

HEZEKIAH'S REFORM

THE importance which the Chronicler attached to the reform which Hezekiah effected after the apostasy under Ahaz appears from the extent of space he devoted to it in his history. No less than three chapters, II. 29-31, are occupied with the subject; and these have no parallel in Kings, but are peculiar to his account. Yet this fact, significant though it is, does not exhaust the evidence for C's interest in the matter. That can only be fully measured, when the two accounts of the reign are compared in some detail. For the later historian has practically recast the work of his predecessor with the result that he has made the reform dominate the reign, and has relegated the defeat of Sennacherib and the deliverance of Jerusalem into a relatively inferior position. The study of his method in this particular case throws light on the aims which guided him in all his work, and illustrates afresh the extent to which he was prepared to modify the facts of history in order to adapt them to his purpose.

K, then, began his story of the reign with high praise of Hezekiah's conduct in matters of religion; but he couched this in somewhat general terms, except that he singled out for special approbation the royal act in removing from the temple the serpent which Moses had made. He added that the king showed a peculiar trust in the God of Israel, and that the Lord was with him, giving him success in his military enterprises. The historian was clearly of opinion that the rebellion against Assyria and a war against the Philistines were inspired by the king's faith in the divine help and were successful, because that faith met its reward, II Kings 18: 2-8. He then related very briefly the campaign of Shalmaneser, which resulted in the ruin of Samaria and the captivity of northern Israel. These events he dated

during the fourth to the sixth years of the reign of the Judean king. The rest of his account is occupied with the story of the campaign of Sennacherib, which he dated in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, and which was followed by the embassy from Babylon with its attendant miracle.

On the other hand, C entered at great detail into the measures of reform which were carried out by the king. How necessary these were he suggested by insisting, much more than K had done, on the gravity of the defection under Ahaz. According to him that king had shut up the temple, had destroyed the sacrificial vessels, and had built altars to heathen gods in the streets of the capital. The national religion had practically been in abeyance during the reign. Accordingly, as the need for reform was greater, its scope was much wider than anything which appeared in K. For, while Hezekiah devoted special attention to the purification of the temple, the community under his influence removed the foreign altars which defiled Jerusalem, and even went so far as to purge the whole land of every heathen emblem. C, however, supplied no dates for the successive stages of this reform, except that he stated, as a proof of the pious zeal of the young king, that Hezekiah began it in the first month of the first year of his reign. When he came to describe its second stage, the celebration of passover at the temple, he left his readers to infer that it must have taken place after the fall of Samaria, since the king took steps to secure the presence of Israelites at the rite; but the exact date did not interest the historian. In the same way, when he related the campaign of Sennacherib, he ignored the date which K had supplied. What to him was of much greater significance was that it took place 'after these things and after this faithfulness', 32: 1. He underlined the religious lesson which K had only suggested; the marvellous deliverance of Judah was the direct outcome of its king's faithfulness in restoring his kingdom to allegiance and dependence on its God. Thus, in contrast with K, who made the defeat of Assyria the leading feature of the reign, C made the

rededication of the temple and the passover celebration dominate everything else.

The same interest appears in his story of the campaign. His account can be paralleled with a series of extracts from his predecessor,¹ but the whole is given a new aspect through a change of emphasis. Since the marvellous deliverance was directly due to Hezekiah's piety, the king must have relied absolutely on the help of God. Therefore C omitted from the message of the Assyrian king any reference to Judah's hope of aid from Egypt, K. 18: 21, 24. Where K wrote about the fear which drove the Judean king to prayer, C made him have recourse to God in faith, 32: 6-8. In the same way he ignored the request of the royal officers that the Rabshakeh should not speak to the Jewish population in their own language: there was no panic in the capital, because king and people were relying on the divine help. Again, because the marvellous and complete character of the divine deliverance was heightened, the disastrous condition to which Sennacherib reduced the kingdom was minimized. There is no mention of the fact that the provincial towns were captured and that many of their inhabitants were carried into captivity. Instead of this, it is stated that the invader encamped against these towns and intended to break them up, v. 1. The reader does not receive the impression, so vividly conveyed in K, that Jerusalem was the one remaining centre of resistance and that Hezekiah was shut up in his capital like a bird in a cage. The letter of the Assyrian king was reported, but nothing was said about the humiliating demands which it contained, or about the extent to which Hezekiah complied with these demands. The letter in C's report contained merely a series of insults directed against the God of Israel and against Hezekiah, His servant. As such, it formed another reason for Sennacherib's complete and ignominious overthrow.

In the account of Hezekiah's sickness, of the resultant miracle and of the embassy from Babylonia, it is equally

¹ Cf. II Kings 18: 13, 17, 19, 22, 29-35; 19: 1 f., 35-37; 20: 1.

significant to notice that C, without entirely omitting these events, slurred them over. Thus at v. 24b he reduced K. 20: 1b-11 to a curt sentence: Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, and He spake unto him and gave him a sign. At v. 25 he dealt in the same way with K. 20: 12-19, and was content to say that the king did not show due gratitude for the sign which was granted in answer to his prayer. There, however, he omitted all reference to the embassy from Babylonia; and, when he did refer to that embassy in v. 31, he wrote as though its only purpose had been to inquire into the miracle. Yet he practically acknowledged that another purpose had been behind it, since he went on to say that, in connexion with it, God left Hezekiah to his own devices in order to know what was in his heart. But he softened the condemnation which was implicit in this remark, since he continued that Hezekiah and Jerusalem repented of their conduct, and that, because of this repentance, the divine wrath did not fall upon the city during the king's lifetime.

The Chronicler was dominated throughout by more than a desire to present Hezekiah as the faithful successor of David who restored the religion of his nation after the lapse under Ahaz, and who in his work of reform gave special attention to the temple and its cult. He was also presenting the conception of the true policy of a wise and devout king of the little state, which has already appeared in the study of his attitude to prophecy. Such a king must rely absolutely on the power of religion to give character to a nation, and even to maintain its independence. Hezekiah's faith had been triumphantly vindicated at the beginning of his reign in the collapse of Sennacherib, and, when he failed to maintain it at a later date, his repentant return to the true attitude prevented Judah from following Samaria into ruin. That method of writing history has its undoubted drawbacks, but it has also a perennial fascination for the minds of men. We have our modern school of historians who are able to trace all the course of man's wild and

gallant efforts through the centuries to its simple source in economic necessity. But the preoccupation with which such historians start has always led them to select from the tangled web of the past the facts which support their judgement and to pass lightly over the rest. It has been possible to trace the Chronicler, as he used his material to present his thesis, or to teach his lesson. The pet thesis of a modern historian and the moral passion of a pious historian are not unlike each other in their sources and in their methods.

The chapters which describe Hezekiah's reform have naturally received a great deal of attention. Earlier scholars, such as Kittel, were peculiarly interested in the question as to the amount of confidence which could be placed in the document as a historical record of events. They discussed very fully the relation between the reform under Josiah and that assigned to Hezekiah from this point of view. It may be said that the older verdict inclined strongly to the opinion that the record of the earlier reform-movement must be received with extreme scepticism, and that, while there was a recoil during Hezekiah's reign against the laxity which prevailed under Ahaz, the account in Chronicles has been so coloured by elements taken from the greater movement in Josiah's reign, as to be practically of little historical value. The line of inquiry which is followed in this study does not permit any detailed reference to the purely historical debate. But it may be legitimate to direct attention here to one aspect of the subject. The somewhat undue absorption in the historical questions which gather round these chapters has had a certain mischievous result in two directions. On the one hand, it has led many scholars to emphasize to a quite undue extent the resemblances between the accounts of the two reforms. It was an inevitable outcome of their belief that the earlier movement was largely a reproduction of the later that they set in high relief every correspondence between the two, with the result that the equally significant differences dropped into the background. Yet, however we are to explain these differences, they are there, and they are

of sufficient gravity to constitute a real factor in a perplexing question. From the point of view of one who is chiefly interested in the Chronicler's attitude they are even of peculiar importance. Another result of this line of approach to the subject has been that students have unconsciously placed undue confidence in the historical accuracy of the story of Josiah's reform. It has become usual to approach the earlier three chapters in Chronicles with hesitation over every detail, and to accept the later record with entire confidence. Yet, to go no further into detail, the close resemblance between certain elements of that record in Kings and Chronicles leaves on a reader the suspicion that the two accounts have been brought into harmony, and that the story of Josiah's reform has received a revision.

The three chapters, then, since they derived originally from C and are peculiar to him, present his view of the situation; and, whatever sources of information he employed, are adapted to show what in his judgement was the conduct which befitted a reforming king. The account proceeded along a series of well-marked stages. It began with the purification of the temple, which was carried out with scrupulous care, 29: 3-19. This was followed by a *hanukkah*, the rededication of the purified sanctuary, vv. 20-30, and this in turn by the resumption of the sacrificial worship on the part of the people, vv. 31-6. The next stage was the celebration of passover at the temple, when for the first time that rite was transferred from the homes of the people to the sanctuary at Jerusalem. The feature in it, on which C laid most stress, was the fact that Hezekiah showed himself anxious to secure the presence of representatives from northern Israel, 30: 1-20. Passover was followed by the festival of unleavened bread, in which also men from Israel took part. On this occasion the festival was continued for fourteen days, vv. 21-7. Thereafter the king took steps to purify the land of Israel from every heathen emblem, 31: 1. Finally, Hezekiah appointed the courses of the temple-clergy, and made a series of regulations to provide for their

support. He also arranged for rooms about the temple in which the offerings were to be stored, and for officials to supervise these stores and to distribute their contents, chap. 31: 2-21. It will be necessary to examine in some detail each of the stages in this reform.

In his account of the purification of the temple, C made Hezekiah gather the priests and levites into a plaza before the sanctuary in order to receive their instructions, 29: 4. The king, however, when he bade the men sanctify themselves for the duty, only addressed the levites, v. 5; and it was representatives of those clergy, chosen from certain levitical tribes, who carried out the task, vv. 12 ff., and, who, after it was completed, reported the fact to their master, vv. 18 f. The initiative here was taken by the king without consultation with the priests, as it was when David gave directions about the transference of the ark, I. 15: 11, and when he issued his final orders about the future temple, I. 23: 2-6a and 25: 1.

Büchler drew attention to the anomalous feature here that, while both priests and levites were summoned to receive their instructions, only the levites were addressed on the subject of the purification. He was of opinion that in the original version the gathering was confined to the priests, and that the levites were added later.¹ In order to explain why, though Hezekiah only convened the priests, he addressed them as levites, he made the suggestion that in v. 5 levites means both priests and levites. In support of this suggestion, he could appeal to only one passage in II. 30: 27, where it is stated that 'the priests the levites arose and blessed the people'. But this verse offers two readings: M.T. and LXX^B, which were followed by the R.V., read 'the levitical priests', some Hebrew MSS. and LXX^A have 'the priests and the levites'. Neither reading offers any support to Büchler's view that the priests were

¹ *Z.A.W.*, 1899, pp. 109 ff. In his view the purpose of the addition was to give the levites a higher status through insistence on their services in connexion with the musical side of the cult.

in v. 26. As soon as this repetition of the sacrificial acts is recognized, other differences between vv. 20-4 and vv. 25-30 become apparent. In the former passage the sacrifices were entirely in the hands of the priests, the sons of Aaron, with no mention of any participation on the part of the levites: in the later passage the priests do not appear at all. Again, in the earlier passage, emphasis is laid on the atoning character of the sacrifices; seven he-goats were set apart for this purpose by the imposition of the hands of king and congregation, and the king commanded that both burnt-offering and sin-offering should be made for all Israel. In the later passage the sacrifice consisted of burnt-offerings without mention of any sin-offerings.

It is of interest to compare the account here with the parallel description of two similar services. The first is the service of dedication after Solomon had completed the temple in II. 5: 2-14, 7: 1 ff. There also the sacrifices were duplicated:¹ in the one case they were offered before the ark, and there is no mention of any priests having taken part in the ritual, in the other they were offered by the priests on the altar and were accepted by the descent of the divine fire. In neither case was there any mention of sin-offerings. The other occasion was that of the dedication of the second temple, Ezra 6: 16-18. There the officiants were the priests with their attendant levites, and the sacrifices included twelve he-goats for a sin-offering for all Israel. Thereafter the priests were set in their divisions and the levites in their courses for the service of God, as it is written in the book of Moses. The duplication here and at Solomon's dedication is enough to prove the presence of two hands. Here, as at II. 5: 2 ff, the Chronicler in vv. 25-30 made the sacrifices consist of burnt-offerings, and did not specify the officiants at the altar. Instead he dwelt on the fact that Hezekiah began the ritual by the appointment of levitical singers according to the commandment of David and certain prophets. These were the men whom, according to C in

¹ Cf. the analysis at pp. 37 ff.

I. 25: 1-6, David set apart to prophesy with a musical accompaniment at the temple-cult, so that the ritual included a liturgy which made its purpose and meaning clear. The reviser, who added vv. 21-4, had a double end to serve. He put the priests into their rightful place as conducting the sacrifices: but he also made the dedication of the temple conform to the ritual of the men of the Return and emphasized the element of atonement in it.¹

When the sanctuary and altar had been reconsecrated, the ordinary sacrificial worship was resumed at the temple, vv. 31-6. In his account of the purification and dedication, C had dwelt on the part taken by the levites and had not confined their functions to the choral service. It is natural, therefore, to find that, when the resumption of the customary sacrifices was described, the levites were said to have been more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests v. 34. The expression, as Kittel recognized, casts a certain slur on the priests. Yet it is not easy to find any justification for that slur in the text as it stands at present, since in it the

¹ There is a minor point here, which may deserve at least a note. When he dealt with v. 22, Kittel appears to have believed that the priests slew the victims which were destined for ordinary burnt-offerings, and contrasted the practice of lay-slaughter in Lev. 1: 5 f., 11 as well as the fact that in Ezek. 44: 11 this duty was assigned to the levites. He, therefore, concluded that in this respect the method of sacrifice did not conform to the later law. But his statement on the subject is not quite accurate. The text, when it described the slaughter of the victims for burnt-offerings, made use of the ambiguous 'they slew', which does not necessarily imply that the priests performed the act. In connexion with the manipulation of the blood of these victims, however, it is definitely stated that this was done by the priests. Also, when the victims were the he-goats destined for the sin-offerings, the language is more precise. In v. 24, after the king and congregation had laid their hands on these goats, the priests both slew them and manipulated their blood. Hänel has devoted special attention to the passage in his 'Das Recht der Schlachtung in der chronistischen Literatur', *Z.A.W.* 1937, p. 46: but in my judgement his conclusions are vitiated by his failure to recognize that there is a duplication of the ceremony in the passage. He has attempted to treat it as a unity.

priests occupied the most important position, and showed no reluctance to appear at Hezekiah's summons or to fulfil his commands. On the other hand, when it has been recognized that the text has been revised in the interests of these priests, it becomes clear that such a slur upon them, if it was intended, was quite in keeping with the attitude of the original narrative.

After this appears the account of the measures Hezekiah undertook for a celebration of passover at the temple, 30: 1-12, which was followed by a purification of Jerusalem from all heathen emblems, v. 14, and associated with the festival of unleavened bread. Here C's account of Hezekiah's reform comes into closer relation to the story of the reform under Josiah. This is not the place to enter into a full discussion of the perplexing questions which arise on that subject, since any such discussion must cover a wider field than is germane to the present study. But it is in place to direct attention to the remarkable divergence in these two passovers, as they are described by C.

It will then be agreed that two questions in connexion with this celebration of passover, whether it took place under both kings or only under Josiah, continue to engage the attention of students. The first of these is that we have here the first *historical* mention of passover having taken place at a sanctuary, with priests in attendance, instead of the family rite described in Exod. 12: 1-14, where neither sanctuary nor priest was essential to its validity. The other involves the attempt to determine the relation of this new feature of the ritual to the book of the law which was discovered in the temple when Josiah repaired it, with all the conclusions which have been based on the reality of this relation.

Now the outstanding feature in C's account of Hezekiah's passover is that he gave no attention to either of these questions. His leading interest in the event from beginning to end was that the whole nation, Judah and Israel, took part in the ceremonial at the temple. He described the

measures which the king took in order to invite the remanent Israelites to a share in the rite. He entered into some detail as to the comparative failure which attended the efforts to unite the nation, and told how representatives of parts of Israel accepted the invitation. In order to make the presence of these men possible, Judah was prepared to postpone not only passover but the following festival of unleavened bread into the second month. Because the northern visitors were ceremonially unclean, measures were taken to guarantee their ritual purity; and, because these measures were not entirely effective, the king himself prayed for the divine forgiveness of a breach of the law in the case of some of the worshippers. It was natural, therefore, that, when he described Josiah's passover, he was content to state that the children of Israel who were present kept the passover at that time with its attendant festival, 35: 17 f. In the connexion in which he had placed the two events it was unnecessary to say more, because Hezekiah's conduct had made it clear that Israel had its place in the national celebration.

On the other hand, in his account of Josiah's passover, C entered into considerable detail as to the method in which the rite was celebrated, chap. 35. That, again, was natural, when it is recognized that the method of celebration was a novelty. When passover ceased to be a family rite, and was transferred from the home to the sanctuary, some change in its form was inevitable: and C, with his interest in everything which concerned the cult, was not likely to lose the opportunity of sketching the use which was then instituted. The later chapter has a direct bearing on the first of our questions, that of the transference of passover from the home to the sanctuary.

One final feature in C's account of the two reforms cannot be ignored here. In neither case did he associate the royal action with the book of the law which Josiah discovered in the temple. His description of Josiah's passover is isolated and contains no hint of its having been the outcome of that momentous discovery; and, obviously, nothing can prove

more clearly his sense of the independence of the two events than that he dated Hezekiah's movement long before the book was found. All who are convinced that Josiah was the first who, in the interests of centralization, transferred pass-over to the sanctuary, that Deuteronomy was the discovered book on which the reform was based, and that it had been revised in the interests of centralization, must take more seriously the evidence of this chapter in Chronicles. It makes no real difference here, though the historical value of C's story of Hezekiah's reform is seriously impugned. The fact remains that a responsible writer, whose book has found its way into the Jewish Canon, had no hesitation in dating the first tentative movement for centralization, and the change of locus for passover in the time of Hezekiah, and that, by doing this, he made it impossible to connect either movement with the discovery of the book of the law. The later his account is placed, the more difficult does it become to see the motive which impelled him to take this attitude.¹

¹ I may be forgiven for introducing here a personal explanation. Recently, in a review of one of my books, Dr. T. H. Robinson informed his readers that I did not accept the view that Josiah made the temple the sole centre for sacrificial worship; and, when the statement was challenged, added that others shared his opinion. I have never questioned that Josiah succeeded in centralizing sacrifice at Jerusalem: what I cannot accept is the generally received judgement that this movement was the outcome of the book found in the temple, and that this book was the Deuteronomic Code, which had been revised in order to adapt it as a basis for this far-reaching change in Jewish worship. It may be that I am partly guilty of having failed to make my meaning plain, and that this failure may be due to my silence about the mysterious book, its contents, and its source. The reason for this silence is the very simple one that I cannot pretend to know. One of the few facts which we do know about it is that it was submitted to a prophetess, and that she declared that no reform based on it would avail to prevent the doom which was impending over Jerusalem. It is difficult to reconcile this recorded utterance with the view that Josiah proceeded with a reform which was based on the book, and that this reform was so successful as to help Judah to recover from the destruction of the doomed city.

The Chronicler combined with his account of Hezekiah's passover a celebration of the festival of unleavened bread, in which also the northern Israelites took part, 30: 13-27. Two points deserve attention here.

The first is that there is some confusion in the text. Kittel thought that the passage again brought proof of a departure from the practice of lay-slaughter at passover. His reason was the statement in v. 15b that the priests and the levites were ashamed and sanctified themselves and brought burnt-offerings to the temple. He naturally concluded that these officials were the men who had killed the paschal victims in v. 15a. But he overlooked two facts when he drew this conclusion. On the one hand, the burnt-offerings which were brought into the temple cannot have been the paschal victims, since these were never consumed on the altar, but were eaten by the worshippers. Nor is there mention in any ritual law of such sacrifices in connexion with passover, though they were prescribed for the successive days of the festival of unleavened bread. On the other hand, when the levites are said in v. 17 to have slain the paschal victims, a special reason is given for their action. They only slew the victims for such worshippers as were not ceremonially clean, which implies that it was their condition of impurity which prevented the men from doing this for themselves.¹ It is necessary to rearrange the verses in order to bring them into order. If we read vv. 13, 14, 15b, 16 along with vv. 21 ff., we have a description of the festival of unleavened bread. The community at Jerusalem kept that feast in the second month, and used the opportunity to purge the city of all heathen emblems, as the king had purified the temple, vv. 13 f. The northern Israelites, who had come to Jerusalem for passover, took part in the following festival, v. 21. When we read in the same way vv. 12, 15a, 17-20 consecutively, it can be recognized that these in turn refer to passover. All

¹ Hänel in his reference to the passage in his article, 'Das Recht der Schlachtung', *Z.A.W.* 1937, p. 49, has also failed to notice that these burnt-offerings cannot have been the paschal victims.

Judah heartily accepted the royal proposal for transferring the rite to the temple, and they slew the victims on the fourteenth day of the second month. But, because in consequence of the novel situation many of the worshippers were ritually unclean, the levites killed the victims for these men. Some of the Israelites, however, were not in such a condition of purity as justified even their approach to the sanctuary, and for them Hezekiah offered intercessory prayer.

When we turn to the description of the festival of unleavened bread, one feature in the account is the diversity in the language used about the officiating clergy. The priests and the levites sanctified themselves and brought burnt-offerings into the temple, vv. 15 f.: the levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, v. 21: Hezekiah commended all the levites who were well skilled, v. 22: a great number of the priests sanctified themselves, v. 24: the priests and the levites united with the community in thanksgiving, v. 25: the levitical priests¹ arose and blessed the people, v. 27.

This can hardly be original, but it is easier to recognize the abnormal character of the passage than to discover a sure method of correcting it. Kittel proposed to omit the levites in v. 15 on the ground that there both priests and levites incurred censure, whereas only the priests were blamed at v. 3. This is possible, and would be more so, if one were convinced that the earlier verse implied blame on the men. Besides, if the motive of the insertion had been to avoid the appearance of making the higher clergy the only delinquents, it would have been more natural to make the insertion when the matter was first mentioned. Nor does the omission of the levites from the verse suit the following statement in v. 16, which bears the mark of a reviser. He noted that, when it was said that priests and levites brought burnt-offerings into the temple, this was capable of implying

¹ So M.T. and LXX^B: several MSS. and LXX^A add a word and read 'the priests and the levites'.

an equal status for the two classes of the clergy. Accordingly he added that everything was carried out in strict accordance with the use of Jerusalem. The king's order might be allowed for once to change the date of the festival, in spite of the hesitation of his clergy, but in the actual administration of the ritual the law of Moses prevailed in its integrity. In v. 21, again, the priests have been intruded, for not only is the order of the words, levites and priests, unexampled, but there is no other instance of a desire to credit the priests with a share in the musical part of the ordinary service. The motive which prompted the reviser may have been to take off the edge from the special commendation which Hezekiah bestowed on the levites for their share in the ceremony.

Thus C gave the levites the leading position in his description of Hezekiah's passover. So far as the priests were concerned he confined himself to the statement that they showed a certain reluctance to take any part in it. On the other hand he credited the priests with a leading position in the festival of unleavened bread; they were prominent in connexion with the burnt-offerings which formed an element in the ceremony. But he recorded the hearty commendation which the king gave the levites because of the support they had given him throughout; and he gave them an equal place with the priests in the benediction of the people with which the rite closed. The latter statement remains true, whatever reading be adopted in v. 27. Even if we read the priests and the levites the verse implies that the levites shared in a privilege which was later reserved to the priests.

When the festival was over the holy land was purged of its idolatrous emblems; the Israelites who were found in the Judean towns went out to Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all, 31: 1.

The concluding section, 31: 2-19, details the arrangements Hezekiah made in connexion with the provision for

the sacrificial worship at the temple. He distributed the officiating clergy into their courses, determined the source of the regular communal offerings, and in particular made regulations to guarantee a sufficient income for the priests and levites. The passage is very confused in its arrangement and uncertain in its terms, since it contains references to charges on the religious community the exact sense of which is far from clear. Hence any conclusions which are presented must be recognized as tentative in their character.

The opening verse states that the king divided the priests and levites into their courses, but defines the respective duties of the two bodies in an unusual way: their service was for burnt-offerings and for peace-offerings to minister and to give thanks and to praise in the gates of the camp of the Lord. Büchler proposed to omit 'and to give thanks and to praise' as a later addition.¹ The proposal seems violent, since the words appear in the versions and are natural in any reference to the functions of the levites. Indeed they may be said to be necessary here, since, if they are omitted, there is left nothing except 'to serve in the gates', which would limit the levites to acting as door-keepers. The curious expression, the gates of the camp of the Lord, appears again at I. 9: 18 ff.; but to expect light from that quarter is to look for light in a deeper darkness. One hint may come from the last clause in the passage, where the men who were over the camp of the Lord are equated with the keepers of the entry or door-keepers. In that case our verse may describe the levites as musicians and door-keepers, so that they were confined to the humble duties about the sanctuary. There is, it may be noted, no mention that Hezekiah, in making these arrangements, restored the conditions which had been introduced by David. The king also made provision that the charges for the morning and evening *tamidh* and for the major and minor festivals should be defrayed from the royal exchequer. The sacrifices mentioned here appear in full detail in Num. chaps. 28 f., and

¹ Kittel entered the reading in *B.H.*, but added a query.

the writer probably referred to that table of offerings when he wrote about the law of the Lord.

The next section, vv. 4-16, is devoted to Hezekiah's measures for the provision of adequate resources for the temple clergy, and is extremely confused in its terms. It closes, however, with three verses, 17-19, which offer a summary of those provisions and which ought to be marked as such by being separated from what precedes them. The verses open with **וְאֵלֵינוּ**, which the R.V. understood to be the sign of accusative. It has therefore made vv. 16 and 17 continuous. But the noun which follows **וְאֵלֵינוּ** is not dependent on or governed by any preceding verb. The word is an instance of the late usage which emphasized a new subject by prefixing **וְאֵלֵינוּ**; and might be translated: as regards, or so far as concerns their register.¹ The verse begins a summing-up and states that the register of the priests for their duties was by genealogy, while the duties of the levites began from the age of 20 years. The purpose of this register is given in v. 18: it was to guarantee that the wives and children of the officiating priests had a sufficient provision. Verse 19 continued the same subject by saying that men were appointed to see that the families of the priests who were not serving on the rota were duly supplied, and to make provision for the levites. The verses are thus closely connected and offer a summary of the arrangements made to meet the needs of the temple-clergy. Three things are noteworthy in their terms. They ignored entirely the earlier appointment of a commission of levites and of Korah and his associates, though these were in charge of a similar task. They further dealt in cursory fashion with the needs of the levites, as compared with those of the priests. They are also later than the work of the Chronicler, since they

¹ Kittel reached the same conclusion by reading **וְאֵלֵינוּ**, in which reading he followed the LXX. It is more probable that the translators made the change in the text, because a literal translation would not have made the sense clear to their Greek readers. For the late usage of **וְאֵלֵינוּ** cf. *B.D.B.* **וְאֵלֵינוּ** 3.

made the levites enter on office at 20 years of age.¹ I suggest that they may be combined with vv. 2 f., where again we find a reference, not to arrangements made by David, but to the later law, and that they present a summary of Hezekiah's dealings with the cult and its ministers. The king distributed the priests and levites in their courses, assigning to each class its separate tasks. He made provision for the cost of the communal sacrifices, and he made arrangements for the maintenance of the temple-clergy. What remains was earlier material.

According to that earlier material, vv. 4-16, Hezekiah ordered the people to give the portion of the priests and levites in order that they might devote themselves to the law of the Lord.² The king did not lay down a new regulation on the subject, but merely enforced the observance of one which already existed, for we find the people responding as though they knew what was required of them. The details of the way in which the order was carried into effect appear in their response, not in the original ordinance. Kittel has suggested that the new arrangements were made to prevent the clergy from deserting the temple and falling away to the high places. But that cannot well have been the sense of the writer here, since he has immediately before described the destruction of the local sanctuaries, so that the temptation to resort to them was non-existent. Bertheau was of opinion that the aim was to prevent the men from having recourse to other means of livelihood, and this judgement is more probable, especially if we combine with it the view that the passage reflects conditions which prevailed before and after the Return. For we find at least two indications of measures having been adopted then to meet similar difficulties. Thus it is said that at some period, because they did not receive such provision, the levites and singers had fled, every one to his field, Neh. 13: 10. Again, the religious community, according to the pact of Neh. c. 10, found it necessary to

¹ Cf. p. 81.

² LXX reads: τη λειτουργιᾳ οἴκου Κυρίου.

take measures to guarantee that the offerings which were devoted to the support of the priests and levites reached the temple. There also the offerings were no novelty. The position of affairs under the pact resembles that which appears here. So long as the kingdom existed the king was responsible for the communal offerings; when it ceased, the community must meet those charges, and met it by a poll tax. But the faithful were always responsible for meeting the needs of the clergy: all that was needed there was to guarantee that their offerings reached their destination.

In the description of the response made by the community to the royal command there is some confusion. To begin with the minor and easier question, 'the tithe of consecrated things' in v. 6 cannot be correct, since these were dedicated in their entirety. We must omit the tithe.¹ The crux is in the beginning of the verse. It had already been stated that the children of Israel brought in abundantly the first-fruits of corn, wine, oil, and honey, and also the tithe of all things, and to this v. 6 adds 'and the children of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah, they also, or, even they, brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep'. Evidently this cattle-tithe was additional to the tithe of all things. Since the children of Israel who lived in the Judean towns is C's usual description of those Israelites who transferred themselves to Judah after Jeroboam's apostasy,² it would be natural to conclude that the men took on the obligation of the country of their adoption, and paid a second tithe. But the mention of Judah is puzzling, as there was no reason for stating that the Judeans lived in their own towns. The LXX carried back 'the children of Israel and Judah' into the preceding verse, and made these the men who brought in the tithes of all things. It then read in v. 6: those who were living in the Judean towns, even they, brought in the cattle-tithes. But these men in the Judean towns can only be the refugee Israelites, and it cannot be supposed

¹ With Kittel, *B.H.*

² Cf. II. 10: 17, 11: 16, 30: 25.

that they alone paid the second tithe. Yet the translators did recognize that there was a distinction here between the contributions from north and south Israel.¹ The simplest solution is to transfer *ויהודה* or *ובני יהודה* to the beginning of v. 6, and read: Judah, or, the children of Judah, and the refugee Israelites, they also, or, even they, paid the cattle-tithe. This not only brings together the familiar description of those refugee Israelites, but it explains why these men are specially said to have paid this tithe. They followed the practice of their new country, and in this respect differed from their brethren of v. 5.

Now the first-fruits which the children of Israel brought correspond with the Deuteronomic law, except that Deut. 18:4, in commanding these to be given to the levites, included wool and omitted *שֶׁבֶךְ* or honey; the increase of the field is also a common expression in Deuteronomy. On the other hand, a law which prescribed a tithe of cattle and sheep only appears in Lev. 27: 32 f., although the specific destination of this offering is not defined—it is merely said to be holy unto the Lord. What precisely is meant by the tithe of all things in v. 5 is not certain, but from its connexion with what precedes and from its contrast with the following cattle-tithe this was probably a tithe on cereals. As such it agrees with the tithe which appears in Deuteronomy; but it disagrees with that law in the purpose to which the tithe was devoted. According to the law it was employed during two years in furnishing a communal meal at the sanctuary in which the levite shared, in the third year it provided a feast in which the levites and the poor had a share, Deut. 14: 22–9. Thus the cereal tithe is a prominent feature of the Deuteronomic Code and was there partly devoted to the

¹ Bénézinger simply cut out *ויהודה*, though he offered no reason for its appearance in both our texts. But this compelled him to give a double sense to 'the children of Israel' in two consecutive verses, since he took the expression to mean Judeans in v. 5 and refugee Israelites in v. 6. It also made the refugee Israelites the only men who were said to have paid the cattle-tithe, and failed to explain the double tithe.

support of the levites, while the cattle-tithe appears only in Leviticus, where its destination is not specifically defined. The provenance of these two laws is, in my judgement, from Israel and Judah respectively. I suggest that at some period during the Exile or after the Return these offerings were devoted to the purpose of the maintenance of the clergy, because their needs were pressing at the time, and that the Chronicler carried back the regulation to Hezekiah, whom he made the pattern reformer among the early kings.

When we turn to the constituents of the heaps into which the offerings were gathered, we find Azariah the high-priest informing Hezekiah that the supply had been more than sufficient and employing the general term *הַתְּרוּמָה* the oblations, v. 10. When the heaps were transferred to the chambers prepared for them, they appear as oblations, tithes, and dedicated things, v. 12. Now according to Num. 18: 8-11 the oblation was the specific provision for the priests, in contrast with the tithe for the levites, vv. 21 ff. Again, because Nehemiah found that the portions allotted to the levites had not been given to them, he issued orders which resulted in the cereal tithe being brought to the treasuries, Neh. 13: 10-12. He also referred to a chamber in which had formerly been stored the cereal tithes given by commandment to the levites, while the oblations were for the priests, 13: 4. He further mentioned chambers for the oblations, the first-fruits, and the tithes to gather into them the portions appointed in the law for the priests and levites. Throughout, these passages agree with the regulations which Hezekiah was said to have laid down and with the terms of the pact of Neh. c. 10. They all agree that the cereal tithes were destined for the levites. Even the latest law did not contradict this, for it ordered that the oblations and the fat of oil, vintage, and corn, their first-fruits, belong to the priests, while the tithe goes to the levites, except a tithe of that tithe, which was paid over to the priests, Num. 18: 11 ff., 26, 28.

The resemblances between our passage and the regulations made on the same subject in the book of Nehemiah and in the later law justify the inference that we have here a reflection of the conditions which emerged about the period of the Return. At that period it was obviously necessary to make provision for the temple-clergy, if the sacrificial worship was to continue. It is also clear that the new arrangements must have involved an adjustment of the older law in order to adapt it to the new conditions. On the one hand, the centralization of the sacrificial worship brought about an increase in the number of the temple-clergy, who were entirely dependent on the gifts of the faithful. On the other hand, men from both the old kingdoms combined under Josiah to maintain the common worship. Their divergent practices needed to be reconciled. A task of this nature cannot be settled off-hand, and was peculiarly difficult at the time of the Return, for there was no central authority with unquestioned influence which could determine the question. I suggest that the verses under review show one of the tentative efforts to bring about order, before the final law in Numbers permanently decided the usage which was to prevail. In my judgement, two features in our account point to an earlier date for its composition. Thus the author made no distinction between the provision which was made for the priests and the levites respectively. Full details were given of the sources from which the revenues were drawn, but after these were collected it was merely stated that they were devoted to the priests and levites. This is in strong contrast with the terms of the law in Numbers, where each source of revenue was ear-marked and assigned to one or other of the separate orders. Again, the author here was very conscious of the fact that the community comprised both Israelites and Judeans. Both were represented, and both were doing their part to meet the situation. But he was also conscious of a divergence of the way in which they met the claims on them, for he set down the sources from which Judah and Israel drew their offerings.

There is no uniform usage, as there is no homogeneous community. In these two respects the passage contrasts with the law in Numbers, which ordered a common practice for all Israel.

Now the features in which this passage differs from the law in Numbers are in agreement with the attitude of the Chronicler. C alone set priest and levite on an equal footing in regard to their status, and he alone was likely to make no sharp distinction between them in their claims on the temple-offerings. To him also we owe the account of Hezekiah's effort to bring the remanent Israelites into a common worship with their brethren in the South.

It has already been stated that the confused condition of chap. 31 must make any effort to bring it into order tentative at the best. In these circumstances it is advisable to ignore these conclusions in any attempt to sum up a general statement about Hezekiah's reform. The remaining chapters, however, show the sequence which has now become familiar. The narrative, which forms its basis, was the work of the Chronicler. Whatever may be its historical value, it represents his attitude and reflects his point of view. To this have been added a series of notes, which disturb the account, in one case producing a duplication, in other cases confusing the text. These cannot be combined into another narrative, which has been blended with the original. They convey no sense apart from the text in which they appear. The common element which appears in them all is that they were intended to bring C's account into agreement with the later law.