

the appointment of a king; they must now be prepared to face the consequences of their choice. *Walketh before you*; as a shepherd before his flock (compare Num. 27: 16, 17). *I am old and grayheaded*; and, behold, my sons. Compare ch. 8: 5. The sons are mentioned merely to show that their father is far advanced in years. *Walked from my childhood*. He has been their shepherd since his youth, (ch. 3: 19-21), and they know his life like an open book. Now he is worn-out in the service of his people.

Vs. 3-5. *Here I am*. He lays down his office with a clear conscience. He puts himself on trial: Jehovah's anointed, Saul, is to be judge in form, the people in reality. *Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass...? or whom...defrauded? whom...oppressed? ...of whose hand...bribe?* All five questions refer to judicial honesty. Oriental judges have always smiled on a bribe. Did not Samuel's sons do this very thing (ch. 8: 3, Lesson I., July 5)? The "ox" and the "ass" are mentioned as the most valuable possessions of an agricultural people (so in the Tenth Commandment). "Defrauded" and "oppressed" describe the treatment of the weak by the strong: the rich man could offer the bigger bribe, and the poor man had no redress. *Thou hast not*. Samuel challenges an indictment, and is acquitted in the very words he used. *The Lord is witness...and his anointed*. Samuel concludes his solemn attestation by calling Jehovah and the king to witness that they cannot accuse him of wrong-doing. And the people say Amen!

In vs. 6-12, Samuel recites the good things Jehovah has done for Israel, and upbraids them with unbelief and ingratitude. Jehovah has always fought against their enemies and given them victory. Why, then, should they ask for a king to be their leader?

II. A Plain Requirement, 13-15.

Vs. 13-15. *Now therefore*. These words mark a turn in the discourse. Samuel points out that the future depends on the people and king themselves. *The Lord hath set a king over you*. He has given the people their wish; it is for them now to stand in the right relation to Jehovah. V. 14 sets forth in five particulars what is required of king and nation. (These appear more clearly in the

Rev. Ver.) *Well* (Rev. Ver.). "If you fear, serve and obey Jehovah, it will be well with you." *If not*, the Lord will smite them with plague, defeat or famine.

III. A Striking Confirmation, 16-25.

Vs. 16, 17. *See this great thing*. To confirm the prophet's words, and in answer to his prayer (compare ch. 7: 9, 10), a striking wonder appears. *Wheat harvest...thunder and rain*. See *Light from the East*. The anomaly of "rain in harvest" was proverbial, Prov. 26: 1.

Vs. 18-20. *The Lord sent thunder and rain*. Compare again ch. 7: 9, 10. The storm sweeps across the wheat fields. The thunder is the "voice of Jehovah" (Psalm 29: 3), which confirms the words of Samuel. *The people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel*. They are convinced of their great sin in asking for a king; they are thoroughly terrified. *Pray for thy servants*. They beg Samuel to intercede for them. He does so, and the destruction they dread it averted. Evidently Samuel stands near Jehovah: his prayers are always heard (compare chs. 7: 5, etc.; 8: 6, etc.; 15: 11, etc.). It is a great relief when Samuel utters the words of comfort. *Fear not*; only cleave not to your sin. *Serve the Lord with all your heart*. That is one of the great words of the Old Testament: it means the complete devotion to God of the inmost life of man, Mark 12: 29, 30. It has been a fountain of life to Jews and Christians.

Vs. 21-25. *Turn ye not...after vain things*; a Hebrew designation for false gods and idols. *The Lord will not forsake his people*. They may hold fast by Him. *For his great name's sake*. He is jealous of His good name; His reputation would be impaired if He should cast them off. *It hath pleased the Lord*, etc. God's free choice of Israel is affectionately recounted in Deut. 7: 6-11. *As for me...pray for you...teach you*. And assembled Israel had just seen how prevailing his prayers were, and with what authority he could speak for God. *Only fear the Lord*. Samuel closes with another warning about the two ways.

Light from the East

WHEAT HARVEST—Varies in Palestine according to the locality. The inhabitants