















### National Religion

Lesson for April 25, 1965

Background Scripture: I Samuel 11:12 through 13:4; II Samuel 22:47 through 23:5; I Kings 6:11-13.  
Devotional Reading: II Samuel 22:47 through 23:5.

If the readers of this column have been noticing, the shift in the Sunday school lessons from the New Testament to the Old, which we are about to take, comes as a kind of shock. The change in atmosphere between



the Testaments is striking. We drop from a world full of wonder and joy, a world of mystic visions, a world of miracle and glory, back to a common-place world, mostly without miracle, indeed a world too much like our own to be comfortable, a humdrum Monday-morning kind of world. And yet this is the charm and the value (one charm and one value out of many) of the Old Testament for us. It shows how religion has to do with everyday affairs of life.

#### Preaching to a nation

At the time our story opens, or rather at the point where we drop in on it, the Hebrew people had never been a nation in the modern sense. That is, they had been an informal group of tribes, about a dozen in all, once living in the wilderness and before then living as slaves in Egypt. They were tied together by a common ancestry and a religion which they violated about as often as they practised it—but government in the organized way they had never had. There had been national heroes but no national officials. But you can't run a nation with heroes. (Our own great soldiers have not always made the most efficient Presidents.) The country the Hebrews then occupied was small, about

the size of Vermont, and it was not difficult to get a representative meeting from all the tribes in one place. Such a meeting was in progress when our study begins. The great man at that time was Samuel, a priest, prophet and military leader. Men listened to him and respected him as no other. They had come to ask him to set up a government "like other nations," partly for military necessities (Samuel was growing old) and partly for national status. What is notable here is that Samuel, a preacher as all the prophets were, did not say to these Hebrews: "Sorry, gentlemen, but my specialty is religion. You have asked me to help out in a political situation, and religion and politics don't mix." Not at all. Samuel preached to the nation about the nation.

#### Prayer for a nation

This vigorous public-minded prophetic preacher also, as was only logical, prayed for the nation about to be born. Here again is a word for our time. We are living under strange circumstances, when courts will not allow us to offer prayer for the country—or anything else—in our public schools. This is close to saying that the only proper places for prayer are in the home and in church.

But we can still pray for our country. Do we, really in school, in church,—anywhere pray for America, in public or in private?

#### National religion

The founding fathers of these United States had seen the evils of a religion backed up by government support; and they wanted religion in every form to live and be spread as any other religion has. They did not want a national religion in the sense of a nationally supported denomination. But that the nation should be irreligious was farthest from their intentions. At any rate, when Samuel prays for his people, he prays most especially that they may keep the Ten Commandments. What difference would it make in American life if every one observed the simple Ten Commandments? We can't be called a nation that has outgrown them; like the ancient Hebrews, we have never lived up to them. But supposed we tried

### Diamond—April Birthstone



April is the month for diamonds—and what girl doesn't dream of getting one, particularly in an engagement ring? Since your diamond will be a life-time purchase, it should be chosen with considerable care. If you are thinking of buying, or even eyeing, a diamond, here are some important things about them you should know. Choose a reliable jeweler. Tell him approximately what you intend to spend and then be guided by the 4 C's—carat, cut, color and clarity.

CARAT is the unit weight used for diamonds. It is divided into 100 points, like cents in a dollar.

CUT refers to the shape of the stone and the placement of facets to catch the light and make the diamond sparkle. The popular shapes are round, emerald-cut, marquise, pear, heart shape and oval. One cut

is not more expensive than another, but the quality of the workmanship affects brilliance and price.

COLOR. The traditional engagement diamond is clear and colorless, like a drop of water. The "whiter" the diamond, the more valuable it is.

CLARITY means absence of carbon spots, bubbles or other imperfections. A diamond that shows none of nature's blemishes to an experienced eye under a glass that magnifies ten times is called flawless and is priced accordingly.

Ask your jeweler to show you your diamond under magnification. He will be glad to explain how the 4 C's contribute to the beauty of your diamond. That beauty, and the sentiment behind it, will make you happy with your diamond forever.

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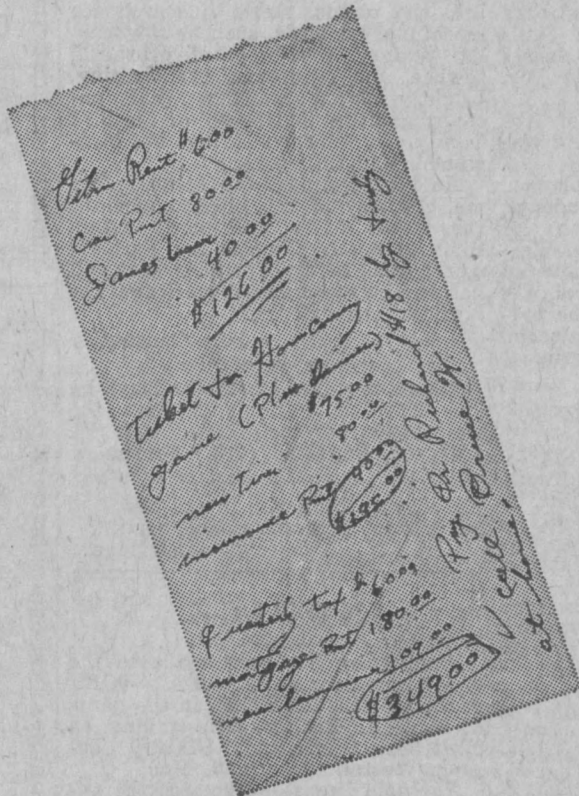
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Whatever breed or sex you prefer, be sure you select a healthy kitten with a personality that appeals to you. Follow some simple advice from the Purina Pet Care Center when you're ready for the specific choice. To make sure your kitten is healthy, look for: clear eyes, not weak or watery; clean ears; firm pink mouth; glossy coat without bare patches; firm and muscular body free from rashes. A spine that juts out too much indicates that the kitten is too thin. Call to the kitten to be sure it is responsive and is not deaf. Avoid a kitten with a runny nose, a symptom of many cat diseases. If possible, find out the date of the kitten's birth and check whatever medical history is available.

### A COOK'S TALE



Heavy iron pots were common by the 17th Century. Heavy cast iron kettles, frying pans and stewing pots were found in every home. Our colonial housewives cooked the evening meal in iron pots suspended over a blazing log fire in a huge kitchen fireplace.

The first cooking utensils were hollowed-out shells and stones. They gave way to ceramic-ware centuries later. The ancient Egyptians stored water and food in huge pottery jars, and cooked in pottery bowls over open fires or in clay ovens.



Today's homemaker does not yearn for the "good old days." With her modern range and light-weight, even-heating aluminum cookware, she not only cooks better than her forebears but is spared the drudgery and discomfort.

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