

October 23rd. 1864

THE ISRAELITES DESIRE A KING.

1 Sam. viii. 1-22.

The events recorded in this chapter are without a parallel in history—a nation without sufficient cause demanding a fundamental change of government, and that change brought about without commotion and bloodshed.

THE PARTIES DESIRING THE KING were the elders of Israel. They were the proper parties to move in this matter. They were the concentrated wisdom of the nation. They were the representative men, and they met in conclave to determine what they should do. In this matter, a matter of great moment to the welfare of the nation, they were unanimous, for it is said that they all gathered themselves together, and after having arrived at the decision, they all formed a deputation to visit Samuel.

The assigned reasons for this step were the age of the prophet Samuel, and the alleged misconduct of his sons. These were not adequate inasmuch as Samuel was still in the possession of much of his mental vigour, and could easily have appointed other judges in the place of his erring sons. But the mind of the nation was set upon a change. They were tired of the undemonstrative administration of the judges, and they made use of these reasons as mere occasions for gaining their purpose.

These elders deserve the credit of taking constitutional means for the accomplishment of their end. A right end may be sought by wrong means, and a wrong end may be sought in a right way. We should aim at accomplishing only right ends, and that in a right way.

TO WHOM THESE PARTIES EXPRESSED THEIR DESIRE. To Samuel. Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, who had been in the service of the Lord from the time he was a little child, and during whose term of government the nation of Israel had peace, was now in his old age rejected by the people he had so faithfully served. This was a sad wound to his feelings. It was all the sadder that it was associated

with complaints against his sons; and all the sadder still that they rejected the prophet of the Lord, and through him the Lord Himself. This was the natural understanding and the Lord Himself so expressed it, ver. 7.

Samuel, like a wise prophet and a wise man, took their request before the Lord. And He told them his answer: The Lord granted them their request. But just as He sometimes denies his people in love, so He on this occasion gratified them in anger.

The natural results of their choice was plainly predicted, and was amply verified in their experience under the Kings which they got. The folly of their choice can be illustrated by the narratives of the different kings.

Learn—(1). That we ought to be useful in our early years, for when we grow old we are not as able to do what is required of us. Instance Samuel, who lived a long life of usefulness.

(2). That we may do well in a humble position, and be spoiled by preferment and power. It was so with Samuel's sons.

(3). That the rejection of a servant of God in his official capacity, is the rejection of God himself.

(4). That the Lord may grant our desires, as a means of punishing us, for what he disapproves.

THE REFUGE.

Jesus! I come to thee,
A sinner doomed to die;
My only refuge is thy cross,
Here at thy feet I lie.

Can mercy reach my case,
And all my sins remove?
Break, O my God! this heart of stone,
And melt it by thy love.

Too long my soul has gone
Far from my God astray;
I've sported on the brink of hell,
In sin's delusive way.

But, Lord! my heart is fixed,
I hope in thee alone;
Break off the chains of sin and death,
And bind me to thy throne.

Thy blood can cleanse my heart,
Thy hand can wipe my tears;
Oh! send thy blessed Spirit down
To banish all my fears.

Then shall my soul arise,
From sin and Satan free;
Redeemed from hell and every foe,
I'll trust alone in thee.

—Roxar.