

NOTES ON THE REIGN OF JOASH.

THE reign of Joash, as recorded in the two narratives of 2 Kings xi., xii., and 2 Chronicles xxiii., xxiv., is not only of great intrinsic interest, but brings into prominence many of the problems which affect our estimate of the Books of Chronicles. It is therefore, indirectly, important as bearing on the current questions of the higher criticism, and of the place which particular books and passages of Scripture—apart from the divine revelation which the Bible contains—are to hold in our religious system. I think then that it may not be useless to consider the reign of Joash with reference to these inquiries.

1. Every disaster and vexation which troubled the good Jehoshaphat arose from his alliance with Ahab, and his wish to cement that alliance by marrying his son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Jehoram of Judah, during his calamitous reign, was entirely under the influence of his half-Phœnician wife, and she was “the counsellor to do wickedly” of his son Ahaziah. Jehoram-ben-Jehoshaphat only reigned eight years, during which he was first defeated by the Edomites, and then by the Arabians and Philistines, who slew all his sons except the youngest, usually known as Ahaziah, but also called Jehoahaz (2 Chron. xxi. 17), and Azariah (*id.* xxii. 6). Ahaziah succeeded at the age of twenty-two, and was murdered by Jehu’s orders in Megiddo (2 Kings ix. 27) or Samaria (2 Chron. xxii. 9), after reigning a single year. On hearing the news of his death, together with the subsequent massacre of forty-two of his “brethren” by Jehu at Beth-equed-haroim, Athaliah determined not to give up her high

rank as Gebirah or queen-mother, but to make herself queen-regnant in spite of the fact that the reign of a queen—much more of a Baal-worshipping and half-alien queen—was a thing unknown either in Israel or in Judah. True daughter of Jezebel in courage and ruthlessness, unsoftened by her very recent widowhood and the murder of her only son, she arose and destroyed all the seed-royal of the house of Judah. Seeing that (1) Ahaziah and forty-two royal personages had just been slaughtered by Jehu; and (2) that every one of the sons of Jehoram, except Ahaziah, his youngest, had been slain by the Philistines and Arabians; and (3) that Ahaziah was only twenty-two when he died, it is difficult to imagine that her grandchildren could have been very numerous; and we must suppose that when the chronicler speaks “of the *sons* of Athaliah, that wicked woman,” he must mean her followers. In any case, the direct line of the House of David, which was heir to so many mighty promises, was at this time more nearly in peril of extinction than at any other period of Judæan history.

2. Its destiny hung on the life of an infant, the son of Ahaziah, by Zibiah of Beersheba. The child’s aunt—Jehosheba or Jehoshabeath, sister of King Ahaziah—succeeded in stealing him from the seraglio with his nurse, and hid him in the store-chamber of the palace, where beds and mats were kept.

The event is very surprising. Ahaziah’s children must have been few; and even when we bear in mind the secrets which were hidden from the outer world in oriental harems, we know that their interior buzzed with minute and incessant gossip. Such a circumstance as the anticipated birth of a child is instantly whispered to all the wives and concubines, and the actual birth of a son is an event of capital importance, which, in so narrow a space, could not possibly be concealed from any member of the little com-

munity. Ahaziah would have had no reason at all to hide from his mother, the great Gebîrah, that she had another grandchild; and when we recall the policy of "Thorough," on which she and her mother always acted, we cannot but be astonished that she overlooked the fact that one of the king's sons had been snatched from her murderous designs to become in the future an inevitable Goël. But headlong wickedness is often very blind.

3. The child, says the historian, "was with Jehosheba hid in the House of the Lord six years."

There would be little or no difficulty in hiding him in the Temple when once he had been securely removed into it from the store-room of bedding in the neighbouring palace. For he may have been housed in any of the numerous buildings which formed the suburbs (*parvarim*) of the sacred building (2 Kings xxiii. 11); or even in one of the three storeys of chambers which rose round the edifice, and which, as we learn from other passages (*e.g.* Neh. xiii. 4, 5), were, to our surprise, used as residences. Athaliah had made Baal-worship popular. Mattan, the priest of the neighbouring temple of Baal, was regarded as a personage of more importance than Jehoiada, and the House of the Lord had fallen into contempt and dilapidation. It was no longer frequented by daily throngs of rejoicing worshippers, and its attendants were few in number.

The information given us by the chronicler that Jehosheba was *the wife* of Jehoiada the priest makes the arrangement seem easier. We have no other authority for the statement, but, like so much of the information derived from this source, it is not unattended with difficulties.

There is no difficulty in the intermarriage of members of different tribes; but in all Scripture history, and down to the marriage of Herod with Mariamne, daughter of Boëthus—whom Herod made high-priest to give a little more dignity to the alliance—we do not find a single other

instance of any union between royal and priestly houses. It is true that Jehoiada is the first who is called "the chief" and "the head priest," a distinctive title which is never given even to Aaron or Eli; but his eminence seems to have been the result of the revolution in which he took part, and of the regency with which it was rewarded.

But besides the isolated character of so exalted a marriage there is another difficulty.

Jehosheba could not at this time have been much older than thirty. For her father, Jehoram, had died at the age of forty, and only nine years had elapsed since his death. But her husband, Jehoiada, must have been *at least* ninety years old; for he died at the age of one hundred and thirty, and he died before—apparently some time before—the death of Joash, who reigned forty years. The quite unique marriage of a princess with a priest is rendered still more surprising when we find that the priest must have been at least sixty years older than his bride, in an epoch and in a country where the average length of life in cities very rarely exceeded sixty.

4. For six years Joash was brought up under the shadow of the Temple. When he reached the age of seven, at which age a Jewish child was much older and more precocious than with us, the priest thought that the time was ripe for striking a blow in favour of his royal ward.

There is a marked difference between the two descriptions of the revolution.

(i.) The historian tells us (2 Kings xi. 4) that Jehoiada summoned "*the rulers over the hundreds of the Carians and runners,*" showed them the little king, and ordered them on the Sabbath (which is here first mentioned in the histories) to guard the Palace with one-third, and the Temple with two-thirds of their number, and to kill any one who came within their ranks. They were all in the Temple court, and when Athaliah entered it, they compelled her to leave

it, between two ranks of armed men, till she was outside the precincts, and then they murdered her.

(ii.) Such a narrative would no doubt seem shocking to the priestly bias and Levitic scruples of the Chronicler, who found it lying before him in the Book of Kings, written a full century or more earlier. He would be displeased (1) by the total silence as to any mention of either priest or Levite in so important a revolution, with the single exception of Jehoiada; and still more (2) by the undisputed presence of foreign mercenaries and palace servants in the actual court of the Temple. His account of the matter gives an entirely different complexion to the whole affair.

According to him, Jehoiada takes five captains of hundreds into his counsel, sends them to gather the Levites and the heads of the fathers out of all the cities of Judah, and they made a covenant with the king in the Temple. Then he orders a third part, not of *the Carians and runners*, but of *the priests and Levites*, to keep the Temple gates; a third part to guard the palace; and a third to stand at the gate of the foundation. *None are to enter the house but the priests and the ministering Levites, "for they are holy."* They are to guard the king while the people keep watch without. Not one word is said about the Carians and runners.

It is perfectly easy, with a little ingenuity, so to manipulate these two narratives, by theories of omission and supplement, as to make them seem equally accurate. But when the discrepancies are so obvious, and when they so exactly coincide with the known object and bias of the Chronicler, it is not easy for one who only seeks the truth, and does not wish it to be obscured by *a priori* dogmatics, to feel any honest contentment with the flexible hypotheses of harmonists between the *Sic* and the *Non*.

5. The Temple courts rarely witnessed a scene more striking than the tumultuary coronation of the little king. De-

testing the hard and manlike spirit of the foreign idolatress, the people had submitted to her tyranny because they did not know that there was still left an heir of David's line. Now, for the first time, they had been suddenly informed that there existed in the Temple solitudes a boy of seven, who was their lawful hereditary king. They were gathered together on some crowded festival, and when the child's life was protected by the lines of guards which formed a sort of triangular barrier in the inner court from the Temple porch to the altar, the priest led the little Joash by the hand, placed him on a platform in full sight of the assembled multitude, and formally crowned him king of Judah. It was the following tumult of acclamation, the shouts of "Long live the king," the hoarse bray of the *shopharoth*, the softer sound of the silver trumpets, and the clash of arms, which roused Athaliah to come hastily into the Temple, and to meet her doom.

6. The actual coronation is described in both records in these words: "He brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him *and the testimony*, and they made him king, and *anointed him*."

Except Solomon, he seems to have been the only king of Judah, as Jehu was the only king of Israel, who was specially anointed. The unction of a progenitor was supposed to transmit its sanctity to his descendants, and it was deemed unnecessary to anoint a king except in the case of revolution or of disputed succession. The only point which the Chronicler adds is that "Jehoiada *and his sons* anointed him."

The unique feature in the narrative lies in his words "put upon him the crown *and the testimony*." There is no authority in the Hebrew for the words interpolated in the A. V., "and *gave him* the testimony." Whatever, therefore, "the testimony" was, it was "put upon" the king.

What was "the testimony"?

From the use of the word in Exodus xxv. 16, Psalm lxxviii. 5, Isaiah viii. 16, 20, it is usually understood to be a part of the law, namely, that most ancient nucleus of the Mosaic Law—Exodus xx.-xxiii.—which was specially known as "the Book of the Covenant" (Exod. xxiv. 7). Hence the marginal reference to the "putting the testimony upon the king" (2 Chron. xxiii. 11) is to Deuteronomy xvii. 18. In that passage each new king is bidden to write out "a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites." What is there meant by "this law," unless it be the nucleus of Deuteronomy itself (cf. Deut. xxxi. 9, 26, 2 Kings xxii. 8), is not specified; and it is tolerably certain that not a single king of Israel or Judah kept this rule, since, beyond all question, the Book of Deuteronomy, whether it existed or not, was not known till the reign of Josiah. But in any case the marginal reference throws no light whatever on the phrase which it is supposed to elucidate. It would have been quite natural that a roll of the most ancient and essential part of Exodus should have been put *into the king's hand*, though we do not know that this was ever done; and if this roll *was kept inside the ark itself* (Exod. xvi. 34, xxv. 16, 21), even the high priest could not have got at it without reversing every possible Levitic rule. In any case the placing of a roll in the child's hands is obviously wholly different from "putting the testimony *upon* him."

Even the Rabbis felt the difficulty. They said that besides the old heavy crown of Ammon which Joab had taken in the city of waters, and with which he had crowned David, there was a miraculous jewel, so heavy that no one could bear its weight except a genuine son of David's line;¹ that this was therefore used as a test in cases of doubtful succes-

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 30. Compare *Avodah Zara*, p. 441. *Targum on Chronicles*. *Targ. Jon.*, Lagarde, p. xxiv. Klostermann, p. 431.

sion; that it was called "the testimony," and that Jehoiada used it on this occasion to show that he was not palming upon the nation a supposititious child.¹

But since "the testimony" was something which was "put on" the young king with the crown, it seems to me that Klostermann may not be wrong in the conjecture that for "testimony" עֵדוּת we should read "bracelets," זַעְדוּת a word which in Hebrew closely resembles it. It is true that the royal bracelet is only mentioned in the case of King Saul (2 Sam. i. 10); but there is nothing remarkable in this, since we only read of the crown in 2 Samuel xii. 30, and we know from the Assyrian and Egyptian sculptures that bracelets were an ordinary part of the royal apparel.

7. Passing over the Levitic measures said to have been taken by Jehoiada in 2 Chronicles xxiii. 18, 19, respecting which the historian is silent, we notice a curious omission. The Chronicler copies the statement that "Joash did right *all the days of Jehoiada the priest*," yet he *omits* the statement that "the high places were not taken away, but that the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places."

Now that he had a *motive* in the omission is obvious. It was his unwillingness to tolerate the thought that not only Joash, for whom he has no liking, but that even Jehoiada—who as a priest-regent is his hero, and almost the first of his order who emerges into any eminence in the long history of the kings—did not suppress the high places. If it was a crime, or at any rate a serious drawback to the unblemished reputation of kings that "the high places were not taken away," how much more heinous in this respect must have been the guilt of a chief priest, who for many years had a

¹ Even Prof. F. W. Newman ventured to suggest that Joash was really a son of Jehoiada and Jehoshebeath! The age of Jehoiada alone would suffice to disprove the conjecture.

predominant influence, and during the earlier part of the minority of Joash even wielded the royal power !

This is entirely in accordance with the general method of the Chronicler in speaking of the high places.

In the reign of Josiah the Book of Deuteronomy, or rather a part of it, was discovered in the temple by the priest Hilkiah, and when it became known, the rule on which it insists with so much earnestness, that Jehovah was only to be worshipped at one central shrine, became an ingrained conviction in the minds of the people.

Two considerations make it obvious that for many previous centuries the use of the high places was regarded as natural, as necessary, as innocent, even as laudable. (i.) They had been freely used by the saintliest of the preceding prophets, judges, and patriarchs. (ii.) There were many occasions on which the religious instincts of the people would lead them to special acts of worship in sacred places, when it was impossible for them to make a long and weary journey to Jerusalem. Palestine abounded in places sanctified by venerable associations, such as Dan, Kadesh, Shechem, Shiloh, Gilgal, Bethel, Beersheba, Hebron ; and in these places, and many others, little chapelries had been established, often under trees and on heights, some of which may have been, or have become, idolatrous, but many of which were set apart for the worship of Jehovah. Not even the most pious of the earlier kings had felt the least objection to them. "Asa's heart was *perfect* with the Lord all his days" ; nevertheless "the high places were not removed (1 Kings xv. 14). Jehoshaphat was a king of supreme and admirable piety ; "nevertheless the high places were not removed" (1 Kings xxii. 43). And when Hezekiah *did* remove the high places, so deep was the wound inflicted on the religious convictions of the people that the Rabshakeh was able to appeal to them whether this was not an act of irreligion which had provoked the wrath

of Jehovah. The Chronicler could not bear the notion that kings so perfect should have felt no scruple against high places, and therefore, with the narrative of the Kings before him, he directly contradicts it. He says that Asa "took away the high places" (2 Chron. xvii. 4), and even "took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places" (v. 5); and the fact that he specifies at the same time the removal of *matsseboth* (pillars), *asherim* (images of the nature-goddess, Asherah), and the images of the sun, furnishes no proof of the gloss that the historian was only thinking of *bamoth* for the worship of Jehovah, and the Chronicler of idolatrous *bamoth*. He also says of Jehoshaphat, "that he took away the high places" (2 Chron. xvii. 6). It is therefore in accordance with his bias that he suppresses the fact of the active continuance of *bamoth*, and the sacrifices therein, even when a priest—and a priest whom he describes as particularly scrupulous about the Levitic ceremonies in the Temple—was all-but on the throne. This, nevertheless, was the fact, and it shows how little the previous pious kings can have regarded themselves as culpable for not abolishing the *bamoth*, which, until the reign of Josiah, seem to have been regarded as a help, not as a hindrance, to sincere religion.

8. The king, who was a child of the Temple, was naturally anxious about the Temple, and it was to him, not to the priest-regent, that the pious thought occurred of restoring the much desecrated House of God.

Here are the two accounts of what occurred. (i.) According to the historian, Joash told the priest to receive all the normal contributions which came to the Temple, both statutory and voluntary, and whatever they could collect from their acquaintance, and to repair the breaches of the House of the Lord. No less than twenty-three years passed, and money had been continuously collected—though in ever decreasing sums, owing to the general supineness and lack

of confidence in the priestly administration—and absolutely nothing had been done. Joash must have been something of a *fainéant*, for the annals of the greater part of his reign are a blank. As he had started the fund for the repair of the Temple, he could not have let so many years elapse without seeing the work carried out if he had been a man of any energy. Certainly it was much more the business of the hoary Regent and of the other priests than it was his; but we see from the example of former kings how easily he could have seen that his commands were obeyed. However, in the twenty-third year of his reign he woke up from the somnolence of his sacerdotal subjection to find that nothing had been done. Summoning the hierarchy, he asked them why they were always collecting money, and yet doing nothing? He did not call them to account as defaulters for what they had received in the past, but took the whole matter out of their hands. They were to receive no more money, and have no more responsibility for the repairs. So Jehoiada took a chest, bored a hole in the lid, and placed it *beside the altar*. All the money which was contributed was put into this chest. When it was full, the High Priest and the king's chancellor opened it, counted it, and paid it direct to the architects and workmen.

(ii.) The *nuances* of the other account are singularly managed. It was indeed impossible for the Chronicler so to tell the story that the priests could escape all blame; on the face of it they had been grossly apathetic and remiss. He says that Joash ordered the priests and Levites to collect money out of all Judah, to go on repairing year by year, and to hasten the matter; and he admits that "*the Levites hastened it not.*" He omits the priests. In point of fact, there seems to have been no distinction between the two till more than two centuries later; but the Chronicler always assumes that the distinction existed. Then the king summons Jehoiada and asks him why he has not required of *the*

Levites "the collection of Moses and of the congregation," since the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had "broken up the House of God" and given its treasures to the temple of Baal. Then *the king* orders a chest to be made, which is placed, not "*beside the altar*," but *at the entrance gate* of the Temple. The king proclaims a collection; confidence is restored; money flows in; and the work is done. The historian says that from this contribution no vessels of gold or silver were made. The Chronicler says that some was left over, and out of the surplus were made vessels of gold and silver.

The neglect, if not the rapacity, of Jehoiada and the priests is obvious even in the mild story of the Chronicler. It has never been sufficiently noticed how very bad a record the priests—between whom and the Levites there is no apparent difference before the days of Ezekiel—bear throughout the long centuries of Jewish history. They scarcely ever merge into prominence at all, and when they do their line of action is rarely to their credit.

9. At this point the brief annals of the Book of Kings tell us nothing more about Joash until the story of the Syrian inroad, and of the king's death. But in the Chronicler follows a dark and startling record.

He first narrates the death of his hero Jehoiada, who, he says, died at the age of one hundred and thirty, and, by a unique honour, was buried in the "city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both towards God and towards his house."

(i.) We have already pointed out one difficulty about Jehoiada's age. If he lived till one hundred and thirty, even if we suppose that he did not die till very near the close of the 'forty years' reign of Joash, he would have been ninety years old when he headed the revolution against Athaliah. Yet if Joash only survived him by a few years, his asserted apostacy becomes more inconceivable. Cer-

tainly Jehoiada was alive in the twenty-third year of the reign of Joash, and apparently some years after. Supposing that he lived through even thirty years of the reign of Joash, he must then have been one hundred years old when he placed Joash on the throne. There must surely be some mistake in the number one hundred and thirty in 2 Chronicles xxx. 15. Such a length of years at this period of history is entirely unprecedented. It is, for instance, doubtful whether a single king of Judah, after David, attained the age of seventy years. Most of them died much earlier, and not a few did not attain the age of fifty.

(ii.) Again, the eulogy bestowed on Jehoiada is surprising. One would have thought that the hated king had done much more for the House of God than the highly lauded priest. It was the king, not the priest, who had suggested the restoring of the Temple from the ruinous condition into which it had fallen. It was the king, not the priest, who, after twenty-three years had elapsed, rescued the work from the slothful hands of its official guardians, and saw it carried to a successful issue. On the face of both records Jehoiada had been disastrously indifferent to a duty so sacred and so essential. We know nothing more of him from the historian, but a very unfavourable light is thrown on his memory if, as seems probable, he is the Jehoiada referred to in Jeremiah xxix. 26. There Shemaiah the Nehelamite appeals by letter to all the priests to show themselves worthy of their position by carrying out the decree of "Jehoiada the priest," to the effect that "every man that is mad and maketh himself a prophet should be put in the stocks and the collar." There is always an almost unbroken antagonism between priests and prophets. To Shemaiah and the priests, Jeremiah was a mere excited false prophet; and to the priests of Jerusalem, six centuries later, John the Baptist had a devil, and the Lord of Glory was Beelzebub. The autocratic decree of Jehoiada was little to his credit.

It was a fatal weapon of religious persecution to quench the Spirit in God's prophets. If the Jehoiada who laid down this rule was the priest-regent, he must rank as the first of the Inquisitors.

10. Next we are told by the Chronicler that no sooner was Jehoiada dead than "the princes of Judah came and made obeisance to Joash," and at a breath he abandoned every tradition of his life, lost all care for the Temple of Jehovah, in which he had been nurtured, and which had furnished the main interest of his uneventful reign, and at once began to serve the *asherim* and idols. God sent prophets, who rebuked Judah and Jerusalem in vain. Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah, the son and successor of Jehoiada, who "stood above the people" and denounced, that as they had forsaken God, God had also forsaken them, so that they could not prosper. Then, *at the commandment of the king*, the people stoned Zechariah to death in the Temple court, nay, according to 2 Chronicles xxiv. 25, Joash not only murdered Zechariah, but other "sons" of Jehoiada. It is a tale of black ingratitude; but if it be true, how are we to account for the complete silence of the earlier and better historian? Is it not just possible that Joash may be less guilty than the narrative would imply? May not the circumstances narrated have arisen from some internecine struggle between a royal party and a priestly party, and from some effort to throw off the yoke of priestly dominance, to which the king had for so many years been entirely subjected?

Talmudic legends represent Zechariah as a man of so insatiably revengeful a character that even two centuries later, when Nebuchadrezzar took Jerusalem, his blood, crying fiercely from the ground, could not be appeased by a perfect *χιλιομβή* of victims—940,000, according to the monstrous exaggeration of the Talmud (*Gittin*, p. 57, and *Sanhedrin*, p. 962)—young and old and of every rank,

slaughtered by the Babylonians over the place of his martyrdom. The only basis for the legend is the priest's dying exclamation, "The Lord look upon it, and require it."

11. Only two events remain.

(i.) Hazael of Damascus, says the historian, made a raid against Gath, took it, and "set his face to go up to Jerusalem." Joash at once collected all the treasures of the often-despoiled temple, and of the often-despoiled palace, and sent them to Hazael, who thereupon went away from Jerusalem.

(ii.) In the Levitic Chronicler everything is told in a way which enhances the disgrace and misery of the king who had caused such deep offence to priests. He says that "at the end of the year the host of Syria came to Jerusalem and destroyed all the princes of the people" (who had tempted Joash to apostasy), "and sent all *their* spoil" (not a word of the Temple spoil) to Hazael. For Hazael had only sent "a small company," and Jehovah "delivered a very great host into their hand."

12. Then comes the end.

(i.) The historian only says that Jozachar, the son of Shimeah, and Jehozabad, the son of Shomer, conspired against Joash and slew him in Beth-Millo which goeth down to Silla.

(ii.) The Chronicler says that the Syrians "left Joash in great pain" or "diseases,"—perhaps the allusion is to wounds received in the disgraceful rout,—and that "his own servants conspired against him *for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest*, and slew him on his bed, and he died"; and that "great burdens," *i.e.*, woeful and numerous oracles had been uttered against him.

Apparently, then, Joash perished in a conspiracy which originated in the revenge of the priestly party (Jos., *Antt.*, ix. 8, § 4). But there is something significant about the

names of the two murderers in the Book of Kings—“Jozachar, the son of Shimeah, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer.” They mean “the Lord hath endowed,” “the son of remembrance,” and “the Lord hath bestowed,” the “son of hearing.” This may, of course, be accidental, but it certainly recalls in a curious manner the last words attributed to Zechariah, “the Lord *look upon it and require it.*” Is it permissible to conjecture that in this, as in other instances, tradition has been influenced by names? In the Chronicler there has been some confusion: he tells us that ben-Shimeah and ben-Shimrith are not (as is almost invariably the case) *patronymics* but *metronymics*, and that Shimeah was an Ammonitess, and Shimrith a Moabitess; but he calls the two murderers *Zabad* and Jehozabad.

13. Even as to the *burial* of Joash there is a difference in the two accounts. The historian says (2 Kings xii. 21) that they “buried Joash *with his fathers* in the city of David”; the Chronicler says, “They buried him in the city of David, but they *buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings.*”

No honest and truth-loving reader can study side by side the Books of Kings and Chronicles without seeing that the differences between them are very marked. In some records there are discrepancies which are not indeed beyond the possibility of removal, by a ramification of ingenious hypotheses, but as to which the hypotheses must be largely conjectural. The conception which we should derive of various kings and of many incidents in their reigns from the *combined* narratives is very far from identical with that which we should have gained from either narrative singly. We observe further that throughout the pages of the Chronicler the *numbers* are marked by that disease of exaggeration which affects all the later literature of the Jews; that the compiler allows himself (as was common in ancient records) a considerable amount of license in reporting speeches; and that, from beginning to end,

the record shows a priestly and Levitic bias. Now the Chronicles are an accepted part of canonical Scripture, and have been rightly received as such. They contain much most valuable information; they abound in passages full of religious edification; they supplement our knowledge in important particulars. On the other hand, when there is any direct collision between the records, we must remember that the Chronicles are the latest book of Scripture, bearing marks of the hand of the editor down even to the days of Alexander the Great; that they did not assume their present form till a full century later than the Kings; that as the rest of Scripture, revealed in human language to men for men, is not exempt from human conditions, so this book reflects the characteristics of the epoch in which it arose. Now that epoch was marked by the prevalence of the Levitic scrupulosity, which blossomed into perfect Pharisaism; and it made large use of those forms of edifying parable which were known as *Haggadoth*. How far some of the narratives of the Books of Chronicles may—with no more intention to mislead than the books of Job, of Jonah, or of Esther, for instance—have admitted the *haggadistic* element for the innocent and laudable purpose of moral instruction, is a question which cannot perhaps be decided at present. For these accounts of Joash, the Chronicler expressly refers us to “the *Midrash* of the Book of the Kings.” Now the *Midrash* did not pretend to be mere plain history. It was history touched with moral amplification.¹ It was in later times described as consisting of PRDS (Paradise), *i.e.* *Peshat* (literal sense);

¹ For further explanation, see the author's Bampton Lectures (*History of Interpretation*), pp. 95-97. Ginsburg, s.v. *Midrashim*, in Kitto's Cyclopædia, etc. The Jewish *Midrash* is avowedly a sort of “Moralising Romance,” and the Chronicler refers for his authorities to the “*Midrash* of Iddo” (R.V. “Commentary,” A.V. “Story,” 2 Chron. xiii. 22), and to “the *Midrash* of the Book of Kings” (*id.*, xxiv. 27). See W. Robertson Smith's *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 148.

Remes (hint or amplification); *Deruch*, or *homiletic application*; *Sød* (mystery, or *Kabbalah*). This, at any rate, is obvious, that we must not too harshly condemn and exalt the kings of Judah on grounds respecting which the earlier and more accurate authority is silent, and of which we find traces in the Books of Chronicles alone.

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NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

II. THE TEACHING OF ST. PAUL.

IN this paper I shall endeavour to reproduce St. Paul's conception of the Second Coming of Christ; and to determine the place and comparative importance of this topic in his conception of the Gospel as a whole. In so doing, I shall take his Epistles in chronological order. And with these I shall compare a single reference to the same subject in an address recorded in the Book of Acts.

In 1 Thessalonians i. 10, St. Paul describes his readers' conversion as a turning "from the idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven." This implies that during the few weeks in which he had founded the church at Thessalonica he had taught his young converts that Christ, "raised from the dead," would return from heaven to earth; and implies also that an expectation of His return was a conspicuous element of the new life and hope which they had received.

In chapter ii. 19 we read, "what is our hope or joy or crown of our exultation? Are not even ye before our Lord Jesus at His coming?" Similarly in chapter iii. 13: "establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." In chapter iv. 13-18, St. Paul seeks to remove