's cause was just, God suffered Hushai's advice to prevail and gave success to it; the defeat therefore of Ahithophel's counsel by that of an inferior minister proves that "there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the LORD," and his fearful end may show us that the Lord "leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools." The overthrow of the rebels and the death of their ambitious and unprincipled leader should warn us against the love of change which rebellion contemplates. Though Joab disregarded the directions of the father, he did real service to the king and the country.

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

2 Samuel xix. 1—30, 41—xx. 22.

David mourned bitterly for Absalom, and Joab went to him and told him that the people were displeased with his grief. David then arose and went forth, and the people came round him. The elders of Judah wished the king to return. So he came to *Jordan*,³⁰ and the men of Judah came to *Gilgal*³⁰ to meet him. Shimei fell down before the king as soon as he was come over *Jordan*, and confessed his sin. David forgave him. Mephibosheth also came, and told the king of Ziba's deceit and slander.

At the time of the king's return, the men of Judah, and those of Israel began to be jealous of each other. David had made Amasa captain of the host, in place of Joab. Joab suspected that Amasa was favourable to a revolt, which was led by Sheba, and he treacherously slew him. Joab pursued Sheba, who had taken refuge in *Abel-beth-maachah*. He was about to besiege³⁸ the city, when a wise woman stopped him by saying that Sheba's head should be thrown over the wall.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Abel-beth-maachah—a city of the tribe of Naphtali, which is believed to have been of great strength and importance. It is sometimes called Abel-maim.

EXPLANATIONS.

displeased—they thought he valued Absalom's life more than the lives of all the army.
arose—he roused himself up; in his deep grief he had retired to his chamber and covered his face.
came round—they were pleased to look on their king, and to do him reverence.
forgave—this was a good way to show his gratitude to the Lord for giving him the victory.
slander—see 'slandered.' Les. 60.
jealous—distrustful, one party being disposed to quarrel with the other.
Amasa—he was David's nephew, and had been general in Absalom's army.
in place of, &c.—Joab had become too haughty, and perhaps David had discovered that he, with his own hands, had slain Absalom.
treacherously—again Joab "shed the blood of war in peace." Les. 55.
wise—truly "wisdom is a defence."

QUESTIONS.

For whom did David mourn?
 Who were displeased, and why?
 What effect had the report of their displeasure upon David?
 What change of feeling took place among the revolters?
 Who now experienced proof of David's generosity of heart?
 What discovery of deceit was now made to David?
 Did any thing unpleasant occur among the people?
 Had not a change of captains taken place?
 What wickedness did Joab perpetrate?
 Of what did Joab suspect Amasa?
 Of what crime was Sheba guilty?
 How did his revolt terminate?
 In what city had he taken refuge?
 How was the siege of this town stopped?
 In what tribe was Abel-beth-maachah?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

As parental love is pure, disinterested, and unchangeable, rebellion against parental authority is the basest and most wicked rebellion. The men of Judah wisely submitted to their sovereign as soon as Absalom was slain; it is better to submit to a first defeat than to persist in rebellion. We are taught by David's forgiveness of Shimei, that it is wrong to indulge in vindictive feelings, even towards those who have injured us; and from Mephibosheth's communication of Ziba's conduct, that acts of deceit will be discovered. Jealousy and angry contention followed this rebellion.

63. The Gibeonites Avenged. David numbers the People.

2 Sam. xxi. 1—10; xxiv. 1 Chron. xxi. 7.

There was a famine⁷ in Israel during three years, 'because Saul had slain the Gibeonites,³¹ with whom the Israelites had made a covenant of peace. The Gibeonites required that seven persons of Saul's house should be given up to them. The king gave up the two sons of Rizpah, and five sons of Merab. The Gibeonites hanged them. Rizpah tenderly watched the bodies of her two sons, and the five grandsons of Saul thus slain, and suffered neither the 'birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the 'beasts of the field by night.

David again sinned against the Lord in 'numbering the people, and the Lord was greatly displeased with him. The prophet 'Gad declared to David the word of the Lord against him. One of three evils was to fall on him and his people;—seven years' famine—flight from his enemies for three months—or three days' pestilence. David said, "Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great; and let me not fall into the hand of man." So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, and there died of the people '70,000 men. At the command of God, David reared up an altar⁸ unto the Lord and offered up sacrifice,⁴ and the plague was stayed.

EXPLANATIONS.

because, &c.—the Lord made known to David that this was the special cause of the present visitation on the people. National sins shall surely receive punishment. The king (Saul) had cruelly broken the covenant with this people, and the people of Israel did not complain of his wicked conduct; so the Lord punished the whole nation.
birds—the rapacious birds of hot countries devour the flesh of exposed carcases.
beasts—such as jackals, wolves, foxes, &c.
numbering, &c.—he thought of converting all his people into soldiers, with the view of extending his kingdom beyond the boundaries which God had assigned.
Gad—he is called "David's seer" he lived in the court of the king.
Let us now, &c.—David knew from former experience that the Lord would "in wrath remember mercy."
 70,000—diminishing the number of people, on which David had prided himself.

QUESTIONS.

Where was there a famine?
 How long did it continue?
 What satisfaction did the Gibeonites require?
 What was done with them?
 Why did Rizpah watch the bodies of the slain?
 Of what sin was David guilty?
 Why is it thought, he desired to know the number of his people?
 What is said of the Lord's anger?
 Who was Gad?
 What message did he convey to David from the Lord?
 In what words did David express his sense of God's mercy?
 Which punishment did David choose?
 Why did he make this choice?
 How many died?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The nation of Israel was bound to protect the Gibeonites, but Saul violated the obligation; no one can violate solemn engagements without incurring guilt, and, sooner or later, punishment. We must remember that "the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted." David's heart was lifted up with the pride of being the ruler over so populous a nation, but he saw his sin even before the punishment was denounced, and humbly besought forgiveness; and here we see the efficacy of humble prayer. David's prayer of penitence was heard, and although divine retribution afterwards lessened the number of his people, the judgment of God was turned into mercy when he willingly submitted to punishment and humbly interceded for his people.

64. Charge to Solomon. Adonijah's Rebellion.

1 Chron. xxii. 1—13; 1 Kings i. 5—53.

David set masons to hew stones, for the house of God. He prepared iron in abundance, for nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass and cedar trees in abundance. He then called Solomon, his son, and charged him to build a house for the Lord. David prayed that the Lord would give Solomon wisdom and understanding, and said he should prosper if he fulfilled the law of the Lord.

Adonijah was the eldest living son of David. He was a goodly man, and had many servants. He said he would be king, and he made Joab and Abiathar his friends. When David heard of these things he called for Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, and he sent them and his own guard, to take Solomon and anoint him king at Gihon. Adonijah feared, and ran to the altar. Solomon said, "If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth; but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die." He told Adonijah to go to his house.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Gihon—a fountain or brook near Mount Sion, on the west of Jerusalem.

EXPLANATIONS.

cedar trees—they grow abundantly on the mountains of Lebanon in the northern part of Israel. *Les. 67.*
prayed, &c.—it is the duty of parents to implore heavenly wisdom for their children, and to encourage them to serve the Lord.
prosper if, &c.—observe the condition;—all our prosperity in life, and hope beyond the grave, depend upon our obedience to the law of God.
goodly—fine, looking, manly.
he would be, &c.—he was well aware that Solomon was to succeed his father, David.
Joab—the captain or head of David's army.
Abiathar—the high priest, or head of the national religion.
Zadok—he was the chief priest of the house of Eleazar.
altar—as a place of protection; sacred places were regarded as a safe refuge.
wickedness—meaning rebellion, or treason.

QUESTIONS.

Enumerate the steps which David took for furthering the temple which Solomon was to build.
 Where were the cedar trees found?
 Did David say any thing to Solomon respecting the future temple?
 For what did David pray?
 On what condition did he say Solomon should prosper?
 Who was Adonijah?
 What is said of his person?
 What of his design?
 Whom did he make his friends?
 How did David show his dissatisfaction with Adonijah's conduct?
 Where was Solomon anointed?
 What was Gihon?
 Whither did Adonijah flee when Solomon was anointed?
 Why did Adonijah flee to the altar?
 How did Solomon act?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The aged and experienced should set an example to the young of zeal in God's service, they should not only instruct them, but assist them to perform their duties, exhort them, warn them, and pray for their success. Thus David did for Solomon. We see the perversity of human nature in Adonijah's rebellion; though he knew of his brother Absalom's failure, though he knew that God had chosen Solomon to build the temple, and to succeed his father, he gained no wisdom from this experience and knowledge.

65. Preparations for the Temple. Death of David.

1 Chron. xxviii; xxix. 1 Kings ii. 1—11.

David assembled the princes, and all his officers, and mighty men, and told them that God had chosen Solomon to succeed him and to build a house for the Lord God. He said to Solomon, "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; . . . if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." He gave to Solomon the patterns of the different parts of the temple, and of the vessels to be made. The fathers and princes of Israel gave much gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and precious stones. They gave willingly, and the people and David rejoiced with great joy. Then David blessed the Lord for his goodness, and prayed for the people, and for Solomon, his son.

When David was about to die, he again admonished Solomon to keep the commandments of the Lord. He warned him of Joab and Shimei, but he enjoined him to show kindness to the sons of Barzillai. David died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour, and Solomon, his son, reigned in his stead.

EXPLANATIONS.

officers—men who were paid for performing the duties of certain offices of state.
mighty men—men of valour in war.
chosen—selected as the fittest of all David's sons. David was himself chosen in preference to his elder brothers. Less. 45.
perfect—sincere, unwavering.
willing—cheerful, well-disposed.
willingly—not grudgingly, nor of necessity. "God loveth a cheerful giver."
admonished—warned, cautioned.
Joab and Shimei—he was to keep a watch over their conduct. Joab had been very faithful to David in earlier years, but he had joined in Adonijah's revolt. Shimei had shown great enmity to David.
show kindness, &c.—in return for their father's kindness to David in a time of trial. Les. 61.
full &c.—having obtained an abundant share of *days*, in his long life; of *riches*, in his wealth; and of *honour* in the public respect shown to him, and in the glory of his name.

QUESTIONS.

Why did David call together the great men of his kingdom?
 What do you understand by officers?
 Who had chosen Solomon to build the temple?
 Repeat David's charge to Solomon.
 How was Solomon to serve God?
 What would be the result if Solomon forsook the Lord?
 What did David give to Solomon?
 What contributions were made towards the temple?
 What effect had these liberal contributions on the spirit of David?
 For whom did David pray?
 Over whose conduct was Solomon to keep watch?
 To whom was he to show kindness?
 How is the end of David spoken of?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn from this lesson, THAT Solomon was chosen to succeed David by divine appointment. THAT David, though attached to his other children, acquiesced in the selection which God had made. THAT it is the part of the aged to enforce the duty and advantage of a religious life upon their children. THAT we are bound to do all the good we can while we live, with the wealth which God has given us. THAT a good example, in acts of self-devotion to good and useful undertakings, is of great importance; and, THAT all great works should be sanctified by devotional exercises.

66. Solomon's Vision.

1 Kings ii. 13—25, 28—34; iii. 5—28.

God appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon asked for an understanding heart to judge the people wisely. God was pleased with his request, because he had asked neither long life, nor riches; and God promised to give him great wisdom, and riches, and honour; and length of days, if he kept his statutes. Two women came to Solomon for judgment. They lived in one house; and they both had infants. One of the infants died in the night. The woman to whom it belonged took the other woman's child, and put her dead child by the side of the mother of the living child; but in the morning, the mother of the living child knew that the dead child was not hers. Solomon called for a sword to divide the living child between them. The mother of the living child cried out, "Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it." The other woman said, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it." Then Solomon knew which was the real mother of the living child, and he commanded it to be given her.

Adonijah again conspired against Solomon, and he sent Benaiah to put him to death. Joab also joined in the conspiracy, and was slain by Solomon's command.

EXPLANATIONS.

Ask, &c.—it is said, "Solomon loved the LORD," hence we see that "if any man love God the same is known of him."
understanding heart—that his judgment might not only be clear, but mingled with human sympathies.
neither, &c.—he was unselfish in his desires; he asked only for that which would make him useful to others,
promised, &c.—the exhortation of Christ is, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
length of days—observe the condition on which a long life was promised.
Give her, &c.—this showed that she was the mother, for she had compassion on her son, and would not consent to his being slain.
divide—What a dishonest, envious, and cruel woman! she could not bear that another should enjoy what she could not have.
again, &c.—thus he forfeited the condition which had been mercifully offered to him by Solomon. Les. 64.

QUESTIONS.

How did the Lord communicate with Solomon?
 What did God say to him?
 How did Solomon show himself to be worthy of such favour?
 What blessing did he ask?
 Why did he ask for an understanding heart?
 What further favours were promised?
 On what condition was length of days promised?
 Relate the case which was brought before Solomon for judgment.
 Which of the two women would not agree that the child should be divided?
 How do we know that the other woman was not the mother of the living child?
 What was the result?
 For what was Adonijah put to death?
 Who joined in the conspiracy and was also slain?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are here taught by Solomon's example to prefer wisdom above all earthly things. We also learn that "the LORD giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." Let us therefore pray that God would fill us "with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." We also see that envious people would deprive others of comfort without increasing their own happiness; and that maternal tenderness is not only a natural, but a very powerful feeling.

67. The Covenant with Hiram. Shimei Slain.

1 Kings ii. 39—46; iii. 1; v; vii. 13,14; 2 Chron. ii.

Solomon had married the daughter of Pharaoh, king of *Egypt*.⁵ He sent to Hiram, king of *Tyre*, desiring that he would command his servants to hew him cedar trees⁶⁴ and fir trees out of *Lebanon*. This pleased Hiram. Solomon agreed to give Hiram wheat and fine oil, in exchange for the timber. Solomon appointed seventy-thousand men to bear burdens; eighty-thousand to hew in the mountains; and three-thousand-six-hundred to oversee them. Solomon also desired Hiram to send him a skilful man to work in gold, silver, brass, and iron; in purple, and crimson, and blue. King Hiram sent Hiram, a widow's son; this widow was of the tribe of Dan, but her deceased husband was a man of *Tyre*.

About this time, Shimei who had sworn to remain in *Jerusalem*,⁵⁶ went to *Gath*,⁴⁶ after two of his servants who had run away. He returned, and when Solomon had reminded him of his oath, and of his wickedness towards David, his father, (Les. 60.) he commanded Benaiah to slay him.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Tyre—a celebrated city of Phœnicia in the division of Asher; it was probably founded by the Sidonians. In the time of Joshua it was fortified and called "the strong city Tyre."

Lebanon—two ranges of mountains on the borders of Syria and Canaan. The district of Lebanon is celebrated for its cedars.

EXPLANATIONS.

had married—this union with a neighbouring king, was not in accordance with the directions the Israelites received not to marry with the heathen nations. As the marriage took place during David's life, it is generally considered that Pharaoh's daughter was a convert to the religion of Israel, or David would not have consented.

pleased Hiram—he rejoiced to see such proofs of the wisdom and prosperity of the son of his friend, king David.

exchange—this kind of dealing or traffic is called *barter*; it was common before coined money became abundant.

to bear, &c.—these men were labourers.

hew—the work of the wood-cutters, and stone-squarers.

oversee—their business was to appoint the work, and see that it was properly done.

purple—the Tyrian purple is famous.

QUESTIONS.

Who was married to Solomon?
 What directions had the Israelites received respecting their marriages?
 What opinion is received as to the religion of Pharaoh's daughter?
 What request did Solomon make of Hiram, king of Tyre?
 Give me some particulars respecting Tyre.
 What do you know of Lebanon?
 How did Hiram receive the request of Solomon?
 Why did the message please Hiram?
 What did Solomon agree to give Hiram in exchange for the timber?
 What were the numbers of the different classes of workmen employed?
 What other request did Solomon make?
 Whom did Hiram send? [tifer?
 What was the parentage of Hiram the artificer?
 What obligation did Shimei violate?
 What was the consequence to him?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn, THAT those marriages only are truly honorable in which both parties are happily united in the Lord; it is therefore the duty of believers to attend to the Apostle's precept, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." THAT the happiness and good fellowship of nations are promoted by trade and commerce, conducted on honest principles. THAT human skill cannot be better employed than in promoting the interests of true knowledge and the right worship of God. THAT perjury will not go unpunished; and, THAT those who are wicked in one respect, are not to be trusted in other matters; Shimei received the just recompense for his misdeeds.

68. The Temple Built.

1 Kings vi.—viii. 9; 2 Chron. iii.—v. 10.

The temple was built at *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ on *Mount Moriah*. Here stood the thrashing-floor of Ornan, the Jebusite, where David had erected an altar to the Lord. Less. 63. The temple was commenced in the fourth year of Solomon's reign. Within, it was overlaid with fine gold, and garnished with precious stones. It was built of stone, which was made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building. The vessels of brass, and the vessels and ornaments of gold, were also made, and brought into the temple. And Solomon brought into it all the silver and the gold, and the vessels, which David, his father, had dedicated. The ark,³⁰ from *Mount Zion*, and all the holy vessels were brought into the temple by the priests and the Levites. There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put therein at *Horeb*.²¹ Solomon was seven years in building the temple.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Mount Moriah—on the north-east of Jerusalem; it was without the city, but David purchased it from Ornan the Jebusite, and erected on it an altar to God; it was afterwards chosen as the situation for the Temple which Solomon built, when it was included within the walls of the city.

Mount Zion—one of the mountains on which Jerusalem was built. It was the strong hold of the Jebusites, from which they were dispossessed by David's mighty men. It was then called the "city of David." Less. 56; 72.

EXPLANATIONS.

thrashing-floor—a place where corn was trodden from the straw by the action of oxen walking. They were flat, well-beaten spaces, generally on eminences.
made ready—so perfect were the arrangements of the workmen that everything was prepared before it was wanted, and outside the walls.
vessels—lavens, bowls, basins, and articles required in the sacrifices. The lavens of water were for the priests who washed before they entered, not by putting their hands and feet into the water, but by letting it fall on them through pipes.
gold—the incense altar, the table for the shew-bread, the censers, the candlesticks and other articles were of gold.
ark—the same which had been made in the wilderness; to bring it in was the last work; the temple without the ark was like a house without an inhabitant.

QUESTIONS.

Where was the temple built?
 What particulars do you know respecting Mount Moriah?
 What had stood formerly on the place where the temple was built?
 What is a thrashing-floor?
 Describe the embellishments of the temple.
 Of what was it built?
 How were the stones made ready for the building?
 What was the consequence of such preparation?
 What did Solomon bring into the temple?
 Who brought in the ark and the holy vessels?
 What things were in the ark?
 By whom had they been put in?
 How long was Solomon in building the temple?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are here taught, THAT haste in commencing important works is not advisable. THAT nothing is too costly to be dedicated to God, as the expression of grateful devotion. THAT we should not suffer our own works to exclude those of others from honourable regard; notwithstanding all Solomon's magnificence, he brought in publicly, and with due respect and solemnity, the things which his father had dedicated. THAT as the temple was uniform and symmetrical in all its parts, so is the mystical temple, (the church of Christ,) when enriched and adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit.

69. The Temple Dedicated and Accepted.

1 Kings viii.—ix. 9; 2 Chron. v. 2—vii. 22.

When Solomon dedicated the temple to God, he assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes at *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶ All the priests were sanctified²²; and the singers and trumpeters praised the Lord, saying, "For *he is good*; for his mercy *endureth* for ever." Then the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud,²⁰ for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God. Great sacrifices were then offered by the king and all the people. The king kneeled down before all the congregation, and prayed—that if evils should be sent upon his people for their sins, God would hear their prayer, and forgive them when they returned to him, and acknowledged their sins.

The Lord appeared unto Solomon by night and told him that he had accepted the temple for his house of prayer. He promised to hear the prayers of the people. But he threatened, if Solomon and his people forsook his commandments and served other gods, he would cut off Israel out of the land which he had given them.

EXPLANATIONS.

sanctified—they underwent the cleansing and purification required by the law, before they served at the altar.

singers—persons trained to sing in parts, so as to observe harmony.

trumpeters—these joined in the chorus.

praised—"with trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King."

cloud—the Lord appeared in a cloud to their fathers after leaving the land of bondage—Egypt.

sacrifices—in the law regarding sacrifices, the rich man brought his bullock, the middle class their lamb, the poorest their pair of young pigeons; all brought an animal offering; by all atonement was to be made by the shedding of blood.

forgive . . . sins—"Whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy."

cut off, &c.—as he had the Canaanites.

given—they had received their inheritance from the Lord, not gained it by their own strength.

QUESTIONS.

By whom was the temple dedicated?

Whom did Solomon assemble?

How were the priests sanctified?

Who praised the Lord?

Why did they praise him?

With what was the house filled?

What did the king and people then offer?

What was the law regarding sacrifices?

When will God hear the prayers of sinners?

Who appeared to Solomon?

What promise did he make?

Did he not also utter a solemn threatening?

What sin did he especially denounce?

What people had been cut off for idolatry?

What is idolatry? *Les. 32.*

How had the Israelites obtained the inheritance of the good land they now possessed?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are taught, THAT the public dedication of sacred edifices is consistent with reason and religion. THAT the maintenance of religious worship is worthy the respectful attention of kings, princes, and nobles. THAT such musical instruments as secure greater harmony in the singing of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," in public worship, are useful and proper. THAT the soul of every true worshipper is blessed with the sense of the divine presence. THAT public mercies demand public acknowledgments, not only by the sovereign, but by the people. THAT the true worshipper will observe the most befitting posture for prayer. THAT God hears and answers prayer. THAT all answers to prayer for future good depend on obedience. THAT disobedience forfeits all right to present blessings and all claim on promises of future favour.

TO THE DEATH OF SOLOMON. [1095-975 B.C.]

70. **Tadmor &c., Built. The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon.**

1 Kings ix. 10—x. 29; 2 Chron. viii.—ix. 28.

After Solomon had built the temple and his own house, he built "Tadmor in the wilderness," and several store-cities in Hamath,⁵⁷ and in other parts of his dominions. Solomon made a navy of ships at "Ezion-geber," and king Hiram sent shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, and they went to "Ophir," and brought gold thence to king Solomon.

The queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, and she came to Jerusalem⁵⁶ to hear his wisdom. She brought a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold and precious stones. She asked Solomon many hard questions, and Solomon answered them all. She told the king that the account she had heard of him in her own land, was true, though she did not believe it, until she had proved it. She said, "Happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom." She made Solomon presents of gold, spices, and precious stones; and returned to her own country.

Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom; and he made silver to be abundant in Jerusalem.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Tadmor—a city situated in the desert of Syria; it was afterwards called Palmyra.

Ezion-geber—one of the encampments of the Israelites on the coast of the Red Sea.

Ophir—a country to which Solomon and Hiram traded, thought by some to be in India, by others in Arabia, and by others in Africa.

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

EXPLANATIONS.

wilderness—a station in the wilderness was much wanted for merchants travelling between Jerusalem and the East.

store-cities—as repositories for the various commodities obtained from the Phœnicians in the way of trade. Hamath was the most northern part of Solomon's dominions.

shipmen—the Phœnicians were celebrated from time immemorial for their commercial and nautical enterprise.

to hear, &c.—with a view to increase her own. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise."

train—company of followers or attendants.

he made, &c.—by his encouragement of trade and commerce, for none of the precious metals were found in his country.

QUESTIONS.

What did Solomon build besides the temple?

When his own house was finished, what did he next build?

What do you know of Tadmor?

Why did he build a city in the wilderness?

What did he make at Ezion-geber?

Where was Ezion-geber?

From whom did he obtain good shipmen?

To what place did they go?

What did they bring from Ophir?

What are the suppositions respecting Ophir?

Who heard of Solomon's fame?

Why did she come to hear his wisdom?

How was she accompanied?

How did she try Solomon's wisdom?

What is here said of Solomon?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are taught, that however much a king may love learning, his especial duty is not devotion to study in retirement, but active labour for the prosperity and strength of his kingdom; for the extension of trade, and the encouragement of general industry. In the visit of the queen of Sheba we see verified the words of the Lord, "them that honour me I will honour," as well as the fulfilment of his promise to Solomon at his accession. (Less. 66). We also learn that wisdom or knowledge, regulated by a sanctified understanding, is promotive of happiness to its possessor, and to those dependant upon him.

71. Solomon's Wisdom. His Offences.

1 Kings iv. 7—34; xi. 1—25.

The wisdom of Solomon exceeded the wisdom of all the 'children of *The East*⁵ country, and all the wisdom of 'Egypt.⁵ His fame was in all nations. He spake of all kinds of 'trees, of beasts, of fowl, of creeping things, and of fishes. And he spake three-thousand proverbs and one-thousand-and-five songs. He had twelve officers⁶⁵ over all Israel to provide victuals for his household. Judah and Israel were as 'many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and 'making merry.

When Solomon grew older he offended God; he took a great many wives from 'strange nations. He 'served the idols of the 'Zidonians, and the *Ammonites*,³⁴ and the *Moabites*,²⁸ and he burned incense and sacrificed to them. Then God was angry with Solomon, and reprov'd³⁹ him; he said that he would surely rend his kingdom from him, and give it to his servant. God stirred up enemies against Solomon—Hadad, and Rezon of 'Damascus.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Zidonians—Sidon, or Zidon was one of the most ancient and celebrated cities of Phœnicia; it existed many years before Tyre, from which place it was about twenty miles distant; its people were celebrated as artificers and merchants. It is supposed to have been founded by Sidon, the eldest son of Canaan.

Damascus—the capital of Syria, and a city of great antiquity, as it is known to have existed in the days of Abraham. It is about 136 miles N. of Jerusalem.

EXPLANATIONS.

children, &c.—a scriptural use of the word, applied to full grown persons; probably the Chaldeans or Babylonians are referred to.

Egypt—here science and art flourished for centuries.

trees, &c.—the various branches of natural history.

many as the sand—that is, exceeding numerous; the result of peace, industry, safety, and commercial enterprise.

making merry—it is quite right to rejoice when God blesses us—to show that we have glad and thankful hearts. This seems to have been the most prosperous and happy portion of Israel's history.

strange, &c.—intercourse with the wise men of heathen countries probably weakened his zeal for Jehovah.

served, &c.—this his father David never did; we do not read that Solomon fell into the idolatry of Egypt. See 'had married,' Les. 67.

QUESTIONS.

Whom did Solomon exceed in wisdom?
How do you understand the term children?

Who are probably meant by the children of The East country?

What had long flourished in Egypt?

Where was the fame of Solomon carried?
Of what did Solomon speak?

How many proverbs, and how many songs did he speak?

What was the business of twelve of his officers?

What is said of the number and the happiness of his people?

Why is it right for us to be merry?

How did Solomon offend God when he grew old?

What did God say he would do?

Who were stirred up against him?

What do you know of the Zidonians?

Give me some particulars of Damascus.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We here learn, THAT all true wisdom proceeds from God, who gives to his human creatures skill and sagacity to turn it to a good account. THAT when God blesses a nation it is not by diminishing the number of its inhabitants to the ordinary produce of the land, but by increasing the skill of its people, so as to afford to all a comfortable and happy provision. THAT the imperfections of human nature are seen in such examples as Solomon's declension from God. THAT age is no security against the degrading power of sin. THAT evil companions lead the upright astray, for "evil communications corrupt good manners."

72. Solomon's Enemies. His Repentance.

1 Kings xi. 29—43. Ecclesiastes.

Ahijah, the prophet, declared God's purposes against Solomon to Jeroboam, saying, that God would take the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon's son, and give ten tribes to Jeroboam, the servant of Solomon. Ahijah also declared that if Jeroboam did right, and kept God's commandments, God would build him a sure house, and give Israel to him. God also said he would afflict the seed of David, but not for ever. Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam, but he fled into Egypt⁵.

Solomon is supposed to have written the book of Ecclesiastes just before his death, after he had repented of his sins. He says, "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Solomon finishes all his instructions by saying, "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Solomon reigned over all Israel forty years, and was buried in the "City of David."

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

City of David—that portion of Jerusalem which David added; it was built on Mount Zion. Les. 68.

EXPLANATIONS.

God's purposes—to rend from Solomon's son ten tribes, for a separate kingdom. *give ten tribes to, &c.*—not for his goodness or deserts, but to chastise the apostacy of Solomon. *build him, &c.*—signifying that his family and descendants should enjoy the honour of royalty in Israel conditionally. *afflict*—cause to grieve; punish. *not for ever*—"He will not always chide neither will he keep his anger for ever." Out of the house of David the Messiah would arise. *to kill*—so as to frustrate his hopes; but Solomon ought to have known that he could not set aside God's purposes. *repented*—in the first six chapters of Ecclesiastes Solomon shows that all things in this world are vain and perishing; in the remaining chapters he shows that piety alone can secure true happiness. *vanity*—instability, uncertainty. *vexation*—disappointment, annoyance.

QUESTIONS.

What did Ahijah declare?
To whom did he make known God's purposes?
How many tribes were to be given to Jeroboam?
Why did God give ten tribes to him?
What encouragement did Ahijah give Jeroboam to do well?
What is meant by building him a sure house?
Who were to be afflicted?
Why not for ever?
What did Solomon seek to do?
Could he set aside God's purposes?
What book did Solomon write?
When did he write it?
What remarkable words has he recorded?
In what does man's duty consist?
What will God bring into judgment?
How long did Solomon reign?
Where was he buried?
What do you mean by the City of David?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn, THAT punishments are measured by, and accord with, offences; as Solomon revolted from God, a part of his kingdom will revolt from his son. THAT Solomon sinned in attempting to frustrate the purposes of God; he did not, like his father, acknowledge that it was good that he should be afflicted. THAT though it is probable that Solomon repented, yet it is not expressly stated; no one may presume to "continue in sin, that grace may abound." THAT human greatness, possessions, and knowledge, are but sources of trouble and anxiety. THAT the doctrine of a future state was believed under the Jewish dispensation.

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.

1 Kings xii. 1-24 ; xiv. 21.

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, was forty-one years old when he began to reign. Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel complained to Rehoboam of their heavy burdens under his father, and desired him to make their burdens lighter, and they would serve him. The king answered them roughly, for he forsook the counsel of the old men, who had advised him to answer the people kindly, and he followed the counsel of the young men, who had advised him to make their burdens heavier.

On hearing Rehoboam's answer the tribes of Israel sent for Jeroboam, and made him king over all Israel ; Rehoboam reigning over Judah only. Rehoboam assembled at Jerusalem⁵⁶ the tribes of Judah and Benjamin—180,000 men who were warriors, to fight against the ten tribes of Israel. But Shemaiah, the prophet, was instructed to go and tell Rehoboam and his people, that they should not go to fight against their brethren, the people of Israel. They hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord, and departed.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Israel—the kingdom of the ten tribes which revolted from Rehoboam. Its principal city was at first Shechem and afterwards Samaria.

Judah—the kingdom of Judah was separated from that of Israel after the death of Solomon ; its metropolis was Jerusalem, its first king Rehoboam. It embraced the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and parts of those of Simeon and Dan.

EXPLANATIONS.

the congregation—headed by Jeroboam.
heavy burdens, &c.—taxes which they had to pay for the support of his magnificent court. As Solomon's reign was noted for the peace, and happiness, and wealth of his subjects, (Les. 70, 71.) it is supposed this complaint was not just.
old men—those who had been his father's wisest counsellors.
young men—Rehoboam's own companions.
Israel—the kingdom which had the larger number of tribes took the national name of Israel.
sent for, &c.—to attend a council of the several heads of Israel.
reigning over, &c.—the kingdom was therefore called the kingdom of Judah. Benjamin was a small tribe compared with the thousands of Judah.

QUESTIONS.

Who reigned after Solomon ?
 What complaint did the people make to him at that time ?
 What do you understand by heavy burdens ?
 Why is it supposed these complaints were not just ?
 What did they promise him if he would grant their request ?
 Did Rehoboam answer favourably ?
 Whose advice did he follow ?
 What did the people do when the king answered roughly ?
 Whom did they make king ?
 Over whom did he reign ?
 Over whom did Rehoboam reign ?
 What preparations did he make ?
 Who forbade him going to war ?
 Did they hearken to Shemaiah ?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Though the subjects of Solomon enjoyed peace, happiness, and wealth, we find that there were dissatisfied people among them, who found a leader, and complained of their burdens. The advice of the aged should be generally preferred to that of the young, for they can speak from their experience of the past. Rashness of language often produces rashness of conduct. Rehoboam spoke intemperately, and the Israelites acted rebelliously. It is better to submit to crosses and losses than attempt to remove them by injury and violence to brethren. Finally, we see how God brings about his purposes by the follies and vices of men.

74. Jeroboam's Idolatry.

1 Kings xii. 24; xiii. 32.

Jeroboam built *Shechem*,³² in *Mount Ephraim*³⁴; and to prevent the tribes from going to *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ to sacrifice, he set up golden calves at *Bethel*³ and at *Dan*.³⁴ He also made priests of the lowest of the people, and he offered sacrifices on an altar which he had set up in *Bethel*. A man of God came out of Judah⁷³ to *Bethel*; he reproved Jeroboam, and cried against his altar.

When Jeroboam heard the words of the prophet he stretched out his hand to lay hold on him, and his hand dried up, so that he could not pull it to him again. The altar was also rent, and the ashes poured out. The king asked the man of God to pray the Lord that his hand might be restored; he did so, and the king's hand became as it was before. The man of God refused to go home with Jeroboam to eat bread, saying he had been commanded neither to eat bread nor drink water at *Bethel*. But an old prophet of *Bethel* followed him, and told him that an angel had appeared to him, desiring him to bring him back to *Bethel* to eat bread, and drink water. The man of God returned with him. Afterwards, as he was going home, a lion⁴⁰ slew him by the way for his disobedience.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Mount Ephraim—this name was given to a range of hills running through the allotment of Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph; they extended into the portion of Benjamin.

EXPLANATIONS.

Shechem—Jeroboam made this city the chief city of his kingdom; his capital.
golden calves—he had seen similar worship in Egypt, whither he had fled from Solomon. Les. 72. Aaron had made a golden calf. (Les. 23.)
he offered—he unlawfully assumed the priest's office, not fearing God's anger.
cried against, &c.—in crying against the altar, he cried also against its founder and its worshippers.
dried up—became rigid or stiff; withered.
restored—he did not ask him to pray that his sin might be pardoned.
neither to eat, &c.—as a sign to them that God esteemed them unworthy the friendship of his prophetic messenger.
returned—he ought to have known that God would not give contradictory commands to his servants.

QUESTIONS.

What place did Jeroboam build?
 What do you know of Mount Ephraim?
 For what intent did he set up the calves?
 Of whom did he make priests?
 Where had he probably seen the worship of golden calves?
 What else did he do wrong?
 By whom was he reproved?
 What is meant by the prophet crying against his altar?
 What did Jeroboam attempt to do unto the prophet?
 How was he prevented?
 By what means was his hand restored?
 What invitation did the man of God decline?
 Why did he refuse it?
 Did he not afterwards offend?
 Who told a lie in order to induce him to transgress?
 How was the man of God punished?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We see that Jeroboam had not faith in God's promise to build him "a sure house," if he would keep his commandments—that he undertook to establish himself on the throne, by instituting a mode of worship, and an order of priests, in opposition to those of divine appointment; that consequently, his want of faith led him into acts of direct rebellion against God. We also see that favours may be granted to wicked men, as evidences of the truth declared by God's prophets; and that false professors may mislead the faithful, and bring on them God's anger and punishment.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL. [975-606 B.C.]

75. Rehoboam and his people forsake God.

1 Kings xiv. 22—24; 2 Chron. xi. 13—17; xii.

The priests and Levites that were in *Israel*⁷³ left their possessions, and resorted to Rehoboam, for Jeroboam had cast them off; and out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ to worship. All these strengthened the kingdom of *Judah*,⁷³ and for three years they walked in the good ways of David and Solomon. After this Rehoboam forsook the law of the Lord, and the people of Judah provoked God, and committed greater sins than their fathers had done.

God then permitted Shishak, king of *Egypt*,⁵ to invade *Judah*. Shemaiah announced to Rehoboam and the princes, that because they had forsaken God, he had delivered them into the hands of Shishak. The king and the princes humbled themselves, and God said they should not be destroyed by Shishak, but that they should be his servants. Shishak took away the treasures of the house of the Lord; he carried away also the golden shields which Solomon had made, and Rehoboam put shields of brass in their place. Rehoboam reigned seventeen years, and was succeeded by his son Abijah.

EXPLANATIONS.

cast them off—they had several cities in his dominions (Les. 32). Jeroboam could not have done his people greater injury than to expel their religious teachers.
such as set, &c.—those faithful men who would not worship the idols of Jeroboam.
walked in, &c.—conducted themselves; maintained the public service of God.
forsook &c.—and practised a worse idolatry than that followed in Israel—the idolatry of the Canaanites.
their fathers—they who had sinned in the last years of Solomon's reign, when idols were worshipped in Judah.
Shemaiah—lest they should not understand the cause of their affliction, God sent a prophet to instruct them, in the ways of his providence.
humbled themselves—they acknowledged that God was righteous in afflicting them but their reformation was only partial therefore God restricted their deliverance.
took away, &c.—thus, only 33 years after the dedication of the temple, it was plundered.

QUESTIONS.

Why did the priests and Levites resort to Jerusalem?
 What effect would the casting off of these teachers necessarily have on the people?
 What other people came up to Jerusalem?
 What led them to prefer Jerusalem to any other place?
 What good effect had this increase of the people on Rehoboam's kingdom?
 How long did the king and people conduct themselves well?
 Tell me the words in which Rehoboam's transgression is related.
 How did the people of Judah forsake God?
 How had their fathers sinned?
 Whom did God then permit to invade Judah?
 Who was Shishak?
 What did Shemaiah announce?
 Why did God send a prophet to them?
 What did Shishak do?
 How did the people behave after their deliverance into the hands of Shishak?
 What place did Shishak plunder?
 How long had the temple then been built?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We here are reminded, that as we pray that we may not be suffered to fall into temptation, so it is our duty, like the priests and Levites, to flee from the way of it. We see that it adds greatly to the strength and prosperity of a country, if its rulers grant protection and encouragement to the servants of God, who take refuge there, in order to avoid persecution. We also learn, that when men prosper they sometimes forget God, and that they need severe correction to keep them in an humble and a submissive spirit.

PERIOD VI.] THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

76. Abijah's Success. Asa Destroys Idolatry.

2 Chron. xiii.—xiv. 3. 1 Kings xiv. 1—20; xv. 1—11, 25—28.

Abijah went to war with Jeroboam. He spake with him and his people against their idolatries, and said, "Behold, God himself is with us for our captain." During the battle which followed, God smote Jeroboam and all the army of Israel,⁷³ so that they fled. The children of Judah⁷³ prevailed because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers. Abijah walked in the sins of his father. He reigned three years, and was succeeded by his son Asa. In his days the land was quiet ten years; he did that which was good and right, and he removed all the idols.

Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, fell sick. Jeroboam, who resided at Tirzah, sent his wife in disguise to Ahijah, the prophet, at Shiloh,³² to inquire if the child should recover. Ahijah sent a message to Jeroboam reproving him for his idolatries; he said the child, Abijah, should die when she returned to the city.

Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, succeeded his father and reigned over Israel two years. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and followed the sins of his father. Baasha, son of Ahijah, of the tribe of Issachar, conspired against Nadab, slew him, and became king.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

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

EXPLANATIONS.

war, &c.—this was one of the sad effects of Solomon's sins; the division of the kingdom into two states caused jealousy and war between the same people.
prevailed—the battle is not always to the strong. What an ungrateful return for such a merciful deliverance.
disguise—she feigned herself to be another woman; but the Lord forewarned the prophet of her coming.
Ahijah—the same prophet who had declared God's purposes against Solomon; (Les. 72.) he now not only declares that Abijah shall die, but that the family of Jeroboam shall be extirpated for the evil he has brought on Israel,
followed, &c.—here is shown the evil effect of bad parental example.
slew him—when Baasha began to reign he destroyed all the house of Jeroboam, and thus his family became extinct twenty-four years after he had been raised to the throne of Israel.

QUESTIONS.

With whom did Abijah war?
 Why was this war particularly distressing?
 Against what did Abijah speak with Jeroboam and his people?
 Who did he say was their captain?
 Who obtained the victory?
 By whose especial favour?
 What good resulted from Judah's reliance on the Lord God?
 Did Abijah walk uprightly?
 Was his reign a long one?
 What is said of the state of the country in Asa's reign?
 Whose son fell sick?
 What do you know of Tirzah?
 To whom did Jeroboam send to inquire respecting his son?
 What is meant by disguise?
 Who was Ahijah?
 What did he tell Jeroboam's wife?
 What is said respecting Nadab and Baasha?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We here see the miserable effects of disunion among brethren; the descendants of the father of the faithful now imbrue their hands in each other's blood. We are also taught that reliance upon God is our best defence; that a wicked reign cut short is a great mercy to a nation; that an upright reign is most likely to be a peaceable one; and that the most impious people will be found, when troubles press upon them, secretly to turn to the counsel of those godly ministers whom they had previously neglected and despised.

77. Asa's Government.

2 Chron. xiv. 4—xvi. 9. 1 Kings xv. 12—22.

Asa commanded all Judah⁷³ to seek the Lord, and to obey the law, and the commandments. He built fenced cities, and strengthened them. Zerah, an Ethiopian, came against him with a million of men and three-hundred chariots²⁰ at Mareshah, in the valley of Zephathah. Asa cried to God for help, so the Lord smote the Ethiopians, and they fled. Asa then smote all the cities about Gerar,⁹ and returned to Jerusalem⁵⁶ with much spoil. The prophet Azariah, the son of Oded, came to counsel Asa. He said, unto him and his people "The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." Asa then took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all Judah and Benjamin.

After this Asa did wrong by sending the silver and gold that were left in the treasury of the temple to Benhadad, the king of Syria, at Damascus,⁷¹ to hire him to come and assist him in his wars against Baasha. At that time Hanani, the seer, came and reproved³⁹ Asa, because he had relied on the king of Syria, and not on the Lord his God.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Mareshah—a city of Judah, probably the birth-place of the prophet Micah.

Syria—an extensive country of Asia between the Euphrates and Arabia on the east and south, with Mount Taurus on the north, and the Mediterranean Sea and Canaan on the west. Syria was annexed to Assyria by Tiglath-pileser, who conquered Rezin, the king of Syria.

EXPLANATIONS.

fenced cities—cities with walls and strong towers in which soldiers kept watch, for the protection of his kingdom.
Ethiopian—an Arabian or African adventurer, who had no kingdom, but was followed by a horde of plunderers.
the Lord smote, &c.—Asa's army bore no proportion to that of the enemy; his success arose therefore from the inter-ference of the Lord.
took courage—banished every unworthy fear as to what the consequence might be.
abominable idols—as representatives of the Holy God, who is greater than our highest thoughts can reach, they were truly abominable.
hire—pay him for the service.
reproved—his punishment was that henceforth he should have wars; and he had wars with Baasha all his days.

QUESTIONS.

What command did Asa issue to all Judah?
 What are fenced cities, and why did he build them?
 Who was Zerah, the Ethiopian?
 Against whom did he come?
 To whom did Asa seek for help?
 Did God help him?
 Where was the battle fought?
 Where did Asa carry his victory?
 What did he obtain?
 Who came to Asa, and for what?
 What did Asa do when he heard Azariah's encouraging words?
 What error did Asa fall into after this?
 Who reproved him?
 What punishment was threatened by God through Hanani?
 What is Hanani called?
 Why did Hanani reprove Asa?
 What do you know of Syria?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

A reign commenced by enjoining obedience to the laws of God is begun well. Learn, THAT those who have power committed to them should use it for the suppression of profaneness. THAT every deliverance or victory which God gives us should be understood as an additional motive for devotion to his service. THAT the destruction of the signs, emblems, and instruments of sin is an important step towards promoting a general reformation. THAT even they who, like Asa, (and David,) aim at pleasing God continually, may, and do err; "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."

PERIOD VI.] THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

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

1 Kings xvi.

Jehu, the prophet, son of Hanani, declared to Baasha, the destruction which should come on his posterity, for his sins against God. After Baasha died, his son Elah became king; he was slain at a feast by Zimri, the captain of half his chariots. Zimri then slew all the house of Baasha—thus the word of the Lord, which Jehu had spoken against the posterity of Baasha, was fulfilled.

The Israelites made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel.⁷³ Omri besieged Tirzah,⁷⁶ and when Zimri saw that the city was taken, he set fire to the palace, and destroyed himself. Omri bought the hill Samaria, and built on it a city which he called Samaria. This city was the capital of the kingdom of Israel, as long as the kingdom existed.

Ahab was the son and successor of Omri. He did evil in the sight of the Lord above all who reigned before him. He took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians.⁷¹ He not only followed the sins of Jeroboam, but he also worshipped Baal. In his days Jericho³⁰ was rebuilt by Hiel, the Bethelite.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Samaria—about forty miles north of Jerusalem; it was built by Omri, who bought the hill Samaria of Shemer, and called the city after his name.

EXPLANATIONS.

the prophet—these holy men had painful duties to perform; it required strong faith in God's protection to carry such a message to such a wicked king.
posterity—children and grandchildren.
then slew, &c.—the family of Jeroboam had been all destroyed by Baasha, so now all Baasha's posterity were cut off, because they followed the sins of Jeroboam.
captain—it will be seen that many of the kings of Israel were military leaders; hence the glory of war was their ambition. What a contrast to Solomon's peaceable reign!
as long as, &c.—till the people were taken captive by the king of Assyria. Les. 108.
but he also, &c.—he added the idolatry of the Phenicians to that introduced by Jeroboam.
Baal—the god of the sun; the worship of the sun was very common among heathen nations. Ahab built a temple to Baal, and reared an altar in Samaria.

QUESTIONS.

What was Jehu?
 Why were the duties of a prophet trying?
 What did Jehu declare?
 Why was the destruction of Baasha threatened?
 Who became king after him?
 How was his destruction effected?
 Who was Omri?
 What place did he besiege?
 How did Zimri act?
 What did Omri purchase?
 For what purpose?
 How long was Samaria the chief city of Israel?
 What do you know of Samaria?
 Who was Ahab?
 Who was his wife?
 What new idolatry did Ahab introduce?
 Of what people was it the idolatry?
 What was the worship of Baal?
 How did Ahab encourage it?
 Who rebuilt Jericho?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The destruction which fell upon Baasha and his family should serve to impress upon our minds the awful declaration of the second commandment, "visiting the iniquities of the fathers," etc. They who resemble others in their sins have no right to expect that they shall escape their punishment. The downward progress of sin is shown in the history of Ahab; not content with the violation of the second commandment, which had long been perpetrated in Israel, he adds to it the sin of breaking the first.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL. [975-606 B.C.]

79. Asa's Death. Jehoshaphat's Prosperity.

1 Kings xxii. 41—44; 2 Kings viii. 18. 2 Chron. xvi. 11—xviii. 1.

Asa began to be troubled with a disease in his feet, in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, yet he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians. He died in the forty-first year of his reign, and was buried in his own sepulchre in the city of David.⁷² His son Jehoshaphat succeeded him; he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, but the people still offered and burned incense on the high places. Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

The Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in⁷⁵ the first ways of David, and kept the commandments of God; therefore the Lord established⁷⁶ his kingdom, and all Judah⁷³ brought presents, and he had riches and honour in abundance. He sent his princes,¹⁰ and Levites,²⁴ and priests, through all the cities of Judah, and they taught the people the book of the law. And the fear of the Lord fell on all the people of the lands about Judah, and they made no war against king Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat joined affinity with Ahab, by allowing his son Jehoram to marry Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Much evil afterwards resulted from this marriage.

EXPLANATIONS.

physicians—it was his duty to employ physicians, but those who are God's servants should not place their reliance on human skill.
still offered, &c.—these pernicious practices were introduced by Solomon and suffered by succeeding kings.
first ways, &c.—how careful should young religious people be, lest their later life prove a dark contrast with their earlier piety, as was the case with David.
established—"righteousness exalteth a nation" "the throne is established by righteousness."
book, &c.—roll of parchment. The labour and expense of copying being great, copies of the book of the law were scarce.
no war—"When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."
affinity—connexion by marriage.
resulted—it led Jehoshaphat into Ahab's wars with Syria.

QUESTIONS.

With what affliction was Asa visited in the close of his life?
 To whom did he seek for cure?
 In what respect was he right?
 How was this act an offence?
 How long did Asa reign?
 Who succeeded him as king?
 What is said of him?
 What sin did the people still continue to practise?
 With whom did Jehoshaphat make peace?
 Who first introduced these hurtful practices?
 In whose ways did he walk?
 How was his upright conduct rewarded by the Lord?
 What had he in abundance?
 How did he promote the education of the people in God's word?
 Why were books of the law scarce?
 Who were united in marriage?
 Into what evil did this alliance lead Jehoshaphat?
 What do you mean by affinity?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are taught by Asa's example, THAT when we use the creatures of God for our good it should be in dependance on the blessing of the Creator. THAT we should seek peace with all, as much as lieth in us, but to secure it we must not sacrifice truth nor a good conscience. THAT a religious reign is sure to be a prosperous and happy one. THAT it is the duty of all sovereigns, princes, and priests, to unite in disseminating the truths of revelation among the people at large. THAT the worst men appreciate and respect a consistent life. THAT our family connexions should never be taken from among the ungodly.

80. **Elijah's Mission to Ahab.**

1 Kings xvii.—xviii. 16.

Elijah, the 'Tishbite, was an inhabitant of *Gilead*.¹³ He declared to Ahab that there should be 'neither dew nor rain for some years. By the command of the Lord he then went to hide himself by the brook 'Cherith. The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the 'morning and in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

According to the word of the Lord, Elijah went thence to 'Zarephath, at which place God had commanded a widow woman to sustain him. She had no bread, and only a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little 'oil in a cruse, which she was about to dress for herself and her son, that they might eat it and die. Elijah told her not to fear, and said, "The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth." The word of the Lord which he spake by Elijah was fulfilled. Elijah afterwards 'restored her son to life.

After many days Elijah was commanded to show himself to Ahab, and God promised to send rain upon the earth. Obadiah, a good man, who was the governor of Ahab's house, met Elijah and knew him. He told Elijah that Ahab had sent to 'seek him in all nations, and kingdoms. Elijah said, "I will surely show myself unto him to-day." So Obadiah went and told Ahab; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Cherith—a brook near the Jordan, where Elijah was commanded to conceal himself.

Zarephath—a city of Phœnicia, which was situated between Tyre and Sidon.

EXPLANATIONS.

Tishbite—some suppose this refers to the prophet's native town; others that it means the 'reformer.'
declared—nothing but the strongest faith in the protection of the Lord could induce men thus to put their lives in their hand, and deliver the messages with which they are entrusted.
neither . . . rain, &c.—the divine chastisement for the nation's sin. He who "sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," can withhold it for his purposes.
morning . . . evening—the times of the two principal meals.
oil—it is used in cooking instead of butter throughout the East.
restored, &c.—how wonderfully God rewards His servants who honour Him by doing good to their poor brethren.
seek him—that he might put him to death.

QUESTIONS.

What is said of Elijah?
 For what purpose was he sent to Ahab?
 Why was there to be neither rain nor dew?
 What would be the consequence? [dew?
 Where was Elijah then to go?
 By what means was he fed at the brook Cherith?
 How often did the ravens bring him food?
 Whither did Elijah go next?
 Where was Zarephath?
 With whom did he lodge there?
 How was this family supplied with food during the famine?
 What did Elijah do to her son?
 What did God promise to send?
 Who was Obadiah?
 What did he tell Elijah?
 What answer did Elijah make?
 What did Obadiah then do?
 Whither did Ahab go?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We here learn, **THAT** all nature is under the control of God who at his pleasure can give or withhold rain and fruitful seasons. **THAT** God is able to sustain the lives of his servants when human succour is not near. **THAT** examples of contentment and faithfulness combined may be found among the poor. **THAT** a generous heart fails not of its reward, "God loveth a cheerful giver." **THAT** God "killeth and maketh alive," though he may employ instruments in the execution of his will. **THAT** in the worst courts and in the worst times good men may be found whose integrity and fidelity commend themselves to their masters' favour.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL. [975-606 B.C.]

81. The Sacrifice on Carmel.

1 Kings xviii. 17-46.

When Ahab saw Elijah he said unto him, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" And Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel⁷³; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim." He told Ahab to send and gather all Israel unto "Mount Carmel, with the prophets of Baal,⁷⁸ and the prophets of the groves. So Ahab gathered the people and the prophets together unto Mount Carmel. Elijah came unto all the people, and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The people answered not a word. Elijah then said, Give us two bullocks, let the prophets of Baal choose one bullock, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under. And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people said, "It is well spoken." The false prophets called on the name of Baal till the time of the evening sacrifice, but there was no answer. Elijah then called on the LORD God, and the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed his offering. The people fell on their faces when they saw it, saying, "The LORD, he is the God." The people, according to Elijah's command, slew all the prophets of Baal. Soon after there was a sound of abundance of rain.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

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

EXPLANATIONS.

not troubled . . . but, &c.—those who are the cause of God's judgments do the mischief, not those who only foretel them.
send and gather &c.—Elijah spoke with divine authority which Ahab at once acknowledged and submitted to.
groves—places where shady trees stand thick. In those idolatrous retreats idols were set up, and bad deeds were done.
halt—hesitate; or linger in uncertainty.
people said—the proposal was reasonable.
no answer—yet Baal was the god of the sun, the source of heat and light.
fire . . . fell—this showed God's acceptance of Elijah's offering; it was the token agreed upon, and to which all Israel were witnesses.
sound, &c.—as the wind murmuring in the sky and driving on the rain-clouds.

QUESTIONS.

What was Ahab's address to Elijah?
 How did Elijah then reprove Ahab?
 Was it Elijah's prophecy, or Ahab's and the nation's idolatry that had troubled Israel?
 What did Elijah desire Ahab to do?
 Did Ahab obey?
 Who assembled on Mount Carmel?
 In what words did Elijah address the people?
 Did the people answer him?
 For what did Elijah ask?
 What proposal did Elijah make?
 Were the people satisfied to put the claims of Baal and of Jehovah to this test?
 Did Baal cause the sacrifice to be burned up which was offered by his priests?
 Was Elijah's offering consumed?
 What effect had this on the people?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We learn, THAT sin is the cause of all our troubles, and that to follow our own ways is to forsake God. THAT great sinners will sometimes be found to stand in awe of eminent saints; Ahab consented to Elijah's proposal, probably because he feared him. THAT those who plead for truth against error have only fair proposals to make. THAT God is able to confound those who "put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face." THAT the universal acknowledgement of the True God brought down the blessing which the nation needed.

82. **Elijah's Grief. Elisha is Called.**

1 Kings xix.

Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, determined⁵⁹ to put Elijah to death. Elijah arose, and went to *Beersheba*⁴³ in Judah, there he left his servant, but he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness,⁹ and sat down under a juniper tree, and he requested for himself that he might die. An angel²⁰ brought him food. And he arose, and did eat, and drink, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto *Horeb*,²¹ the mount of God.

And the word of the Lord came to him and said, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of *Israel*⁷³ have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." And Elijah stood on the mount before the Lord. God told Elijah to return towards *Damascus*,⁷¹ and to anoint Hazael to be king over *Syria*,⁷⁷ and Jehu, the son of Nimshi, to be king over Israel, and Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of *Abel-meholah*, to be prophet in his room. God then assured Elijah that there were seven-thousand men in Israel, who had not bowed the knee to Baal.⁷⁸

Elijah found Elisha ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and Elijah cast his mantle upon him. Elisha left the oxen, and went after Elijah, and ministered to him.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Abel-meholah—a town in western Manasseh, to which the army of the Midianites went when put to flight by Gideon. This town was the birth-place of Elisha.

EXPLANATIONS.

arose—got ready for a journey, set out.
a day's journey—perhaps 20 English miles.
juniper tree—a species of broom, common in Arabia.
requested—besought. He felt weary of life.
strength, &c.—God caused it to afford him nourishment for that very long period.
mount of God—so called because the law was there given by God to Moses. L. 22.
jealous, &c.—offended; because the honour due to God was withheld from Him.
I, even I—he thought there was no one else in all Israel who publicly acknowledged and worshipped God.
ploughing—Elisha is taken from the plough to be a prophet. David was taken from the sheep-fold to be a king. Les. 45.
ministered to—served; Elijah had now a companion, and Elisha had the advantage of his experience.

QUESTIONS.

Who wickedly determined to kill Elijah?
 Did Elijah rashly brave danger?
 At what place did he leave his servant?
 What did Elijah request?
 Why did he wish for death?
 What notice did the Lord take of his request?
 How long did that meal sustain his strength?
 Whither did he come to next?
 By whom was he addressed?
 What did the Lord ask?
 What was Elijah's answer?
 What reply did God make?
 Whom did Elijah call to be his successor?
 What town was the birth-place of Elisha?
 How was Elisha engaged?
 How did Elijah call him?
 What did Elisha do?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We have here a proof that men of great faith and courage will sometimes quail before a threatened evil, and we learn that when faith fails unhappiness succeeds. "We count them happy which endure." If God were to grant our impatient wishes our case would be bad indeed, therefore let us not sin with the tongue. When we retire from active service, God may be heard speaking to our consciences, "What doest thou?" we should therefore keep in the path of duty. In the worst seasons a remnant is left that keep faithful to God though a feeling of despondency may cause us to think things are worse than they are.

83. Benhadad Besieges Samaria.

1 Kings xx. 1-25.

Benhadad, king of *Syria*,⁷⁷ sent messengers to Ahab saying, "Thy silver and thy gold *is* mine; thy wives also and thy children, *even* the goodliest, *are* mine." Ahab said, "I *am* thine, and all that I have." Again Benhadad sent messengers to take whatsoever was pleasant in the eyes of Ahab and his servants. The elders of *Israel*,⁷³ and all the people advised Ahab not to hearken to Benhadad. Benhadad then told his servants to set themselves in array against the city of *Samaria*.⁷⁸

A prophet³⁶ came to Ahab and assured him that God would deliver that great multitude into his hand, and that the victory should be gained by the young princes. At noon Benhadad was drinking himself drunk, he and the thirty-two kings that aided him. The young princes of Israel went out of the city first; the army followed the princes, and they slew every one his man; the *Syrians*⁵⁷ fled, but the king escaped. The prophet came again to Ahab, and told him that Benhadad would come against him at the return of³⁴ the year. The Syrians said of the Israelites, "Their gods *are* gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they."

EXPLANATIONS.

saying, &c.—he took to himself the honour of being master of all Israel.
Ahab said, &c.—a very degrading admission, showing a willingness to be considered a tributary to Syria.
pleasant—desirable; all that they set much value upon.
servants—soldiers; those who served in the war.
A prophet—an inspired messenger from God.
deliver . . . into his hand—give him the victory over them.
drinking, &c.—drunkenness has caused many a man's ruin.
his man—the Syrians were not in fighting order, they were in confusion.
of the hills—the Syrians had not a correct notion of the One True God; but supposed that the Israelites had gods of the hills, gods of the valleys, gods of the rivers, &c.

QUESTIONS.

What insolent message did Benhadad send to Ahab?
 Did Ahab admit the truth of the message?
 What next did the Syrian king do?
 Were they permitted to do as their master commanded?
 Who advised Ahab not to comply?
 What was the next step Benhadad took?
 Was any communication made to Ahab?
 By whom?
 Who were to gain the victory?
 How was the fulfilment of this prophecy brought about?
 What became of Benhadad?
 What was told Ahab?
 By whom?
 What opinion did the Syrians express concerning the gods of the Israelites?
 To what heathen notion did they refer when they spoke of the gods of Israel?
 By what means did they think they could conquer the Israelites?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We have here a picture of guilty cowardice. Ahab had put himself from under the divine protection, and he makes a mean surrender to Benhadad. We see that a reasonable submission will not satisfy an insolent and imperious king; Ahab is required not only to be the vassal of Syria, but also to pay a heavy tribute from the wealth of his people. We also see that an unreasonable and unjust demand may stir up a cowardly king to hostility and resistance; and that God may interfere for those who serve him not, if they suffer wrongfully from tyrants.

PERIOD VI.] THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

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

1 Kings xx. 26—43.

Benhadad came again, as the prophet³⁶ had predicted.¹⁶ at the 'return of the year, and went up to 'Aphek to fight against *Israel*.⁷³ The army of the children⁷¹ of *Israel* was like two little 'flocks of kids; but the *Syrians*⁷⁷ filled the country. A man of God came and said to Ahab, "Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not god of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and 'ye shall know that I *am* the LORD." On the seventh day the two armies joined in battle, and the Israelites slew of the Syrians 100,000 footmen in one day; the rest fled into *Aphek*, and there a wall fell upon 27,000 of them. Benhadad fled, and hid himself in an inner chamber in the city.

The servants of Benhadad humbled themselves to Ahab and asked the life of Benhadad, who 'proposed this covenant to Ahab, "The cities which my father took from thy father, I will 'restore; and thou shalt make 'streets for thee in *Damascus*,⁷¹ as my father made in *Samaria*.⁷⁵" To this Ahab agreed. He was afterwards 'denounced by a prophet³⁶ for letting Benhadad escape.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Aphek—There are several cities of this name mentioned in the Bible. Aphek in Syria was one of the chief cities in the kingdom of Benhadad.

EXPLANATIONS.

return of, &c.—probably after the harvest had been gathered in, and the great heats of the summer were over.
flocks of kids, &c.—very expressive of the disproportion in the numbers of this army to that of the Syrians.
ye shall know, &c.—by proving to you that it is not by great numbers that victory is gained, but according to my will.
proposed—made an offer.
restore—after nations of about equal strength have been at war for some time; it is usual when they wish for peace for both to give back their conquests. Better not to have engaged in war at all.
streets for thee—certain streets where Israelites alone might carry on business unmolested.
denounced—threatened in an authoritative voice, and by a parable and its application showed him that his own life, and the lives of his people would be taken for his unwise clemency.

QUESTIONS.

What prophecy was now fulfilled?
 Where did the armies of Syria and Israel join in battle?
 How is the disproportion in the army of Israel to that of the Syrians described?
 What message from the Lord was communicated to Ahab?
 Was it because of the goodness of Ahab that this promise was given?
 How were they to know that Jehovah is the only God?
 Did the armies remain long in each other's view before fighting?
 How did the battle end?
 Did any other loss occur to the Syrians besides the loss in battle?
 Tell me how Benhadad afterwards acted.
 Did Ahab agree to the proposals made by Benhadad?
 What were the proposals?
 For what was Ahab afterwards blamed?
 How did the prophet show him the fatal effects of his clemency to himself and his people?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Observe that God gave the victory to Ahab not because he and his people had humbled themselves, and repented, and supplicated the divine protection, but because the Syrians had blasphemed God. Observe again that the victory which God gave Ahab had no effect in bringing him to acknowledge God's goodness and to seek his favour. Again, that the haughtiness of the Syrian king is changed into the most abject supplication; and lastly, that the victory granted to Ahab by God's favour, leads him to affect more compassion, and to exercise greater mercy than justice warrants.

85. Ahab Covets Naboth's Vineyard.

1 Kings xxi. 1-27.

Near Ahab's palace in Jezreel, a man named Naboth had a vineyard. Ahab wanted it for a garden of herbs, so he offered Naboth a better vineyard for it, or its worth in money. Naboth refused to sell it, because it was the inheritance of his fathers. Ahab was sorrowful and displeased. Jezebel, his wife, promised to procure him the vineyard. She wrote letters in Ahab's name, to the elders of the city, desiring them to obtain false witnesses, to say that Naboth had blasphemed God and the king, and directing that he should afterwards be stoned. All this was done, and Naboth was stoned. Jezebel then told Ahab to arise and take possession of the vineyard. Elijah was commanded to meet Ahab in the vineyard, and to make known to him that dogs should lick his blood, as they had licked the blood of Naboth—and that the dogs should eat Jezebel, by the wall of Jezreel. When Ahab heard these words, he rent his clothes, put on sackcloth, fasted, and went softly.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Jezreel—a celebrated city in the valley of Jezreel in the tribe of Issachar.

EXPLANATIONS.

palace—royal residence
inheritance—that which has been long handed down from father to son, from generation to generation. The Israelites were forbidden to dispossess themselves of their lands. Num. xxxvi. 7.
sorrowful, &c.—he suffered his disappointment to make him unhappy and angry.
stoned—this was the punishment for blasphemy; the offender was taken outside the city.
as they had, &c.—the punishment being similar in many respects to the crime, would prove that it was ordered by the Lord.
rent—tore; it was a common mode of expressing grief in the East.
sackcloth, &c.—outward signs of sorrow.
softly—with a quiet humble look and step.

QUESTIONS.

Where was Jezreel?
 Who had a palace there?
 What stood near it which he coveted?
 What did Ahab want it for?
 What proposal did he make to Naboth?
 Did Naboth agree to it?
 What is an inheritance?
 Were the Israelites permitted to alienate their lands?
 How did Ahab show his disappointment?
 Who promised to procure the vineyard for him?
 Tell me the means this wicked woman employed to gain her ends.
 Did Ahab show any dislike to possess himself of Naboth's vineyard, now that it had been obtained by murder?
 Whose doom did Elijah pronounce?
 How did Ahab conduct himself?
 Of what were these signs?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are here taught that the sin of covetousness is not confined to any class of people, kings may be guilty of it as well as their meanest subjects; Had Ahab forgotten the command: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house"? We learn also, that a wicked wife is a curse, and that they who devise means for gratifying the iniquitous desires of the great are their worst enemies. It is clearly shown, that one iniquity leads to another—covetousness to perjury—perjury to murder; and that God will avenge the blood of the innocent, even on the heads of royal murderers.

86. Battle at Ramoth-gilead.

1 Kings xxii. 3—40.

Ahab wanted to take *Ramoth-gilead* from the *Syrians*,⁵⁷ and he desired that Jehoshaphat, king of *Judah*,⁷³ should accompany him. At the request of Jehoshaphat, Ahab consulted his prophets, and they said, "Go up." Jehoshaphat inquired for a prophet³⁶ of the Lord. Ahab answered that there was none but Micaiah, and he always prophesied evil concerning him. When he came he answered in the words of the prophets of Ahab. The king perceived that Micaiah's answer was contrary to his knowledge, and adjured him to say nothing but what was true. Micaiah then foretold Ahab's death. Ahab remarked that Micaiah had again prophesied evil, and ordered him to be put into prison till his return in peace. Micaiah said, "If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me."

Ahab disguised himself, and went into the battle, but Jehoshaphat was in his robes. During the battle a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote Ahab. He was then driven in his chariot out of the battle. His blood flowed into his chariot,²⁰ and he died. His chariot was washed in the pool of *Samaria*⁷³; and the dogs licked up his blood, as Elijah had foretold. Ahab was succeeded by his son Ahaziah.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

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

EXPLANATIONS.

accompany—that he and his army should go in company with Ahab and his army.
prophets—these were false prophets.
Go up—this was the advice of men who taught lies, and who knew not what would be the result.
of the Lord—one who knew the will of God.
prophesied evil—Could he, as an honest prophet, speak of peace to a wicked man?
adjured him—bound him by an oath; by a solemn pledge.
true—only what he could speak in the name of the Lord.
If thou, &c.—this would be a sure proof that he was a true prophet of the Lord.
disguised, &c.—this showed that he had a secret fear that Micaiah's words would be fulfilled.
the dogs, &c.—the prophecy of Elijah was soon verified.

QUESTIONS.

What place did Ahab wish to gain possession of?
 Where was Ramoth-gilead situated?
 What do you know of this place?
 Whose help did he solicit?
 What did the false prophets advise the king to do?
 Who was dissatisfied with the advice of the false prophets?
 Who was Micaiah?
 How did Micaiah answer at first?
 What did the king do?
 What is it to adjure?
 When adjured what did Micaiah foretel?
 What cruel order did Ahab then give?
 What was Micaiah's parting answer?
 How did Ahab show that he feared Micaiah's words would prove true?
 Did he escape by this prudent arrangement?
 What prophecy was fulfilled? [ment?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We here see that tyrants do not respect their word, Benhadad failed to restore the cities he had covenanted to give up to Israel. There is danger in alliances with the wicked; the family connexions of Jehoshaphat with Ahab caused him to overlook his idolatry. It is desirable to consult wise and godly persons respecting any undertaking we propose, but we see that faithful ministers are hated by wicked men; "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee." Micaiah's hard lot shows us that many of whom the world was not worthy, suffered "bonds and imprisonment" for the truth's sake. And Ahab's death, that no disguise can secure a man from the arrow of God's vengeance, when his days are numbered.

87. Jehoshaphat Reproved. His Trust in God.

2 Chron. xix.—xx. 30.

When Jehoshaphat returned to his house, Jehu, the prophet, met him and reproved⁹ him for going to 'help the ungodly. Jehoshaphat placed judges in his fenced cities,⁷⁷ and commanded them to judge the people 'righteously; he charged the Levites²⁴ and priests to act in the 'fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a 'perfect⁶⁵ heart.

The Moabites²³ and Ammonites³⁸ invaded *Judah*⁷³; Jehoshaphat set himself 'to seek the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast throughout his kingdom. The people gathered themselves together 'in the house of the Lord, and Jehoshaphat stood in the 'congregation and offered up a solemn prayer to God for aid. In the morning they went forth into the wilderness⁹ of 'Tekoa, and as they went Jehoshaphat said to them, "Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of *Jerusalem*⁵⁶; 'Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established⁵⁶; believe 'his prophets, so shall ye prosper." When they began to sing, the children of Moab and Ammon rose up and slew those of *Mount Seir*,¹³ who had also come against *Judah*; and afterwards they helped to destroy one another.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Tekoa—a city of Judah; Amos the prophet was a native of this place.

EXPLANATIONS.

help, &c.—an error of the good king.
 Good people sometimes err as others do.
righteously—justly; not showing favour nor disfavour to one man more than another, nor taking gifts of any.
fear, &c.—not terror; but with a solemn feeling of reverence.
perfect—sincere; not with a double mind.
to seek, &c.—to try to find out by proper means whether the Lord would be favourable to him.
in the house, &c.—in the court of the temple; they were in danger, and they sought the Lord in his house of prayer.
congregation—the men of the nation.
Believe in, &c.—God; the Lord of all power and might.
his prophets—they that speak the truth as God's servants and give you good counsel.

QUESTIONS.

By whom was Jehoshaphat reproved?
 When, and for what?
 What improvement did he then introduce in his government?
 What did he command the judges to do?
 What was the charge which he gave to the Levites and priests?
 By whom was Judah invaded?
 Did Jehoshaphat go at once to attack them?
 How did he act?
 Is it right that we should begin all great works with reverence?
 Where was the battle fought?
 What was Jehoshaphat's address to his army on going to fight?
 Who succeeded in the fight?
 By what means were the Israelites saved from their numerous enemies?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Jehoshaphat loved God—he returns in safety after a dangerous expedition with Ahab. He took reproof well; "Rebuke a wise man and he will love thee." His zeal was quickened by reproof; "Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning." He saw the danger of invasion to his nation, he called for national penitence, fasting, and prayer, and he thus teaches us that faith in God, and confidence in the word of his prophets are our best defences. We also learn, that God often makes wicked people instruments of destruction to one another.

88. Elijah's Translation.

2 Kings i.; ii. 1—12.

Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, fell through a lattice in his upper chamber; he then sent messengers to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron,⁴² to know if he should recover. Elijah was commanded to meet the messengers, to reprove the king for his impiety, and to say that he should surely die. He died soon after, and Joram, his son, reigned in his stead.

When Elijah was about to be taken into heaven Elisha went with him to Gilgal.³⁰ Elijah told him to tarry at Gilgal, for the Lord had sent him to Bethel.⁶ Elisha would not leave him. The sons of the prophets at Bethel asked Elisha—if he knew that the Lord would take away his master that day. Elijah told Elisha to tarry at Bethel, for the Lord had sent him to Jericho.³⁰ Elisha said he would not leave him. So they went together to Jericho. At Jericho Elijah told Elisha to tarry there, for the Lord had sent him to Jordan.³⁰ Elisha would not leave Elijah; and they went on together and stood by Jordan. Elijah wrapped his mantle together, and smote the waters; they divided,²⁰ and the two prophets went over on dry ground. As they went on, a chariot of fire and horses of fire parted them, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.

EXPLANATIONS.

lattice—a railed fence on the upper part of his palace.
Baal-zebub—‘the god of flies’; like his father he preferred idols to the living God.
impiety—want of true religion; contempt of the Lord God.
to tarry, &c.—thus the constancy of Elisha to his master, and his knowledge of God’s purpose respecting him, were tried but Elisha was resolved not to leave his master.
sons, &c.—disciples, learners. They lived together in schools or colleges.
divided—as they did in the time of Joshua. See Les. 30.
chariot of fire, &c.—thus rendering his departure conspicuous and illustrious in the eyes of those who witnessed it.
whirlwind—a wind which blows round and round, caused by two currents of air from different directions.

QUESTIONS.

What evil happened to Ahaziah?
 To whom did he make application respecting his recovery?
 What was Baal-zebub?
 Who was commanded to meet the king’s messengers?
 What was Elijah to say?
 What wonderful occurrence was now about to take place?
 By whom was he accompanied to Gilgal? —to Bethel?
 What did this prove?
 What question did the sons of the prophets at Bethel put to Elisha?
 What were the sons of the prophets?
 Whither did Elijah and Elisha then proceed?
 By what means did they get over Jordan?
 By what were they parted?
 How did Elijah ascend to heaven?
 What is a whirlwind?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The accidents of life show us that “there is but a step between (us) and death.” Those who consult fortune tellers as to the future imitate wicked Ahaziah; our business is to say “Lord what wilt thou have me to do?” and to leave the future in God’s hands. The narrative of Elijah’s translation shows us, THAT the dearest friends must part. THAT those who possess influence and learning in the church should take care to leave behind them well trained ministers to carry forward the work of God. THAT God gave witness to the doctrine of a future state by the translation of his servant Elijah.

89. Elisha succeeds Elijah.

2 Kings ii. 13—iii. 25.

Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah, which fell from him, and went to the *Jordan*.³⁰ He smote the waters, with Elijah's mantle; they parted, and he went over. When the sons³⁸ of the prophets at *Jericho*³⁰ saw him they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha," and they bowed themselves before him. The men of *Jericho* complained to Elisha of the badness of the water, and the barrenness of the land. He cast salt into the waters, and healed them, and the land was no longer barren. Elisha went to *Bethel*.⁶ Some children⁷¹ out of the city mocked⁹ him, and two she-bears came out of the wood, and destroyed forty-two of them. From *Bethel* he went to *Mount Carmel*,⁵¹ and thence to *Samaria*.⁷³

Joram, king of *Israel*,⁷³ asked Jehoshaphat to go with him against *Moab*²⁸ to battle. The king of *Edom* also joined them. They were in want of water, and Jehoshaphat asked for a prophet⁸³ of the Lord. They heard of Elisha, and went down to him. He told them to make the valley full of ditches, and they should find water for themselves and their cattle, he also told them that God would deliver the Moabites into their hand. In the morning the country was filled with water. When the Moabites came the sun shone on the water so they thought it was blood, and that the kings had smitten one another. When they came to the camp⁴² of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote them; they also beat down the cities, marred the good land with stones, stopped up the wells, and felled every tree.

EXPLANATIONS.

mantle—the same which Elijah had cast upon Elisha when he called him. Les. 82.
The spirit, &c.—before Elijah's departure Elisha had asked for a double portion of his spirit.
bowed—acknowledged him as their head.
barrenness—unfruitfulness; Jericho had been cursed, the curse was now removed.
healed—of their disagreeable qualities.
asked—as did his father Ahab when going to fight with the Syrians. Les. 86.
joined—the descendants of Lot and Esau unite against Jacob's descendants.
Elisha—he must have been in the immediate vicinity of the camp; perhaps his steps had been directed by heaven, where he was wanted.
blood—appeared so by the glistening of the sun's rays upon it.

QUESTIONS.

What did Elisha obtain which belonged to Elijah?
 What was the first use he made of it?
 What did this lead the sons of the prophets at Jericho to say?
 What request had Elisha made before Elijah's departure?
 Who acknowledged Elisha's headship?
 What complaints were made to Elisha at Jericho?
 Did Elisha remove them?
 By what means?
 Whither did Elisha next proceed?
 What fearful judgment here fell on some young persons for their wicked conduct?
 With whom did Jehoshaphat go to battle?
 Against whom did they go?
 What did the united armies require?
 How did Elisha intimate that water would be supplied to them?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The faithful and affectionate service of Elisha is rewarded, he is endowed with the spirit of Elijah. We should be prompt to acknowledge those who minister to us in holy things. We cannot do as Elisha did at Jericho, but we should aim at leaving every place we reside in better than we found it. How ought we to value the natural gifts of providence! Without water we should all perish; the temporary want of it soon humbles kings and their armies; none can tell how much the ungodly are indebted to the righteous for many of the common blessings of life; here the wicked Joram obtains favour because of the presence of the good king Jehoshaphat.

90. Miracles of Elisha.

2 Kings iv.

A poor widow came to Elisha, and complained that her creditor was about to take her two sons as bondmen, because she could not pay her debt. She said she had nothing in the house but a pot of oil. Elisha told her to borrow a large number of empty vessels, from her neighbours, and to pour out the oil, and set the vessels aside as she filled them. This she did, and she came and told Elisha. He told her to sell the oil, and pay the debt, and live herself and her children upon the rest. Elisha was hospitably entertained at Shunem, by a great woman there, who respected him because he was a holy man of God. Elisha promised her a son, and his word was fulfilled. When the child was grown, he went out one day to his father to the reapers, he was taken ill and died. His mother fetched Elisha, from Mount Carmel,⁸¹ and he restored the child to life. Elisha came to Gilgal³⁰ when there was a dearth in the land, and the pottage made for the sons of the prophets was found to be poisonous. Elisha healed the pottage by casting meal into the pot. He also fed a hundred persons with twenty loaves, which a man from Baal-shalisha brought to him as a present.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Shunem—a city in the border of Issachar, which Elisha frequently visited; it was about five miles from Mount Tabor.

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

EXPLANATIONS.

A ... widow—this poor woman had lost her provider and protector—her husband, who had been a prophet, but who had died poor, and in debt.
creditor—one who lends money or gives goods on a promise of future payment.
bondmen—persons compelled or bound to labour for others.
hospitably—with kindness and generosity.
a great woman—one of wealth and piety.
respected—regarded with reverence.
promised, &c.—the words of Christ are here verified, “He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward.”
reapers—this was the hot season of the year, when people of the East sometimes die suddenly from exposure to the sun.
dearth—See ‘famine,’ Les. 7. for the wickedness of the people.
healed—made it wholesome and pleasant.

QUESTIONS.

What complaint was made to Elisha?
 By whom? Of whom?
 What do we know of her husband?
 What is a creditor?
 What are bondmen?
 How did Elisha enable her to pay her debt?
 Where was Elisha entertained?
 What do you know of Shunem?
 By whom? In what way? Why?
 What reward was granted her?
 What occurred to the child?
 What did the mother do?
 Was the child restored?
 Why was there a dearth in the land?
 What discovery was made at Gilgal?
 Did Elisha remedy this evil?
 How, and where did Elisha further prove his divine mission?
 In what tribe was Baal-shalisha?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The miracles of Elisha were not for show but were acts of charity; hence we should seek to do good and to benefit our fellow creatures from love to God. Debt is a burden to be avoided, it oppresses the spirits of honest people who feel that “the borrower is servant to the lender.” Hospitality to God’s ministers from love to Him and respect to their office is not only a duty but will be rewarded. Christ himself says, “Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of those little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”

91. Naaman's Leprosy Cured.

2 Kings v.

Naaman was captain of the host⁵² of the king of Syria,⁷⁷ and he was a leper. The king of Syria wrote a letter to Joram, the king of Israel,⁵³ requiring that he would cure Naaman of his leprosy.²⁵ Elisha heard of it, and sent to the king that Naaman should go to him. Naaman came to Elisha, who told him to wash in Jordan³⁰ seven times, and he should be clean. Naaman was angry, and went away saying, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus,⁷¹ better than all the waters of Israel?" The servants of Naaman said, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" Then Naaman went and dipped seven times in Jordan, and his flesh came again, like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. He returned to Elisha, and prayed him to take a present from him; but Elisha refused. Naaman said he would henceforth offer neither burnt-offering⁴⁵ nor sacrifice⁴ unto other gods, than the Lord. When Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, saw Naaman depart, he followed him, and asked, in the name of his master, for silver and changes of raiment. Elisha reprov'd him, and said the leprosy of Naaman should cleave unto Gehazi and to his seed for ever.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Abana—Pharpar—the chief rivers of Damascus; Abana descending from Mount Hermon, flowed through the city and divided it into two parts.

EXPLANATIONS.

leper—a person infected with leprosy.
leprosy—a disease of warm climates. It was called by the Hebrews the stroke or wound of the Lord.
to wash, &c.—prescribed as a trial of his obedience.
angry—he felt disappointed that the cure was not performed at once.
My father—thus expressing his care and kindness, as well as acknowledging his authority.
prayed him—earnestly begged or entreated him; his pride was now humbled.
other gods—he was cured of idolatry as well as of leprosy.
cleave—stick fast unto—thus his covetousness was punished.
seed for ever—thus the remembrance of his crime was perpetuated.

QUESTIONS.

What is said of Naaman?
 What do you mean by a leper?
 What did the king of Syria do?
 Could the king of Israel cure Naaman?
 Who did cure him?
 What means did Elisha tell him to adopt to effect his cure?
 Was Naaman willing at first to follow Elisha's instructions?
 What did he say?
 How did Naaman's servants act?
 What was the result of Naaman's obedience?
 How did he show his gratitude to Elisha?
 Did Elisha receive Naaman's present?
 What did Naaman say he would not henceforth do?
 What wickedness was Gehazi guilty of?
 How was he punished?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Naaman's leprosy teaches us that the greatest men are subject to the common afflictions of humanity;—his *pride*, that humility gives access to many blessings from which pride would exclude us; his *cure*, that the greatest mercies are those which are most common, as light, air, water, &c., and that the best remedies are those that are most natural; his *after-obedience*, that an humble and a childlike observance of ordinances, will contribute to our spiritual cleansing from the leprosy of sinful habits. Elisha's disinterestedness in doing good is worthy the imitation of all; while we see in Gehazi that covetousness and lying are vices which God abhors and punishes.

92. The Messengers from Syria.

2 Kings vi. 1—23.

The sons⁸⁸ of the prophets wished to remove their dwelling to a larger place. Elisha went with them to *Jordan*.³⁰ As one was felling a tree the axe-head fell into the water, and he was grieved because it was borrowed. Elisha cast in a stick there; the iron swam, and the man took it out. The king of *Syria*⁷⁷ at this time warred against *Israel*,⁷³ but Elisha informed Joram, the king of Israel, of his designs, and thus saved him several times. The king of *Syria* thought that one of his own people had informed the king of Israel, and inquired who it was; one of his servants answered that it was Elisha, the prophet, who gave the information to the king of Israel. The king of *Syria* then sent men with horses and chariots to *Dothan* to take Elisha. Elisha's servant was afraid when he saw them, but Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and they were smitten with blindness; he then led them to *Samaria*,⁷³ and prayed that their sight might be restored. The king of Israel asked Elisha if he should smite them. Elisha told him to give them provisions, and let them go to their master. So the bands of *Syria* came no more into the land of Israel.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Dothan—There were two towns of this name; at one of them Elisha was surrounded by the soldiers of Benhadad; at the other Joseph was sold by his brethren.

EXPLANATIONS.

falling—cutting down.
borrowed—we ought to be as careful of that which is borrowed as of our own.
swam—rose from the bottom and floated on the surface.
saved—by knowing where dangers lay, he was able to avoid them.
thought, &c.—it was reasonable for him to think so, for such base conduct has often been perpetrated.
men with, &c.—that by their speed they might come upon him unaware.
smitten, &c.—not by Elisha's power, but by the power of God in answer to prayer; their blindness was only temporary.
to give them, &c.—thus, in the spirit of the gospel returning good for evil.
no more—the Syrians no more attempted to molest Elisha; but their king soon forgot the kindness his soldiers had experienced.

QUESTIONS.

What miracle did Elisha perform at the Jordan?
 On what occasion was it? [Jordan?
 Why was the man grieved?
 Tell me the means by which Elisha recovered the axe.
 What service did Elisha render the king of Israel during his war with Syria?
 How did the king of Syria endeavour to meet this great disadvantage?
 Was he successful in his plan of taking Elisha?
 How did Elisha frustrate it?
 When the men were blinded what was done to them?
 Was their sight restored?
 When?
 What cruelty did the king of Israel propose to Elisha?
 What was Elisha's answer?
 What effect had this treatment on the Syrian bands?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The anxiety of the man to recover the lost axe should bring to our mind the precept of Christ, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." Elisha showed kindness to the wicked Joram, we should esteem it a great advantage to be cautioned of approaching danger, in order that we may avoid it. If our enemies fall into our power we are here instructed not to act revengefully towards them. Elisha followed this law of kindness, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee."

93. Jehoram's wicked Reign.

2 Chron. xxi. 1—17. 2 Kings viii. 16—22.

After Jehoshaphat's death, his son Jehoram reigned alone in Judah, for he had before reigned three years in consort with his father. Jehoshaphat gave to all his sons 'gifts of silver, and gold, and precious stones, with 'fenced cities,⁷⁷ but he 'gave the kingdom to Jehoram, the eldest son. Jehoram slew all³³ 'his brethren and many of the princes of the land; and he 're-established idolatry.³² He followed the evil ways of the kings of Israel, for he had the daughter of Ahab to 'wife. By 'a writing of Elijah, the prophet, he was threatened with a plague¹⁸ on his people and children, and with a disease in his bowels, which should cause his death. In those days *Edom*¹⁴ 'revolted⁵⁵ from *Judah*,⁷⁸ and made themselves a king. The people of 'Libnah also revolted, 'because Jehoram had forsaken the God of his fathers. The Philistines,³⁵ 'Arabians, and 'Ethiopians also, came against *Judah*, and carried away the king's treasures, his wives, and his 'sons, except Jehoahaz, the youngest.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Libnah—a Levitical city of Judah, about twelve miles south-west of Jerusalem.

Arabians—chiefly descendants of Ishmael. See *Arabia*, Les. 5.

Ethiopians—the inhabitants of portions of Arabia and of Abyssinia. Les. 25.

EXPLANATIONS.

gifts, &c.—presents, large sums of money.
fenced, &c.—cities so important as to require the defences of walls. The king's sons were rulers over them.
gave the kingdom, &c.—appointed him to the kingly office.
his brethren—lest any of them should attempt to dethrone him; a common practice among Eastern monarchs.
re-established, &c.—it had been set up by Solomon. Les. 71.
wife—those who serve God should not suffer their children to intermarry with ungodly persons.
a writing, &c.—left by him, either with Elisha or to the care of the sons of the prophets; this writing plainly told him that his sins would ruin his kingdom, his family, and his health.
revolted—they had been subject to Judah since the time of David.
because, &c.—the Levites of this city thus condemned the conduct of their king.
sons—they were not only taken captive, but they were slain by this band of men.

QUESTIONS.

Who succeeded Jehoshaphat king of Judah?
 How did Jehoram's father show his partiality for him?
 How did Jehoram commence his reign?
 Why did he perpetrate so horrid a crime?
 What did he re-establish?
 What courses did he follow?
 What reason is assigned for his cruelty and idolatry?
 By what was he threatened?
 Who, probably, had the care of this writing?
 What did the writing tell him?
 What did the Edomites at this time?
 What other people revolted?
 Why were these revolts permitted?
 What people now began to attack Judah?
 From whom were the Arabians descended?
 What people were called Ethiopians?
 What did they carry away?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Jehoram was jealous of his brethren—those that intend ill themselves generally suspect others, and that without cause. Probably Jehoram hated his brethren, because they were better than he, for the same reason Cain hated Abel. They who build a house in blood have a foundation that will bring themselves and their work to confusion. A wicked wife is the cause of much evil, she influences her husband, as bad companions influence boys and girls, to do wrong. They who revolt from God may expect that those who owe them duty and submission, will revolt from them.

94. Siege of Samaria.

2 Kings vi. 24—vii. 20; viii. 7—15.

Benhadad, the king of Syria,⁷⁷ and all his host² again went up and besieged Samaria,⁷⁸ and there was a great famine.⁷ Joram the king wickedly resolved to kill Elisha, and sent a messenger to take him. Elisha appeared, and announced to the king, that the next day provisions should be abundant and cheap in Samaria. In the night the Lord made the Syrians hear a noise of chariots and horses, and they fled,⁵³ leaving their tents,¹² and horses, and asses.⁴⁴ Four lepers went, and told in the city that the Syrians had fled. The people went to the camp¹³ and carried away the spoil¹³ of the Syrians to Samaria; so the prophecy of Elisha was fulfilled, for there was abundance of food. A lord who had disbelieved the prophecy, was appointed to have charge of the gate of the city, where he was trodden to death by the people. He thus saw the abundance, but did not eat thereof, as Elisha had predicted¹⁶ the day before.

When Benhadad was sick, he sent Hazael with forty camels¹⁰ burden of every good thing in Damascus,⁷¹ as a present to Elisha, and he was to inquire of him if he should recover. Elisha told Hazael to say, "Thou mayest certainly recover; howbeit the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die." On the morrow Hazael murdered him, and became king.

EXPLANATIONS.

famine—the food within the city was consumed and none could be brought in, for it was surrounded by the Syrians.
resolved—see 'determined,' Les. 59.
to kill—the prophet who had before saved him from the designs of the king of Syria.
hear, &c.—a sound as of an approaching multitude in the stillness of the night alarmed them.
Four lepers—they lived outside the walls of the city for persons so diseased were compelled to live apart from society.
told—these men were near dying of hunger and determined to throw themselves on the mercy of the enemy, but on coming to the camp they found that the Syrians had fled, and they carried the news to A lord—a prince of Israel. [Samaria.
disbelieved—refused to believe; he thought it impossible; he spoke contemptuously of the prophecy of Elisha.
mayest—alluding to the disease, which was not a fatal one.
howbeit—notwithstanding; although I have said this.

QUESTIONS.

By whom was Samaria besieged?
 What did the siege occasion?
 In what way?
 What crime did the king wickedly resolve to perpetrate?
 Did he follow out his resolution?
 What announcement did Elisha make?
 By what means was this brought to pass?
 Who told the people of the city that the Syrians had fled?
 How did they know?
 What punishment was inflicted in the midst of this wonderful relief?
 Tell me the words in which Elisha had predicted his death.
 How did Benhadad show that he believed Elisha was a true prophet?
 What was Elisha's answer by Hazael?
 What crime did Hazael commit?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We should learn to abhor war, and pray for the universal extension of harmony and peace among all nations. We should also learn not to abuse plenty but be thankful for it; famine is one of the worst evils that can fall on a people. God can dispirit the bold and the brave, and cause fear to be felt where no danger is. The punishment of the disbelieving lord should teach us not to treat with contempt the word of hope and encouragement which any one may offer in the time of distress, better even to die hoping than despairing. The man whose life was spared by Ahab is now murdered by his own servant; cruelty will not go unrequited.

95. Jehu anointed King. Jezebel's Death.

2 Kings ix.—x. 28.

Elisha sent one of the sons⁸³ of the prophets to *Ramoth-gilead*⁸⁶ to anoint Jehu, the son of Nimshi, to be king over *Israel*,⁷³ that he might destroy the house of Ahab. Jehu went to *Jezreel*.⁸⁵ Joram, king of Israel, and Ahaziah, king of *Judah*,⁷³ went forth, in their chariots²⁰ to meet Jehu; Joram said, "Is it peace, Jehu?" Jehu spoke of the wickedness of his mother Jezebel, and Joram turned to flee, saying, "There is treachery, O Ahaziah." Then Jehu drew a bow, and smote Joram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart. As Ahaziah fled Jehu followed, saying, "Smite him also in the chariot"; and they did so; and he fled to *Megiddo*, and died there. When Jehu came to *Jezreel*, Jezebel looked out at a window, and said, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" Jehu said to her servants, "Throw her down." She was thrown down, and after he had eaten and drunk, he sent people to bury her; but they found only her skull, and feet, and the palms of her hands, for the dogs⁸⁶ had eaten her flesh, as Elijah had foretold.

Soon after Jehu came to *Samaria*⁷⁸ and slew all that remained of the house of Ahab. He then proclaimed a solemn assembly to Baal, and he slew all the worshippers, and brake down the house of Baal.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Megiddo—a fortified city in Manasseh, from which the original inhabitants were not wholly expelled at the conquest of Canaan. *Les.* 33.

EXPLANATIONS.

that he might—God's government and justice require executioners as well as human governments.
destroy—the house of Ahab had rebelled against the God of Israel, and had been guilty of murder and almost every vice.
Ahaziah—he too, had been guilty of rebellion against the God of Jacob.
treachery—treason; rebellion against the royal authority.
Zimri—he was not sent on an errand of justice as Jehu was.
all that remained, &c.—his sons, the officers of his household, ministers of state, and his priests; he also slew the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, who were branches of Ahab's house.
Baal—thus was the idolatry of the Phœnicians, introduced by Jezebel, destroyed out of Israel after her death.

QUESTIONS.

On what mission did Elisha send one of the sons of the prophets?
 Where was Jehu?
 What was Jehu appointed to do?
 Whither did Jehu go?
 Who went to meet him?
 What was Joram's question, and how did Jehu reply?
 How did Joram act?
 What did he say to Ahaziah?
 What was done by Jehu?
 Did Ahaziah escape?
 Where did he die?
 What wicked woman was now punished?
 What sort of death did she meet with?
 Who had predicted this awful ending of a wicked life? *Les.* 85.
 Of what crime did she remind Jehu?
 What course did Jehu pursue at Samaria?
 Did he wholly destroy Baal out of Israel?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Though Jehu was anointed to execute judgment on the idolatrous kings of Israel and of Judah, he is not a character to be admired or imitated. His was the unenviable eminence of an executioner. The awful death of the widow and family of Ahab should teach us not to think lightly of the threatenings of God's word; "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Jehu's "solemn assembly" to Baal, collected those idolaters fraudulently, they were drawn together by a direct falsehood; this was to "do evil that good may come," a course which cannot be justified.

96. Athaliah's Reign. Joash Proclaimed.

2 Kings xi.—xii. 16. 2 Chron. xxii. 10—xxiv. 14.

When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, king of Judah,⁷³ saw that her son was dead, she destroyed all the seed-royal of Judah, except Joash, the infant son of Ahaziah, who was saved by his aunt, the wife of Jehoiada, the priest. She hid Joash in the house of God six years. During this time Athaliah reigned and established idolatry³² in the land. In the seventh year of Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada resolved to proclaim Joash king. He strengthened himself, and instructed the captains and the Levites²⁴ how to guard the king; and Jehoiada and his sons put upon him the crown,⁵³ and anointed him, and said, "God save the king." Athaliah hearing the noise, came into the house of the Lord, and when she saw the king there with the princes¹⁰ and perceived that all the people of the land rejoiced, she rent her clothes, and said, "Treason." Jehoiada would not have her slain in the house of the Lord, but she was slain at the entering of the horse-gate, by the king's house. Jehoiada governed the kingdom for Joash, while the king was young. The king and the people covenanted¹³ to serve God, and Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada. The king required that the temple should be repaired. The princes and the people rejoiced and gave much money for this purpose; after the workmen were paid the king made vessels⁶³ of gold and silver for the temple.

EXPLANATIONS.

seed-royal—not only the family of the late king, but with them to extinguish the royal race of David.
aunt—his father's sister; she was the daughter of Jehoram.
house of God—the temple was surrounded with chambers for the accommodation of the priests.
established—she was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Her son Ahaziah was the grandson of Jehoshaphat, and in him the royal families of Judah and Israel were united.
strengthened—by taking such steps as would increase the number of those friendly to Joash.
rejoiced—they had recently experienced the cruelty and immorality of idolatrous rulers; they were therefore glad to see true religion established.

QUESTIONS.

What dreadful deed was perpetrated in Jerusalem by Athaliah?
 Who was Athaliah?
 Who alone escaped of all the royal family?
 By what means was the child saved?
 What was Jehoiada?
 Where did Jehoiada's wife hide Joash?
 What noble act did Jehoiada resolve to do?
 At what time?
 How did he conduct this difficult business?
 What did Athaliah do?
 What was done with her?
 Who governed during the king's boyhood?
 How did Jehoiada prove that he had the best interests of the people at heart?
 What did Joash require?
 Was it repaired?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Athaliah perpetrated a deed of great cruelty, and is truly named "that wicked woman;" in her character we see no natural affection, no fear of God. Jehosheba saved an infant prince of the line of David from death, and thus contributed to the fulfilment of prophecy, that the house and lineage of David might not be cut off. In Jehoiada we see a man of great influence using that influence for good; a man of faith in God's promise to David's seed setting up a child of the royal line against the queen-mother's usurpation; a man of true religion, and of great resolution in the cause of God.

97. Reigns of Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Jehoash.

2 Kings x. 29—36; xiii.

Jehu departed not from the the sins of Jeroboam, but God promised that his children to the fourth generation should sit on the throne of Israel⁷³; because he had executed God's judgments on the house of Ahab. Jehu reigned twenty-eight years; his son Jehoahaz reigned after him, during whose reign God suffered Hazael, the king of Syria,⁷⁷ to afflict Israel very greatly. The kingdom was much weakened by the oppressions of Hazael, who had taken many of the cities round the borders of Israel. Jehoahaz was succeeded by his son Jehoash. When Elisha was on his death-bed, Jehoash visited him, and wept³³ over him. Elisha predicted¹⁶ the deliverance of Israel from Syria, he said Jehoash should smite the Syrians thrice. Elisha died, and they buried him. At the coming in of the year the Moabites²⁵ invaded the land, and as the Israelites were burying a man they spied a band of men, and they cast the dead man into the sepulchre of Elisha; and when he was let down and had touched the bones of Elisha, he revived.

Jehoash took from Benhadad the cities which Hazael had taken from Jehoahaz, his father. Three times did Jehoash beat him, and the prophecy of Elisha was fulfilled.

EXPLANATIONS.

departed not—instead of destroying that kind of idolatry in Israel when he overturned Baal-worship, he encouraged the worship of calves. Les. 74.
suffered—permitted. Thus we learn that God restrained, or kept back, Israel's enemies until they had grievously sinned against him.
afflict—persecute, by war, plunder, etc.
borders—edges of the country joining Syria; the country of the Reubenites, and Gadites.
wept—though the king had followed a wrong course, he yet esteemed the prophet's death as a national loss.
sepulchre—tomb, or burying place. They hastily removed the door or other entrance to the cave in which Elisha was laid.
touched—bodies were generally buried without coffins—hence one body might be laid close to another.

QUESTIONS.

What course of folly did Jehu pursue?
 In what consisted Jeroboam's idolatry?
 Why was not Jehu immediately removed from the throne of Israel?
 How many generations of his family were to be permitted to reign?
 Who succeeded Jehu?
 What troubles did God permit during his reign?
 What do we learn from God permitting it?
 Who was the king of Syria?
 Who succeeded Jehoahaz?
 Whose death now drew near?
 What successes did Elisha foretell to Jehoash before his death?
 What testimony did God bear to the faithfulness of Elisha after his death?
 What possessions were recovered from Hazael?
 Was Elisha's dying prediction fulfilled?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Though Jehu executed God's judgments on Ahab's family and on the idolaters of Baal, he fell into the snare of Jeroboam's sin, he went with the multitude to do evil. Whatever we do for God, even though it be partial service in a public capacity will be rewarded. Amidst the darkness and idolatry of Israel we see one of its kings showing regard for the dying Elisha. It is no disparagement to the great to be seen waiting at the dying bed of aged saints, to receive their counsel and blessing. We should set a high value on good men, that we may have no reason to reproach ourselves when they are gone for having neglected opportunities of instruction.

98. Idolatry and Ingratitude of Joash.

2 Chron. xxiv. 15—24 ; 2 Kings xii. 17, 18.

Jehoiada, the priest, lived one-hundred-and-thirty years, and he was buried among the kings, because he had done good in *Israel*.⁷³ After his death, Joash and the princes¹⁰ of *Judah*⁵³ served idols. Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, reproveth⁹ them for transgressing the commandments of God. They conspired⁸ against him, and stoned²⁴ him at the command of the king, in the court of the temple. Thus Joash, the king, remembered not the kindness of Jehoiada, but slew his son. When Zechariah died, he said, "The LORD look upon it, and require it. Then Hazael, king of *Syria*,⁷⁷ and his host came up against *Judah* and *Jerusalem*,⁵⁶ and destroyed all the princes from among the people, and sent all the spoil to *Damascus*.⁷¹ The Lord delivered them into the hands of the *Syrians*, because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash. And Joash gave Hazael the hallowed things from the temple, which he and his fathers had dedicated⁵⁷ to purchase peace.

EXPLANATIONS.

130 years—God rewarded his pious zeal with a long life.
among, &c.—another honour conferred upon the faithful priest.
idols—again introduced by men of authority and power. How awful for such men to be guilty of leading a nation into sin!
transgressing—violating.
the court of, &c.—"between the temple and the altar." Our Saviour makes the persecutors of himself and his gospel answerable for the blood of Zechariah. Matthew xxiii. 35.
require—demand satisfaction, punish in return.
all the princes—thus the judgments of God fell upon the murderers of Zechariah; the *Syrians* being the instruments of God's justice.
spoil—booty; plundered property.
The Lord delivered, &c.—see 'The Lord smote, &c.' *Les.* 77.
hallowed things—they were free-will offerings which had been dedicated to the Lord from time to time by former kings.

QUESTIONS.

Who died at the age of 130 years?
 Why was he thus rewarded with a long life?
 What honour was paid to his remains?
 In what respect was his death soon felt as a grievous calamity?
 Who reproveth the king and princes?
 Was Joash ashamed of his idolatry?
 How do you know that he was not?
 Whom did he put to death?
 What were Zechariah's last words?
 Did troubles soon follow?
 Who destroyed the princely conspirators and murderers of Zechariah?
 Whither was the spoil sent?
 Why did the Lord thus punish them?
 From whom did Hazael obtain the treasures of the temple?
 Who had dedicated them?
 For what purpose were they given him?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

God had done great things for Joash, but he proved ungrateful to Him. How necessary it is to have religion in the heart, then the loss of a pious adviser will not prove the downfall of our professions. Joash seemed to be under religious influence when he was only swayed by respect for the character of a good man who promoted his interests. The murder of Jehoiada's son was a fearful aggravation of Joash's impiety. The judgments which came upon Joash and his princes show that God will avenge the innocent, and that he heard the prayer of the dying martyr. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

99. Joash is slain. Amaziah Reigns.

2 Chron. xxiv. 25—xxv. 24. 2 Kings xii. 19—21; xiii. 10—13; xiv. 1—16.

When the Syrians¹⁷ had departed from *Judah*,⁷³ Joash was afflicted with great diseases, and two of his own servants conspired³⁸ against him, and slew him. As soon as Amaziah succeeded Joash, he slew the two men who had killed his father. He then led his army forth and conquered the Edomites¹⁴ in the "Valley of Salt." After this conquest Amaziah worshipped idols, which he had brought from *Seir*¹³; for which he was reprov^{ed}³⁹ by a prophet.⁸³

Amaziah sent messengers to declare war against Jehoash, king of Israel.⁷³ Jehoash told Amaziah that he had indeed smitten *Edom*, and that his heart lifted him up; he might glory of this, and tarry at home, lest he should fall and Judah with him. But Amaziah would not hear. The kings and their armies met at *Bethshemesh*⁴²; Jehoash took Amaziah prisoner, and came to *Jerusalem*,⁵⁶ whence he took all the gold and the silver that were found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house. Jehoash departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the king of Israel. He died, and his son Jeroboam II., reigned in his stead.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Valley of Salt—an extensive plain, at least fourteen miles across, which lay between the boundaries of Judah and Edom.

EXPLANATIONS.

slew him—he who had commanded that the Lord's faithful servant should be slain, (Les. 98.) is now killed by two of his own wicked servants.
the two men—they had not the authority which Jehu had. (Les. 95.) They had done this act wickedly—hence God suffered them to be punished.
had brought—this was a different kind of idolatry from that of Baal.
reprov^{ed}—chided; but he silenced the prophet, who, however, boldly pronounced God's sentence against him for his wickedness.
sent messengers—thus he provoked a new war. He had no command from God to do this.
lifted him up—in pride and presumption.
tarry—abide; stay; remain.
would not hear—obstinacy ruins many.
treasures—riches; wealth collected for carrying on the service of God.

QUESTIONS.

What trouble followed Joash when the Syrians were removed?
 What was the manner of his death?
 Who succeeded Joash?
 What did he do on his accession?
 Over whom did Amaziah obtain a great victory?
 What error did he then commit?
 How was he rebuked?
 How did the prophet manifest his boldness?
 What act of presumptuous pride did Amaziah commit?
 How did Jehoash rebuke, and also advise him?
 What was the result?
 Where was the battle fought?
 How did Jehoash spoil the temple?
 Was Jehoash a godly prince?
 Who succeeded him?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Joash fell through the treachery of his own servants, thus was the sinner punished according to his own sin. How gross is the folly of idol-worship. The homage due to Jehovah is given to the gods of Edom which could not protect their own worshippers, and this is the act of a king who knew the True God and his attributes. Amaziah was vain of his success, it led to his ruin. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall," Amaziah's fall was the punishment for his apostacy.

100. Uzziah's Reign and Wars.

2 Kings xiv. 17—28; xv. 1—4. 2 Chron. xxv. 25—xxvi. 10.

Jeroboam II., restored the borders of *Israel*⁷³ from *Hamath*⁵⁷ to the *Dead Sea*; and he also recovered *Damascus*.⁷¹ About this time God sent Jonah, the prophet, to comfort Israel.

Amaziah reigned in *Judah*⁷³ fifteen years after the death of Jehoash, king of Israel. When he turned from following the Lord, a conspiracy was formed against him in *Jerusalem*⁵⁶; and he fled to *Lachish*, and was slain there. Uzziah was sixteen years old when his father Amaziah was slain; all the people of Judah made him king. He sought God all the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God caused him to prosper.

Uzziah warred against the *Philistines*,³⁵ and God helped him against them, and the *Arabians*⁹ and the *Mehunims*. The *Ammonites*³⁵ brought him gifts, and he strengthened himself exceedingly. He built towers in *Jerusalem* and in the desert, and digged wells, for he had much cattle, and husbandmen, and vine dressers; for he loved husbandry.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Dead Sea—the lake which covers the guilty cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim. Les. 8. The waters of the river Jordan fall into it.

Lachish—a city of Judah which was about twenty miles south-west of Jerusalem.

EXPLANATIONS.

When he turned, &c.—Observe how the misfortunes of these kings followed upon their adoption of idolatry.
fled—from his own house, after he had neglected the house of God.
all the people—they did not commit the sin of placing a stranger on the throne, as forbidden by the Lord. Deut. xvii. 15.
sought—desired to know the Lord's will.
visions—remarkable dreams or appearances; obscure modes of divine communication. See 'vision.' Les. 52.
as long, &c.—thus will it be with us and our nation.
Mehunims—probably the lawless inhabitants of the Wilderness of Maon.
gifts—as a sign of submission; the gifts were probably sent to purchase friendship.

QUESTIONS.

Who restored the borders of Israel from Hamath to the Dead Sea?
 What city did he recover?
 Who was sent as a comforter to Israel at this time?
 How long did Amaziah reign after Jehoash's death?
 What trouble did he bring upon himself?
 When did this evil come upon him?
 Where did he meet his death?
 Where was Lachish?
 Who succeeded Amaziah?
 How old was he at his accession?
 What character is given him?
 How long did Uzziah prosper?
 Over what nations was Uzziah successful?
 Who brought him gifts? [in war?
 What did he do for his kingdom?
 What strong places did he build?
 Why did he dig wells in the desert?
 What pursuit did he love?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The fall and death of Amaziah is another example of a departure from the ways of the Lord being followed by political reverses, and the death of him who led his people into idolatry. His son Uzziah was guided by a devout prophet of the Lord; happy are those who are willing to be advised by such ministers. Prosperity is the gift of God. Religion and piety are favourable to outward prosperity. It is an honour to the husbandman's calling, that one of the princes of the house of David followed it. The arts of peace are more pleasing to follow than those of war.

101. Prophecies of Hosea, Amos, and Joel.

Hosea i.—iii. Amos i—v. Joel.

At this time Hosea prophesied against *Israel*.⁷³ He said that God would 'put an end to the kingdom of Israel, but that he would 'have mercy on the house of *Judah*.⁷³ He said the children of Israel should 'abide many 'days without a king, without a prince, and without a sacrifice, but that 'afterwards they should return to God, fear the Lord, and 'own his goodness.

Amos was a herdsman⁷ of *Tekoa*³⁷; he lived in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam, king of Israel. He declared God's judgments against *Damascus*,¹ and spoke of the 'captivity of the *Syrians*⁵⁷ at 'Kir. He predicted the captivity of the Israelites beyond *Damascus*, and exhorted them to repentance.

The prophet Joel predicted the captivity of Judah, and called on the people to repent. He exhorted the priests, the 'ministers of the Lord to repent, to 'sanctify a fast, to call a solemn assembly of the elders⁴³ and inhabitants of the land, in the house of the Lord, and to cry unto the Lord. He also predicted the return of the Jews from captivity, and their final restoration to God in *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Kir—a country north of Media and Assyria, between the Black and Caspian Seas.

EXPLANATIONS.

put an end, &c.—remove the people from the land which God had given to their forefathers. Moses foretold this, *Lev.* 29.
have mercy, &c.—by not destroying the kingdom of Judah finally. Many of the kings of Judah were sincere worshippers of God; but all the kings of Israel were idolaters.
abide, &c.—this prophecy is applied to the time when the children of Israel should have no share in the true service of God, yet would be restrained from idolatry.
days—the word *days* is here put for *years*.
afterwards—this portion of the prophecy is applied to the conversion of the Jews to Christ.
own—acknowledge; confess.
captivity—bondage to another nation, away from their own land.
ministers of the altar—priests, Levites.
sanctify—appoint in a religious spirit, and observe with seriousness.

QUESTIONS.

Who prophesied at this time?
 Tell me some of his predictions.
 What did he mean by God putting an end to the kingdom of Israel?
 How would God have mercy upon Judah?
 What should the Jews do in the latter days?
 Who was Amos?
 When did he prophesy?
 Against whom did he declare God's judgments?
 Whose captivity did he predict?
 What did Joel call on the people of Judah to do?
 Did he say anything of the priests and Levites?
 What public duties did he exhort them to observe?
 What were his predictions respecting the Jews?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Though God bears long he will not bear always, He hath said "My spirit shall not always strive with man." God shows mercy to those who retain the form of sound words, (Judah) while those who "cast him down from his excellency," (Israel) are rejected. Learn to value the blessing of civil government, without it a nation is as a widow unprotected and helpless. There is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared, "therefore let us seek the Lord our king." We should adore the goodness of God in sending so many prophets to warn the nations, especially Israel and Judah, to escape the wrath of God by repentance.

102. Jonah's Mission to Nineveh.

Jonah.

Jonah, the prophet,³⁶ was commanded to go to "Nineveh, and cry against it. He rose up to flee from the presence of the Lord; he went down to "Joppa, where he found a ship going to "Tarshish, and he went in it. But the Lord sent a great storm, and the mariners were afraid. Jonah told them to cast him into the sea, and it would be calm. Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord out of the belly of the fish, and the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. Jonah then went to Nineveh, and as he walked through the city, he cried and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." So the people of Nineveh believed God, and the king proclaimed⁵⁵ a fast, and commanded the people to cry mightily unto God, and turn from their evil ways. And when God saw their repentance, he spared them and would not overthrow the city.

When Jonah saw that his prophecy was not fulfilled he became very angry. But God showed him he ought not to be angry, because he had spared Nineveh, which contained more than six-score-thousand persons, that could not discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Nineveh—the metropolis of Assyria Les. 104.; it was founded by Asshur, and was situated on the river Tigris. It became a vast city, and in the time of Jonah it was three days' journey through it.

Joppa—also called Japho, the chief sea-port and harbour of the Israelites.

Tarshish—supposed to have been Tartessus on the coast of Spain.

EXPLANATIONS.

cry against it—declare aloud the punishment due to the people for their sins.
presence—the place where God had made known his will to him.
the Lord sent—thus the winds are God's messengers. He sent a tempest after Jonah to recal him to obedience.
told them—he felt that he alone was the cause of their danger.
prayed—he now knew that God's presence is not confined to any particular place.
Yet forty, &c.—this was the time graciously granted them to repent.
turn—to strong prayer we must add sincere renunciation of evil.
angry—jealous because his declaration of ruin was not fulfilled.
discern—distinguish. This large number consisted of children.

QUESTIONS.

What was Jonah's mission?
 Did he fulfil it without delay?
 How did his fear and disobedience answer?
 How did God punish him to compel his obedience?
 When brought into danger to whom did he cry?
 What was the effect of his prayer?
 What message did he then proclaim in the streets of Nineveh?
 What did their belief in this awful message lead them to do?
 How did the Lord regard their penitence?
 Why did Jonah become angry?
 How did God reprove him?
 How many persons did Nineveh contain who did not know their right hand from their left?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Though we have not to perform such duties as devolved upon Jonah, yet we are bound, not to suffer sin upon our brethren, nor should we shrink from setting before those around us the danger of sinful courses. If we turn aside from opportunities which are afforded us for these duties God will mark our footsteps and chastise us till we turn back again into the proper course of conduct. We are not to feel discontented if God shows mercy where we have looked for judgment.

103. Of Amos and Hosea. Interregnum.

Amos vii. ix. 10—15. Hosea iv. 1,2. 2 Kings xiv. 29

Amaziah, the idolatrous priest of *Bethel*,⁶ sent to Jeroboam II., king of Israel, to say that Amos had prophesied against him, and against *Israel*.⁷³ Amaziah advised Amos to flee away into *Judah* and 'prophesy there, but to prophesy no more at *Bethel*. Amos answered, "I *was* no prophet,³⁶ neither *was* I a prophet's son; but I *was* an herdsman,⁷ and a gatherer of 'sycamore fruit; and the LORD 'took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, "Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." He then spoke of the miserable end of Amaziah and his family, and repeated the 'prophecy of the captivity¹⁰¹ of Israel. He also prophesied of the return of the Jews.

Hosea also prophesied in the reign of Jeroboam II.; he declared that the sins of the people were 'swearing, 'lying, 'killing, 'stealing, and committing 'adultery, and that there was 'no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. 'Eleven years after the death of Jeroboam, during which time there was no king, Zachariah, his son, began to reign.

EXPLANATIONS.

prophesy there—thus admitting that there was more protection for the Lord's prophets in Judah than in Israel.
sycamore—the sycamore tree of the Scriptures is the Egyptian fig-tree; its fruit has some resemblance to figs.
took me, &c.—thus he showed that his mission was from God, and not for worldly gain.
prophecy, &c.—that they should be utterly taken captive out of their own land.
swearing—in violation of the third commandment.
lying—contrary to the ninth commandment.
killing—forbidden in the sixth commandment.
stealing—condemned by the eighth commandment.
adultery—in opposition to the seventh commandment.
no truth &c.—all men spoke and acted falsely; all were unkind to each other, and they refused to hear and practise the commands of God.
Eleven years—during this period the country was in a disturbed state.

QUESTIONS.

What was the office of Amaziah?
 What report did he send to the king against the prophet Amos?
 Who was king of Israel at this time?
 What did Amaziah advise Amos to do?
 How did Amos refer to his former humble occupation?
 Who had commissioned him to be a prophet?
 How did he show that he did not prophesy for gain?
 What were the words of his commission?
 What evil did Amos predict of Amaziah?
 What other prophecy did he utter?
 What crimes did Hosea speak against?
 In which of the commandments respectively are these crimes forbidden?
 Of what good things was the land destitute?
 For how long was there no king in Israel?
 Who then began to reign?
 Whose son was Zachariah?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Truth and error cannot be reconciled, nor can the teacher of lies endure the denouncer of God's anger against sin. It was not uncommon for false accusers to charge the ministers of God's word as enemies to their king and country. We must not think it strange if men of worldly motives cannot understand how the faithful confessor of truth can oppose men who are in power, and not fly when he is threatened. From the miserable doom of Amaziah we may learn to dread the punishment of those who try to stop the declaration of God's truth—and from the description of Israel's sins by Hosea, to cultivate a tender conscience respecting sin.

PERIOD VI.] THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

104. Kings of Israel. Uzziah's Transgression.

2 Kings xv 5,8—26. 2 Chron. xxvi. 16—21.

'Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam reigned but six months in *Israel*.⁷³ Shallum conspired⁸⁸ against him, 'slew him, and reigned a month in *Samaria*.⁷⁵ Menahem went up and smote Shallum, and reigned in his stead. Then Menahem destroyed ''*Tiphsah* and all that were therein, because they opened not the city to him.

Menahem reigned ten years in *Samaria*, he did evil by sinning as did Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. In his reign Pul, the king of ''*Assyria*, came against the land, and Menahem gave Pul 'tribute—a thousand talents of silver, which he 'exacted from the mighty men of wealth. Menahem was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, who reigned two years and did evil. He was slain by Pekah, one of his captains,⁷⁸ who 'usurped the throne.

Uzziah, king of *Judah*,⁷³ 'transgressed against God by going into the temple to burn incense.²⁶ The priests withstood him, saying that the sons of Aaron alone were 'consecrated to burn incense. Uzziah was angry with the priests, and while he was angry he became leprous, being smitten by the Lord. The king was 'a leper till his death, and Jotham, his son, was 'over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Tiphsah—a city of Ephraim about six miles from Samaria. Another Tiphsah was seated on the river Euphrates.

Assyria—an ancient kingdom of Asia, south of Armenia; its great city was Nineveh.

EXPLANATIONS.

Zachariah—God's promise to Jehu (Les. 97.) was fulfilled in the accession of Zachariah to the throne.
slew him—with Zachariah the family of Jehu ceased.
tribute—a yearly tax, by which his submission to Pul was proved.
1,000 talents—amounting to £450,000.
exacted—obtained by compulsion; by demanding such sums as he thought their riches enabled them to give.
usurped—seized it by force; took possession of it unlawfully.
transgressed—the only blot on king Uzziah; the kingly and priestly offices had been separated by the law of Moses.
consecrated—set apart with the "holy anointing oil" of the Sanctuary.
a leper—his pride was thus punished.
over, &c.—the king being excluded from society; for among the Jews lepers were compelled to live apart.

QUESTIONS.

How long did Zachariah reign in Israel?
 Whose son was he?
 Who slew Zachariah and reigned in his stead?
 Who slew Shallum and usurped the throne?
 What act of cruelty did Menahem commit?
 How long did he reign?
 Whose evil example did he follow?
 To whom did he pay tribute?
 What was the amount of the tribute?
 What do you know of Assyria?
 Who was Pekahiah?
 By whom was he slain?
 In what way did Uzziah offend?
 Was there any other blot in his character?
 Why did the priests oppose him?
 How was he punished for his offence?
 Why did his son rule for him?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Learn to abhor the sins which brought Israel to the desperate state of confusion which now prevailed, and pray for the continuance of good government, and for its extension over every country, that kings may rule in righteousness, and princes decree justice. Pride often seizes upon those who have long maintained an upright and useful course. Prosperity has its attendant temptations. Let us pray for the grace of humility, for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL. [975-606 B.C.]

105. Jotham and Ahaz reign. Isaiah Prophecies.

2 Kings xv. 6,7,32—xvi. 5. 2 Chron. xxvi. 22—xxviii. 3. Isaiah vii. 1-16; ix. 1-7.

Uzziah died in the second year of Pekah's reign. Jotham was then twenty-five years old, and he did that which was right. He built cities in the mountains, and castles, and towers in the forests. He prevailed against the Ammonites,³⁸ so that they paid tribute¹⁰⁴ to him. He became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God. Isaiah began to prophesy at the beginning of his reign. Jotham reigned sixteen years. Ahaz succeeded Jotham as king of Judah⁷²; he not only followed the idolatry of the kings of Israel,⁷³ but he followed other idolatries and abominations of the heathen nations. Rezin, king of Syria,⁷⁷ and Pekah, king of Israel, invaded Jerusalem,⁵⁶ and Ahaz was afraid when he heard they were leagued together against him. Isaiah was commissioned to tell him not to fear nor be faint-hearted.

Isaiah prophesied of the birth of Christ,¹⁶ saying, A virgin shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. The people of Zebulun and Naphtali¹⁵ were to see the great light shine—the light of the gospel, or the beginning of the kingdom of Christ.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Zebulun—the division of Canaan allotted to the descendants of the tenth son of Jacob; it was south of Asher and Naphtali, and north of Issachar; it had the sea of Cinnereth to the east, and the Mediterranean to the west.

EXPLANATIONS.

right—just, honourable. He was sincere and upright as God's servant, and as the ruler of the Lord's people.
built, &c.—for the defence and security of his kingdom.
prevailed against—showed his superiority, conquered in battle.
he prepared—he took care in the regulation of his conduct and devotion that both should be in accordance with the law of the Lord.
abominations—he burnt incense and offered sacrifices on the hills and under every green tree; he burnt some of his children in the fire to the honour of his idols, and made them pass between two fires.
leagued—allied, joined.
Immanuel—"God with us."
light—knowledge and purity are represented by light; ignorance and sin by darkness.
gospel—good news; the word of God.

QUESTIONS.

How old was Jotham when his father died?
 Was he an upright prince?
 What public works did he execute?
 Against whom did he prevail?
 How was it that he became mighty?
 Who prophesied in his reign?
 Who succeeded Jotham?
 How did God testify his displeasure against Ahaz?
 Was he delivered up to his enemies at this time?
 Who brought him a message of encouragement and hope?
 Of what did Isaiah prophesy?
 What should his name be?
 What glorious light was to be seen in the latter days?
 Upon whom was this light to shine?
 What means this light?
 What do you know of Zebulun?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Here is another example of prosperity in Jotham resulting from the pursuit of a right course of conduct; while an additional warning against sin is shown in the troubled reign of Ahaz. We see that the Saviour of men was especially spoken of as "God with us," 700 years before his coming. We may therefore learn to trust in Him as "able . . . to save . . . to the uttermost." The character of the gospel is beautifully illustrated as light shining upon the darkened earth, and giving comfort, joy, and blessing to its myriads of inhabitants.

106. Wickedness and Captivity of Ahaz.

2 Chron. xxviii. 4—21. 2 Kings xv. 29—31; xvi. 6—9; xvii. 1—3.

Ahaz burnt incense²⁶ in the 'high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree. 'Therefore the Lord 'delivered him into the hand of the king of *Syria*,⁷⁷ and he and a great multitude of his people were taken captive to *Damascus*.⁷¹ Ahaz was also delivered for his sins into the hand of Pekah, the king of *Israel*,⁷³ who slew in *Judah*⁷³ 120,000 valiant men in one day, and carried away captive 200,000 persons and brought the spoil⁷⁴ to *Samaria*.⁷³ At this time, a prophet of the Lord, named Oded, 'reproved⁷⁹ the people of Israel for making their brethren bondmen.⁹⁰

Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, king of *Assyria*,¹⁰¹ 'asking assistance against Rezin, king of *Syria*; he also sent the 'treasures⁷⁹ of the temple, and of the king's house to Tiglath-pileser, who went up against *Damascus* and took it. He carried the people captive to *Kir*¹⁰¹ and slew Rezin.

Tiglath-pileser also invaded Israel in the reign of Pekah, he conquered the northern parts of *Canaan*,⁵ and 'carried away the inhabitants captive into *Assyria*. Hoshea 'conspired³³ against Pekah, slew him, and reigned in his stead.

Hoshea did evil in the sight of the Lord, Shalmaneser, the king of *Assyria*, came against him, and Hoshea 'paid tribute¹⁰⁴ to him.

EXPLANATIONS.

high places—erected for idolatrous worship on mountains or elevated situations.
therefore, &c.—mark the necessary connexion between sin and sorrow.
delivered—gave him up as one not worth preserving from danger any longer.
reproved—this reproof caused the princes of Israel to set their brethren of Judah at liberty.
asking assistance—he need not have sought the help of a heathen king, had he acted like Jotham. *Les.* 105.
treasures—he first neglected the house of God—now he robs it of its sacred wealth.
carried away—this was the first captivity of Israel.
conspired—Pekah had slain his predecessor, and is now slain by Hoshea.
paid tribute—to purchase peace; to cause his army to be withdrawn.

QUESTIONS.

Of what great sins was Ahaz guilty?
 What punishment was inflicted upon him?
 What lesson does this teach us?
 What did the Syrian king do?
 What was the nature of the evil Pekah inflicted?
 What service did Oded render the captive Jews?
 What was the effect of Oded's reproof?
 Whose help did Ahaz purchase against these two powerful enemies?
 How did he bribe the king of Assyria?
 What was the consequence to Israel?
 Who slew Pekah?
 What was Hoshea's course of conduct?
 Who reduced Israel to a tributary state?
 Who was Shalmaneser?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The unexampled wickedness of Ahaz shocks us; children of good fathers, and good grandfathers, take care, and let not sin debase you, and bring you to merited punishment. Live not so as to be a reproach to your pious forefathers. The sins of Ahaz were great, his punishments severe, so shall it be with us; according to our faith, or according to our sins, shall we be dealt with. The first captivity of Israel warns us of the approaching time of Israel's final rejection. When will men by this example learn to receive correction before it be too late?

THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL. [975-606 B.C.

107. Hezekiah's Reforms.

2 Chron. xxviii. 26—xxx. 27. 2 Kings xvi. 19,20; xviii. 1—6.

After the death of Ahaz, his son Hezekiah began to reign. He did that which was right¹⁰⁵ as his father David did. He destroyed all forms of idolatry,³² and he restored the temple service, and sent priests and Levites into the temple to cleanse it, as well as the holy vessels and altars. The temple was afterwards sanctified⁶⁹ by burnt-offerings, and by the worship of the king and all the congregation.⁵⁷

Hezekiah then commanded the people to bring their sacrifices and offerings² into the house⁸⁷ of the Lord. He also sent letters throughout all Israel⁷³ and Judah,⁷³ inviting the people to come to Jerusalem,⁵⁶ and keep the passover¹⁹; and not to be like their fathers and brethren, who trespassed against the Lord.

Some of those who came to this feast of the passover were not sanctified⁶⁹ according to the law of Moses. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "The good LORD pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." They kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness, and they took counsel to keep other seven days. The priests blessed the people, and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to God's holy dwelling place, even to heaven.

EXPLANATIONS.

father—used for ancestor or forefather.
David—the unvarying fidelity of David in publicly honouring God, and upholding his true worship is thus frequently spoken of with approbation.
all forms—among other things he destroyed the brazen serpent, which Moses had made, (Les. 27) because the people worshipped it.
temple service—the worship of God according to the law of Moses. It had been disused during the reign of Ahaz.
to bring, &c.—they had been taught by his father to sacrifice elsewhere.
Some, &c.—these were of the people of Israel whom Hezekiah had invited to this passover; Hoshea, their king made no opposition; some accepted the invitation, but generally the tribes of Israel refused to attend.
unleavened—without yeast or "leaven."
 Passover bread was not allowed to be made with leaven. Ex. xii. 15.
blessed, &c.—this office devolved upon the priests by divine appointment. Nm. vi. 22—26.

QUESTIONS.

Who reigned after Ahaz?
 What good is recorded of him?
 What did he destroy?
 Did he leave the people without any religion when he destroyed their idols?
 How was the temple prepared for the true worship of God?
 After it had been cleansed and sanctified, what was commanded to be done there?
 What did this zealous king exhort his people to do?
 How did Hoshea silently concur in Hezekiah's efforts?
 How did Hezekiah pray for those who had come to the feast without being sanctified?
 How did they keep the feast of unleavened bread?
 What are we assured respecting the blessings and prayers of the priests?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The influence of men in power, if directed to good ends, will produce wise reforms. We must not omit to pray for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. What is worth doing as a matter of religious reform should be done quickly, but it is better, even late, to turn from evil courses than to continue the wicked follies of former generations. God's ordinances ought to be strictly observed, yet if circumstances are unfavourable to the performance of all external requirements, it may be hoped that God will not refuse to accept the true worshipper.

PERIOD VI.] THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

108. Micah Prophecies. Captivity of Israel.

Micah v. 2; vi. 6-8. 2 Kings xvii 4-41; xviii. 9-12.

Micah also prophesied in the days¹⁰¹ of Hezekiah; he foretold⁴ the birth of Christ¹⁶ at *Bethlehem*,³⁶ saying, "But thou, *Beth-lehem Ephratah*, though thou be little among the thousands of *Judah*,⁷³ yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." He also spoke of the ignorance of the people concerning their duties, and told them plainly of God's requirements.

Shalmaneser, king of *Assyria*,¹⁰⁴ found Hoshea, king of *Israel*,⁷³ conspiring¹⁹ against him with So, king of *Egypt*,⁵ and he brought no tribute¹⁰⁴ as he had done year by year; therefore the king of *Assyria* bound him in prison in the sixth year of his reign. Shalmaneser then went up and besieged *Samaria*⁷¹ three years.

He carried the people of *Israel* away, and placed them in *Assyria* and in the cities of the *Medes*. God suffered⁹⁷ them to be thus taken captive for their sins against him; they had forsaken God, served idols, and rejected his prophets.⁵⁷ The king of *Assyria* brought men from *Babylon*, who feared not the Lord, to dwell in the cities of *Samaria*. God sent lions among them which slew some of them. Then the king sent one of the priests of the land into *Samaria*, to teach the people.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Medes—the people of Media; a country formerly under the dominion of Assyria.

Babylon—the metropolis of the Babylonian empire; it was situated on the River Euphrates, and was celebrated both for its extent, and its magnificent buildings.

EXPLANATIONS.

Beth-lehem Ephratah—the earthly birth-place of Christ was thus universally known among the Jews.
ruler in Israel—this prophecy of the Messiah was to encourage the faith of the people.
goings forth, &c.—a strong assurance of the pre-existence of the Messiah from all eternity.
forsaken, &c.—renounced the true worship.
requirements—demands; namely, to to justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.
served, &c.—gave that worship due to God to senseless idols.
rejected—spurned, refused to hear, would not acknowledge them.
feared not—who neither knew nor cared for the True God.
one of the priests—so that these Assyrians had a mixed religion; they worshipped their own idols, and they agreed to worship the God of Israel also.

QUESTIONS.

In whose reign did Micah also prophesy?
 What truth did he foretel?
 In what words?
 Where did he say Christ should be born?
 What important attribute of the Messiah is affirmed?
 What did the ignorance and sin of the people lead him to speak about?
 What were these requirements?
 What offence against Shalmaneser was Hoshea guilty of?
 How did the Assyrian king punish him?
 In what year of his reign?
 How long did Shalmaneser besiege Samaria?
 Whither did the Assyrians carry Israel?
 How were their places filled in Samaria?
 What occurred to the new inhabitants?
 What plan did the king adopt thinking to conciliate the God of the land, for the removal of the king and people?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

This important prophecy of Micah proclaims the human birth of Christ, while it affirms his eternal Godhead. Conspiracy rarely succeeds, especially when it violates solemn engagements made by those who conspire. From the punishment of Israel we learn, that sin persevered in against the Lord will at last depopulate a country and bring it to ruin. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."

THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL. [975-606 B.C.]

109. Hezekiah resists Assyria. His Illness, &c.

2 Kings xviii. 7,8,13—16; xx. 1—6. 2 Chron. xxxii. 1—8. Nahum.

The Lord was with¹⁵ Hezekiah; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth. He rebelled against the king of Assyria,¹⁰⁴ and he smote the Philistines³⁵ even to Gaza.⁴¹ At this time Nahum prophesied of the ruin and desolation¹¹⁶ of Nineveh,¹⁰² and denounced³⁴ its crimes of lying¹⁰³ and robbery.

In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against the fenced cities⁷⁷ of Judah,⁷³ and took them. Hezekiah strengthened Jerusalem⁵⁶ for a siege, and he encouraged the people. He afterwards acknowledged to Sennacherib that he had offended, and offered to pay him tribute.¹⁰⁴ Sennacherib appointed him to pay three-hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and he cut off the gold from the doors and pillars of the temple and gave it to him. In those days Hezekiah was sick unto death. The prophet Isaiah came to him and announced this message from the Lord, "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live." Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed¹²⁷ to the Lord, and wept.²⁵ Isaiah departed, but was commissioned to return, and tell him that God had heard his prayer, and seen his tears, and he would heal him, and on the third day he should go up to the house of the Lord. He was also to announce to him, that God would add fifteen years to his life, and deliver him from the king of Assyria.

EXPLANATIONS.

prospered—succeeded in his undertakings.
rebelled, &c.—refused to pay him tribute or to acknowledge him as his superior.
strengthened, &c.—renewed the decayed parts and added new defences.
to pay, &c.—the sum amounted to about £276,750.
silver, &c.—What a painful necessity this must have been to Hezekiah!
commissioned—received a message to deliver to the king.
heard his prayer—his cry of human helplessness was immediately answered; which furnishes a reply to the scoffers' question, "What profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"
fifteen years—thus Hezekiah knew what no man ever knew before him or since namely, how long he had to live.

QUESTIONS.

Did God show favour to Hezekiah?
 Against whom did Hezekiah rebel?
 Whom did he conquer?
 Who prophesied at this time?
 Against what place and people?
 Who came against Judah?
 What cities did Sennacherib take?
 Why did he not take Jerusalem?
 What amount of tribute had Hezekiah to pay?
 What tribute did Hezekiah give Sennacherib?
 Narrate the particulars of Hezekiah's illness and recovery.
 Repeat this instance of the efficacy of prayer in the words of the lesson.
 How many years longer did Isaiah inform him he should live?
 From whom was he to be delivered?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

FROM the doom on Nineveh we learn, that lying and robbery will bring a people to ruin. FROM Hezekiah's rebellion and the result, that engagements either made or tacitly admitted by a revolted party must be religiously kept. FROM the message of the prophet to the king, that it is our duty, as well as our interest to be always prepared for death. AND FROM the prayer of Hezekiah, that earnest prayer to him who is the great Physician, in seasons of sickness, is not only the best preparation for death, but for recovery. We have not if we ask not, or if we ask amiss.

PERIOD VI.] THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

110. Sennacherib's Invasion.

2 Kings xviii. 17—xix. 7, 35—37; xx 12—19. 2 Chron. xxxii. 9—22.

Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of *Babylon*,¹⁰⁸ heard that Hezekiah had been sick, and he sent letters and a present to Hezekiah. Hezekiah showed the messengers all his precious things; his silver, gold, spices, armour, and every thing he had. Isaiah came and inquired of Hezekiah what the messengers wanted, and whence they had come. Hezekiah told him that they had come from *Babylon*, and that he had shown them all his treasures. Isaiah then announced to him, that the days¹⁰¹ would come when all he had in store should be carried away to *Babylon*, and his sons should be captives there. Hezekiah bowed submissively to this sentence, saying, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken."

Sennacherib again invaded⁵¹ *Judah*.⁷³ He sent his captains with a great host⁵² against *Jerusalem*⁵⁶; they reviled Hezekiah, and tried to persuade his people to revolt, but Hezekiah was comforted by this message from Isaiah, "Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of *Assyria*¹⁰⁴ have blasphemed²⁴ me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." Afterwards the angel²⁰ of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp⁴² of the Assyrians a-hundred-and-four-score-and-five-thousand. So Sennacherib returned to *Nineveh*,¹⁰² and he was slain by two of his sons.

EXPLANATIONS.

sent letters—to express his pleasure at Hezekiah's miraculous recovery, and to encourage him to oppose the invasion of the Assyrian king.
showed, &c.—he was pleased with the attention of the king of Babylon, and was tempted to make a show of his wealth and greatness to strangers.
should be carried, &c.—to that country whence his visitors had come.
blasphemed—these daring idolaters had declared that God was unable to preserve Judah from their king.
a blast—hence it is inferred that a pestilential wind was sent to destroy the Assyrian army.
angel—any being or creature employed in effecting God's will is his messenger. See 'the Lord sent,' Les. 102.
slain—the untimely end of a blasphemer, and thus the word of the Lord was fulfilled.

QUESTIONS.

What do you know of Babylon?
 Who was Berodach-baladan?
 How did he communicate with Hezekiah?
 Was Hezekiah pleased with his courtesy?
 What foolish thing was he tempted to do?
 What inquiries did Isaiah make?
 What did he say to Hezekiah's answer and communication?
 How did Hezekiah show his acquiescence in this prophetic sentence?
 Who again invaded Judah?
 What did he do with regard to Jerusalem?
 Whom did his captains revile?
 How was Hezekiah comforted?
 By what means did the Lord say he would punish Sennacherib?
 What number of the Assyrian army perished?
 What severe punishment fell on Sennacherib?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Those people sin greatly who indulge their pride in boasting of their possessions, their fine clothes, houses, furniture, books, &c., to gain their fellow-creatures applause, or excite their envy; the reproof which Hezekiah received should be a warning to us; the best of men have infirmities, and have nothing to boast of before God. From the blasphemy of the king of Assyria, and the punishment which followed, we see that God is jealous of his glory. We have also a warning not to use profane or irreverent language, nor to attribute to human power and skill that which belongs to God alone.

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

Isaiah xl. ; xli. ; lii. ; liii. ; lx.—lxvi. 2 Chron. xxxii. 27—29,33.

Isaiah prophesied of many things that were to come to pass in the Jewish nation. Some of the events he predicted¹⁶ were then near at hand, others were very distant. He foretold⁴ the coming of John the Baptist, as the messenger of Christ, ¹⁶saying, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the LORD.'" He compared Christ's care of his people to that of a shepherd over his flock, and spoke of Christ's rejection, sorrows, sufferings, death for the transgressions of his people, his resurrection, and his intercession for the transgressors. He also spoke of the messengers of the gospel,¹⁰⁵ saying, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him . . . that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth !" He predicted the coming of Cyrus to perform God's pleasure, who would cause Jerusalem and the temple to be re-built ; and he foretold the great extension of the gospel in the latter days.

Hezekiah had very much riches and honour ; he made himself treasuries for silver, and gold, and precious stones ; store-houses for the increase of corn and wine and oil³⁰ ; and stalls for all manner of beasts and flocks. When he died he was buried in the chief of the sepulchres of the sons of David, and all Judah⁷³ and the inhabitants of Jerusalem⁵⁶ did him honour at his death ; and Manasseh, his son, reigned in his stead.

EXPLANATIONS.

events—occurrences ; things which were to take place.
Prepare, &c.—Let your minds be ready to receive instruction from the Lord from heaven.
care—tender watchfulness and constant protection.
rejection—casting off ; the Jews refused to acknowledge Christ.
death for, &c.—the way of reconciliation announced from of old, seen in antediluvian, in patriarchal, and in Jewish sacrifices, is clearly set forth by Isaiah 700 years before the Saviour's birth. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." No sacrifice, no salvation.
intercession—earnest prayer for.
messengers—apostles, ministers.
publisheth—maketh publicly known.
salvation—deliverance from eternal death ; everlasting happiness.
did him honour—showed respect and esteem for his memory by interring him in a manner becoming his greatness.

QUESTIONS.

Of what did Isaiah prophesy ?
 What are events ?
 Were all the events that he foretold very distant ?
 Whose coming did he foretel, and as what ?
 What means "Prepare ye the way," &c. ?
 What did he predict of Christ ?
 Why was he to endure all this ?
 How had this mode of reconciliation—death for sin—been constantly before the chosen people of God ?
 Who then is the sin-bearer of believers ?
 What was Christ to do after his resurrection ?
 Of whom did Isaiah next speak ?
 In what expressive words ?
 What did Isaiah predict of Cyrus ?
 What did Isaiah also foretel ?
 Tell me some particulars of Hezekiah's prosperity.
 How was he honoured at his death ?
 Why was he thus honoured ?
 Who reigned after Hezekiah ?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Here we learn, THAT God, who knows all things, future as well as present, was pleased to make known the facts and doctrines of Christianity for the hope and consolation of those who lived before its introduction. THAT we ought to commit ourselves to the care of Christ, who is the shepherd of our souls. THAT glory is usually preceded by sufferings and grief—the glory of Christianity is founded on the sufferings of our divine Redeemer. THAT those who declare the message of God to man are deserving of our earnest respect and regard. Lastly, we learn, THAT a useful man is worthy of an honorable death.

PERIOD VI.] THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

112. Manasseh's Idolatry and Repentance. Amon's Reign.

2 Kings xxi. 2 Chron. xxxiii.

Manasseh was only twelve years old when he began to reign. He restored all kinds of idolatry,³² he reared up altars for Baal,⁷⁸ made a grove, worshipped²³ the host of heaven, and built altars for the host of heaven in the two courts of the temple; he set a graven image in the house of the Lord, and he filled Jerusalem⁵⁶ with innocent blood. The Lord spake to Manasseh and his people,* but they would not hearken.¹⁸ Therefore God brought upon them the host⁵² of the king of Assyria¹⁰⁴; they bound Manasseh with fetters and carried him to Babylon.¹⁰⁵

When Manasseh was in affliction he humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed¹²⁷ unto him. The Lord heard his supplication, and brought him again to his kingdom. He repaired Jerusalem, took away the strange⁴³ gods,²³ and the idol out of the house of the Lord, and all the altars he had built, and cast them out of the city. Manasseh was king fifty-and-five years. He was succeeded by Amon his son, who served¹⁰³ idols, and forsook the Lord God of his fathers. Amon's servants conspired³⁸ against him, and slew him after a reign of two years. The people made Josiah, his son, king in his stead.

EXPLANATIONS.

only twelve—too young to reign unless he was under the guidance of good ministers.
restored, &c.—he not only set up that which his father had destroyed, (Les. 107.) but he introduced other idolatrous worship. It would seem that he was under the instruction of those princes against whom Micah had prophesied. Les. 108.
two courts—the court of the women and the court of Israel.
innocent blood—the blood of persons not guilty of any crime deserving of death.
brought upon &c.—the king of Assyria had conquered Babylon, and Manasseh was carried thither for his sins. Thus Isaiah's prediction to Hezekiah began (Les. 110.) to be fulfilled.
brought him, &c.—by putting it into the heart of the king of Assyria to restore him to his throne.
repaired, &c.—it is the duty of all who repent of having done wrong, to make what amends they can to those whom they have injured.
fifty-five—the longest reign recorded in the Bible.

QUESTIONS.

How old was Manasseh when he began to reign?
 Did he follow his father's good example?
 Tell me what he did.
 Did the Lord allow him to go on in sin without reproving him?
 When Manasseh and his people would not hearken, what did the Lord do?
 How was Isaiah's prediction to Hezekiah partially fulfilled?
 When did Manasseh change his conduct?
 How was the Lord gracious to him?
 What did he do on his restoration to his kingdom?
 How did God answer his prayer?
 How long did Manasseh reign?
 What is there remarkable in it?
 By whom was he succeeded?
 What was Amon's conduct?
 How was he punished?
 Whom did the people make king?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

It is clear from the narrative of Manasseh's evil courses that the young are in great danger of being drawn aside from right principles and conduct if put into situations of trust and power at too early an age, especially if they are not guarded by good counsellors. They who reject God's words reject their own means of mercy, and expose themselves to the anger of God. Honour and character lost may be regained by sincere repentance and reformation. Wickedness not only brings us under the condemnation of God's law, but also exposes us to the evils pronounced against sin in this life.

113. Josiah's Good Reign.

2 Chron. xxxiv. 2 Kings xxii.—xxiii. 3.

Josiah began to reign at eight years old; and in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father.¹⁰⁷ In the twelfth year he destroyed the images and altars of idolatry³² throughout the land. In the eighteenth year of his reign he repaired the house of God, and the men did the work faithfully. A book⁷⁹ of the law of the Lord given by Moses was found by Hilkiah, the priest, in the temple, and it was carried to the king, and read to him by Shaphan the scribe.¹¹⁷ When the king had heard the word of the law, he rent³⁵ his clothes, for grief, because the fathers of Judah⁷³ had not kept the word of the Lord. Huldah, the prophetess,³⁵ declared that the Lord would bring all the evil written therein upon Judah. Of the king Josiah she said, "Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, . . . I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place." Josiah then assembled all the elders⁴³ of Judah in the temple, and he read in their hearing all the words of the book; and the king and the people made a covenant to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments.²²

EXPLANATIONS.

twelfth year—he was then but twenty years old.
faithfully—they gave full value in materials and labour for the money which they received.
A book ... found—not one copy was known to exist till this was discovered. How grateful to God should we be for the abundance and cheapness of Bibles.
prophetess—occasionally the Lord made known his will through women.
tender—yielding to the requirements of the law of God, not hardened with obstinacy.
gather thee, &c.—cause thy remains to be buried among the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. Les. 115.
read in their hearing—no wonder that the people had become so corrupt: when the book of the law was so scarce that even the king did not know its contents; How wise of the king to read it to the elders.

QUESTIONS.

At what age did Josiah begin to reign?
 What did he do in the twelfth year after?
 In what work did he engage with zeal in the eighteenth year of his reign?
 What effect had his zeal on the workmen?
 What do you mean by their working faithfully?
 Who found a copy of the law?
 What was done with it?
 By whom was it read to the king?
 Why was he grieved?
 What did the king do?
 What did Huldah declare?
 What consolatory words did she speak of Josiah?
 Whom did Josiah then assemble?
 For what purpose?
 What good effect was produced?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Early piety is pleasing in the sight of God and man. Observe the steps that young Josiah took to honour God, and imitate him as far as possible. He first destroyed the stumbling-blocks which were in the way of true religion, and when these were removed, he established the pure worship of God. When God speaks of our sins in anger let us humbly bow ourselves before him, and he will send us messages of comfort. But we must remember at the same time, that sin will not be allowed to pass unpunished. David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

PERIOD VI.] THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

114. Prophecies of Zephaniah and Jeremiah.

Zephaniah. Jeremiah i.; ii. 8—iii. 8; iv. 3—18.

Zephaniah, the prophet,³⁶ uttered severe denunciations against Judah⁷³ for their sins, saying God would cut off⁸⁹ the remnant of idolaters—those, “that are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought¹⁰⁰ the LORD, nor enquired⁵⁴ for him.” He also declared⁸⁰ God’s judgments against heathen nations, and exhorted Judah to await their restoration and to rejoice in their salvation.

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah, a priest of Anathoth; he lived during the reigns of Josiah and the succeeding kings of Judah. He was commissioned to reprove the Jews for their idolatries; to tell them of the certain punishments which awaited them; and to exhort them to repentance. He spoke of the ingratitude³⁸ of the people to God, for defiling with idolatry³² the good and plentiful land he had given them; and also of the desolations which should come on Judah from the north.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Anathoth—a Levitical city of Benjamin, a few miles north of Jerusalem.

EXPLANATIONS.

denunciation, s &c.—threatenings on account of their hateful vices.
cut off, &c.—removed them from the privileges and comforts of their own country, homes, and religion.
await—patiently endure their captivity; bend to the Lord’s will.
rejoice—be glad that their punishment was not to be like that of Israel. Les. 101.
salvation—deliverance from captivity in Babylon; restoration to their own city and country.
commissioned, &c.—commanded; out of compassion to them. God’s word, his ministers, his providences, and man’s conscience are the means He uses *now* as *then* to bring people to himself.
defiling—making impure; idol-worship is a defiling and degrading sin.
desolations—frequent destructions of the people which would leave the land waste and uninhabited.
north—Babylon was north-east of Canaan.

QUESTIONS.

Why did Zephaniah utter severe denunciations against Judah?
 What are denunciations?
 What did he say God would do?
 What do you understand by cut off?
 What distinct classes of people were denounced?
 What did he declare against heathen nations?
 What did he exhort Judah to do?
 In what sense is salvation here used?
 What is said of Jeremiah?
 What do you know of Anathoth?
 What commission did he receive?
 Why did he receive this commission?
 What means does God use to bring people to himself?
 What did the prophet mean by desolations?
 From what quarter were they to come?
 Why were these desolations to be permitted? See ‘desolation,’ Les. 116.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We see, THAT God’s justice must be satisfied, and not even a remnant of the wicked shall escape punishment. THAT they greatly aggravate their sin, who after they have turned from their idols, relapse into their former sins. THAT those bold sinners who say to God, “Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,” shall be humbled. THAT while a day of repentance is granted us we should avail ourselves of it. “To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” THAT the ingratitude of man to his maker is a great offence, and lies at the root of all departures from God.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL. [975-606 B.C.]

115. Josiah is Slain.

2 Chron. xxxv. 20—xxxvi. 4. 2 Kings xxiii. 25,28—35. Habakkuk i. 5—11.

Necho, king of *Egypt*,⁵ came up to fight against *Charchemish*, by the *Euphrates*; and Josiah went out against him. But Necho sent ambassadors to Josiah, telling him to forbear, as he came not against him. Josiah would not⁹⁹ return, but disguised⁹⁶ himself and went into the battle. The archers shot at king Josiah in the *valley of Megiddo*,⁹⁵ and he was sorely wounded. His servants brought him to *Jerusalem*,⁹⁶ and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. All *Judah*⁷³ and *Jerusalem* mourned for him; for there was no king before him nor after him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, as he did, according to the law of Moses.

The people made Jehoahaz, a younger son of Josiah, king after his father; he reigned only three months and did evil. Pharaoh-Necho deposed and imprisoned him, and afterwards carried him away into *Egypt* where he died. He also exacted¹⁰⁴ tribute¹⁰⁴ from the kingdom; and made Jehoiakim, the brother of Jehoahaz king.

At this time Habakkuk prophesied; he spoke of the Chaldeans as a bitter and hasty nation, which should march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling-places that were not theirs.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Charchemish—a town of Assyria on the Euphrates, which Pharaoh-Necho took and fortified.

Euphrates—the great river of Asia which flowed through the garden of Eden; it rises in the mountains of Armenia, and falls into the Persian Gulf.

EXPLANATIONS.

came up—from Egypt along the sea-coast; he had then to cross the northern part of Canaan by land, on his way.

went out, &c.—as a tributary king to Assyria, he thought it was his duty not to allow an enemy of Assyria to pass through his country.

forbear—the king of Egypt had no quarrel with the king of Judah.

disguised, &c.—a proof that Josiah himself thought he was pursuing a doubtful course.

mourned, &c.—they had great cause to honour his memory, and to remember and imitate his goodness.

no king—zeal for reformation, and an unblemished life were his characteristics.

deposed—put him down from the throne; he was not allowed to be king.

tribute—Judah was now made tributary to Egypt as it had been to Assyria.

QUESTIONS.

Who came up from Egypt to fight against Charchemish?

What did Necho do when Josiah came against him?

What was Josiah's conduct?

Why did he think he ought to oppose Necho?

From what circumstance is it judged that he pursued a doubtful course?

What occurred to him in the valley of Megiddo?

What did his servants do?

Who mourned for him?

What character is here given of Josiah?

Whom did the people make king?

Who deposed and imprisoned him?

What exaction did he make from the kingdom?

Whom did Pharaoh-Necho make king?

Who prophesied at this time?

How did he speak of the Chaldeans?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

If we desire to engage in any business which makes it necessary for us to disguise our real character or appearance, we may be sure that such engagements are contrary to our happiness, consistency and safety. All the people mourned; many mourn for their calamities, though they will not forsake the sins that provoked God to punish them. The Chaldeans soon after came and possessed the land; (Les. 118.) we see how sin transfers our possessions to others.

116. Predictions of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah. xiii.—xxiv.; xxvi.

Jeremiah declared⁸⁰ God's judgments against *Judah*⁷³ for their transgressions; he said that the people should be 'utterly cast forth; and that their captivity,¹⁰¹ and the 'desolation of their country were at hand. Pashur smote Jeremiah, and put him in the 'stocks, when he heard that he prophesied these things. On the morrow, when he brought him forth, Jeremiah denounced⁸⁴ him, and told him from the Lord, that his eyes should see *Judah* given to the king of *Babylon*,¹⁰³ and the people taken captive thither. Of Jehoiakim he predicted¹⁶ that the people should not lament for him, but that he should be buried with the 'burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of *Jerusalem*.⁵⁸ The priests accused Jeremiah to the princes¹⁰ of prophesying against the city. He said the Lord had sent him thus to prophesy, and he called on them to repent. The princes said that he was not worthy to die; and some of the elders⁴³ asked if 'former prophets who had prophesied against *Jerusalem* had been put to death, and as they were not, the princes and elders would not consent to the death of Jeremiah.

EXPLANATIONS.

utterly—thoroughly. Not meaning that none should be left in the city, but that the mass of the population should be removed, and none left in authority.
desolation—there should be but few inhabitants in the land, no civil government, no temple, and the once fertile land should be untilled, unoccupied, and unproductive.
smote, &c.—as though he had uttered something too horrid to be endured.
stocks—a mode of punishment both of pain and shame, which confined the hands and the head between pieces of wood.
burial of an ass—left exposed without any attention to decency or respect.
former prophets—such as Micah, who prophesied against Jerusalem, in former reigns. The elders were aware that Jeremiah spoke, not of himself, but in the name of the Lord God.
not consent—like the elders, we should be slow to condemn those who tell us of our sins and urge us to repent.

QUESTIONS.

What were the judgments which Jeremiah uttered against Judah?
 How do you understand the word *utterly*?
 What calamities did Jeremiah say were at hand?
 What do you understand by *desolation*?
 Why was their punishment so near?
 What act of iniquity did Pashur commit?
 How did Jeremiah condemn Pashur?
 What punishment was proclaimed against Pashur?
 What against Jehoiakim?
 What is meant by the burial of an ass?
 How did Jeremiah answer the accusation made against him?
 Were the princes as wicked as the priests and the people?
 Of what were the princes and elders aware?
 How did the elders show their wisdom?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

The sin of persecuting the Lord's prophets is a heinous one. Amongst the causes which hastened on the destruction of Israel and Judah this sin was prominent; "They misused his prophets." (Les. 121.) It is a cause of grief and shame to see such a man as Pashur in authority, and such a man as Jeremiah in the stocks. An unprofitable life though free from persecution is not to be preferred to the glory of suffering and being in personal danger for the cause of truth. From the conduct of the priests we see that though religious teachers are a blessing to a land, yet if they become corrupted they exceed even the princes and the common people in wickedness. "What is the vine tree more than any other tree?"

THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL. [975-606 B.C.]

117. Of Nebuchadnezzar and Jehoiakim.

Jeremiah xxv. 1—11.; xxxvi. 1—26. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 5—7. 2 Ki. xxiii. 36-xxiv. 1.

Jeremiah was again sent to reprove the people of *Judah*⁷³ for their idolatry³² and disobedience, and to say that God would bring Nebuchadnezzar against the land and its inhabitants, and against all the nations³⁷ round about, and utterly¹¹⁶ destroy them; and that the whole land should be a desolation¹¹⁶ seventy years.

Jeremiah was commanded to take a roll of a book,⁴⁴ and write down all the prophecies which the Lord had spoken to him against *Israel*⁷³ and *Judah*. Jeremiah called Baruch, a scribe, who wrote them from the mouth of Jeremiah; and he commanded Baruch to read the roll publicly. Michaiah, the son of Gemariah, declared unto the princes¹⁰ of *Judah* all the words that he had heard Baruch read; and the princes said they would inform the king. The princes then advised Baruch and Jeremiah to go and hide themselves. The king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll, and he began to read it in the ears of the king and the princes. The king cut it with a pen-knife, and cast it into the fire. He then sent men to take Baruch and Jeremiah, but the Lord hid them.

When Jehoiakim had reigned three years Nebuchadnezzar came up to *Jerusalem*,⁵⁶ as Jeremiah had foretold; he bound Jehoiakim in fetters, and took him to *Babylon*¹⁰⁸; he also took away the vessels⁶³ of the house of the Lord, and put them in his temple at *Babylon*.

EXPLANATIONS.

the people, &c.—nations like individuals must suffer for disobedience, and learn by lessons of affliction.
God would bring, &c.—when the evils of war distress a nation, we may reasonably fear that God has suffered them to come because of that nation's sins.
roll of a book—the old Jewish books consisted of rolls of parchment, they were written upon with great neatness. The art of printing was not then known.
a scribe—a writer of the law. Baruch acted as secretary or scribe to Jeremiah.
cut it, &c.—destroyed the writing which contained God's messages and warnings. This was an act of daring impiety. The princes had felt some concern till they saw that the king made light of it.
hid them—defeated the vigilance of those sent to apprehend them. Under divine protection they were safe.

QUESTIONS.

Tell me what Jeremiah was again sent to say to the Jews.
 Why were the Jews to be punished?
 How long was Judah to be desolate?
 What have we reason to fear when war distresses a nation?
 What command did Jeremiah receive?
 Against what people were these predictions made?
 What did Baruch do?
 Who complained of Baruch's reading Jeremiah's prophecies?
 What did the princes say?
 Did they show any kindness towards the scribe and prophet?
 What is said of Jehudi?
 What did the king do with the roll?
 Why was this an act of daring impiety?
 How were Jeremiah and Baruch preserved from his anger?
 What did Nebuchadnezzar do?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Jehoiakim and his people were ripening fast for ruin, but before the final stroke another gracious effort is made to bring them into the way of duty. Observe, that the writing of the Scriptures is of divine appointment, and it is at our peril therefore if we treat the sacred records with the indifference with which we may treat other writings; but if we from hatred of their solemn warnings and threatenings, dare destroy these writings, God will add to us all the plagues that are written therein, and take our names out of the Lamb's book of life.

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 i. 2 Kings xxiv. 2—17. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 8—10.

Nebuchadnezzar directed Ashpenaz to select from among the captives the 'noblest, the most 'beautiful, and the most 'skilful of the princes¹⁰ of Judah,⁷³ to be brought up in the wisdom of the Chaldeans. Among them were Daniel, and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. 'God blessed¹⁵ Daniel and his friends in their captivity,¹⁰¹ and gave them knowledge and skill in all 'learning and wisdom. And Daniel had understanding in all 'visions¹⁰⁰ and dreams.¹⁵

After Jehoiakim had 'rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, the Lord sent against Judah to destroy it, bands of the Chaldeans, the *Syrians*,⁵⁷ the *Moabites*,²³ and of the children of Ammon. Jehoiakim 'died after reigning eleven years, and his son Jehoiachin succeeded him.

Soon after, Nebuchadnezzar 'again besieged *Jerusalem*,⁵⁶ and Jehoiachin, the new king, and the princes and all the mighty men, and craftsmen, and smiths, were 'taken captive to *Babylon*.¹⁰⁵ None were left in the land save the poorest of the people. Nebuchadnezzar then make Zedekiah king over Judah and *Jerusalem*.

EXPLANATIONS.

noblest—those of princely extraction
beautiful—handsome in form and countenance.
skilful—of quick understanding, clever.
God blessed, &c.—the wisdom with which they were favoured was far superior to all that the Chaldeans possessed.
learning . . . wisdom—knowledge and sound judgment in difficult matters, ability to advise and direct.
visions, &c.—he could explain them.
rebelled—refused to pay the yearly tribute which conquered princes frequently were obliged to pay in acknowledgment of their submission.
died—perhaps of grief, perhaps in a sally against the bands of Chaldeans; it is recorded that his body was left unburied. Jer. xxxvi. 30. Les. 116.
again besieged—the new king, Jehoiachin had now rebelled against the conqueror of Judah.
taken captive, &c.—the treasures of Judah were also now carried thither, as Isaiah had foretold to Hezekiah. Les. 110.

QUESTIONS.

What orders did Ashpenaz receive?
 What do you mean by noblest?—most beautiful?—most skilful?
 What was the object of this selection?
 Were any of these youths remarkable for their good qualities?
 Did the Lord show them favour?
 With what did the Lord endow them?
 How was Daniel more especially gifted?
 Of what imprudence had Jehoiakim been guilty?
 How was he punished?
 How long did he reign?
 Who was the next king?
 What took place in his reign?
 Who were taken to Babylon?
 Who was then made king?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Nebuchadnezzar's wise policy is a lesson to kings to take proper steps for securing men for the public service who possess the necessary qualities of mind and enlarged experience. It is a discredit to any country to employ men in state affairs who are without wisdom and experience, and to leave unnoticed others who are well qualified for the public service. If opportunities of rising in the world are afforded us we must not throw aside the restraints of religion in order to please, or from fear of offending our patrons; God will put honour on those who scrupulously reverence his laws and love his ordinances.

119. Jeremiah's Exhortations.

Jeremiah xxviii. 10—17; xxix. 1—10, 30—32; xxxi.

Jeremiah wrote a letter to the elders⁴³ of the Jews, to the priests, and to the prophets who were carried away captive to *Babylon*.¹⁰⁸ He exhorted them to build houses, plant gardens, and to marry, and to be at peace in the city of their captivity,¹⁰¹ and to pray to the Lord for it, and not to listen to false prophets and diviners, who would deceive them; and that after seventy years' captivity in *Babylon* they should return to *Judah*.

Jeremiah denounced⁸⁴ God's wrath against Shemaiah, for causing the captives to trust in a lie and to rebel against the Lord. He also foretold⁴ the massacre of the infants at *Bethlehem*,³⁶ and spoke of God's new covenant with the house of Israel, when all should know the Lord from the least of them to the greatest. A false prophet, named Hananiah, said that within the space of two years the people should return from captivity. Jeremiah denounced him for making the people trust in a lie, and said that he should die during that year, for teaching rebellion against the Lord. So he died the same year in the seventh month.

EXPLANATIONS.

elders—they exercised authority over the people in their captivity.
to build, &c.—inasmuch as their captivity would exceed the age of all who were then full grown.
to marry—not with the heathen.
be at peace, &c.—not to join in any wicked attempts to overthrow the government of the country in which they lived.
to pray, &c.—all our efforts for our own good and that of others should be made with prayer.
diviners—men who foolishly and falsely pretend to foretel future events.
a lie—a prophecy of a speedier return than Jeremiah had predicted.
massacre, &c.—murder of many with the intention of killing the infant Saviour.
new covenant—salvation by Christ.
all should know, &c.—when the things of God should by the gospel of Christ, be seen in a clearer light, and all should have this means of knowledge.
teaching rebellion, &c.—alluring them to distrust and disobedience.

QUESTIONS.

To whom did Jeremiah write a letter?
 Why was it proper to write to the elders?
 Did the prophet show that he kindly remembered the captives.
 Why did he advise them to build, marry, &c.?
 What else did he tell them to do?
 What did he advise them not to do?
 What hope of future comfort was held out to them?
 What was Shemaiah's sin?
 What remarkable prophecy did Jeremiah utter?
 Of what did he also speak?
 To what times did the prophet refer?
 Who was Hananiah?
 Of what sin was he guilty?
 What did Jeremiah say should happen to him.
 Was this threatening fulfilled?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

If we are brought into any trouble or affliction for our sins let us not be fretful or impatient under punishment; let us not be as "a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke;" which rebels against the restraint that is to train him to a life of useful service. Let each of us rather say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." When false friends assail us with temptations, we should stop our ears against every suggestion which would make us suppose that our affliction shall be lightened before our sin is corrected. False teachers are to be dreaded; they teach rebellion against the Lord, and they make many fall by reason of their lies. Let it not be said of us the deceived and the deceiver shall alike perish.

120. Jeremiah Denounces the Princes. Ezekiel Prophecies.

Jeremiah xxxiv. 1-17. Ezekiel.

God commanded Jeremiah to tell Zedekiah, that he would give *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ to the king of *Babylon*,¹⁰⁸ and it should be burned with fire, and that the king should be taken captive. Zedekiah made a covenant to 'proclaim liberty to all in the land who were bond-servants. But the princes¹⁰ and the people 'brought them again into subjection. Jeremiah condemned their conduct, and reminded them of God's 'merciful laws towards bondmen,⁹⁰ and said as they 'had not hearkened unto the Lord, he would punish them with the 'sword, and the pestilence, and famine,⁷ and make them be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

Ezekiel prophesied to the captive Jews in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river 'Chebar. He spoke of the judgments of God on *Jerusalem*. He also predicted¹⁶ the end of Zedekiah, who was to be taken into captivity, brought to *Babylon*, the land of the Chaldeans; yet he should not see it, though he should die there. He exhorted idolaters to repent for fear of God's judgments, but said that God would 'remember his covenant, and be merciful in the last days, when Judah should know the Lord.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Chebar—a river of Mesopotamia which falls into the Euphrates; it was the scene of one of Ezekiel's visions.

EXPLANATIONS.

proclaim liberty, &c.—thus he sought by an act of kindness to stay the anger of God. In this way many offenders have tried to turn from them the just judgments of the Lord when too late.
brought them again, &c.—their covetousness and selfishness were stronger than their fear of danger and love of mercy.
merciful laws, &c.—referring to God's gracious command to their fathers, when he brought them out of bondage in Egypt, that an Israelite should not be held in servitude above 7 years. Ez. xxi. 2.
had not hearkened, &c.—God's word speaks in severe language against those who oppress the poor and helpless.
sword . . . pestilence . . . famine, &c.—war, disease, and death, want of food and bondage; he who gives peace, health, and plenty, can also withhold these blessings.
remember, &c.—let us be assured that God will prove faithful to all his promises as well as true to his threatenings.

QUESTIONS.

What message from the Lord did Jeremiah deliver to Zedekiah?
 What did this lead Zedekiah to do?
 Why did he proclaim liberty to bond-servants?
 Did all who had bondmen obey this proclamation?
 What bad feelings influenced them in this course of conduct?
 In what way did Jeremiah reproach the princes?
 Of what did he remind them?
 Why are God's laws the best?
 What punishment was declared against these hard-hearted princes?
 Where did Ezekiel prophesy?
 Where is the river Chebar?
 Why did he prophesy there?
 What did he predict of Zedekiah?
 Whom did he exhort? And why?
 What did he say God would remember?
 When?
 What lesson may we learn from this?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Here is—1. An example of the folly of rebellion against the condition into which we may be brought for our sins; Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar contrary to the express command of God. 2. An attempt to stay judgment by a late and insincere reform, and that because of immediate danger. 3. An example of selfishness and extortion under the worst circumstances, for which God was indeed angry. The predictions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel would tend to dissipate the fallacious hopes which the Jews in Babylon entertained of a speedy restoration. Thus was God's great kindness shown in giving Judah a prophet in her last days, and the captives a prophet after their separation from their own land.

121. Zedekiah's Rebellion.

2 Chron. xxxvi. 11—21. 2 Kings xxiv. 18—20. Jeremiah xxxii.

Zedekiah rebelled¹¹⁸ against Nebuchadnezzar, and 'did not humble himself before Jeremiah when he spoke to him from the Lord. The priests and the people also transgressed, for they 'mocked⁹ the messengers of God, and 'despised their words. Therefore God brought upon them the king of the Chaldees. In the tenth year of Zedekiah's reign, Nebuchadnezzar besieged *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶ Jeremiah had prophesied of the captivity¹⁰¹ of Zedekiah, and that though the people of Judah should fight with the Chaldeans, they should 'not prosper while in prison. Jeremiah 'showed his faith in God's promises of the return from captivity, by buying from Hanameel, his uncle's son, a field in *Anathoth*.¹¹⁴ He then took 'witnesses of the purchase, to whom he expressed his belief in the word of the Lord, that the Jews should again possess houses, and fields, and vineyards in the land, though it was then given up to the Chaldeans. God then comforted Jeremiah, by again assuring him, that he would 'gather the captives out of all lands, and bring them again into their own land to dwell safely.

EXPLANATIONS.

did not humble, &c.—he refused to hear rebuke, even from the Lord's prophet.
mocked, &c.—they who treat the Lord's messengers with derision are both foolish and wicked.
despised, &c.—treated with contempt, as undeserving of their attention.
not prosper—to submit to the rod of punishment when applied for our sins is the best wisdom. It is in vain to strive against God's will.
showed his faith, &c.—had he felt any doubt of the restoration of the Jews to their lands and religious privileges, he would not have thus spent his money on land then in the enemies' possession.
witnesses—those in whose presence the deed of purchase was signed and sealed.
gather, &c.—is "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock."

QUESTIONS.

How did Zedekiah hasten his own ruin?
 Why was he wrong in rebelling against his superior king?
 Why was he wrong in not humbling himself?
 How did others transgress?
 What did God therefore do?
 When did Nebuchadnezzar come?
 What prophecy had Jeremiah delivered?
 How did he prove his faith in the message he delivered?
 What particular promise did he now show his faith in?
 What did God assure Jeremiah he would do?
 Was this a grief or a comfort to Jeremiah?
 What is the promise respecting the gathering again of Israel?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We are here taught, THAT perjury is hateful to God; Zedekiah had sworn allegiance to the king of Babylon, he now violates his oath, and hastens that calamity which his submission would have delayed. THAT that country is ripe for ruin where religion is scoffed at, and God's ministers are abused. THAT we should express our faith in God's promises by such methods as may be within our power by actions as well as by words. THAT though we may be assured of future blessings, such assurances must not be interpreted as securities from present troubles. THAT whatever God designs to do, whether in wrath or mercy, none can hinder him nor defeat his purpose.

122. Jeremiah Accused and Imprisoned.

Jeremiah xxxvii. 12—xxxviii. 13; xxxix. 2—18; lii. 2—11.

Afterwards Jeremiah departed to go into the land of *Benjamin*, but he was taken by Irijah, a captain of the ward, and accused of favouring the *Chaldeans*.¹¹⁵ Jeremiah said, "It is false." Irijah brought him to the princes, and they cast him into prison; after which they had him cast into a noisome dungeon for having prophesied. Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian, spoke to the king in his favour, and he was taken out of the dungeon, but he remained in the court of the prison. Jeremiah promised Ebed-melech, by the word of the Lord, that he should escape when the *Chaldeans* took the city.

When the city was besieged, Zedekiah and the men of war fled by night, but the army of the *Chaldeans* overtook the king in the plains of *Jericho*,³⁰ and all his army was scattered from him. They carried the king up unto the king of *Babylon*,¹⁰⁸ at *Riblah*, and slew his sons before his eyes; the princes of *Judah*⁷³ also were slain in *Riblah* before him. Then they put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him in chains, carried him to *Babylon*, and put him in prison till the day of his death. Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the guard, had charge to do Jeremiah no harm, so he and all the princes of *Babylon* took him out of prison, and he committed him to the care of Gedaliah.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Riblah—a town of Syria in Hamath, at which Pharaoh-necho halted on his return from Charchemish. Les. 115.

EXPLANATIONS.

departed—knowing that Jerusalem would soon be in the hands of the enemy he quitted the city.
accused—such accusations have frequently been made against honest men who have exposed the misdeeds of others.
It is false—this was not rudeness; it was a simple denial of the treasonable accusation made against him.
court—this place was not so unwholesome as the dungeon itself. Great men used to have prisons or dungeons in the lower part of their houses.
put out the eyes, &c.—thus were two predictions accomplished; one by Jeremiah that he should be carried to *Babylon*; the other by *Ezekiel* that he should not see *Babylon*. Les. 120.

QUESTIONS.

Why did Jeremiah quit Jerusalem?
 Into what trouble did he fall?
 Of what crime was he accused?
 Was Jeremiah really a bad citizen?
 How did Jeremiah answer?
 How did the princes act?
 Who showed kindness to Jeremiah?
 What did he do in Jeremiah's favour?
 What reward was promised him by Jeremiah?
 Who fled from the city by night?
 Where was the king captured?
 How was he treated?
 Where were his eyes put out?
 What was done before his eyes were put out?
 What two predictions were now fulfilled?
 Where was *Riblah*?
 What charge had Nebuzar-adan?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

When we are unjustly accused it is not wrong boldly to deny the charge, and to commit ourselves and our cause to Him that judgeth righteously. God can raise up friends for the innocent in distress, where they least expect to find them. The Lord is able to make punishment a mercy, and convert a prison into a place of defence. Jeremiah was protected from a lawless community at a time when all civil order was deranged. Those who deceive themselves with groundless hopes of mercy, will find their misery aggravated when judgment comes. Walls, gates, bars, and all other defences are as nothing when God gives up a people to ruin.

123. Gedaliah made Governor. Of Tyre.

2 Kings xxv. 22—26. Jeremiah xl. 6—xli. 15. Exekiel xxvi.; xxvii.

Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah governor of the land of *Judah*⁷³ after *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ had been destroyed. Jeremiah went and joined Gedaliah.

Johanah informed Gedaliah that Baalis, the king of *Ammon*, had sent Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, to slay him. Gedaliah believed it not. Johanah wanted to go and slay Ishmael, but Gedaliah would not allow him, thinking he spoke falsely. Ishmael came to Gedaliah at *Mizpah*,³⁴ and ate bread with him, he afterwards slew him and a great number of his friends, and took away captive many people who had remained with Gedaliah at *Mizpah*, and went over to the *Ammonites*.³⁸ When Johanah heard of all the evil Ishmael had done, he and the captains who were with him pursued Ishmael, and overtook him. The people were glad to see Johanah, and turned to him, but Ishmael escaped to the *Ammonites* with eight men.

The Tyrians rejoiced when *Jerusalem* was destroyed, saying, "I shall be replenished now she is laid waste." *Tyre*⁶⁷ was then a place of merchandise; but God threatened to destroy her, to break down her towers, and make her like the top of a rock, a place for spreading nets upon, in the midst of the sea, that should be built no more.

EXPLANATIONS.

governor—he ruled the country under the authority of its Babylonian conquerors.
informed, &c.—the confusion and disorder of the country was now even greater than when it was under the rule of its unwise kings.
Ishmael—he was the chief conspirator against Gedaliah but there were others.
would not allow, &c.—in times of turbulence it is not well to confide in all the reports we hear, but this report of Ishmael's conspiracy was a true one.
rejoiced, &c.—Tyre was long celebrated for its commercial activity, its wealth and population; it has long been desolate.
replenished—made rich; they thought they should have more trade and gain, more wealth and power.
merchandise—trade, commerce, business.
top of a rock—bare, uninhabited; this prophecy was fulfilled.

QUESTIONS.

Who was appointed governor of Judah?
 Under whose authority did he govern?
 Who joined Gedaliah?
 Of what did Johanah inform Gedaliah?
 Was Gedaliah willing to believe this report?
 How did Ishmael accomplish his crime?
 What did Ishmael do next?
 Who pursued him?
 To what people did he escape?
 When did the Tyrians rejoice?
 As what was Tyre noted?
 What did the Tyrians say?
 What did they mean by replenished?
 How did God threaten Tyre?
 What was this proud city to become?
 Was this threat fulfilled?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

In this lesson we have several melancholy examples of the evils which result from the breaking up of an established government. Let this be a warning to those who are "given to change"; for the unloosing of the bands of society is at the same time the unloosing of the bad passions of men. If we wish to gain a blessing we must endeavour to deserve it, and if we labour for it, in a right spirit, we are not unlikely to attain it. The language of Tyre is a warning to those who rejoice over the fall of others.

124. Nebuchadnezzar's Vision. Of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Daniel ii. ; iii.

In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign he dreamed dreams which his wise men could not tell him nor interpret. God made known to Daniel the dream and its interpretation, who first told the king the dream, and afterwards explained it. Three kingdoms were to succeed each other after *Babylon*¹⁰⁸; the fourth was to be the strongest, but during its decline God would set up a kingdom which should stand for ever. When Daniel had made these things known to Nebuchadnezzar he acknowledged the greatness of God, and made Daniel ruler over the province of *Babylon*.

Nebuchadnezzar set up an image of gold on the *Plain of Dura*, and commanded all people to worship³³ it. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused, and were cast into a burning fiery furnace. The king was astonished to see four men in the furnace, walking about unhurt; and the form of the fourth was like the Son of God. He then called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to come forth. Not a hair of their head was singed, for the fire had no power on them. The king then blessed the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and promoted them to high honours.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Plain of Dura—an extensive level tract of country near Babylon.

EXPLANATIONS.

wise men—men who pretended to tell what would happen; to explain dreams &c.
interpretation—the meaning. See '*God blessed, &c.*' Les. 118.
kingdoms—governments.
set up—establish; this means the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.
greatness of God—who could thus inform Daniel of the dream and its meaning, and cause all that it foretold to happen.
province—a large division or part of the kingdom.
Son of God—he thought there were the signs of a divine being in his countenance and actions.
no power, &c.—could not do them any harm. "Our God," no other god, "is a consuming fire."
blessed the God—he owned them for servants of the Most High God; a God able to deliver them out of his hand.

QUESTIONS.

What occurred in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign?
 By what means was Daniel enabled first to tell and then interpret the dreams?
 Tell me Daniel's explanation of the dream?
 What was the result of the interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar?
 What was its result to Daniel?
 What folly was the king afterwards guilty of?
 Where was the plain of Dura?
 Who refused to worship the image?
 Why did they not comply with the king's command?
 How was their fidelity rewarded?
 Why did the king say that the fourth was like the Son of God?
 How did this event end?
 Why had the fire no power on the three faithful Jews?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We here learn, THAT God serves his own purposes by sometimes putting things out of men's minds as well as into them. THAT pretenders to superhuman knowledge are generally found out to be deceivers when a demand contrary to the routine of their system is made, THAT God's kingdom of grace on earth is to succeed all human systems, and it is to stand for ever! Let us pray, "Thy kingdom come." We are further taught not to sin through fear of man; but at the same time not to use disrespectful language in reply to an iniquitous proposal. God's course will not be benefited by violent conduct. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

125. Nebuchadnezzar's Pride and Punishment.

Daniel iv. ; vii.

Nebuchadnezzar had a second dream which his wise men could not interpret. He therefore sent for Daniel, and told it to him. Daniel was troubled in his thoughts for an hour. He then interpreted the dream to Nebuchadnezzar. This dream was to show the king that, for his pride, he should be driven from men, and eat grass as oxen. Daniel then advised the king to break off his sins by righteousness. About a year after, the king walked in his palace, and said, "Is not this great Babylon,¹⁰³ that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" While he thus spoke a voice came from heaven—his dream was fulfilled—for he was driven from men, and did eat grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like bird's claws. At the end of seven years he lifted up his eyes to heaven, his understanding returned to him; he again reigned over *Babylon*, and he blessed the most High God.

After this, when Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar reigned over *Babylon*, Daniel had a vision of four beasts, which was explained to him to mean successive kingdoms and powers of the earth; these would all fall, and the everlasting kingdom of Christ would be established in the earth.

EXPLANATIONS.

troubled, &c.—probably he had some difficulty in obtaining a clear understanding of the divine communication made to him.
eat grass, &c.—such a change should come over him that his habits would assimilate to those of the lower animals. How humiliating to a proud man!
the might of my, &c.—by this daring assumption he took to himself the honour of being the author of his own greatness.
understanding—his reason; the power of judging aright of men and things. His insanity was gone.
most High God—he was now aware that it is God alone who regulates the affairs of men—for he is "King of kings, and Lord of lords."
grandson—Evil-merodach was his son.
successive kingdoms.—the Chaldean Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires.

QUESTIONS.

Had not Nebuchadnezzar another dream?
 Who interpreted it?
 Why was there the delay of an hour before he interpreted it?
 What advice did Daniel give?
 Why was this dream fulfilled?
 What was the king doing at the time of its fulfilment?
 How was its fulfilment announced?
 To what state of degradation was Nebuchadnezzar reduced?
 How long did he continue thus?
 What returned to him after seven years?
 Of what truth was he now aware?
 What vision had Daniel in the reign of Belshazzar?
 How was Daniel's vision explained to him?
 What were the successive empires?
 What everlasting kingdom would be established?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Proud tyrants, who "set their hearts as the heart of God," deserve to be deprived of the heart of man, and have a beast's heart given instead. Learn 1. Not to glory in the good things you possess, for God can either deprive you of them, or take you from them. 2. That reason abused may be withdrawn, and O! what a pitiable creature is man deprived of the power of mind. 3. That when afflictions end in bringing us to acknowledge God's wondrous power and goodness, they are blessings in disguise. Learn finally, to long for the time when Christ's name shall be honored from the rising to the setting of the sun.

126. Belshazzar's Feast. The Writing on the Wall.

Daniel v.

Belshazzar, king of *Babylon*,¹⁰⁸ made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and he commanded the golden and silver vessels⁶⁸ belonging to the temple of *Jerusalem*⁵⁶ to be brought. He, his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank wine from them, and praised the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone. In that same hour a hand appeared writing on the wall of the palace. The king called for the wise men of *Babylon*, and promised them great gifts and honour if they should read the writing, and show the interpretation, but none of them could do it. Daniel was then sent for, and he read and interpreted the writing. He first reminded the king of Nebuchadnezzar's great power and his pride, and how he was humbled, till he acknowledged the most high God. He proceeded to remind Belshazzar of his own sins, after which he declared the interpretation of the writing; "*God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.—Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.—Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes¹⁰⁸ and Persians.*" The same night Belshazzar was slain, and Darius, the Median, took the kingdom.

EXPLANATIONS.

vessels—thus were the vessels of the Lord's house desecrated.
drank ... praised, &c.—this act was one of very daring impiety.
same hour—the last hour of the divine forbearance was come.
none ... could do it—God thus confounded the wisdom of the wise; they knew nothing of divine truth.
heread, &c.—God had endowed Daniel with this power. Les. 118.
humbled—by casting him down among the lower animals.
numbered—completed the number of years it should continue.
weighed—to ascertain his value.
wanting—deficient; valueless.
The same night—while these things were transacting in the palace, Cyrus entered the city, and took possession of the kingdom in the name of Darius, the king of the Medes, his uncle and father-in-law, whom he succeeded two years after.

QUESTIONS.

To whom did Belshazzar make a feast?
 What number of lords did he entertain?
 Of what desecration was he guilty?
 How was the mirth of the company arrested?
 What class of men were called to read the writing?
 What were they required to do?
 What rewards were promised them?
 Could they read it?
 Who alone was able to read it?
 Why could he read it?
 Of what did he remind Belshazzar?
 What was the interpretation of the words written on the wall?
 What people were to share his kingdom between them?
 What occurred that same night?
 Who was Darius?
 When did Cyrus succeed him on the throne?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Here we see, THAT they who affront God shall be affrighted by Him. THAT mirth is indeed sinful which profanes sacred things. THAT God is able to cast a damp on all the revelry of man, and turn his feasting into sorrow, and his boasting into feebleness. THAT children who have seen the punishment of their ancestors because of sin, are much more criminal if they persist in the same course than those who have had no such warnings. THAT the day of mercy to sinners, if not improved, will end in a night of dark despair and fearful suffering, "The wages of sin is death."

127. Daniel Accused. Decree of Cyrus.

Daniel vi. 4—24. ix.1—19. Ezra i. 1—4.

Some of the enemies of Daniel 'procured a decree¹⁷ from Darius, the king of *Babylon*,¹⁰⁸ that if for thirty days, any one should ask a favour of any God or man except the king, he should be cast into a den of lions. They found Daniel praying, and making supplication before his God; wherefore they accused him to the king of doing contrary to the decree. The king was sorry, but could not deliver him, He said to Daniel, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." Daniel was then cast into the 'den of lions. In the morning the king arose very early, 'went to the den, and called to Daniel, who answered that God had sent his angel, and shut the lions' mouths. Daniel was taken out of the den. His accusers were 'cast into it, and the lions destroyed them.

Daniel knew that the 'time appointed for the captivity⁰¹ of the Jews, according to Jeremiah's prophecy, was nearly expired, and he 'prayed earnestly to God for the restoration of his people to *Jerusalem*.⁵⁶ In the first year of the reign of Cyrus, who succeeded Darius, he made a proclamation to the Jews throughout all his kingdom that they should return, and re-build their city, and the house of God in *Jerusalem*. Thus the prophecy 'of Isaiah respecting 'Cyrus was fulfilled.

EXPLANATIONS.

procured a decree—to flatter the king's power, and also to injure Daniel, who prayed to God three times a day.
Thy God—though the king, had clear notions as to the power and goodness of the God of Jacob, he had not himself acknowledged Him as *his* God.
den of lions—it appears that this was a mode of capital punishment in Babylon for certain criminals.
went to the den—so anxious was he for the safety of his faithful servant.
cast into it—their own wicked intentions fell upon themselves.
time appointed, &c.—seventy years.
prayed—the strongest faith in God's promises does not exclude the necessity of earnest prayer.
of Isaiah—he foretold this act of Cyrus about 200 years before.
Cyrus—in this prophecy Cyrus is called "my shepherd"; that is, he should be employed to release God's sheep. Only the foundation of the temple, as in the words of the prophecy, was laid in the days of Cyrus. Isaiah xlv. 28.

QUESTIONS.

What singular decree did Darius make?
 Who obtained it?
 Did Daniel observe this decree?
 Was he accused for the neglect?
 What was the king's remark to him?
 How did the king show his anxiety for Daniel's safety?
 What answer to his inquiry did he receive from Daniel?
 How were the enemies of Daniel punished?
 Of what impending event was Daniel aware?
 How long was the time appointed?
 Whose prophecy did Daniel take as his guide as to the duration of the captivity?
 What did Daniel then do?
 Who succeeded Darius as king?
 What proclamation did he make?
 What prophecy was thus fulfilled?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We here see, THAT if duty compels us to honour God at the risk of our life we are bound to be firm, and not seek to escape from the consequences. THAT they who are ready to risk their lives for truth assuredly take the best course to preserve them, for if they lose them on earth, "their life is hid with Christ in God," and they shall be raised up at the last day. THAT they who piously, thoughtfully, and prayerfully observe the prophecies, comparing them with passing important events, shall not be left without some cheering knowledge of their fulfilment.

128. Rebuilding of the Temple.

Ezra iii.—vi. Haggai.

Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah,⁷³ and Jeshua, the high priest, forwarded the re-building of the temple. When the builders laid the foundation, the priests rejoiced, and the people shouted and praised the Lord. The ancient men who had seen the first house wept²⁵ with a loud voice.

The re-building of the temple was delayed fourteen years by the enemies of Judah and Benjamin; these were the Samaritans, whom Esar-haddon, king of Assyria,¹⁰⁴ had placed in Samaria.⁷⁸ The prophet Haggai reproved⁹ the Jews for delaying the building; he also prophesied that the glory of the second temple should be greater than the glory of the first.

Tatnai the governor of the province,¹²⁴ saw the work in which the Jews were engaged, he wrote to Darius to ascertain if Cyrus had made the decree of which the Jews informed him. The decree was found at Achmetha; and Darius wrote to Tatnai not to let the work be hindered, but to help the Jews in money, young bullocks, rams, and lambs for their offerings, and wheat, salt, wine, and oil. Tatnai obeyed this command.

Some years after, the Samaritans conspired against the Jews, and accused them to Ahasuerus, king of Persia, of being a rebellious people, unwilling to pay tribute, for which cause the city had been destroyed.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Samaritans—the mixed race who occupied the former kingdom of Israel (Les. 108.) the descendants of heathens and Jews who had intermarried.

Achmetha—the capital of Media; it was also called Ecbatana.

Persia—a celebrated kingdom of Asia; its inhabitants were called Elamites, and afterwards Parthians. Media and Persia were united by Cyrus.

EXPLANATIONS.

forwarded, &c.—by encouraging the people, and by making efforts for procuring supplies of money and materials.

shouted, &c.—their joy was loudly expressed on witnessing a proof of returning favour unto Zion.

ancient—men of years; aged men.

had placed, &c.—instead of the Israelites, whom he had removed into Media and Assyria. Les. 108.

reproved—they were losing their zeal for the completion of the Lord's house, while their love of gain and of luxury was increasing.

glory, &c.—which should be complete when the Son of God entered it as the Saviour of the world.

province—a division of an empire or kingdom. Judea was now not a kingdom, but part of a province.

QUESTIONS.

Who forwarded the re-building of the temple?

Who rejoiced when its foundations were laid? What did the people do?

Why did the ancient men weep?

Who caused the work to be delayed fourteen years?

Who were the Samaritans?

By what prophet were the Jews reproved for delaying the work?

By what glorious prophecy did he encourage them?

Who was Tatnai?

What did he do?

Was the decree found, and where?

What was Achmetha?

What did Darius do?

Did Tatnai do as he was commanded?

Of what did the Samaritans afterwards accuse the Jews?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Here is an emblem of life; while some are rejoicing, others are weeping, while the young, inexperienced in the world, gladly hail the beginning of a great work, the aged, who have known by experience the fading glories of all earthly things, weep at the contrast between former times and these. Then we see the verification of Isaiah's prediction respecting the church, "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers." "The rich among the people shall intreat thy favour."

129. Vashti Deposed. Esther made Queen.

Esther i—ii. 20. Ezra vii.

Ahasuerus, another king of *Persia*,¹²⁸ reigned over 'a hundred-and-twenty-seven provinces, from ''*India* even to ''*Ethiopia*. In the third year of his reign he made 'a feast to his nobles, and another feast to all the people in ''*Shushan* ; and his wife made a feast 'for the women of the royal house. On the seventh day of the feast, when his heart was merry with wine, he commanded 'the presence of Vashti, the queen, that she might show the people and the princes her beauty. She 'refused to go, and the king was very angry. He deposed Vashti and 'married Esther, a Jewess, whose parents were dead. Esther had been brought up by Mordecai, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, and she was his cousin.

Ezra, 'the scribe,¹¹⁷ was a Jewish officer in the court of *Babylon*,¹⁰⁸ he obtained leave to go to *Jerusalem*.⁵⁸ The king gave him gold and silver to expend for the temple and the altar in *Jerusalem*. He 'commissioned¹⁰⁹ him to appoint magistrates and judges in the law, and to teach them their duties ; and to let judgment be executed on those who disobeyed the law of God, and of the king.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

India—an extensive country of eastern Asia, only some portions of which were known in the time of Ahasuerus.

Ethiopia—a name formerly given to several countries of Asia and Africa.

Shushan—the capital of that part of Persia anciently called Elam, and the winter residence of the kings of Persia.

EXPLANATIONS.

127 provinces—What a mighty empire! This was the second great kingdom shown in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Les. 124.
a feast—such feasts are common in Eastern countries.
for the women—it is not the custom for the women in the East to eat with the men.
the presence, &c.—she was to come unveiled into the banquetting-room.
refused—she rebelled against a command which would have degraded her in her own eyes.
married Esther—thus a Jewess became the wife of the most powerful monarch of his time.
scribe—writer, one who wrote copies of the law of God.
commissioned, &c.—authority was given to him to regulate all those things according to the law of God.

QUESTIONS.

What number of provinces belonged to the kingdom of Ahasuerus?
 What countries were its boundaries?
 What do you know of India?
 What was Shushan?
 How did Ahasuerus celebrate the third year of his reign?
 In what state was he on the seventh day of the feast?
 What indiscreet conduct did his intoxication lead to?
 Why did the queen disobey the command of her husband?
 How did the king then act?
 Who was Mordecai?
 What relation was he to Esther?
 Where was Ezra, the scribe employed?
 What was the business of a scribe?
 What favour was shown him by the king of Persia?
 What important task was he appointed to perform at Jerusalem?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Here is a lesson against intemperance. The king being merry with wine, commands the queen to do that which in his sober senses he would not have thought of. Vashti's sense of modesty was stronger than her obedience to her king and husband, and she was deposed. God overruled this family dispute for the advantage of the Jews ; the elevation of Esther, a captive Jewess, to the throne, saved her nation from ruin. A good governor will provide for the social security, the comfort, the religious training, and the administration of justice among the people over whom he is placed. This was the course pursued by Ezra in Judah.

130. Of Haman and Mordecai.

Esther iii.—vi. 11.

Ahasuerus promoted Haman, an 'Agagite, above all the other princes, and the king's servants 'reverenced him. Mordecai alone bowed not to him. Haman was very angry; he spoke of the Jews to the king as a 'disloyal people, and obtained a decree¹⁷ against them. He sent letters through all the provinces for the destruction of the Jews on a certain day. Mordecai informed Esther of this decree; accordingly she went to Ahasuerus, and made a request to him that he and Haman would come to a 'banquet, which she had prepared. Haman went forth 'joyfully; he also told his wife that he had been invited to the queen's banquet; by his wife's advice he erected a gallows on which 'to hang Mordecai. On that night the king 'could not sleep; the 'chronicles of his kingdom were read to him, from which he learned that Mordecai had discovered a conspiracy against his life, and had received neither reward nor honour. Just then Haman came to the king to request that Mordecai should be hanged on the gallows he had prepared. The king asked him, "What shall be done unto the man the king delighteth to honour?" Haman thought only of himself, and suggested that such man should be clothed in royal apparel, and placed on the king's horse, and that one of the king's most noble princes should go with that man through the city, and proclaim before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour." The king approved of this, and told Haman to do even as he had said unto Mordecai, the Jew.

EXPLANATION.

Agagite—a descendant of the Amalekite king whom Samuel put to death for his horrid cruelties. Les. 45.
reverenced—treated with great respect; bowed humbly before him.
disloyal—not faithful nor submissive to foreign rulers.
banquet—a feast.
joyfully—supposing he was now about to enjoy the queen's favour as well as that of the king.
to hang, &c.—instead of being generous in the days of their prosperity, Haman and his wife became very vindictive.
could not sleep—observe how trifling a circumstance was appointed by the Lord to overthrow Haman's wicked designs.
chronicles—in which the remarkable events of each king's reign were registered.

QUESTIONS-

What good fortune did Haman enjoy?
 What was his descent?
 Who reverenced Haman?
 What do you mean by reverenced?
 Who did not bow to him?
 How did he speak ill of the Jews to the king?
 What did he obtain against them? [king?]
 What did he do towards carrying it into effect?
 How did Mordecai and Esther act?
 Was Haman pleased with the queen's invitation?
 What did he do by his wife's advice?
 What took place that night?
 What do you understand by chronicles?
 What occurred the next morning?
 What question did the king ask Haman?
 Would he have suggested this if he had known these honours were to be paid to Mordecai?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

Mordecai thought it derogatory to God to pay great honours to a wicked man, therefore he firmly declined performing obeisance to Haman. We are to hold by our conscientious convictions so long as they are not contrary to the word of God. We see that the wrath of a proud and wicked man knows no limit, and leads to revenge; and that self-admirers, are, like Haman, self-deceivers. Disappointment awaits the man whose ambition is for this world alone, who lives for himself; and the gratification of his evil passions, and not for God and his fellow-creatures, while honour will be the reward of him who is faithful and consistent.

131. Haman Accused and Hanged. Of Nehemiah.

Esther vi. 12—viii. 17. Nehemiah i.; ii.

After Haman had shown honour to Mordecai, according to the king's command, he went to his house mourning. Soon after, the king's chamberlains came to bring Haman to the queen's banquet. There Esther accused him of having contrived the death of herself and her people, and Haman was hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. The king then issued another decree to save the Jews, and Mordecai was promoted to great honour.

Nehemiah was cup-bearer to the king of Persia.¹²⁸ When he offered wine to the king, he told him that the city of his fathers was lying waste, and requested of the king that he might visit Jerusalem.⁵⁶ The king granted his request, and the Samaritans¹²⁸ were vexed when they heard of Nehemiah's arrival. Nehemiah went by night to view the walls; he told the elders of the king's words, but Sanballat, the governor of Samaria,⁸⁰ and his friends laughed him to scorn, and despised the Jews. Nehemiah thus answered them, "The God of heaven he will prosper us; . . . but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem."

EXPLANATIONS.

mourning—he felt that the first step in his downfall had been taken, by being compelled to do honour to a man who refused obeisance to him.
chamberlains—upper servants who had the care of the royal apartments,
then hanged, &c.—the word of an Eastern sovereign is obeyed as a law. "The triumphing of the wicked is short."
to save, &c.—he gave them permission to defend themselves.
cup-bearer—this was an honourable office; no Eastern monarch would have a cup-bearer to whom he could not entrust his life; it was therefore a place of great trust.
vexed—because Nehemiah had come with full authority from the king.
no portion—no inheritance.
nor right—not being of the family of Abraham.
memorial—no record of their history was connected with Jerusalem, or with the seed of Abraham.

QUESTIONS.

Why did Haman go home mourning?
 Who called him to the queen's banquet?
 What is meant by chamberlains?
 Who accused Haman to the king?
 When did she accuse him?
 What was the result of her accusation?
 What immediately followed on the death of Haman?
 What was done to Mordecai?
 Who was cup-bearer to Ahasuerus?
 Why was this an honourable office?
 What did Nehemiah tell the king?
 What request did the king grant him?
 Who were vexed at Nehemiah's visit?
 How did Nehemiah act?
 To whom did he tell the king's words?
 Who treated him with contempt?
 What was Nehemiah's answer?
 What is meant by no portion?—nor right?—nor memorial?

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

We have here an evidence of the precarious tenure of human favour. Courtly people who flatter and deceive are "set in slippery places," whence they often fall. We see also the wisdom and prescience of God exerted on behalf of his people, resulting in their deliverance from the dangers which surrounded them. In Nehemiah's zeal we see that great difficulties may be surmounted by those whose hearts are set to a good work; and that if attempts are made to drive us from the path of duty by scorn or contempt, or personal danger, we are not to desist, but persevere, for "God will prosper us."

132. Completion of the Walls of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah iv.—vi. ; viii. ; ix. ; xiii. Malachi.

Sanballat and Tobiah derided the Jews in their labours, yet they were very angry as the work proceeded. Nehemiah set men to guard those who builded, and some of them worked with one hand, and held a weapon in the other. When the wall was finished, it was dedicated³⁷ with gladness, and with great thanksgivings.³⁹ About this time the poor of the Jews cried out against the bondage and oppressions of the rich. Nehemiah reproveth⁹ the rich, and they promised to leave off usury, and restore to their brethren their lands.

Nehemiah was recalled to Persia¹²⁸; but Ezra instructed the people in the law, and the people rejoiced to hear the words of the law read to them. They made a solemn covenant to observe the commandments²² of the Lord, and not to forsake the house of their God. Nehemiah came again to Jerusalem,⁵⁶ and testified against those who were unfaithful, particularly against the sabbath-breakers, and against those who had taken wives from the heathen nations.

Malachi was the last of the prophets whose writings are in the Old Testament. He foretold the conversion of the Gentiles; he spoke of Christ as the Sun of righteousness; and he predicted¹⁶ the coming of John the Baptist, in the spirit of Elijah, to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of Christ.

EXPLANATIONS.

derided, &c.—they affected merriment at what they represented as fruitless labour, but they were sad at heart.
to guard, &c.—from the attacks of their malicious enemies the Samaritans.
dedicated—all our works should be commenced and ended in acts of devotion.
bondage, &c.—this was one of the offences of their fathers which hastened the destruction of Jerusalem, Les. 130.
usury—the crime of obtaining for a loan of money a larger sum than is just.
lands—which had been seized for debt.
sabbath breakers—this, as a national sin, was one cause of Israel's ruin.
conversion—turning; a moral change.

QUESTIONS.

What did Sanballat and Tobiah do?
 What is the meaning of derided?
 On what occasion were they very angry?
 What did Nehemiah do?
 How did the builders protect themselves?
 What was done on the completion of the wall?
 Of what did the poor Jews complain?
 How did Nehemiah act?
 What did the rich promise to do?
 What good did Ezra do? [read?
 Were the people pleased to hear the law
 What was done by Nehemiah on his return
 What is it to testify? [to Jerusalem?
 Who was Malachi?
 Tell me some of his predictions.

PRECEPTIVE LESSONS.

If we are engaged in a good work, the reproaches and scoffs of the ungodly should not deter us, but rather quicken us in our duty.

Oppression of the poor is a sin strongly condemned in the word of God therefore "oppress not a poor man because he is poor," for "he that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker."

We must also learn from this lesson that sabbath breaking, unequal marriages, and other forbidden courses will bring down God's displeasure.

Lastly we must contemplate Christ as the "Sun of Righteousness," walk in the beams of his favour, and be prepared for his second coming.

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