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### The Sabbath-School

#### INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter-Lesson III.—August 4.

SAUL CHOSEN OF THE LORD.—1 Sam. 9: 15-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*By me kings reign and princes decree justice.*—Prov. 8: 15.

**GOD'S GUIDING PROVIDENCE.**—Vers. 15-21. Saul was living with his father, somewhere in Benjamin, probably at Gibeah. His father's asses had strayed away. Saul with one servant, went forth in search of the asses, and after seeking two or three days in vain, they drew near to Ramah, where Samuel lived. Some young women drawing water from a well outside of the city directed them to Samuel, who was going out of the gate to a sacred festival. *Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear.* The revelation was made privately to Samuel. *I will send thee a man.* God controlled the influences which led Saul in that direction. *That he may save my people out of the hands of the Philistines.* The Philistines were harassing and oppressing the Israelites. *Because their cry has come unto me:* as recorded in last lesson. *And when Samuel saw Saul.* This verse follows closely on ver. 14, the statements of verses 15 and 16 being parenthetical. The young Saul and his servant came up to accost the seer; Samuel impressed by the great stature and splendid beauty of the stranger asks his Master silently, "Lord, is this then he of whom thou whisperest me yesterday, to whom the destinies of thy people were to be confided?" The words *Behold the man,* etc., were the silent answer of God to the silent prayer of his old servant. *Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate.* The open space or market-place at the gate of the city. *Go up before me.* Addressed to Saul only. Desiring the young stranger to precede him to the public place of sacrifice was a sign of distinguished honor from one of Samuel's rank to a young unknown wayfarer like Saul. *Unto the high place:* the hilltop, where people were assembled at a sacrificial festival. *For ye shall eat with me.* *Will tell thee all that is in thine heart.* Thine inmost thoughts and aspirations: not merely about the asses. *For thine asses . . . set not thy mind on them.* Be not anxious about them. *For they are found:* and even if they were not, the loss is of no account, for *on whom is all the desire of Israel?* *And Saul answered and said.* He was filled not only with awe, but humility, as he contrasted his present condition with the prospects held out to him. *A Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes.* The warlike tribe of Benjamin, the smallest except Manasseh, at the time of the numbering in the wilderness was reduced to insignificance by the terrible slaughter recorded in Judg. 20: 46.

**GOD'S GUIDING PROVIDENCE.** In this story we have an illustration of how God guides men and controls affairs without interfering in any way with the free will and choice of men. He guides by the free will of men, and not by overbearing it. Stray asses led Saul to his kingdom. A shower, it is said, decided the fate of Europe at the battle of Waterloo. F. W. Robertson says that the barking of a dog affected his whole life, changing his purpose from a military life to the ministry. A storm at sea destroying the Armada changed the course of history in England.

**THE NOMINATION OF SAUL FOR KING.**—Vers. 22-27. *And Samuel . . . brought them into the parlor:* a room at the high place specially used for sacrificial feasts. *Made them sit in the chiefest place.* Save them a place at the head of those who were invited. *About thirty persons.* Only the more distinguished citizens would be specially invited to the chamber. *And Samuel said unto the cook.* The very piece of meat set before Saul at the Ramah banquet was no chance piece, but one which, owing, no doubt, to its being considered the choicest, had been carefully set aside for him when the sacrificial feast was being prepared. *The shoulder.* The right leg was the priest's portion, which Samuel had received. The reservation of the leg for Saul was a mark of honor. Josephus calls it "a royal portion." *Kept for thee since I said.* I have kept in reference to the festival for which I have arranged. *And when they were come down:* after the sacrificial festival was over *Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.* On the housetop they would be open to the public view, so that all could see the honor Samuel showed his guest, while they would have opportunity for undisturbed conversation. How much Samuel told Saul we do not know; but doubtless they talked over the

political and religious situation, the danger from the Philistines, and the greater danger from the departure of Israel from the true God, and various ways of dealing with these vital issues. He may have instructed him also in the duties of a king, and the best way of assuming his new duties. *About the spring of the day:* the dawn. *Samuel called Saul to the top of the house.* *And they went out . . . abroad:* i. e., out of the house. *Bid the servant pass on:* so that Samuel might be alone with Saul. Thereupon, producing a vial of oil, he poured it on his head, adding the kiss of homage, and telling him that Jehovah had anointed him to be captain over his inheritance. The prophet named three incidents which would happen to Saul on his return, as signs that Jehovah was with him; the first, an assurance of the safety of his father's cattle, as the prophet had said; the second, a present which was to be an earnest of the future offerings of the people; the third, the descent of the spirit of Jehovah upon him, causing him to prophesy, and turning him into another man. All these occurred as foretold.

**WHY SAUL WAS CHOSEN.** He was a Benjamite. By selecting a king from this least and nearly extinct tribe, divine wisdom designed to remove all grounds of jealousy among the other tribes. Saul was tall and commanding in person; size impresses the imagination of many people. He is conjectured to have been not less than seven feet high, sinewy from farm exposures, in the prime of manly vigor, and in his bulk of massive strength looking "every inch a king." Saul had in him the possibilities of a great, noble useful king. He had the military instinct, a capacity for generalship. Saul was a popular idol. He had the power of attracting and holding men by a personal magnetism of leadership.

**PREPARATION OF SAUL FOR HIS KINGDOM.**—Sam. 10: 6-10. In addition to his natural qualifications, Saul was specially prepared to assume his kingdom by the Holy Spirit of God, who "turned him into another man," and "gave him another heart." In the Old Testament, "the heart is represented as the centre of the whole mental and physical life; of will, desire, thought, perception, and feeling." The expressions used describe, not a new heart in the New Testament sense, but a "change in mental power and energy," a capacity for ruling and leading the people of which before he was destitute.

**THE ELECTION OF SAUL TO BE KING.**—1 Sam. 10: 17-25. It was very important for the fame of Samuel that the nomination of a king should not seem to be determined by any partial favoritism on his part. In due time, therefore, the tribes were convened at Mizpeh for the choice of a king by lot. Thus Saul, the choice of whom had hitherto been a secret, was openly elected to be king; and Samuel told the people the principles of the kingdom, the constitution, and wrote them down in a book.

**THE INAUGURATION OF SAUL.**—1 Sam. 11: 15. Some of the people the roughs, the evil-minded, refused to acknowledge Saul as king, and he himself went to his home in Gibeah holding his peace till his hour should come. It was not long. Israel was attacked by an invading army of Ammonites from the East under Nahash. Saul summoned the warriors of the nation; and 330,000 men assembled around his standard. A great victory was gained, which established the confidence of the people in the new leader, and his authority was confirmed. He still had the advice and counsel of Samuel. He thus entered upon a career that might have ended in untold usefulness and blessedness.

#### PRACTICAL HINTS.

God's guiding providence is over all men and all events.

The smallest things rightly used may lead to the largest issues.

Outward advantages,—a stately form, beauty of feature,—are all advantages to those who use them aright. But he is to be measured by his own greatness, not by the height of the pedestal.

God sends to men not the best absolutely, but the best they are willing to use.

When God gives a young man the benefit of fair and excellent counsels of one who is experienced and devoted to him, then there is reason for bright hopes in the future.

There is scarcely a limit to the possibilities in our lives.

If God has a great work for us to do, the Holy Spirit comes to prepare us for the work.

The proof of our election to a work is in the accomplishing of the work.

#### AN EARTHLY PARADISE.

Where Even the Wind Is Tempered to the Shorn Lamb.

Whatever may be the proportion of philosophic spectators and of conscientious opponents of gaming to inveterate gamblers and cursory punters who risk a few louis now and again, "just for the fun of the thing," the fact remains that Monte Carlo has become an earthly paradise, says the London Standard; that the gardens, with their sub-tropical vegetation, are enchantingly beautiful; that the views from the terrace are more than Neapolitan in their soft loveliness; and that the drive from Nice along the Corniche road and through Villefranche, Beaulieu, Rochebrune and Monaco is almost unequalled in its bright picturesqueness. The hotels of Monte Carlo, to those who know how to choose their domicile, are not more expensive than those of Nice; the resident doctors are skilled and moderate in their terms; and, if the population be not about the happiest to be found on the continent, the blame assuredly does not lie at the door either of the paternal Grimaldi or the more than paternal Banque de Monaco. The Monagasques pay no taxes, are subject to no conscription, enjoy the advantages of excellent paving, lighting, drainage and sanitation, and run no risk of being injured in pocket through the vicinity of the Casino, seeing that a paternal government does not allow the natives of the principality to play at the tables. Health seekers, again, are arriving at the conclusion that the climate of Monte Carlo is in winter warmer and more staple than that of Nice; that the cut-throat "mistral" rarely careers over the bay of La Coudamne; and that the little town is altogether more sheltered than the great blazing, windy, dusty, Mediterranean watering place. Then, again, for persons in really delicate health, the amenity of Mentone is easily accessible; and beyond the Riviera in its Italian section, opens up a whole chain of delightful winter resorts between Ventimiglia and Savona, which, twenty years ago, were never heard of in England. San Remo, Bordighera, Alassio and a score more pretty and genial seaside hamlets have now their regular complement of wealthy patrons from England and the States, and every season spacious, elegant and clean hotels and "pensions" continue to spring up, superseding the artistic and pretty little "osterie" and "locande" of the past. Have the roulette and trente-et-quarante tables of Monte Carlo been exclusively, or even principally, instrumental in bringing to these smiling shores so many thousands of Anglo-Saxon pilgrims, or is it that the prime cause of the amazing popularity of the Riviera is its accessibility from England? Only thirty hours' traveling, including the steamboat journey from Dover to Calais, will now enable the valetudinarian or the pleasure seeker to exchange the smoke, the fog, the sleet, the raw damp or the piercing cold of a London winter for the palms, the cactus and prickly pear, the oranges and olives and almond blossoms, the blue sky and bright sun of the Riviera. Is it to be wondered at, then, that princes, peers, politicians, people in society and people out of society, that all sorts and conditions of men and women who can put money in their purses, are flocking to the Riviera, notwithstanding the potential wickedness of Monte Carlo and its gambling rooms.

#### Woman Suffrage Abroad.

Among the countries in which woman suffrage in one form or another prevails are: England, Scotland, Wales, Sweden, Russia, Austro-Hungary, Croatia, Dalmatia, Italy, British Burma, Madras Presidency, Bombay Presidency, Russian Asia, Tasmania, Iceland, New Zealand, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia.

#### Tough on the Census.

Not a single babe has been born in Liberty, Ky., for thirteen years. Liberty has a population of 700.

#### A WOODPECKER'S JOKE.

The Bird Was Very Funny, But Paid Dearly for His Little Trick.

H. B. Parker, of Salem, Ill., relates a good bird story, which he sends to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat: "I was engaged in the

monument and tomb-stone business," he writes, "and made and put up in the Catholic cemetery of a Southern Illinois town a stone imitation of a rustic cross, standing on a pile of rocks. Some few days after I set the cross up I had some other work to do in the cemetery, and my attention was called to a large woodpecker of the yellow-hammer variety very industriously tapping away at my cross. I said to myself: 'Old fellow, I don't think you will pan out very well on that stump.' I watched him with some curiosity. He came to the same conclusion apparently in a little while, and flew to a dead tree that had been left standing about twenty feet from the cross, tried that awhile, and then flew back to the cross, seemingly puzzled to account for things, then backward and forward for some little time, testing the difference apparently, when all of a sudden he left and started for the timber, about half a mile distant.

"I continued my work, thinking no more of the matter, but in the course of half an hour, I should judge, on looking up I saw some ten or twelve birds over my head making toward the cross, one seemingly in the lead, who lit on the cross and commenced tapping for dear life. Most of the others lit on the tree, but finally all got to work on the cross. I sat down and watched the proceedings. The original woodpecker seemed to be running the business, as he would fly back and forward from tree to cross till he had them all at work picking away. They did not seem to be very well satisfied, but he would, as it looked to me, encourage them by seemingly getting something for his work by his actions. I so judged anyway. At last he flew back on the tree by himself, watching them, and I thought I could see a gleam of fun in his eyes. He then, as they were all busily engaged, gave one of his woodpeckerian screeches, and left for the woods in high glee. The rest looked at each other, and I came to the conclusion that they were settling in their minds, if they had any, that they were sold and looked mad; and they all started hot-foot for the timber.

"It was then about time for dinner, and I started for home somewhat amused at the affair.

"After dinner I went back to finish my work, and had to pass the cross on my way to the job I was doing, and noticed a good many feathers lying around in the lot, all from the yellow-hammer bird. I couldn't account for them, and went up to the cross to examine more closely, when I discovered a dead woodpecker lying on the rock at the foot of the cross, every feather picked as clean as possible and his head all picked to pieces. I came to the conclusion that it was the joker who had paid so dear for his fun.

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