

ART. VII.—MANASSEH, KING OF JUDAH.

A CURIOUS interest has come to circle round the Book of Chronicles which, in one sense, can hardly be said to exist in the case of any other book of the Old Testament. That it is a post-exilic work, written by an historian with a very special intent, is agreed on all hands. But "post-exilic" is a rather vague word. Are we to think of such a period as (say) the reign of Artaxerxes (464-425 B.C.) or thereabouts, or must we look on much later, when the Greek régime had succeeded the Persian? This is a question which it is not altogether easy to answer, nor does it matter for our present purpose. A very much more important question arises as to whether the Book of Chronicles is to be viewed as honest history. Of course it is readily allowed, and is, indeed, obvious, that the author keeps a very special purpose steadily in sight. The most casual reader can see that he is no mere supplementer, filling in topics which the writer of the Book of Kings had passed over. The Septuagint and Vulgate, and the Douay Bible, do indeed call the Chronicles the *Paraleipomena*, "the book of things passed over," but this is an extremely one-sided aspect of the truth. The writer of the Chronicles is one to whom the annals of the various kings is a very secondary matter compared with the history of the Jewish Church; with him the idea of the theocracy is ever the guiding principle. Thus matters which to the annalist are of supreme importance here fall into the background. For example, to the author of the Book of Kings the history of Hezekiah's reign is focussed in the great event of the Assyrian invasion and the Divine intervention; while the author of the Chronicles devotes nearly thrice the space to the account of Hezekiah's religious reforms to what he gives to the account of the war. Or, again, to the writer whose mind was filled with the all-absorbing thought of the theocracy the mushroom dynasties of the northern kingdom were of little moment, except when now and again the kingdom of Judah was brought into very close connection with its neighbour. Accordingly the allusions to the northern kingdom are but few.

It may probably be conceded that a writer with such an aim would somewhat idealize, would view the story through a softening medium. A modern historian, whether treating of Church or of secular matters, will write from a certain standpoint, with a certain set of sympathies; and yet to recognise an author's sympathies is not tantamount to saying that he has played unfairly with his facts. A man may be an upright, honourable gentleman, however strong a partisan

he be. The only question for us is: Whence did the chronicler get his facts, and how did he treat them? Whence, then, did he get his facts? On the twofold answer given to this, and to the other half of the question, will hinge the resulting matter, the view we must take of the historic trustworthiness of the Chronicles. That the chronicler had before him our present Book of Kings is, of course, obvious, and is admitted by all; there is a large amount of matter common to the two works, to say nothing of various explicit references in the later book to the earlier.

At this stage an important question arises. There are numerous statements in the Chronicles which have no parallel in the Kings. A convenient way of realizing how much we have of such details will be found by consulting such a book as Canon Girdlestone's "Deuterographs," or Mr. A. Wood's "Hebrew Monarchy." Whence did all this independent matter come? For our own part, we fully believe that the writer had access to a number of historical documents now no longer existing. Where are the prophecies of Ahijah the Shilonite (2 Chron. ix. 29), or the vision of Iddo the Seer (*ibid.*), or the Book of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the Seer concerning genealogies (xii. 15), or the story of the prophet Iddo (xiii. 22), or the Book of Jehu, the son of Hanani (xx. 34), or Isaiah's history of the reign of Uzziah (xxvi. 22), or Hozai's¹ history of Manasseh (xxxiii. 19), and many others? We are content to believe, until the contrary is *demonstrated*, that they were documents, more or less official, entering into the details of this or that reign, accessible to the author of the Chronicles, and utilized by him. Such would be the natural inference to be drawn from the constantly recurring references, and such would certainly be the line which men would take if the case arose in connection with a Greek or Latin historian.

But, then, certain very definite consequences follow. If behind the Book of Chronicles are a mass of detailed pre-exilic histories on which the compiler has drawn, may we say, with average care and average honesty, then we must accept in a general way his historic picture of the pre-exilic age. But in that case what is to become of certain latter-day theories? It seems just now as if we must submit to be told that, however fallible Old Testament history may be, the scheme

¹ So the word is rendered in the Revised Version and Authorized Version margin [Hosai], and if we hold to the Masoretic text, we can hardly render otherwise. It is, however, by no means improbable, having regard to verse 18, that we have a scribal error, and should read Hozim ["the seers"]. So the LXX.

of Wellhausen and his followers must not be challenged. In that case we must allow, for example, that the rule as to one sanctuary dates from the reign of Josiah, and that the mass of the details of the Levitical code are to be assigned to the exile or even later. It is clear that if we believe the Chronicles to be genuine, honest history, we cannot accept these theories as gospel, and if the theories are to be accepted in anything like their entirety, then we must surrender the Chronicles. The two can scarcely co-exist as parts of the circle of our belief. That this is no exaggeration may be seen from the language used about the Book of Chronicles by various leaders of the neo-critical school. Let us take just one example. Wellhausen asks:¹ "With what show of justice can the chronicler, after his statements have over and over again been shown to be incredible, be held at discretion to pass for an unimpeachable narrator? . . . It is, indeed, possible that occasionally a grain of good corn may occur among the chaff," etc. Moreover, the good points are but "paste pearls" after all.

It is quite clear that, in a trial when the views taken of a leading witness by the advocates of both sides differ *toto caelo*, when by the one side the witness is held trustworthy, and by the other utterly untrustworthy, and when the views urged by the two sides are such as not to compare each with the other, there is a very awkward deadlock. In the case of the Chronicles, the old-fashioned believer held that (to pass over here any argument resting on his belief in inspiration) a weighty argument might be drawn from the inclusion of the book in the Canon of the Jewish Church, where certainly we are justified in a belief that an unauthorized claimant did not readily find entrance. The glory of the privilege of being entrusted with the oracles of God would be hardly worth laying any stress on, if the author of a cunningly-devised forgery could manage to get his work included. On the other hand, the neo-critical school tell us that, in virtue of their subjective theory, which, probable or improbable, is but theory, the Chronicles cannot be historic.

In this deadlock it might be said that we must agree to differ, and if things stood where they did a generation ago, there would be nothing more to be said. Happily they do not so stand. Recent archæological discoveries have revolutionized the old fields of battle in many parts of the Bible. It is this which gives point to the wise words of Dr. Fritz Hommel: "External evidence' must be the banner under which all students of Old Testament literature are to range themselves

¹ "Prolegomena," p. 224. English translation.

for the future." A good many soldiers are finding their way to that banner, and are likely to do good work in the future. It is true that archæology has not done much for the Book of Chronicles as yet, but it has done something, and that in connection with Manasseh, the persecuting King of Judah.

There is one point in which the authors of the Books of Kings and Chronicles agree in their account of Manasseh's reign: they compress the story of fifty-five years into the small compass of about twenty weeks. The subject must have been one inspiring the intensest grief and shame and indignation. Nor was the feeling a transient one: long ages after the Talmud sets forth the name of Manasseh as one of the three kings who have no portion in the world to come. There must be an infinity of history summed up in the few curt words: "Manasseh shed innocent blood till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." Yet not one name of those saints, valiant for the truth, has come down to us—unless, indeed, the tradition be true which would include Isaiah among them, a tradition possibly had in view by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 37). In any case, we believe that there is much to be said for the belief that the grim picture set forth to us in Isa. lvii. represents the period of Manasseh's persecution.

The chronicler, it will be observed, says nothing of that persecution. Possibly, filled with enthusiasm as he was for the house of David, as the embodiment of the theocratic kingdom, he felt that the picture was black and terrible enough without any further aggravation. What could be worse, he might say, than the action of a king who built idol altars in the house of the Lord, nay, could even set up a graven image there?

What we are concerned with now, however, is a statement of the Chronicles which does not occur in the Kings. We read that "the captains of the host of the King of Assyria took Manasseh in chains, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon." While there he repented, and God "brought him again to Jerusalem with his kingdom." Why this part of the story should be passed over by the author of the Book of Kings it is impossible to say. Perhaps the appalling thought of the persecution blotted out everything else. Whatever Manasseh's repentance was to him personally, the awful effects of his reign on the nation remained. Even in the reign of Jehoiakim, after the long reforming reign of Josiah, the bitter memory remained (2 Kings xxiv. 3). Our business now, however, is to ask, not why the story of the imprisonment and repentance is not given in the Book of Kings, but whether the chronicler was warranted in inserting it.

Three points have to be noticed. In the first place, we have a reference to military activity on the part of Assyrian generals in the West-land at a time when there is no other allusion to it in Scripture. Secondly, it might be maintained, as indeed it has been maintained, that the captive vassal of an Assyrian king would certainly be taken to Nineveh and not to Babylon. Thirdly, it has been maintained that an offending vassal of the King of Assyria, when brought before his overlord, might make up his mind that he would be very fortunate if simply condemned to death, without very grim torture accompanying it.

Before taking these points seriatim, it may be well to point out how the succession fell in the Assyrian Empire about this time. The wording of the Bible story of the murder of Sennacherib (2 Kings xix. 37) might seem to imply that it befell at once on his return to Nineveh; but the Bible does not say so, and as a matter of fact, as we learn from the monuments, twenty years had then elapsed since his return from the invasion of Judah. The murder of the tyrant may be referred to 681 B.C., when he was succeeded by his son Esar-Haddon, who reigned till 668 B.C. Esar-Haddon's son and successor, Assur-Bani-Pal, was perhaps the most renowned of all the Kings of Assyria.

If it now be asked which King of Assyria it was who showed Manasseh mercy, it must be admitted that we cannot speak with absolute certainty. Mr. T. G. Pinches connects the story with the invasion of Phœnicia and Palestine in the fourth year of Esar-Haddon's reign. He thinks that, while the whole district gave in its submission, Manasseh was seized on a charge of rebellion and carried off. On the other hand, a majority of experts take Assur-Bani-Pal to be the merciful overlord; and on this later view history seems to furnish a more reasonable clue to explain Manasseh's rebellion, as we shall seek to show. Probably the available evidence is insufficient to establish a conclusion, but for our present purpose, an inquiry whether a particular statement in the Chronicles is history or fiction, the one King is just as good as the other.

We know that Manasseh was a vassal to both these Kings of Assyria. He is one of the twenty-two princes of the West-land, of whom Esar-Haddon says: "I gathered twenty-two princes of the land of the Hittites, who dwelt by the sea and in the midst of it: all of them I summoned." In the list which follows, *Mi-na-si-i sar ir Ja-u-di*, i.e., "Manasseh, king of the land (lit., city) of Judah," comes second. Among other familiar names, the Kings of Tyre, Edom, Moab, Ashkelon, and Ekron meet us. Sidon is not included, for it had

been destroyed by Esar-Haddon. There exists also a list of the twenty-two States in an inscription of Assur-Bani-Pal. They are ranged in absolutely the same order, and it might have been thought that the son was seeking to glorify himself by reproducing his father's list, were it not that two of the States had changed hands. The King of Ammon is no longer Puduil,¹ but Amminadab; and the King of Arados is no longer Matanbaal, but Jakinlu. This shows that account was taken of changes occurring in the interval. It is worth noting that Padi,² King of Ekron, of whom we read so much in Sennacherib's great inscription on the Taylor Cylinder, has now disappeared, and another King, Ikasamsu, reigns in his stead.

A study of the two lists renders it probable that the periods to which they point are the later years of Esar-Haddon's reign and the earlier years of his son's reign; but whether the incident recorded in Chronicles is to be associated with either it is impossible to say.

Before summing up under the three points of which we spoke before, it is worth while to call attention to one clause in the statement in Chronicles. In the Authorized Version we read (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11), "which took Manasseh among the thorns," while the Revised Version renders, "which took Manasseh in chains." The former is not very intelligible (though the word *chochim* occurs elsewhere in the Bible in the sense of "thorns"); the latter might with advantage have been more exact. The noun in the clause is literally "hooks" (so Revised Version, margin), reminding one of the ring put through the nose of a bull or other animal which it is desired to control. Thus, in the question as to Leviathan (Job xli. 2; xl. 26, Heb.), "Canst thou bore his jaw through with a thorn?" we have the same word in the Hebrew as here.

The Assyrian régime was the very apotheosis of cruelty, and we know from the monuments that prisoners were often secured in this way. Professor Maspero, after remarking on the frequent representations of "the impaling stake, rebels being flayed alive, and chiefs having their tongues torn out," gives us a picture, taken from bas-reliefs at Nineveh, germane to our present topic. Before an Assyrian King, who is standing, kneels a captive in fetters, through whose lip a ring

¹ Puduil was the King of Ammon at the time of Sennacherib's invasion, and is named on the Taylor Cylinder as one of the kings bringing tribute.

² It may be remembered that Padi had been imprisoned by Hezekiah in Jerusalem, and the party hostile to the Assyrian rule had become dominant in Ekron; but after Ekron was stormed by the Assyrians, and the rebels had been impaled, Padi was reinstated on his throne and his territory augmented.

has been thrust, attached to a cord, the end of which is in the King's hand. With a spear he is about to put out the eyes of his captive, while two others, similarly fastened, are waiting their turn ("Passing of the Empires," p. 546). Well might the voice of the nations cry aloud at length, like Nahum in his impassioned ode, "Woe to the bloody city!"

We must now turn seriatim to the three points to which we referred above. As regards the first, there was certainly military activity in the West on the part of the Assyrians in the reigns both of Esar-Haddon and Assur-Bani-Pal. The former in his fourth year made an expedition against the cities of Phœnicia, and in his several expeditions against Egypt he must have traversed the great road through Palestine. Had Manasseh been suspected of treason against his overlord then, we can hardly doubt but that there would be some allusion to it in Esar-Haddon's inscriptions.

We may now look on to the reign of Assur-Bani-Pal, and here we are faced by a highly suggestive fact for our attempt to fix the time of the trouble in which Manasseh was involved. The inscriptions of Assur-Bani-Pal show that the West-land, the *mat aharri*, by which we are to understand Phœnicia and Palestine, was concerned in the revolt raised against Assur-Bani-Pal by his younger brother. Esar-Haddon had appointed Assur-Bani-Pal to be his successor as the head of the Empire, with his seat at Nineveh, while making a younger son, Shamash-shum-ukin (Sammughes-Saosduchin), a subordinate King, ruling in Babylon. The younger brother, evidently disliking the position of a vassal, attempted to assert his independence; but after a long struggle he was completely crushed, and, Babylon being taken, burnt his palace over his head to save himself from falling into the hands of the Assyrians. This happened in or about the year 648-647 B.C. Now, since we know that the western States were involved in the attempt, it seems reasonably probable that Manasseh was one of the rebels. Dr. Schrader goes so far as to say, "We may assume with perfect confidence that Manasseh was included among these Palestino-Phœnician rebels." Even if he had not openly committed himself, he may well have had understanding with the rebel King of Babylon, and so was led away, secured in Assyrian style, to clear himself or to meet his fate.

At this stage comes the crucial difficulty. Surely an Assyrian vassal would be taken to Nineveh and not to Babylon. Yet, as it happens, the difficulty is apparent rather than real, and that, whichever of the Assyrian Kings we take count of. Esar-Haddon, reversing the brutal policy of his father Sennacherib, who had wasted Babylon with fire and

sword, rebuilt the city, and attempted to conciliate his Babylonian subjects. The inscriptions show that he was King of Babylon as well as King of Assyria, and therefore it may be assumed that from time to time he held his Court there. As regards his successor, a like statement could not be made so long as Shamash-shum-ukin, though really a mere viceroy, was called King of Babylon; but on his overthrow, when Assur-Bani-Pal had assumed the title of King of Babylon, we may feel certain that he would reside there for a time, and would there meet his vassals. Such a residence would be but putting the seal on the assumption of his new dignity. Dr. Schrader gives an instance in which this actually happened. After Sargon's conquest of Babylon, when he had placed its crown upon his head, the ambassadors of seven Kings of Jatnan (Cyprus) brought presents to the great King to *Babylon*. In the light of this fact, the attempt to treat the reference to Babylon in the case of Manasseh as fictitious falls to the ground. What actually happened in the case of Sargon cannot be called inherently improbable, under like conditions, in the case of Esar-Haddon or Assur-Bani-Pal.¹

Our remaining point was the question of the probability of the release of an offending vassal, one who had suffered the disgrace of being placed in fetters, with a hook through his lip. It happens curiously enough that the reign of this very Assur-Bani-Pal gives us an undoubted instance. In one of this King's inscriptions we are told of two vassals, Sarludari and Necho, whom "they bound with iron bonds and iron chains, hands and feet." When Necho arrived in this style at Nineveh, the Great King "bestowed favour on him," and allowed him to return to Egypt. The parallel is perfect, and we may confidently sum up, with Dr. Schrader, "that there is no reason to cast any suspicion on the statement of the chronicler . . . and that what he relates can be satisfactorily accounted for from the circumstances that existed in the year 647 B.C."

Let us once again take the illustration of a great trial in court before a judge. A witness is produced on the acceptance or rejection of whose statements great issues depend; yet from the nature of the case proof and disproof appear

¹ It is matter for regret to see in a book which is characterized alike by learning and sobriety (Professor M'Curdy's "History, Prophecy and the Monuments," ii., 386, n.) the remark that "Babylon" is simply an error of author or copyist for "Nineveh." This style of criticism, consistently carried out, would mean the reversal of the familiar canon, *Proclivi scriptioni prestat ardua*.

alike impossible, and the whole seems to become a matter of subjectivity for or against the witness. If at this juncture some fresh evidence, definite objective facts, is brought to light, and a severe cross-examination in the light of those facts fails to discredit the witness's testimony, in ordinary life practical men would say that this testing on some unexpected point—some point perhaps where special obloquy had been cast on the witness—was, at any rate, reasonable ground for holding that, if the means arose for taking the witness in twenty points, similar results might be looked for. It is only a case of *ex pede Herculem* after all.

Let men have the courage not to be browbeaten by being told that "all critics are agreed" that the Book of Chronicles is quite untrustworthy—which, indeed, is not true, unless we explain "critic" in a special sense. If the Book is treated as simply so much Jewish literature, then its claim to be historic must be tested by such little outside evidence as we have got. In the only case where as yet comparison is possible, a rather trying test has been satisfactorily undergone. Those who are content to believe that the Book of Chronicles is a legitimate part of God's Word will not maintain that in lapse of centuries errors of text may not have crept in, or that the author was necessarily at all times absolutely accurate in statements of detail, and especially where numbers are concerned; but they will feel confident that, so far as our evidence goes, we are justified in believing the Book of Chronicles to be honest history, not a concoction of dishonest priests.

R. SINKER.

ART. VIII.—THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY SINCE THE RESTORATION.

WILLIAM HOWLEY.—I.

I HAVE now come to a Primate that I have seen. It was in 1845, at the annual meeting of St. Mark's College, Chelsea; and his tall thin figure, his tremulous voice, his wig, his nervous rubbing of his hands together all the time he was speaking, the simultaneous standing up of the whole assemblage when he rose to address them—all these things remain fixed in my memory. I saw him again at the annual meeting of the National Society, in 1847, listening to Mr. Gladstone, and portions of the famous statesman's address on that occasion I can also remember.

William Howley was the only son of a country clergyman,