

Samuel's company, was by him privately anointed to be king. Our lesson shows how, in a more public manner, he was chosen and acknowledged.

NOTES.—*Mizpeh*: a watch tower, a high point of land in a plateau of considerable elevation above the sea level. Five miles north from Jerusalem. Family of *Matri*: though not mentioned among the families of Benjamin in 1 Chron. 8, the omission there does not contradict the statement here. Some suppose it to be a corruption of one of the names given in the list of families belonging to the tribe, while others regard it as a substitute for the same. *Gibeah*: about six miles from Jerusalem, in the southern part of Benjamin. Children of *Belial*: lawless, worthless persons.

I. SAUL CHOSEN KING.—Ver. 17.—Called the people together: though Saul was secretly anointed, it was proper he should be publicly recognized as king; and Samuel called all the grown men of the tribes together to Mizpeh.

Ver. 18.—I brought up Israel out of Egypt: Samuel is well called a prophet. Here he had a direct revelation from God: and the Lord reminds them, as in a great many other places in the Bible, of the great works He had done for their nation. It is well for us in our prayers to follow the same model, and first remember and praise God's mercies to us and others.

Ver. 19.—Ye have this day rejected your God: God reminds them, through His prophet, of the great sin they were committing. They desired a king; because they were unwilling to be ruled by God. Nay, but set a king over us: this had been their answer to God's warnings and expostulations. They were, as they had always been, a "rebellious house." Since all warnings were unheeded, they were now commanded to draw near to the altar, to have the "lot" taken by tribes and thousands. The latter were sub-divisions of a tribe; probably in every case embracing only those of common family descent. Ver. 21 shows that "thousand" and "family" may be used interchangeably.

Ver. 20.—The tribe of Benjamin was taken: mark the Divine wisdom in this choice. Ephraim and Judah were powerful and rival tribes: but Benjamin was always small, and some time before nearly exterminated. And one from that little tribe would not be likely to excite the jealousy of the more powerful tribes. Of all the passages that speak of the "lot" only one indicates anything of the mode.—Prov. 16: 33, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." The ballot or lot was drawn from the lap, or from an urn, after a solemn appeal to God to direct. If the Lord directed us to use "the lot," as He did the Israelites, it would be our duty to use it.

Ver. 21.—The family of *Matri* was taken: a division of the tribe, equivalent to one of the "hundreds" or "thousands" of Benjamin. Saul, the son of Kish, was taken: when the lot came to be drawn, man by man, among the descendants of *Matri*, first Kish would be taken, and then Saul. He could not be found: it was a good sign for Saul that he modestly shrank from publicity. He did not *refuse* to reign, but he did not *seek* the honour.

II. SAUL'S RECEPTION BY THE PEOPLE.—Ver. 22.—Enquired of the Lord: perhaps by Samuel; but the phrase generally means through the high priest, by Urim and Thummim. Hid himself among the stuff: among the baggage; or, as in one or two places, the "carriage." The Lord kindly answered their inquiries.

Ver. 23.—Ran and fetched him: they insisted on his presenting himself before the people. Higher than any of the people: Saul, being a head taller than any of the people, must have stood nearly seven feet high. In those rude ages, bodily proportion and vigour were more valued than now. These would gain him favour with his followers.

Ver. 24.—Whom the Lord hath chosen: it was not an election by the people: it was the Lord's doings. Yet God was angry with them. (See Hos. 13: 11.) None like him: for commanding stature and noble bodily presence. God save the king: or, "Let the king live!" An admiring shout, when they saw him. They gloried in Saul, when they should have gloried in the Lord.

Ver. 25.—Told the people the manner of the kingdom: not as in chap. 8, where he told them what they should suffer under their kings; but rather laying down a "constitution" for Saul and for them to be guided by. And this he wrote in a book, and deposited it beside the ark, or in the tabernacle, for future reference. And then Samuel sent the people home.

Ver. 26.—A band of men whose hearts God had touched: "Who feared God, and regarded allegiance to their king as a conscientious duty."—*Jamieson*. He was thus honourably escorted home by God-fearing men. *Gibeah* was Saul's capital during his lifetime. Not long after, he had to leave his quiet retirement and take the field. (11: 4.)

Ver. 27.—Children of *Belial*: *Belial* is not a person, supposed or real, but a *quality* (though it is once used as a name for Satan, 2 Cor. 6: 15). It means "worthlessness." So, "children of worthlessness" just means "exceedingly worthless people." Brought him no presents: homage without a present was an unknown thing in the East. They despised him, but he nobly overlooked it.

#### PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. It does us good to remember God's mercies. (Ver. 18.)
2. God may grant us our rebellious desires, as a punishment for us. (Ver. 19.)
3. Physical nobleness or beauty has its influence: like other influences, it should be used for good.
4. Kings have no right to do wrong. They, too, are under law. (Ver. 25.)
5. When God touches men's hearts (ver. 26), and they do what is right, it is very lovely to see.
6. Saul's "holding his peace" (ver. 27), was one of the noblest things he ever did. We may learn even from very faulty men.

## GOD REJECTED. SAUL RECEIVED.

Nov. 4, 1883. } **SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.** { 1 Sam. 12: 13-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you."—1 Sam. 12: 24.

CONNECTION.—Nahash, king of the Ammonites, made war on Israel, and Saul took the field, and gained a great victory over him. On Samuel's proposition, the people assembled at Gilgal to "renew the kingdom" there. It might be called Saul's "coronation." Samuel reminded them of God's goodness and their own idolatries, and how he had delivered them when they cried through judges whom he had raised up. He then proceeds, in the words of the lesson.

I. THE OBEDIENCE REQUIRED.—Vers. 13, 14.—Behold the king: they had desired—even demanded—a king: and had gloried in the choice of Saul. God also had "set" a king over them. Though God was displeased at their demands, yet if they and their king feared and obeyed God, and continued to follow Him, *it should be well with them* (for so the sense demands).