

then (xii.) he again reproves them for their wickedness in asking for a king, but says that he would continue to pray for them and seek the favor of the Lord.

But the earlier narrative (ix. to x., 16 inc. ; xi. entire ; xiii. and xiv ) gives us a different representation both of Samuel and of the appointment of Saul as king.

Here we are introduced to "Samuel the Seer," and are given an insight into the character, and the influences forming the characters of the earliest prophets. Samuel was not, according to this narrative, a military man or "judge," but eminently a religious man. His work was spiritual. Chapter iii. introduces him to us as a child endowed with extraordinary power of spiritual insight. He gains access to the mind of Jehovah, and (iii., 11 12) obtains information regarding a future event. As he grows older this power of forecasting the future remains with him and increases. He is known in his land for his ability to gain knowledge in a supernatural way. The asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. Saul seeks for them in vain, though he and his band travel so far and so long that they are concerned lest the father of Saul should forget the loss of the asses in his anxiety over the absence of his son. Then his (Saul's) servant said to him (ix., 6): "Behold now, there is in this city a *man of God*, and he is a man that is held in honor; *all that he sayeth cometh surely to pass*; now let us go thither, peradventure he can tell us concerning our journey where on we go."

Chap. ix., 15, tells us how Samuel obtains his power to get information inaccessible to ordinary men. The Lord reveals the knowledge to Samuel. This book moreover gives us an idea of the mental preparation necessary for the reception of the power to prophecy, we are given a little insight into the manner in which prophets are made, for we are introduced to the "school of the Prophets."

Here it may be remarked that the

student of the Bible must be constantly on guard in his endeavors to free his mind from false conceptions derived from the erroneous teaching of divinity schools, or theological colleges. To understand the Book of Samuel, one must put himself in the time of Samuel, amid his surroundings, and under the popular ideas of his day.

The servant of Saul gives expression to the popular idea of the power of "a man of God." He is a soothsayer, or necromancer, who derives his power from the Lord. He discovers lost articles, foretells future events, but he does this only by the revelation of an unseen Power, who knows all things, past, present, and to come. Thus inspired, he has the power to perform miracles, as to change rods into serpents, water into blood, or to prevent rain and produce pestilence. Prophets of the gods of other nations may do the same or similar acts, except that their power is inferior, and, in a contest, Jehovah's prophet is always victorious. This is the primitive idea of a prophet. Do we discover in it a valuable idea? It certainly seems to have persistently held a place in all religious systems, for we find it not only in their early history and fundamental stages, but given a place of importance in the developed creeds of religious sects down to the present day. At first thought it may seem to be a relic of superstition that if expunged from the Bible would make the Scriptures a greater aid than now in the progress of true religion.

But if we put ourselves in the proper frame of mind to understand the Bible, adjust ourselves to the conditions under which it was written, we shall find that even the earliest idea of prophecy was a step in the progress of man's knowledge of God. The servant of Saul who believed that there is a power who knows all things, and a man to whom this power not only can, but will, impart his knowledge, had no mean idea of religion. He was in the way of truth, even