

in the working of the universe, would yet fain hope that there does exist that love that passes understanding and tempers justice with mercy.

But in these ideas Saul would seem to have been in advance of his day, and like every man so situated he suffered for his opinion. The later and more evenly balanced view of the Apostle James, for which he has almost incurred the "odium theologicum," as to the relative value of faith and works, suggesting the inference that each has a value of its own, and that the presence of works, not necessarily complete, is a strong indication of the existence of faith, not necessarily perfect; this view would seem to differ from the strongly expressed belief of Samuel. Yet it may well be that his opinion about this was an error of judgment on his part. He was at this time an old man, and his late years were disgraced by the behaviour of his sons. On account of his age and the actions of his sons, he was asked by the people to retire in favour of a king. Very few are the men who can surrender power gracefully, even when the proper time is at hand. Samuel's enforced abdication and his being compelled to appoint Saul as his successor, and the early victories of the king, may have biased his mind and led him unconsciously to misinterpret the Divine will. Certainly, his action is at variance with his whole career. The motives that actuate men in moments of spiritual enthusiasm need to be very carefully looked into. They often are not what the actors imagine them to be. The conduct of Samuel is opposed to that idea of mercy which runs like a golden thread through the Old Testament, guiding to the fuller light of the New, always present though often unseen when hidden by the passions of men. And down the history of the ages this idea of mercifulness in the Ruler of the World has grown in intensity until it has become the chief characteristic, and covers with a mantle of charity, the efforts of man to keep the law, failures though they be at best. It might be considered that the arrival of Saul's evil spirit and the loss of his kingdom were severe punishments, considering that he obeyed