

## The Sunday-School.

THIRD QUARTER,  
LESSON II.—July 12.

SAUL CHOSEN 111

I SAMUEL 10: 17-27.

Read I Sam. Chapters 9, 10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*The Lord is our King  
he will save us.*—Isa. 33:22.THE LESSON.—The account of Saul's  
first meeting with Samuel, I. Sam. 9:  
1 to 10, and the lesson, I Sam. 10: 17-  
27.LEARN BY HEART.—Vs. 24, 25; Prov.  
16: 33; Eph. 4: 1, 2.HISTORICAL. SETTING.—Time. The  
chronology is uncertain. 1079 B.C., ac-  
cording to the Cambridge Bible.Place.—*Mispeh*. (or Mizpah) the  
"watchtower," is a name given to sev-  
eral places in Palestine. The Mizpah  
of our lesson is generally held to be  
the present Neby Samwil, a hill near  
Ramah and Geba, five miles from Jeru-  
salem.GOD'S PREPARATION OF A KING.— I  
Sam. 9: 1 to 10: 16. After rehearsing  
the people's demand for a king, the  
author of the book of Samuel looks  
backward, and traces the history of  
Saul, who was to fill the great  
position. This young man be-  
longed to the tribe of Benjamin. His  
father was Kish, "a mighty man of  
power," who dwelt in Gibeah. Saul is  
described as "choice and goodly," and  
of unusual height.Saul was sent one day after his father's  
drove of asses. Arriving at Ramah,  
he besought the help of Samuel, the  
prophet. Obeying a God-sent dream,  
Samuel entertained the young man over  
night, and in the morning poured upon  
his head the sacred oil and kissed him,  
thus setting him apart for his kingly  
destiny. On Saul's way home from this  
mysterious ceremony he was met by  
one of the companies of prophets which  
Samuel had organized. They were  
chanting hymns, and Saul, seized with  
a divine fervor, joined in their religious  
exercises. As to the anointing for the  
kingship, Saul kept absolute silence.In this history there are disclosed  
several kingly features of Saul's char-  
acter: (1) his trustworthiness. (2) his  
perseverance; (3) his respect for re-  
ligion; (4) his ready yielding to im-  
pulses from on high; (5) his modesty  
and prudence. Alas, that his entire  
career did not follow out the promise of  
his young manhood!THE FINAL WARNING.—Vs. 17-19.  
The historian tells how Samuel made  
known God's choice to the people. *And  
Samuel called the people together.* He  
convoked the national assembly, or  
'congregation of Israel.' This body was  
composed of all Israelites of twenty  
years old and upwards. *Unto the Lord.*  
The Hebrews associated God's presence  
with particularly holy places, such as  
Bethel and Mizpah. The phrase im-  
plies the presence of the ark, or the  
tabernacle, or the high priest's ephod.  
*To Mispeh.* Samuel chose this spot  
for the assembly on account of the  
memories of his own victory, many  
years before, at that place.*And said unto the children of Israel.*  
What follows is a summary of what  
was doubtless a long oration. *Thus  
saith the Lord . . . I brought up Israel  
out of Egypt.* They were constantlyforgetting it, just as we forget our past  
blessings. *And delivered you . . . out of  
the hand of all kingdoms, and of them  
that oppressed you.* Jehovah had al-  
ways done for them the very things for  
which they desired a king. *And ye  
have this day rejected your God.* By  
desiring to shake off his direct rule  
and authority. *Who himself saved you.*  
Literally, "Who is a Saviour to you."  
*And ye have said unto him, Nay, but  
set a king over us.* They had spoken to  
Samuel, God's representative. *Now  
therefore present yourselves before the  
Lord.* Come together in solemn as-  
sembly. *By your tribes, and by your  
thousands.* Moses had instituted a  
division of the tribes into thousands,  
hundreds, fifties, and tens.*In modern times God is rejected:* (1)  
by those that openly defy him, and  
scout the claims of religion; (2) by  
those that live for mammon, disregard-  
ing religion; (3) by those that profess  
religion, but bend all their desires upon  
the things of the world. The last was  
the case of the Israelites.THE DIVINE SELECTION.—Vs. 20-22.  
Having uttered this solemn warning,  
Samuel perceived that further expostu-  
lation was useless, and proceeded to a  
confirmation of the secret choice God  
had already made. *And when Samuel  
had caused all the tribes of Israel to  
come near.* The choice is made by the  
sacred lot. *The tribe of Benjamin was  
taken.* By selecting a king from this  
least and nearly extinct tribe (Jud. 20),  
divine wisdom designed to remove all  
grounds of jealousy among the other  
tribes. The names of the tribes graven  
on stones or written on slips of parch-  
ment, were placed in the sacred bag of  
the high priest's breastplate, in presence  
of the princes and elders. Then the  
high priest draws one forth. The one  
drawn was marked 'Benjamin.' Why  
did Samuel draw lots when Saul had  
already been selected? That the people  
might have a visible token that the  
choice of this obscure youth was from  
God. *The family of Matri was taken.*  
This family is not mentioned elsewhere  
in the Bible. *And Saul the son of Kish  
was taken.* The narrative omits the lot  
cast among the heads of households, by  
which Kish was selected. *And when  
they sought him, to present him to the  
people he could not be found.* Saul hid  
himself through modesty, and natural  
shrinking from the exalted position.  
*Therefore they enquired of the Lord  
further.* The technical phrase for as-  
certaining God's will by means of the  
Urim and Thummin in the breast-  
plate upon the high priest's ephod. It  
is not known what these were nor how  
they were used. *And the Lord answer-  
ed. Behold, he hath hid himself among  
the stuff.* The baggage.SAUL'S STATELINESS.—Vs. 23-25.  
Learning thus where Saul was to be  
found, the people sought him out. His  
physical fitness was at once made mani-  
fest. *He was higher than any of the  
people from his shoulders and upward.*  
He is conjectured to have been not less  
than seven feet high. *And Samuel said  
to all the people, See ye him whom the  
Lord hath chosen. . . . And all the  
people shouted, and said, God save the  
king.* This was the greeting usually  
given a ruler. *Then Samuel told the  
people the manner of the kingdom.* A  
charter establishing and defining the  
position of the king in relation to Jehovah  
and to the people. In substance, at any  
rate, it probably resembled the law of*the king in Deut. 17: 14-20. And wrote  
it in a book.* The reference may be to  
"the book of the law," the book in which  
Moses inscribed his system of govern-  
ment. There were added to it histori-  
cal narratives and other important rec-  
ords. *And laid it up before the Lord.*  
That is, beside the ark, which was then  
in Kirjath-jearim. It is a solemn  
thought that all our engagements are  
laid up before the Lord. *And Samuel  
sent all the people away.* Samuel had  
not lost his supremacy. And till the  
end of his life, though he appeared sel-  
dom, whenever he came forward it was  
as leader and chief.THE NEW KING TESTED.—Vs. 26, 27.  
The new king was immediately tested  
in three respects,—his power to win  
friends, his ability to meet enemies at  
home, his power to conquer foes abroad.  
He met all three tests successfully.  
*And Saul also went home.* He wisely  
chose to make quiet preparation for his  
work. *And there went with him a band  
of men.* Warriors, who wished to form  
his bodyguard. *Whose hearts God had  
touched, drawing them to Saul.* *But  
the children of Belial said.* Belial is  
not a proper name but a common noun,  
signifying "worthlessness." *How shall  
this man save us?* Perhaps they were  
princes of the leading houses of the  
tribes of Judah and Ephraim, who were  
disgusted at the choice falling on an  
unknown man of the small tribe of Ben-  
jamin. *And they despised him and  
brought him no presents.* The token  
homage. *But he held his peace.* The  
best answer to a taunt or an insult is  
absolute silence. By his silence Saul  
showed that he was master of himself.  
Saul soon had an opportunity to prove  
himself worthy to be king. From east  
of the Jordan came an army of the fierce  
Ammonites, under their king, Nahash,  
(I Sam. 11: 1-11). Gathering a great  
army of 330,000 men, Saul totally rout-  
ed his adversaries. Thus he won the  
confidence of the people. Thus fortun-  
ately did Saul's reign open, with victory  
over his foes, with a devoted people,  
and with Samuel for his sage counselor.

\* \* \*

## BOOK POISON.

Some one asked the late Dwight  
L. Moody if he had read a certain book.  
He replied, "No, I believe there is poi-  
son in it; at least, I have heard so on  
good authority." The friend said, "But  
wouldn't it be well to read it for your-  
self?" No," said Mr. Moody; "if I  
take poison in my stomach, the doctor  
has to come with a stomach pump to  
take it out. Why should I take poison  
in my mind? I might never be able to  
get it out."

\* \* \*

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