

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON VI.—SAUL CHOSEN KING.—NOV. 10.

(1 Samuel x. 17-27.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice."—Ps. xcvi. 1.

TIME.—B.C. 1075 or 1095.

PLACE.—Mizpeh.

INTRODUCTORY.—Samuel at the time of this lesson, was about seventy-two years old. He had been acknowledged as a prophet of the Lord for sixty years, and for twenty years before this lesson had discharged the duties of judge over all Israel. During this period there had been peace and prosperity, and his rule as judge appears to have been most satisfactory to the people, but he had associated with him his sons as judges, and they were guilty of corrupt practices that occasioned great discontent, leading to an urgent demand for a king, like the nations around them. This was displeasing to Samuel, but when he laid the matter before the Lord, he was directed to grant the request, and to anoint Saul as king privately. And the people were then gathered at Mizpeh where the king was duly chosen by lot, as recorded in this lesson.

LESSON COMMENTS.—V. 17. Samuel called the people together—This was no doubt one of those great assemblies of Israel which were accustomed to gather on all important occasions, made up of representatives of all the tribes and of the people as far as possible. Unto the Lord—The Lord was present there to meet His people. To Mizpeh—This hill, near Ramah, the home of Samuel, was the place where, during that period, great assemblies were often held.

V. 18. Said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel—He speaks in the name of the Lord, delivering the message God had given him. I brought up Israel out of Egypt, etc.—He reminds them that in all their great dangers and deliverances He, Jehovah, was their King and Leader, and to Him they were indebted for whatever of prosperity they had enjoyed.

V. 19. And ye have this day rejected your God—This they had done by their dissatisfaction with the form of government he had hitherto given them, and especially their lack of faith in Him. It was this which had led to all the disasters that had distressed them. And ye have said, . . . Set a king over us—This was their demand of Samuel. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord—There was no doubt an altar there, and we must suppose that on this occasion some religious service was performed. By your tribes, and by your thousands—There was to be some systematic arrangement of the tribes to facilitate the taking of the lot.

V. 20. And . . . the tribe of Benjamin was taken—The first lot was between the twelve tribes, resulting in the choice of the tribe of Benjamin as the tribe from which the king should be taken.

V. 21. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near with their families—The tribes were divided into subdivisions, called families. These divisions were generally distinguished by the names of the sons of the original heads of the tribes. The sons of Jacob were the heads of the tribes, their sons were the heads of the families into which the tribes were divided. The family of Matri—This family of all the families of Benjamin was chosen by lot. Saul the son of Kish—There were perhaps intervening steps taken, but the final lot pointed out the king God had chosen. When they sought him, he could not be found—Saul knew what the result of the lot would be, for he had been already anointed by Samuel, and modesty seems to have led him to withdraw from the assembly.

V. 22. Therefore they inquired of the Lord further—How they inquired is not told, but probably through the high priest, and in the appointed way. Among the stuff—The baggage. Such an assembly would have a well-appointed camp with the baggage.

V. 23. And they ran and fetched him thence—The expression indicates the eagerness of the people to see the chosen king. And when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward—It is surmised that he must have been nearly or quite seven feet tall.

V. 24. And Samuel said to all the people—Notwithstanding Samuel had been rejected by the people. It is evident here and elsewhere that he had entered heartily into the movement and attached himself strongly to the young king. See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? We may suppose that it was not merely the stature of Saul that impressed those who saw him, but his attractive appearance. And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king—Thus accepting him as their king.

V. 25. Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book—These words imply that Samuel, under

divine direction, gave to the king and people a written constitution thus establishing a limited monarchy, unlike those of neighboring kingdoms, as they were despotic in their character. Laid it up before the Lord—It was doubtless placed in charge of the priests, as was the law of Moses.

V. 26. Saul . . . went home to Gibeah—This place was four miles north of Jerusalem, where Saul seems to have made his headquarters. A band of men—Who appear to have volunteered to be his followers, and who constituted the nucleus of his army. Whose hearts God had touched—That is, had inclined toward Saul.

V. 27. But the children of Belial—The expression means *worthless people*. How shall this man save us?—Perhaps this was because he was of the smallest of the tribes. They . . . brought him no presents—The customary gifts of homage. He held his peace—Patiently abiding the time when he could gain their allegiance by his acts of valor.

Hints to Teachers,

The lesson is taken from the fourth section of the first general division of the Books of Samuel. The principal events of this fourth section are:

1. The demand for a king, and the Lord's response.
2. Saul privately anointed by Samuel, with the sign given him that he was to become king.
3. Saul chosen king by lot at Mizpeh.
4. Saul publicly accepted by the people after his victory over the Ammonites.

Our lesson is taken from No. 3, but the incidents preceding and succeeding, as noted above should be considered.

Summary.

1. God sometimes suffers the disobedient to have their own way.
2. To reject God is a sin of heinous ingratitude.
3. Modesty, humility, and forbearance are marks of true greatness.
4. A young man of noble traits, if he be without the grace of God, may fall to the lowest depths.
5. Bad rulers, high or low, are a great curse to a people.
6. The precepts of God's law should be the guide of every one in his official acts.
7. Some follow Christ the King in Zion; others despise Him.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

"There is a wonderful future before the Endeavor movement, on one condition: that its leaders and members persistently offer it to God for the filling and renewing and thanksgiving of the Holy Ghost."—Rev. Andrew Murray.

What Others are Doing.

Hungary's first Christian Endeavor Society was lately organized, with seven members.

The local union of Wellington, New Zealand, employs a Chinese catechist to work among his countrymen in that city.

The latest denomination to make Christian Endeavor its official young people's society is the African M. E. Zion Church.

One of the former members of the society in the Wisconsin State Prison is now engaged in work for prisoners in New England and New York.

A society in Richmond, Ind., made arrangements for taking the feeble and aged members to the church to a communion service, and afterwards went with them to their homes.

The original Christian Endeavor Society in Williston Church, Portland, Me., sees no flagging in its zeal. In alternation with other Portland Societies, it has undertaken the holding of regular services at the Greeley Hospital.

Christian Endeavor in Texas partakers of western enterprise. The Cumberland Presbyterian Society of Terrell, recently made a trip of eight miles to Poetry and organized a Christian Endeavor Society of thirty members in its own denomination.

During the Boston Convention, the uniform courtesy of the men employed on the street cars was quickly noted, and in recognition of this service the United Society sent a letter of thanks to the West End Railroad Company. The company printed the letter, and gave a copy to each of its employees.

The power that rests with one consecrated young people's society is well shown by the example of the Presbyterian Endevancers of Glenolden, Penn. The eleven delegates to Boston returned home fired with zeal for personal work. An evangelistic committee was appointed and outdoor services have been held regularly on Sabbath evenings. The first seven services resulted in more than fifty conversions.