

thus: "and both ye and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of the Lord your God." This makes a fifth condition of prosperity. According to this translation Samuel leaves the promise to be supplied by some such words as, "It shall be well with you." (Compare Ex. 32:32; Luke 19:42.) *But if ye will not obey.* Two only of the conditions of prosperity given in v. 13 are repeated here, but they are the most important. Indeed, obedience includes them all. *Then shall the hand of the Lord be against you;* as unfailingly as it would be for them, if they obeyed. No one can break His laws without suffering for so doing. *As it was against your fathers.* In v. 9 Samuel had rehearsed the history of the nation's forsaking of God for idols, and their punishment by being given over into the hands of the surrounding heathen nations.

II. Samuel's Authority, 16-18.

Vs. 16-18. *Now therefore.* The people had failed to learn the Lord's power and claims from the life and teachings of Samuel. They were now to be convinced by an outward miracle. But it is nobler to find divine power in a righteous life and faithful preaching, like that of Samuel, than in thunder out of a clear sky. *Wheat harvest;* May or June, the hottest period of the year. Usually no rain falls from the cessation of the spring showers about the end of April until October or November. "Rain in harvest" served as a figure for what is out of place or contrary to rule, Prov. 26:1. *Thunder and rain.* "Thunder" is literally "voices." (See Ps. 18:13; 29:3.) *That your wickedness is great.* Like all the miracles of the Bible, this one was intended to teach a moral lesson. *And all the people greatly feared the Lord.* (Compare Ex. 9:28; 19:16.) Fear of this kind needs to be turned into real reverence and unswerving loyalty. *And Samuel.* He was coupled with God as was Moses, Ex. 14:31. The unexpected rain was a "sign" attesting the truth of his words and their divine authority.

III. Samuel's Promise, 19-23.

Vs. 19, 20. *Pray for thy servants.* Compare the request of Pharaoh (Ex. 9:28) and of the Israelites (Ex. 20:19) to Moses. *Added*

unto all our sins this evil. They confess their past sins, and also admit that the demand for a king had been sinful. *Fear not.* Samuel believes in a merciful God, and teaches that sinners need not despair, if they are really penitent and seek mercy with a sincere heart, 1 John 1:9. *Serve the Lord.* They must "do works meet for repentance," Acts 26:20. *With all your heart.* The first mark of true service is heartiness, earnestness, enthusiasm, Mark 12:30. *Turn not aside;* a second mark. Our service should be single. God will not share our hearts with any idol, Matt. 6:24.

Vs. 21-23. *Vain things;* literally, "nothings." The same word is applied to idols Isa. 41:29 (translated "confusion") and idol makers, Isa. 44:9 (translated "vanity"). (See also 1 Cor. 8:4.) *For;* introducing encouragements to the service of the Lord. The first of these is that they can count on His help. *Will not forsake His people;* a most gracious and loving assurance. (Compare Heb. 13:5.) *For his great name's sake;* the chief reason for the assurance. The reputation of God would suffer if He should forsake His own. (Compare Ex. 32:12; Josh. 7:9; Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22; Rom. 11:1, 2.) *It hath pleased the Lord.* For God's free choice of His people see Deut. 7:6-11. Having once made this choice, He will not go back on it, Jas. 1:17. *As for me;* a second encouragement. Samuel promises to help the people by his prayers and teaching. *God forbid;* literally "far be it from me." *To pray for you;* the first way in which Samuel promises to give help. For other instances of his prayers, see chs. 7:5; 8:6; 15:11. His power as an intercessor is referred to in Ps. 99:6; Jer. 15:1. It was the work of the prophet to speak to God on behalf of the people, as well as to the people on God's behalf. *I will teach you;* a second way in which Samuel will help. He may cease to rule, but he will continue to instruct. He will still be able to help the nation he loves and has served so well.

IV. Samuel's Appeal, 24, 25.

V. 24. *Only fear the Lord;* a different kind of fear from that of vs. 18, 20. That is the fear felt by a slave towards a harsh master, or by an enemy towards a powerful foe. This