

part of his life was spent in wandering or in war, and when he came to the possession of large power he had many troubles with his family and the rough soldiers upon whom he had been compelled to depend. We have a suggestive and reliable, if not a perfect or systematic, picture of his life and times. For him Yahweh was a great God, the supreme God of Israel, though His actual rule is limited to Israel's territory (1 S. 26/19). The striking story of 2 S. 21 shows that he, and the Church of his time, still stood on the old tribal level (cf. Dt. 24/16, Jer. 31/30, Ezek. 18/20). What a great step from this to the advanced theology of Ps. 139, attributed by later scribes to this great king! However, the union of the tribes and the choice of an important capital city was an event of religious importance for the life of Israel and the world. The local sanctuaries still had their place, and religious officials of various kinds were scattered throughout the land. But the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem and the desire for a permanent dwelling-place of Yahweh marked an advance.

At the king's court soldiers, councillors, priests, and prophets were assembled, and a new and more important centre of life was thus formed. The king was a man of his time, in many ways rough, impulsive, self-willed; but he leaves upon us the impression of rare strength, power of leadership, a certain frankness of nature, and magnanimity of spirit. He receives counsel from 'a wise woman,' accepts meekly the stern rebuke of Nathan, and seeks to restrain the fierce men of blood whom he has had to use as his instruments. Judged by the standards of his own time he is a true and noble embodiment of Israel's religion. He is loyal to Yahweh, and is not content with a mere formal worship. He comes into the main current of this great religious movement; he would give due honour to the God of his fathers, from whom his kingship came; and he prepared the way for "the city of God," of whose full glory and influence he never dreamed. Before there could be a national religion, in the full sense, the nation must be created; then, when the national religion came, it must take time to realize its true nature before the conscious-