

their desire. 1. It is well for both people and rulers to recognize that the powers that be are ordained of God.

14. If ye will. Samuel now speaks as prophet, an office which he did not relinquish when he laid down the government. With the authority of an inspired teacher he shows the people the results, both of obedience and of unfaithfulness to their God. **Fear the Lord.** Not with terror and dread toward a mighty enemy, but with loving reverence, as toward a Father, whose word is law, willingly obeyed. **Serve him.** In every way recognize his authority and be loyal toward him. **Obey his voice.** Fulfill his direct commands, whether in the written law, through the appointed prophet, or by the inner voice of conscience. **Not rebel.** As God was their lawful ruler, disobedience to his will was accounted rebellion. 2. All sin is rebellion, and springs from a disloyal heart. **Then shall.** This part of the verse is not correctly translated. It is not a consequence of the preceding clauses, and should read, "and will be, both you and your king that reigns over you, followers of the Lord, then well," the last word being supplied; equivalent to the wish that it may be so. **The king.** A hint to the new sovereign that he has an important part in the well-being of his people. **Your God.** Constantly the Lord kept his people reminded that he was, in a peculiar sense, their God.

15. If ye will not obey. The prophet now presents the other and unwelcome side of his message, for he sees very plainly that the hearts of the people are unchanged under their new form of government. 3. It is easier to alter our profession than our character. **The hand of the Lord be against you.** God would deal with them in discipline for their sin, as he had dealt before. **As.... against your fathers.** They were looking for the removal of all evils by the monarchy, but the prophet warns them that God's favour and the prosperity attending it were dependent less on their king than on themselves.

16. Now therefore. He was about to give them a sign that he spoke by divine warrant, since God would answer at his call, and at the same time show that he was ruler both over them and their land. **Stand and see.** The posture of the mind, and not of the body, is indicated. 4. Let us be ever quick to see the hand of the Lord. **This great thing.** An event so rare that it could be hardly short of miraculous under any circumstances. **The Lord will do.** And by doing, both show his own might, and accredit his messenger.

17. Wheat harvest. Between the middle of June, a time when no rain ever falls in Palestine. **I will call.** He speaks with a consciousness of the power that dwelt in a righteous man's prayer. James v. 16, 17. **He shall send thunder and rain.** Thus showing that he was above the ordinary and known laws of

nature, and could work through them to do his will. **That ye may perceive.** God would make them realize that he had forsaken an Almighty King, in order to possess an earthly ruler. **Your wickedness is great.** They had failed to trust in God and to seek the fulfilment of his designs, and sought out a destiny for themselves as a nation. (See Notes on Lesson III.)

18. Samuel called.... the Lord sent. The prayer and its answer were both public, and in such a manner as to show to all present that there was a relation between them. **Thunder.** Called in many places, as Exod. 9, 28. (margin) and in the Psalms, "the voice of the Lord." **Greatly feared.** Note the two senses of the word "fear:" in ver. 14, a fear of reverence; here, a blind terror of awful power. **To Samuel.** Whom they had wished to set aside as their ruler, but now saw invested with a power greater than that of Saul. 5. God honours those who trust him.

19. Pray for thy servants. Again the people beg Samuel to act as their mediator with God, whom they dare not approach directly. (See Lesson II, ver. 5, 8, 9, and Notes.) 6. We, too, have a mighty Intercessor by the throne. **That we die not.** They dreaded lest Samuel's cry should be followed by their destruction, as it had once been followed by the destruction of the Philistines. **We have added.... this evil.** Their alarm made sin look more dreadful than ever before. All their past wickedness rose before them, and they saw with new distinctness how great was the crime of setting aside the Almighty as their ruler.

20, 21. Fear not. Fear indeed, but with reverence, not with alarm. **Ye** is here emphatic. "Ye have indeed done wickedly as ye say." **Yet turn not.** How much mercy is locked up in that word "yet." 7. Even those who have turned from God may yet turn toward him. **From following the Lord.** For they were his people still, though they had proved unfaithful. **With all your heart.** Not with divided service, as in the past. **For them.** This should read, "And do not turn aside after vain things," etc. **Vain things.** Idols, gods that are no gods, called in the Hebrew, "emptiness," as a term of contempt.

22. The Lord will not forsake. Though they had by their act forsaken God, yet he would not give them up. **For his great name's sake.** For his own honour, not for theirs; and for the accomplishment of his purposes, which were vaster than the interests of one small nation. **It hath pleased the Lord.** "It was an act of his choice, not for your worthiness." **To make you his people.** Emphasis on *his*. God chose Israel as the race best adapted for his purpose to receive the truth and perpetuate it until they should be trained, and the world also trained, for the larger impartation of the Gospel. 8. How high the honour of being the instrument of the Lord's will!