

Samuel would thus prepare Saul for the great announcement to be made on the following day. *Top of the house.* The flat roof of an Oriental house is still a favorite place for business relaxation or sleeping.

III. The Anointing, 26 to ch. 10 : 1.

Vs. 26, 27. *Spring of the day* ; early dawn, the time for starting on a journey in such hot countries as Palestine. *Called to Saul on the housetop* (Rev. Ver.) ; where Saul, in accordance with the Eastern custom, had spent the night. *Abroad* ; out of the house. *To the end of the city* ; whither Samuel had accompanied Saul, according to the Eastern custom, as if to speed him on his homeward way. *The servant* ; Saul's companion. *Shew . . . the word of God* ; what God's purpose for Saul was.

Ch. 10 : 1. *Took of the vial of oil* (Rev. Ver.) ; perhaps that used for the setting apart of priests (see Ex. 30 : 23-33). *Poured it upon his head* ; to signify : (1) Saul's being set apart as king to God's service ; (2) the gift of God's spirit to fit him for his work. *Kissed him* ; as a token of personal affection. *Captain* ; Rev. Ver., "prince." *His inheritance* ; his people Israel (compare Deut. 32 : 9 ; Ps. 78 : 7).

On his way home, the designation of Saul as king was confirmed by three signs, vs. 2-16. In vs. 17-24 we have the story of Saul's proclamation as king.

Light from the East

"THE HIGH PLACE" (v. 19)—Sacrifice seems to have been a "gift" at first. You would bring a gift to a god as you would to a man of influence, when you wished to appeal to his kindness, or to appease him if he were angry, or to show gratitude for his favor. You would offer sacrifice to God, too, when you began an important undertaking and again when you completed it successfully. The rites of sacrifice seem, in ancient times, to have been of extreme simplicity. A man killed his own beast (among Hebrews and Arabs it was a sheep or a goat). He poured the blood on the ground or on a sacred stone, or he smeared it on the tent-ropes or on the door-posts of the house. Some choice bits of the fat might also be offered, but the greater part of the flesh provided a feast for the owner and his family or his guests. At Samuel's sacrificial feast (vs. 22-24) there were about 30 guests, probably the sheikhs of the village. These feasts on the high places were of a joyful character. Deuteronomy describes sacrifice in the days of the kingdom as "to eat and drink and rejoice before Jehovah." The great festivals at the beginning and the end of the harvest and at the vintage were naturally times of rejoicing. Music and song and dancing and drinking often led to excesses.

THE LESSON APPLIED

The Problem of Government. A change was being inaugurated in the national constitution of the Israelites. Hitherto they had been a theocracy, led by men who revealed to them the will of God. They had strong leadership in the days of Moses and Joshua, but in the days of the judges there had been periods of division and weak rule. Samuel was entrusted with leadership when the transition from a theocracy to a monarchy was taking place. During his term of office the demand for a king became emphatic. So Samuel was directed to yield to the people's wishes and grant them a king. How was he to be chosen ? There was no hereditary line from which to choose, and our democratic methods of election were unknown, so Samuel,

under divine guidance, selected Saul to be Israel's first king.

The Meeting of Samuel and Saul, vs. 15-17. Saul started out on a very humble errand, and before he returned he found a throne. Seeking lost live-stock, he won a crown. Evidently Saul knew nothing of Samuel, for the visit was suggested by the servant. But they went where sacrifice was being offered, and Samuel, who had been forewarned that on this day the king would come to him recognized the new ruler the moment that Saul arrived. Samuel disapproved of the change in Israel's form of government, and it was hard for him to resign power in favor of a young man, but he welcomed Saul heartily.