

dient, he aided them in their choice, and Saul became the anointed of the Lord. Samuel, however, still directed the affairs of Israel—more now as the seer, or prophet, and as such he marks the transition from the office of judge to that of the prophet, whose voice kings might refuse to obey, but at their peril.

There are two distinct epochs then in Samuel's life: the child, and the man. The first the one usually associated with his name, that upon which, in his tenderer moments, the inimitable Luther dwelt with calm delight, and found thereby a corrective to his sterner nature. This picture of Samuel, Christian art has bequeathed to us, the little child a fond mother brought to the sanctuary, "Lent to the Lord as long as he liveth" (1 Sam. i. 27, 28); the lad sleeping in the tabernacle, unconscious of the vices and sorrows around, to whom the mysterious voice called and uttered the words of Eli's doom; the child that "grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord" (1 Sam. iii. 19, 20). There is nothing tragic in connection with Samuel's faith, as with Abel's; nor miraculous, as with Enoch's; nor clouded with judgment, as Noah's; nor have we the pilgrim faith of the patriarchs; the pathetic trust of Joseph; the towering faithfulness of the would-not-be Egyptian prince, Moses; neither have we the uncouth heroism of the earlier judges. Samuel is heroic in the steady discharge of changing duties, which even touched his own position as the leader of his people. Samuel's life was the child's faith, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." His child-life was the preparation therefor. There is no abrupt transition in his history. The child was father to the man. Age and youth were to each other bound by natural piety. With the associations of the past he could lead on without sudden break to the changes demanded by the near future, and harmoniously blend the declining judgment with the growing prophetic school. The second epoch of Samuel's life had not been possible without the first. The manhood of long and unspasmodic service was the outgrowth of the childhood lent unto the Lord. He was faithful, and did not ignore the "severity of God." He had called down thunder from heaven, hewed Agag in pieces

before the Lord, and the terrible figure in the cave at Endor, which denounced the faithlessness of the apostate king, are all manifestations of a faithless age cannot be allowed to forget. Because there is wrath, sweet-scented words, when danger is imminent, are vile; and Samuel, as prophet, laid the foundation example of that order of men who, in the face of king and power, have not failed to speak the words of Jehovah, whether men hear or whether they rebel.

It is Samuel we first read of what in after days has been called the School of the Prophets—*e.g.*, x. 10—though of the exact character of that company we are in great measure ignorant; but from this time the prophetic order grew in numbers and influence, and from their lips have come to us severest words of condemnation, most earnest exhortations to holiness, most tender touching revelations of God's will and heart.

Dean Stanley's closing remarks upon Samuel's life are not without instruction: "Samuel is a type of holiness of growth, of a new creation without [sudden] conversion; and his mission an example of the special mission such characters are called upon to fulfil." There are times of change—such are upon us now—when no iconoclast is needed to uproot old associations and to break down cherished mementoes; but those who have sufficient experience in growth to sympathize with the moral or mental steps by which men rise, have risen, to broader, clearer light, whilst still the energy is ever forward bent, and in thus rising to remember to communicate the child-like faith, with form changed, to our children, as we received it from those who have gone before. The call may come to us in many ways to forget the things that are behind. Blessed we if enabled to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

Our reflections upon Samuel will close by being concentrated on one scene, 1 Sam. xii.: "And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and *I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.* Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I