

father in the office of high-priest. How this honor came to be transferred to the line of Ithamar we are nowhere informed. As Eli was also judge, it may be that some great deed of heroism had exalted him in the eyes of the people, and opened the way for him to become at once chief priest and ruler. **The word of the Lord.** Revelation, or divine communications of instruction, counsel, rebuke, exhortation, and promise, imparted through prophets to the people. This phrase is very common in later prophets, and means the divine message which the Lord sent by them. **Precious in those days.** The Hebrew word here translated *precious* is most commonly applied to rare and costly stones. Applied to the word of prophecy, as here, it must mean that in those times direct communications from God to men were very rare. When such a word was given it was of the nature of a rare and precious jewel. The only instance in those days, aside from Samuel, is that of the man of God mentioned in chap. 2, 27, whose appearance in history is as remarkable as that of Melchizedek in the time of Abraham, and somewhat like it. **No open vision.** This means that no heavenly revelation was known to break upon the soul of any, and none was published abroad. The words, literally translated, are, "No vision broke itself forth." There was not then, as in later times, an opening of heaven to prophetic souls, a breaking in upon them of visions and voices.

2. At that time. Namely, when Samuel was yet a child, and there was no prophet of Jehovah known to be established in Israel. **In his place.** In the place where he was accustomed to sleep. After the tabernacle had been set up at Shiloh (comp. Josh. 18, 1), it appears to have become the center of a group of dwellings which served as residences of the priests. One of these Eli and Samuel occupied together. The next sentences should be read in parenthesis, as in the Revised Version, thus: "Now his eyes began to wax dim; he could not see." This inability to see was the result of old age, and seems to have been mentioned here to explain why Samuel was so quick to run to Eli when he heard his name called.

3. Ere the lamp of God went out. That is, before the dawn of day. The golden candlestick is here referred to, which, according to Exod. 25, 31-37, had six branches and a central shaft, so that it held seven lamps. It was the business of the priests to light these lamps every evening so that they might burn until the morning (see Exod. 27, 21; 30, 8; Lev. 24, 2). **In the temple of the Lord.** The word *temple* seems to be somewhat inaccurately employed here and in chap. 1, 9 to designate the tabernacle, which in ver. 15 and chap. 1, 7, 24, is called "the house of the Lord." Possibly this narrative was not written in its present form until long afterward, when the temple of Solomon was standing and the word *temple* had become the more common name of the sanctuary of God. **Where the ark of God was.** The lamp was in the holy place, the ark in the holy of holies. The common version does not correctly represent the original here. Better is the Revised Version, which reads: "And the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down to sleep in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was." This obviously implies that Samuel was sleeping somewhere within the temple, but it does not necessarily mean that he was in the most holy place. It would seem from ver. 2 and from the propriety of things that the high-priest and the child Samuel occupied a dwelling in immediate proximity to the tabernacle, and the ark is here mentioned as being the place where Jehovah was wont to reveal himself.

4. The Lord called Samuel. These words and the whole context show that this call was an audible utter-

ance of Samuel's name. Comp. Exod. 3, 4. The entire communication made to Eli through the child was obviously of a supernatural character.

5. He ran unto Eli. This statement shows the promptness with which the youthful Samuel was accustomed to respond to the calls of the venerable Eli.

7. Samuel did not yet know the Lord. Knowing the Lord is an expression used here in a different sense from what it signifies in chap. 2, 12. There it means that Eli's sons had no decent respect for the commandments of the Lord, and gave no thought or study to his holy claims upon them. Here it means, as the next sentence explains, that Samuel had not yet received any revelation from the Lord.

8. The third time. The threefold repetition of the call made it the more emphatic and impressive. Compare the repetition of Peter's vision in Acts 10, 16. **Eli perceived.** The venerable priest at length discerned that Jehovah was about to reveal something, and he gave the obedient child the necessary counsel and direction.

10. Came, and stood. This implies a vision, a perception on the part of Samuel of a supernatural movement and presence, and so it is called in ver. 15. That which had been only a voice arousing him from his sleep became a vision now. Thrice the voice had called and thrice Samuel had gone to Eli. Thus both the child and the priest were gradually prepared for the remarkable revelation about to be given. What form this vision assumed we are not told. **Samuel answered.** He responded now as to the voice of a supernatural presence.

11. I will do a thing. Or, I am about to do. The word or decree of judgment is something about to be executed. **In Israel.** Among the Israelitish people. The chosen nation is to be visited with a bitter judgment. This threatened judgment came speedily, as the next chapter shows. **Both the ears....tingle.** Compare the same expression as employed in 2 Kings 21, 12; Jer. 19, 3.

12. In that day. Every such visitation of wrath upon a guilty family or people is conceived as a day of judgment. The Lord had foretold the coming woe. **Spoken concerning his house.** The reference here is to the prophecy which the man of God had spoken to Eli, and which is recorded in chap. 2, 27-36, which the reader should carefully examine in connection with this verse. **Begin....end.** The sense is, I will thoroughly accomplish all I have said I would do to Eli's house; from beginning to end the judgment shall be rigidly executed.

13. For I have told him. A strict adherence to the law of tenses in Hebrew would require here the future instead of the past, and so the margin reads: *And I will tell him.* Better, "And I will show him." Eli will live to see the beginnings of the bitter judgment and so have personal assurance that God is about to judge his house. It is here evident that judgment and punishment are associated ideas in the Scriptures. **For ever.** Perpetually. The judgment is of a nature not to be reversed or set aside. **Because his sons made themselves vile.** More correctly the Revised Version: "His sons did bring a curse upon themselves." The vile deeds and impurity of Eli's sons are described in 1 Sam. 2, 12-17; 22-36. Eli knew of their wickedness, and rebuked them, but exercised no authority against them. So it is here charged against him that he restrained them not.

14. I have sworn. The determination of Jehovah to execute punishment is represented as a solemn oath. Nothing could be more immutable. Comp. Gen. 22, 16; and Heb. 6, 13. **Iniquity of Eli's house.** The sins of