

Tenderness, pity, sympathy, any emotion of his human spirit were put aside as rightly having no part in his decision; the revealed will of Jehovah, nothing more, nothing less, must be obeyed. And so while Samuel "mourned for Saul," "he came no more to see Saul until the day of his death" (xv., 35).

The lesson we learn from both narratives is the same. Samuel was a prophet, not only in the sense that he foretold future events, but in the far deeper and more important aspect, that "he sought to know the will of God," and in accordance with this will direct the affairs of the Hebrew people. He was believed by the people to stand in closer relations with God than did any other of their people. It was because of this relation that he possessed supreme power among them. It was not his duty to cheer them with any hope of the future—to portray the glory that awaited their nation in an age to come—but to point to the duty of the hour, to demand prompt and unswerving attention and obedience to the will of God. He held out no flattering prospects, he made no promises of rewards, he represented instead the Nemesis that visited sure punishment upon the unfaithful and disobedient. The religion of Samuel appealed to the sense of fear rather than to the emotion of love. His Jehovah is the God of justice, not of mercy. His religious emotion is intense, the result of feeling, not speculation. There was nothing artificial in it.

We may not forget that Samuel lived in barbaric times and inherited ancestral modes of worship. He entered into the sacrificial services with the people (see ix., 12; x., 8; xi., 15; xiii., 10; xiv., 2), as did his fathers, before him, but he differed from them in making Jehovah the one object of his worship, the one source of his reliance. The people over whom he ruled as "a man of God" had adopted the religion of the Assyrian and Phœnician goddess, Ashtar or Ashtaroth (xii., 3; xii., 10), but under Samuel's influence they seem to

have put aside "the strange gods" and served the Lord only (vii., 4).

In our study of this book, however, we must bear in mind that it did not assume its present form until some time in the sixth century before the Christian era, some four hundred years after Samuel's death. The writer, whoever he was, gathered his history from at least three different stories and artlessly blended them, making a book that is full of inconsistencies and contradictions, some of which have been cited in the two narratives of Saul's career. The reader cannot fail to notice also that there are two conflicting accounts of David's opening history. Thus in chap. xvi. we have "a mighty man of valor and a man of war," who is soon made the armor bearer of Saul (xviii., 22). But following this in chap. xvii., we have a shepherd lad too young to enter the army (28), whom Saul has never seen before the day of his conflict with Goliath. "Inquire thou," said he to Abner, "whose son the stripling is" (57).

But these are unimportant matters of detail, for it is the correspondences in the testimony of different witnesses that give value to evidence, their divergences are attributable to personal idiosyncrasies. All that I care to impress upon the minds of my readers in my presentation of the divergences is the fact that the Bible record is a piece of literature, and that it must be subject to the same rules of criticism that any other historical narrative is subject to. The cause of truth is not served by regarding the Bible as a book given to mankind by God, every word of which is inspired, every declaration a revelation of God, from which there can be no appeal. It is well for those who hold that the Bible is beyond criticism, and that it is irreverent to point out its faults, to consider what injury they are doing to the cause of truth, to the real progress of righteousness in the world, by their blind zeal. God cannot be encompassed in a book, even if the book were miraculously preserved from alterations