

Manasseh, which had furnished such champions as Gideon and Samson. But God chose the smallest of all, Benjamin, and among the Benjamites he chose a young man whose unfitness is curiously shown by a circumstance which many readers might easily pass without noticing. In chap. 9, 6, we find the servant telling his master's son about Samuel. Saul actually did not know the judge, and deliverer, and prophet of his nation, (see also ver. 18,) though he lived within the small area of Samuel's limited circuits, (7. 16.) No doubt he was quite a child when the Philistines were driven out, and so quiet and prosperous had the country been since, that he was not acquainted with the man to whom that peace and prosperity were due, even though he was his own ruler! There could not be a more signal instance of God's choosing the weak things of the world; and we cannot doubt that the purpose of the choice was once more to throw back the people in trust upon their God.

Saul had, however, one qualification for the leadership, namely, his stature; and it is significant of the determination of the people to be pleased with the result of their agitation that at the sight of the tall young farmer they were perfectly satisfied without making the slightest inquiry as to any other claims he might possess. It would be well if we were always as content with what God sends us!

#### 4. *The result of the change.*

The Golden Text very impressively describes this. "Sent leanness into their soul." Look at chap. 13. 6—"in a strait"—"distressed"—"did hide themselves in caves," &c. How sadly must the people have then looked back to the victory at Ebenezer, and to the twenty-five years of peace that had followed under the benign rule of the now aged prophet they had treated so ungratefully? By the calamities now brought upon them, God taught them the folly of trusting in any arm of flesh; and the Golden Text of last lesson must have been the thought of many a pious Israelite—"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes!"

The lesson for our scholars is, not to indulge in wishes for things it has not pleased God to give them, much less to seek to obtain these things at any sacrifice. *God knows best*—that is what we should all remember. Sometimes we can get things that we make up our minds we will get: God gives us our request—but what is the result? "*Leanness into our souls.*" When

the Israelites in the wilderness murmured for flesh, quails were sent; but sickness and death followed. When the Gadereenes prayed Jesus to "depart out of their coasts," he did as they wished, and he *never went back*; the blessings others received at his hands they lost. There is such a thing as a prayer being *answered in wrath*. Let our prayer always be—"Give me what thou seest best; thy will be done."

I dare not choose my lot;

I would not, if I might;

Choose thou for me, my God;

So shall I walk aright.

### For Senior Scholars.

#### I. THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

1. **WORLDLY FRIENDS.** Prov. 20. 25; Matt. 10. 28, 37; Isa. 51. 12; Acts 4. 19.
2. **WORLDLY HONOR.** Gal. 1. 10; John 5. 44; Prov. 22. 4; John 12. 42, 43.
3. **WORLDLY PLEASURE.** 1 Tim. 5. 6; Heb. 11. 25; Eccles. 2. 1; 11. 9.
4. **WORLDLY EASE.** Luke 12. 19-21; Amos 6. 1; Zeph. 1. 12; Matt. 25. 24-30.
5. **WORLDLY RICHES.** James 5. 1-3, 5; Zeph. 1. 18; Mark 20. 24; 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.
6. **BESETTING SINS.** Isa. 59. 2; Prov. 15. 26; Isa. 57. 20, 21.
7. **THE FOLLY OF CHOOSING THESE OBJECTS.** Deut. 30. 19; Josh. 24. 15; Luke 10. 41, 42; Prov. 9. 10-12.

#### 2. SEED THOUGHTS.

1. Why was this gathering at Mizpeh if it was already determined that Saul should be king? (Chap. 9. 16.)
2. How happened Saul to meet Samuel at the time he was informed he was to be made king? (Chap. 9. 18, 19.)
3. What advantage could result from this *public* method of choice of king?
4. What was the advantage of the choice *by lot*?
5. When assembled why does God remind them that he brought them out of Egypt, and out of the land of all *kingdoms*?
6. After the exodus, who had been their only *lawgiver* and *king*?
7. What direct and fearful charge does Jehovah now make against them?
8. Why was this charge made, just as they were about to revive their request for a king?
9. Why had Saul *hidden* himself away among the baggage?