

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Department Conducted for The Chronicle by Miss Mildred C. Watkins.

SAUL CHOSEN KING.

Sabbath School Lesson for July 12, 1908—1 Sam. 10:17-27.

Golden Text—"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."—1 Sam. 23:3.

TOPICAL OUTLINE.

God does not give up Israel though rebellious.

God appoints Saul by lot, vs. 17-21. Divided feeling toward the new King, vs. 22-27.

CONTEXT OF THE LESSON.

The omitted section of the Bible and the previous verses of this tenth chapter, relates in simple yet graphic fashion the circumstances by which God brought together Saul the king He had selected and Samuel who was to induct him and appoint him ruler.

Strange to say this Saul, son of a wealthy farmer of Benjamin, a grown man and a brave one, had so little knowledge of Samuel that it was his servant who suggested that they go to Samuel to get some needed information.

The knowledge they desired was about a herd of donkeys that had strayed away from the fields of Saul's father, the shepherd, on a long, fruitless search for them, returning by Samuel's home city.

God had told His prophet that He was sending him the man "to be captain over my people Israel, and Samuel, Saul entered the room he said to Samuel, "Behold the man whom I spoke to thee of."

Saul most modestly disclaimed any fitness for the high place offered him, but he was given signs that it was the will of God, signs that came to pass in every detail so that he could not doubt, and best of all he was charged in his own mind and through by supernatural guidance that turned him toward religious things, enabling him to join in the utterances of a company of "the sons of the prophets," young men trained by Samuel to sing and speak for God.

Time and Place—more than a year since the last—the last half of the eleventh century B. C. Mizpeh is some conspicuous hill not far from Jerusalem, being generally located a few miles to the northwest. Gilead, Saul's home, is five miles southwest of Mizpeh, "a beacon-like cone," still known as "the hill."

COMMENTARY ON THE LESSON.

Verse 17-21—Very eagerly must the representatives that had asked a king have come together at Samuel's call to hear what King Jehovah had selected for them, for notice the phrase "Unto the Lord," "The Lord God in His great mercy did not withdraw His guidance and interest any more than does the loving earthly father when his son refuses the best counsel and makes his own choice of his life's course. The father is disappointed but he continues to offer help and advice in the new path. In the case of mere human beings the children may have some excuse for trusting their own desires for the parent is not infallible and perhaps has no understanding of the other's tastes and talents, but with our infallible God as adviser it is madness to trust our own opinions as superior to His. Yet as Samuel told the Israelites that is exactly what they had done, and he adds weight to his words by the reminder of past days when they, their king, had delivered them out of worse bondage and oppression than any threatening them at present. Despairing slaves in Egypt had been brought out from their captor's land and transformed into a free nation, and again and again in the days of the judges they had been saved from enslaving kingdoms.

"Ye have this day rejected your God who Himself saveth you out of all your calamities and your distresses," is a sentence we should expect to have as sequel: "And God hath this day rejected you and His people," but instead there is the command: "Now therefore present yourselves, before Jehovah by your tribes and by your thousands," which meant that they must come through their representative heads for Jehovah to select the King they were foolishly bent on having.

I have no doubt that they paid little attention to Samuel's well deserved reproaches since after all Jehovah had let them have their own way, and oh! we do love to have our own way. We are not of different clay from these Israelites; we too deliberately decline to take all God's advice as we find it in the Bible even while we profess to be His children and even while we are praying to Him daily with words that sound humble and submissive.

Somebody has well said: "There are three grades of people; one class that doesn't consult God at all in the planning, another that first makes the plans and then asks God's blessings on those plans, and finally the third class that goes to God saying: 'What is Thy plan? Give me wisdom to carry it out perfectly.'"

The Israelites and the average Christian belong to the second grade; Samuel and a few shining names belong to the last and on them alone can God depend, to them alone can He give the best of either earth or heaven or of the kingdom that is to be on the earth.

"Samuel brought all the tribes near," through the twelve tribal chiefs who came up to cast lots—we suppose this the method as to be appointed in one or other cases—before him, and the Benjaminite leader was indicated settling the fact that the king must be from that tribe.

In like manner the particular family was selected and then the very man, for everyone being a descendant of Jacob there could be a perfect organization of representative heads, civil and military—a central government, by tens, hundreds, thousands, the system being minutely described in the Pentateuch. Each individual had his exact place; there was never such a continuation of a central government and States-rights down to the rights of every hamlet and family. "Saul the son of Kish," having been thus indicated.

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"In 1902 I had a very severe attack of diarrhoea," says R. N. Farrar of Cat Island, Front Street, Raleigh, N. C. "I considered it one of the best medicines of its kind in the world, and had I used it in 1902 believe it would have saved me hundreds of dollars doctor's bill." Sold by all druggists.

vidually appointed by Jehovah Himself, he was sought, and lot he could not be found.

Verses 22-27—The marginal reading furnishes the best sense here: "They asked of Jehovah, 'Is the man yet come hither?'" for of course Samuel's call was only for the representatives and though there were thousands of spectators Saul might easily have been supposed not to have come personally since he was not one of the "elders."

Very contradictory are the views concerning that hiding among the baggage—such a large assembly would, like a campmeeting, have much paraphernalia of "stuff," or baggage, food for man and beasts, etc.—for Saul had been praised for his beautiful humility and modesty, scorned for his cowardice and shirking, censured for his shirking and shrinking back from God's will. After all that had happened, after Samuel pouring on his head the sacred anointing oil, after the king's supernatural, or rather predicted, experience, and finally after the plain utterance of Jehovah's choice by the lot, I regard Saul as much more a distruster of Jehovah's wisdom and ability than as a distruster of his own wisdom and ability. He knew God had called him to a high place, he had God's promise that He could fit him for the place, he simply disbelieved God, and after all, looked upon the lot as his own weakness and said, "I can't."

Some pupil may intelligently suggest, "Well, he did prove unfit, so wasn't he right in his estimate of his own ability?" He was right, except that he much over-estimated them. He never did let God take full possession of his weakness and ignorance and change them into divinely-given strength and knowledge.

Nevertheless Saul was exactly the type of King the Israelites had been clamoring for; they had never asked that he be righteous and upright; their ideal was superiority of physical powers, and as Saul stood among them a gigantic figure, head and shoulders overtopping every other one present, they delightedly agreed with Samuel that there was "none like him among all the people," and shouted, "Long live the King!"

"Samuel told the people the manner of the anointing," wrote it on a book," refers probably to the constitution Samuel drew up under God's direction, a constitution based on Deut. 17:14-20, which lays down the restrictions of the monarch, and which did not wish them to have a monarchy, they would have one, then God pitifully protects them against the full effects of their own folly by teaching them the wisdom of a limited or constitutional monarchy, the King and the subjects having responsibilities and privileges safeguarded, both being just under God as the final authority, for Samuel and a whole line of prophets speak to the King God's orders representing Him as the supreme sovereign to whom they owed their first allegiance.

The important business having been transacted the delegates were dismissed to report the results each in his own home or community, the newly-elected King returning quietly to Gilead for as the one reason for having a King was for a war leader there was at present no attempt at royalty beyond a band of valiant men, whose hearts God having touched, felt called upon to escort Saul home in token of the pledge that they would obey his summons when war came.

As nearly always happens in a revolution there were still dissatisfied folks, "certain worthless fellows," in Biblical phrase—Beli is a proper name—who despised the man God had chosen, contemptuously asking: "How shall this man save us?" They belong to that class that ignore God altogether, the chronic complainers that evidently do not believe there is any wise Providence over-ruling our affairs. How they argued in the face of the decision of the lot we do not know except that they refused to believe this unknown stranger of a small tribe capable of doing what they demanded, and they not only spoke their rebellion, they acted it by not bringing any tribute—symbolistic of their allegiance to the "present," Saul proved "by holding his peace" that he had one requisite of a ruler over men, rule over his own spirit and it was not long until by a splendid act of courage and good judgment he made himself master of the situation and had at his mercy these rebels, whom he kindly rescued from death at the hands of an army enthusiastically desirous to kill the one opposed to their popular new King.

If Saul and his nation had even now followed God wholly there was a chance for prosperity and success; they were all wise in their own conceits and the record became one blotted with disaster and failure.

AN ALCHEMIST IMPOSTOR.

Fate of Dubois Who Duped Louis XIII and Richelieu.

Chicago News.

There have been many alchemists who claimed to be able to make gold from the baser metals. A strange adventure in this connection was that in which the dupes were persons of no less importance than Louis XIII., King of France and Navarre, the Cardinal Minister Richelieu and Francois du Tremblay, Father Joseph, called "the gray eminence." This was in the seventeenth century. The alchemist's name was Dubois. He was an ex-Capucin monk, a contemporary of Father Joseph, and he informed the latter he had the secret of manufacturing gold. At that particular moment the cardinal was short of funds for the use of the King. Father Joseph induced the cardinal to believe that Providence had sent a man, a maker of gold, to help him. The cardinal, who, as a rule, was pretty well awake, was on this occasion blinded by the necessities. He consented that Dubois be allowed to experiment in the presence of the King and Queen and the assembled courtiers.

In his record, "Tableau de Paris," Mercier gives the sequel to the story. A royal carriage was dispatched to fetch Dubois, his powder and his tools, and to bring them to the Louvre, where in one of the galleries the highly interested witnesses were awaiting results. Dubois lighted the furnace and in a loud voice said, "May it please His Majesty to command his orders."

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soldiers to give me twelve musket bullets and I will turn them into gold. The bullets were handed over to a courtier, who cast them into a cupel. Dubois added a few grains of a certain powder, covered the whole with cloths and placed it over the lighted furnace. In an anxious half hour's time Dubois exclaimed, "The gold is made! Louis XIII. permitted no one but himself to blow away the burning hot cloths. But he blew so hard that the onlookers were smothered with them. Everyone cast a look at the bottom of the cupel and exclaimed, "There is gold!"

Everyone was joyfully astonished. The King embraced Dubois and knighted him off-hand, and the courtier who handed over the bullets was rewarded with a gift. On the suggestion of the Queen the gold was assayed. A goldsmith was sent for, who declared that it was 18-carat gold, the mint standard of the coin in circulation. But no one was much impressed by the alchemist's fact. Dubois was ordered to supply \$50,000 'vres' (\$160,000) worth of gold every week, which he undertook to produce as soon as an adequate installation had been erected. He obtained the land required for the purpose, but delayed, with vain excuses, its realization. The cardinal lost patience, grew angry and finally had the monk incarcerated in the Chateau of Vincennes. He was convicted as an associate of the criminal "Union de Sa Int-Sulpice." On July 25, 1637, Dubois was hanged.

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Shelby and return \$1.75, one sale Saturday good to Monday.

Lincolnton and return \$1.95, on sale Saturday good to Monday.

Rutherford and return \$2.25, on sale Saturday good to Monday.

Hickory and return \$2.15, on sale Saturday good to Monday.

Cliffs and return \$2.40, on sale Saturday good to return Monday.

Lenoir and return \$2.90, on sale Saturday good to Monday.

Blowing Rock and return \$6.20, on sale Friday and Saturday good to Tuesday.

Chimney Rock and return \$5.75, on sale Friday and Saturday good to Tuesday.

These tickets will be sold until September 6th, 1908. For further information call on or address JAMES KER, JR., City Passenger Agent.

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The Seaboard Air Line Railway will operate a special excursion train Rutherfordton-Charlotte and intermediate stations to Wilmington Tuesday, July 14th, leaving Rutherfordton 8:45 a. m., Charlotte 9:30 a. m. Fare for the round trip from Charlotte only \$3.00. Fast schedule in both directions, giving a three days' outing at a most remarkably low cost. The best of order will prevail. All who want an outing should avail themselves of this grand opportunity to visit the seashore, this is the time that the season is at its height, something doing all the time. Good coaches, fast time, good order, some everybody and go to the seashore, July 14th. Remember we go rain or shine, and want every one to go with us. For further information call on your nearest agent, or address JAMES KER, JR., C. P. A., Charlotte, N. C.

SPECIAL RATES ACCOUNT OF MEETING OF ELKS DALLAS JULY 12TH-18TH BY SEABOARD.

The Seaboard announces low round trip rates to Dallas, Texas, and return account of the annual meeting Grand Lodge Order of Elks Dallas July 12th-18th. Round trip rate from RR Raleigh \$38.40; Durham \$36.40; Wilmington \$36.75; Charlotte \$32.65. Tickets to be sold July 11th, final limit to leave Dallas until August 8th. Route by Atlanta, Birmingham and New Orleans or Atlanta, Birmingham and Memphis. By twelve hours the quickest line with double daily service. Will arrange for through Pullman for the North Carolina delegation by route desired. If can secure sufficient number to justify same, providing same by most direct route and most convenient schedule through New Orleans at which points it is expected most all Elks will desire to stop on the return trip.

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