

that the priest was more likely to inherit his office and to be fastened to a particular place. The priesthood of a particular sanctuary might remain in the possession of one family or clan. This made the priests the custodians and guardians of a special tradition and ritual, varying in different localities, but with many features common.

There were also "seers," "wise men," and "prophets" of various types at this stage. Their functions were not clearly defined; by their superior insight, ability, and acknowledged relation to God, they were able to render service to their fellow-men. The structure of society was simple, and the various professional services were not elaborately organized, but the needs of men were similar in all times. Religious guidance, social help, the pursuit of justice, and the interpretation of uncommon facts of life—these made room for real spiritual insight or for showy charlatanism or petty quackery, as in our day. But the prophets that we are most concerned with now are the bands of patriotic enthusiasts who arose in times of excitement or danger, and in a real if in a rude way kept alive the fiery energy of Yahweh religion. Some among their compatriots might regard them as "mad," and look with cooler criticism upon their wild performances, but generally abnormal sensational outbursts were attributed to "the spirit of Yahweh" (2 K. 9/11). Saul was caught in the contagion of this frenzied worship, to the surprise of those who knew him (1 S. 10/11). These bands stood for loyalty to Yahweh and opposition to Philistine oppression, and no doubt played a real part in the struggles which prepared the way for the kingdom. Here, at any rate, was the belief that God could use men as His instruments, sending His Spirit to trouble or to give them courage and strength. The same motive and the same power moved "the heroes" who fought against the surrounding peoples when they sought to divide and oppress the Israelites. The strong indignation and furious resentment which prompted men to determined resistance and fierce vengeance were regarded as the result of the oncoming of Yahweh's Spirit (Jg. 13/25, 14/6, 15/14, 1 S. 11/6). Saul, who did real work in the effort towards national unity, was a capable man, a true