

that a king be given them, instead of judges. They don't want the unjust judges removed, and just judges put in their place; they want government by a king rather than government by judges. It is plain that they were dissatisfied, not only with the existing judges, (they had reason to be dissatisfied with them,) but with the *order* of judges. They wanted a change, and this was the time to ask for it. And as things were, there was some show of reason in their asking for it. But the real reason was not the corruptness of Samuel's sons, but the desire to be like the nations round about. Vs. 19 and 20 express this plainly. They made the existing state of matters, which was no doubt bad enough, a pretext to ask for and urge that on which their hearts were set; and that which they must have known it was not the will of God they should have.

V. 6.—Samuel is displeased when he hears their request. But like a good man he lays the matter before the Lord. The Lord hears and answers him, (v. 7) And His answer is this: Let the people have their own way, let them have a king of their own choosing, but let them know what sort of a king he will be, how he will rule and oppress them. Or in other words God's answer was: Let the people act in their own way, the way in which they are determined to act, but let them also take the consequences of their act.

Willful and disobedient, God suffers them to do as they wished to do, after He has warned them of the consequences.

From the 10th v. to the 18th, the sacred writer records Samuel's description of the king that would reign over Israel. And after the people have heard the description, and know that their king will be a harsh and severe ruler, still they persist in their cry, "Give us a king." And God gave them a king in His anger. See Hosea 13: 10, 11.

#### LESSONS.

(1.) The children of good men may do wickedly. Grace is not hereditary. Eli's sons were vile, Samuel's sons unjust.

(2.) The people of God are prone to conform to the world. It was that they might be like the other nations round about; the Israelites asked for a king, and against nothing are we exhorted to be more on our guard than against conformity to the world. The determination of the Israelites to have a king, God regarded as nothing less than rejection of Himself. We cannot be God's and the world's at the same time.

(3.) A people may desire what is not best for them. And what is more, they may get their desire. And He gave them their request, but He sent leanness into their soul—Psalm 106: 15. Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin, Hosea: 8: 11.

(4.) But while God sometimes gives men their own way, He at the same time tells them that they shall be filled with the fruit of their own doings. If they will sin, they must take the consequences. Getting what we wish

we may get that which will be a grief and trouble to us ever after.

The following is a pertinent illustration: A fond father having a very sick child, near unto death, was urged to submit to the will of God, and leave his child in His hands; but he replied, "I cannot give him up; I pray God to spare this child to me whatever may be the consequences." The child was spared, became a hardened wretch, a constant grief to his father, and finally paid the penalty of his crimes on the gallows.

#### THIRD SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*Saul chosen*, 1 Sam. 10: 17-24.

Samuel had grown old, and his sons were not walking in his steps. They turned aside after lucre, took bribes, and perverted judgment. This furnished the people with a show of reason for asking a king. They professed to be anxious for better government, whilst in reality they were actuated by pride, wishing to appear great in the eyes of the surrounding nations. The old prophet was displeased at the proposition, yet he asked God for direction. In reply God said to give them a king, yet at the same time, to tell them that their request was not right, for it was virtually a wish to renounce their allegiance to Jehovah, and also to inform them what the character of the king would be. In the face of solemn warning the people persisted in their request, so that they had none but themselves to blame when they suffered under their king. In the preceding chapter, and in the first half of this, is an account of the anointing of Saul as king. God directing Samuel in the matter. But the appointment was not yet made known. Hence the people were summoned to Mizpeh, where, after they were told that they were virtually rejecting God who had delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, they were made to present themselves before the Lord that by solemn lot a king might be publicly chosen. The lot fell upon Saul, who, in his modesty, had hid himself. When brought from his hiding place, the people shouted, God save the king.

#### LESSONS.

1. We should be contented with the arrangement of Providence. God is *wise*, and knows what is best; He is *kind* and does what is best. It is very sinful to repine against God.

2. God may give us what we ask when we knowingly ask amiss, that we may be chastened for our waywardness. He gave the Israelites a king in His anger. See Hosea 13: 11. Should a parent, for example, be unsubmissive to the will of God who seems to wish to remove a dear child by death, that child may be spared to prove a curse instead of a blessing.

3. Little do we know the evil that is in us. Had Saul, when in modesty he hid himself, been told his subsequent career, he would have said, Is thy servant a dog that he should do this evil? Let us learn to be jealous of ourselves.