

History

DAVID.

SAUL.

THE CHOOSING OF A KING.

(Continued from last issue.)

Then the Lord told the people that Saul was hiding ; and he bade them go and search for him in that place which God should name.

The people obeyed, and Saul was found and brought before the people.

"Is this the man?" the people asked. And the Lord said, "This is the man."

Then the people shouted, and Saul was made king over the Israelites.

Then Samuel said to the people, "Behold, I am an old man. My hair is white with age. All my life I have been with you, from the time when I was a little child until now. Tell me, have I ever oppressed you, or have I ever taken anything from you?"

And all the people shouted, "No! No! Never! Never have you oppressed us or wronged us in any way!" For the people all loved Samuel, from the oldest to the youngest.

"Wait, then," said Samuel, "and hear what I would say to you. Many years ago God brought your fathers out of Israel and gave this land to them for a possession.

"Often your fathers rebelled against God ; and as often he sent punishment upon them that they might turn back to him. Sisera and the Philistines and the Moabites God sent to fight against the Israelites ; but whenever they repented and turned back, then He forgave them. Many good captains He sent them,—Gideon, Jephthah and Samson.

"And now you have asked for a king, and God has given you one. And so long as the king and his people are true to the one God, so long shall His blessing be upon you."

And so ended that time in the history of the children of Israel when they were content to be ruled over by Judges chosen by God ; and of these Judges, Samuel was the last.

Saul was a brave soldier, and the Israelites were very pleased when he led them to battle with different people. But one day Saul disobeyed God. That night God spoke to Samuel, and ordered him to go and tell Saul that he would be punished for his sin. God had given him the kingdom, and God would take it away again.

Samuel delivered his message faithfully, but his heart was sad ; and when he had left Saul, he went home and was very, very sorry. Then God spoke to him again, and told him to leave off mourning for Saul ; for He wanted him to go and anoint someone else to be king instead.

Now let us follow the old prophet, for he is old now and his work on earth is almost done. Watch him walking up the path which leads to the gateway of the little city of Bethlehem. How dear that place is to us all now, for was it not the birthplace of the Lord Jesus?

As Samuel walks along, he looks very sad. He is grieving over the wickedness of King Saul ; perhaps too he is wondering whom he is to choose as king ; for although God has told him what family to go to, He has not yet told him the name of the new king. God does not always make our way quite clear for us. He sends us one step at a time ; but if we are sure that He is leading us, let us try to be content.

A feast was being held at Bethlehem, and Jesse, one of the chief men of the city, was present, with the elders of the town. Suddenly the prophet Samuel appears ; before him goes the heifer or young cow which he has brought for sacrifice. In his hand the old man carries a horn of oil, with which he will anoint the future king. He tells Jesse that after the solemn sacrifice he will join the feast at his own house.

(To be continued.)