BENNETT WILLIAM HENRY

THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE: THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

William Bennett

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Bennett W.

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W. H. Bennett
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Preface

To expound Chronicles in a series which has dealt with Samuel, Kings, Ezra, and Nehemiah is to glean scattered ears from a field already harvested. Sections common to Chronicles with the older histories have therefore been treated as briefly as is consistent with preserving the continuity of the narrative. Moreover, an exposition of Chronicles does not demand or warrant an attempt to write the history of Judah. To recombine with Chronicles matter which its author deliberately omitted would only obscure the characteristic teaching he intended to convey. On the one hand, his selection of material has a religious significance, which must be ascertained by careful comparison with Samuel and Kings; on the other hand, we can only do justice to the chronicler as we ourselves adopt, for the time being, his own attitude towards the history of Hebrew politics, literature, and religion. In the more strictly expository parts of this volume I have sought to confine myself to the carrying out of these principles.

Amongst other obligations to friends, I must specially mention my indebtedness to the Rev. T. H. Darlow, M.A., for a careful reading of the proof-sheets and many very valuable suggestions.

One object I have had in view has been to attempt to show the fresh force and clearness with which modern methods of Biblical study have emphasised the spiritual teaching of Chronicles.

Book I. Introduction

Chapter I. Date And Authorship

Chronicles is a curious literary torso. A comparison with Ezra and Nehemiah shows that the three originally formed a single whole. They are written in the same peculiar late Hebrew style; they use their sources in the same mechanical way; they are all saturated with the ecclesiastical spirit; and their Church order and doctrine rest upon the complete Pentateuch, and especially upon the Priestly Code. They take the same keen interest in genealogies, statistics, building operations, Temple ritual, priests and Levites, and most of all in the Levitical doorkeepers and singers. Ezra and Nehemiah form an obvious continuation of Chronicles; the latter work breaks off in the middle of a paragraph intended to introduce the account of the return from the Captivity; Ezra repeats the beginning of the paragraph and gives its conclusion. Similarly the register of the high-priests is begun in 1 Chron. vi. 4-15 and completed in Neh. xii. 10, 11.

We may compare the whole work to the image in Daniel's vision whose head was of fine gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Ezra and Nehemiah preserve some of the finest historical material in the Old Testament, and are our only authority for a most important crisis in the religion of Israel. The torso that remains when these two books are removed is of very mixed character, partly borrowed from the older historical books, partly taken down from late tradition, and partly constructed according to the current philosophy of history.

The date[1] of this work lies somewhere between the conquest of the Persian empire by Alexander and the revolt of the Maccabees, *i. e.*, between b. c. 332 and b. c. 166. The register in Neh. xii. 10, 11, closes with Jaddua, the well-known high-priest of Alexander's time; the genealogy of the house of David in 1 Chron. iii. extends to about the same date, or, according to the ancient versions, even down to about b. c. 200. The ecclesiastical system of the priestly code, established by Ezra and Nehemiah b. c. 444, was of such old standing to the author of Chronicles that he introduces it as a matter of course into his descriptions of the worship of the monarchy. Another feature which even more clearly indicates a late date is the use of the term “king of Persia” instead of simply “the King” or “the Great King.” The latter were the customary designations of the Persian kings while the empire lasted; after its fall, the title needed to be qualified by the name “Persia.” These facts, together with the style and language, would be best accounted for by a date somewhere between b. c. 300 and b. c. 250. On the other hand, the Maccabæan struggle revolutionised the national and ecclesiastical system which Chronicles everywhere takes for granted, and the silence of the author as to this revolution is conclusive proof that he wrote before it began.

There is no evidence whatever as to the name of the author; but his intense interest in the Levites and in the musical service of the Temple, with its orchestra and choir, renders it extremely probable that he was a Levite and a Temple-singer or musician. We might compare the Temple, with its extensive buildings and numerous priesthood, to an English cathedral establishment, and the author of Chronicles to some vicar-choral, or, perhaps better, to the more dignified precentor. He would be enthusiastic over his music, a cleric of studious habits and scholarly tastes, not a man of the world, but absorbed in the affairs of the Temple, as a monk in the life of his convent or a minor canon in the politics and society of the minster close. The times were uncritical, and so our author was occasionally somewhat easy of belief as to the enormous magnitude of ancient Hebrew armies and the splendour

[1] Cf. *Ezra*; *Nehemiah*; *Esther*, by Professor Adeney, in “Expositor's Bible.”

and wealth of ancient Hebrew kings; the narrow range of his interests and experience gave him an appetite for innocent gossip, professional or otherwise. But his sterling religious character is shown by the earnest piety and serene faith which pervade his work. If we venture to turn to English fiction for a rough illustration of the position and history of our chronicler, the name that at once suggests itself is that of Mr. Harding, the precentor in *Barchester Towers*. We must however remember that there is very little to distinguish the chronicler from his later authorities; and the term “chronicler” is often used for “the chronicler or one of his predecessors.”

Chapter II. Historical Setting

In the previous chapter it has been necessary to deal with the chronicler as the author of the whole work of which Chronicles is only a part, and to go over again ground already covered in the volume on Ezra and Nehemiah; but from this point we can confine our attention to Chronicles and treat it as a separate book. Such a course is not merely justified, it is necessitated, by the different relations of the chronicler to his subject in Ezra and Nehemiah on the one hand and in Chronicles on the other. In the former case he is writing the history of the social and ecclesiastical order to which he himself belonged, but he is separated by a deep and wide gulf from the period of the kingdom of Judah. About three hundred years intervened between the chronicler and the death of the last king of Judah. A similar interval separates us from Queen Elizabeth; but the course of these three centuries of English life has been an almost unbroken continuity compared with the changing fortunes of the Jewish people from the fall of the monarchy to the early years of the Greek empire. This interval included the Babylonian captivity and the return, the establishment of the Law, the use of the Persian empire, and the conquests of Alexander.

The first three of these events were revolutions of supreme importance to the internal development of Judaism; the last two rank in the history of the world with the fall of the Roman empire and the French Revolution. Let us consider them briefly in detail. The Captivity, the rise of the Persian empire, and the Return are closely connected, and can only be treated as features of one great social, political, and religious convulsion, an upheaval which broke the continuity of all the strata, of Eastern life and opened an impassable gulf between the old order and the new. For a time, men who had lived through these revolutions were still able to carry across this gulf the loosely twisted strands of memory, but when they died the threads snapped; only here and there a lingering tradition supplemented the written records. Hebrew slowly ceased to be the vernacular language, and was supplanted by Aramaic; the ancient history only reached the people by means of an oral translation. Under this new dispensation the ideas of ancient Israel were no longer intelligible; its circumstances could not be realised by those who lived under entirely different conditions. Various causes contributed to bring about this change. First, there was an interval of fifty years, during which Jerusalem lay a heap of ruins. After the recapture of Rome by Totila the Visigoth in a. d. 546 the city was abandoned during forty days to desolate and dreary solitude. Even this temporary depopulation of the Eternal City is emphasised by historians as full of dramatic interest, but the fifty years' desolation of Jerusalem involved important practical results. Most of the returning exiles must have either been born in Babylon or else have spent all their earliest years in exile. Very few can have been old enough to have grasped the meaning or drunk in the spirit of the older national life. When the restored community set to work to rebuild their city and their temple, few of them had any adequate knowledge of the old Jerusalem, with its manners, customs, and traditions. “The ancient men, that had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice”[2] when the foundation of the second Temple was laid before their eyes. In their critical and disparaging attitude towards the new building, we may see an early trace of the tendency to glorify and idealise the monarchical period, which culminated in Chronicles. The breach with the past was widened by the novel and striking surroundings of the exiles in Babylon. For the first time since the Exodus, the Jews as a nation found themselves in close contact and intimate relations with the culture of an ancient civilisation and the life of a great city.

Nearly a century and a half elapsed between the first captivity under Jehoiachin (b. c. 598) and the mission of Ezra (b. c. 458); no doubt in the succeeding period Jews still continued to return from Babylon to Judæa, and thus the new community at Jerusalem, amongst whom the chronicler grew up, counted Babylonian Jews amongst their ancestors for two or even for many generations. A Zulu

[2] Ezra iii. 12.

tribe exhibited for a year in London could not return and build their kraal afresh and take up the old African life at the point where they had left it. If a community of Russian Jews went to their old home after a few years' sojourn in Whitechapel, the old life resumed would be very different from what it was before their migration. Now the Babylonian Jews were neither uncivilised African savages nor stupefied Russian helots; they were not shut up in an exhibition or in a ghetto; they settled in Babylon, not for a year or two, but for half a century or even a century; and they did not return to a population of their own race, living the old life, but to empty homes and a ruined city. They had tasted the tree of new knowledge, and they could no more live and think as their fathers had done than Adam and Eve could find their way back into paradise. A large and prosperous colony of Jews still remained at Babylon, and maintained close and constant relations with the settlement in Judæa. The influence of Babylon, begun during the Exile, continued permanently in this indirect form. Later still the Jews felt the influence of a great Greek city, through their colony at Alexandria.

Besides these external changes, the Captivity was a period of important and many-sided development of Jewish literature and religion. Men had leisure to study the prophecies of Jeremiah and the legislation of Deuteronomy; their attention was claimed for Ezekiel's suggestions as to ritual, and for the new theology, variously expounded by Ezekiel, the later Isaiah, the book of Job, and the psalmists. The Deuteronomic school systematised and interpreted the records of the national history. In its wealth of Divine revelation the period from Josiah to Ezra is only second to the apostolic age.

Thus the restored Jewish community was a new creation, baptised into a new spirit; the restored city was as much a new Jerusalem as that which St. John beheld descending out of heaven; and, in the words of the prophet of the Restoration, the Jews returned to a “new heaven and a new earth.”[3] The rise of the Persian empire changed the whole international system of Western Asia and Egypt. The robber monarchies of Nineveh and Babylon, whose energies had been chiefly devoted to the systematic plunder of their neighbours, were replaced by a great empire, that stretched out one hand to Greece and the other to India. The organisation of this great empire was the most successful attempt at government on a large scale that the world had yet seen. Both through the Persians themselves and through their dealings with the Greeks, Aryan philosophy and religion began to leaven Asiatic thought; old things were passing away: all things were becoming new.

The establishment of the Law by Ezra and Nehemiah was the triumph of a school whose most important and effective work had been done at Babylon, though not necessarily within the half-century specially called the Captivity. Their triumph was retrospective: it not only established a rigid and elaborate system unknown to the monarchy, but, by identifying this system with the law traditionally ascribed to Moses, it led men very widely astray as to the ancient history of Israel. A later generation naturally assumed that the good kings must have kept this law, and that the sin of the bad kings was their failure to observe its ordinances.

The events of the century and a half or thereabouts between Ezra and the chronicler have only a minor importance for us. The change of language from Hebrew to Aramaic, the Samaritan schism, the few political incidents of which any account has survived, are all trivial compared to the literature and history crowded into the century after the fall of the monarchy. Even the far-reaching results of the conquests of Alexander do not materially concern us here. Josephus indeed tells us that the Jews served in large numbers in the Macedonian army, and gives a very dramatic account of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem; but the historical value of these stories is very doubtful, and in any case it is clear that between b. c. 333 and b. c. 250 Jerusalem was very little affected by Greek influences, and that, especially for the Temple community to which the chronicler belonged, the change from Darius to the Ptolemies was merely a change from one foreign dominion to another.

Nor need much be said of the relation of the chronicler to the later Jewish literature of the Apocalypses and Wisdom. If the spirit of this literature were already stirring in some Jewish circles,

[3] Isa. lxvi. 22.

the chronicler himself was not moved by it. Ecclesiastes, as far as he could have understood it, would have pained and shocked him. But his work lay in that direct line of subtle rabbinic teaching which, beginning with Ezra, reached its climax in the Talmud. Chronicles is really an anthology gleaned from ancient historic sources and supplemented by early specimens of Midrash and Hagada.

In order to understand the book of Chronicles, we have to keep two or three simple facts constantly and clearly in mind. In the first place, the chronicler was separated from the monarchy by an aggregate of changes which involved a complete breach of continuity between the old and the new order: instead of a nation there was a Church; instead of a king there were a high-priest and a foreign governor. Secondly, the effects of these changes had been at work for two or three hundred years, effacing all trustworthy recollection of the ancient order and schooling men to regard the Levitical dispensation as their one original and antique ecclesiastical system. Lastly, the chronicler himself belonged to the Temple community, which was the very incarnation of the spirit of the new order. With such antecedents and surroundings, he set to work to revise the national history recorded in Samuel and Kings. A monk in a Norman monastery would have worked under similar but less serious disadvantages if he had undertaken to rewrite the *Ecclesiastical History* of the Venerable Bede.

Chapter III. Sources And Mode Of Composition

Our impressions as to the sources of Chronicles are derived from the general character of its contents, from a comparison with other books of the Old Testament, and from the actual statements of Chronicles itself. To take the last first: there are numerous references to authorities in Chronicles which at first sight seem to indicate a dependence on rich and varied sources. To begin with, there are "The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel,"[4] "The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah,"[5] and "The Acts of the Kings of Israel."[6] These, however, are obviously different forms of the title of the same work.

Other titles furnish us with an imposing array of prophetic authorities. There are "The *Words*" of Samuel the Seer[7], of Nathan the Prophet,[8] of Gad the Seer,[9] of Shemaiah the Prophet and of Iddo the Seer,[10] of Jehu the son of Hanani,[11] and of the Seers[12]; "The *Vision*" of Iddo the Seer[13] and of Isaiah the Prophet[14]; "The *Midrash*" of the Book of Kings[15] and of the Prophet Iddo[16]; "The *Acts* of Uzziah," written by Isaiah the Prophet[17]; and "The *Prophecy*" of Ahijah the Shilonite.[18] There are also less formal allusions to other works.

Further examination, however, soon discloses the fact that these prophetic titles merely indicate different sections of "The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah." On turning to our book of Kings, we find that from Rehoboam onwards each of the references in Chronicles corresponds to a reference by the book of Kings to the "Chronicles[19] of the Kings of Judah." In the case of Ahaziah, Athaliah, and Amon, the reference to an authority is omitted both in the books of Kings and Chronicles. This close correspondence suggests that both our canonical books are referring to the same authority or authorities. Kings refers to the "Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" for Judah, and to the "Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" for the northern kingdom; Chronicles, though only dealing with Judah, combines these two titles in one: "The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah."

In two instances Chronicles clearly states that its prophetic authorities were found as sections of the larger work. "The Words of Jehu the son of Hanani" were "inserted in the Book of the Kings of Israel,"[20] and "The Vision of Isaiah the Prophet, the son of Amoz," is in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.[21] It is a natural inference that the other "Words" and "Visions" were also found as sections of this same "Book of Kings."

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[4] Quoted for *Asa* (2 Chron. xvi. 11); *Amaziah* (2 Chron. xxv. 26); *Ahaz* (2 Chron. xxviii. 26).

[5] Quoted for *Jotham* (2 Chron. xxvii. 7); *Josiah* (2 Chron. xxxv. 26, 27).

[6] Quoted for *Manasseh* (2 Chron. xxxiii, 18).

[7] Quoted for *David* (1 Chron. xxix. 29).

[8] Quoted for *David* (1 Chron. xxix. 29) and *Solomon* (2 Chron. ix. 29).

[9] Quoted for *David* (1 Chron. xxix. 29).

[10] Quoted for *Rehoboam* (2 Chron. xii. 15).

[11] Quoted for *Jehoshaphat* (2 Chron. xx. 34).

[12] Quoted for *Manasseh* (2 Chron. xxxiii. 19). "Seers," A.V., R.V. Marg., with LXX.; R.V., with Hebrew text, "Hozai." The passage is probably corrupt.

[13] Quoted for *Solomon* (2 Chron. ix. 29).

[14] Quoted for *Hezekiah* (2 Chron. xxxii. 32).

[15] Quoted for *Joash* (2 Chron. xxiv. 27).

[16] Quoted for *Abijah* (2 Chron. xiii, 22).

[17] Quoted for *Uzziah* (2 Chron. xxvi. 22).

[18] Quoted for *Solomon* (2 Chron. ix. 29).

[19] Cf. pp. 17, 18.

[20] 2 Chron. xx. 34.

[21] Chron. xxxii. 32.

These conclusions may be illustrated and supported by what we know of the arrangement of the contents of ancient books. Our convenient modern subdivisions of chapter and verse did not exist, but the Jews were not without some means of indicating the particular section of a book to which they wished to refer. Instead of numbers they used names, derived from the subject of a section or from the most important person mentioned in it. For the history of the monarchy the prophets were the most important personages, and each section of the history is named after its leading prophet or prophets. This nomenclature naturally encouraged the belief that the history had been originally written by these prophets. Instances of the use of such nomenclature are found in the New Testament, *e. g.*, Rom. xi. 2: "Wot ye not what the Scripture saith in Elijah"[22]—*i. e.*, in the section about Elijah – and Mark xii. 26: "Have ye not read in the book of Moses in the place concerning the bush?"[23]

While, however, most of the references to "Words," "Visions," etc., are to sections of the larger work, we need not at once conclude that *all* references to authorities in Chronicles are to this same book. The genealogical register in 1 Chron. v. 17 and the "lamentations" of 2 Chron. xxxv. 25 may very well be independent works. Having recognised the fact that the numerous authorities referred to by Chronicles were for the most part contained in one comprehensive "Book of Kings," a new problem presents itself: What are the respective relations of our Kings and Chronicles to the "Chronicles" and "Kings" cited by them? What are the relations of these original authorities to each other? What are the relations of our Kings to our Chronicles? Our present nomenclature is about as confusing as it well could be; and we are obliged to keep clearly in mind, first, that the "Chronicles" mentioned in Kings is not our Chronicles, and then that the "Kings" referred to by Chronicles is not our Kings. The first fact is obvious; the second is shown by the terms of the references, which state that information not furnished in Chronicles may be found in the "Book of Kings," but the information in question is often not given in the canonical Kings.[24] And yet the connection between Kings and Chronicles is very close and extensive. A large amount of material occurs either identically or with very slight variations in both books. It is clear that either Chronicles uses Kings, or Chronicles uses a work which used Kings, or both Chronicles and Kings use the same source or sources. Each of these three views has been held by important authorities, and they are also capable of various combinations and modifications.

Reserving for a moment the view which specially commends itself to us, we may note two main tendencies of opinion. First, it is maintained that Chronicles either goes back directly to the actual sources of Kings, citing them, for the sake of brevity, under a combined title, or is based upon a combination of the main sources of Kings made at a very early date. In either case Chronicles as compared with Kings would be an independent and parallel authority on the contents of these early sources, and to that extent would rank with Kings as first-class history. This view, however, is shown to be untenable by the numerous traces of a later age which are almost invariably present wherever Chronicles supplements or modifies Kings.

The second view is that either Chronicles used Kings, or that the "Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah" used by Chronicles was a post-Exilic work, incorporating statistical matter and dealing with the history of the two kingdoms in a spirit congenial to the temper and interests of the restored community. This "post-Exilic" predecessor of Chronicles is supposed to have been based upon Kings itself, or upon the sources of Kings, or upon both; but in any case it was not much earlier than Chronicles and was written under the same influences and in a similar spirit. Being virtually an earlier edition of Chronicles, it could claim no higher authority, and would scarcely deserve either recognition or treatment as a separate work. Chronicles would still rest substantially on the authority of Kings.

It is possible to accept a somewhat simpler view, and to dispense with this shadowy and ineffectual first edition of Chronicles. In the first place, the chronicler does not appeal to the "Words"

[22] R.V. marg.

[23] R.V.

[24] *E.g.*, the wars of Jotham (2 Chron. xxvii. 7).

and "Visions" and the rest of his "Book of Kings" as authorities for his own statements; he merely refers his reader to them for further information which he himself does not furnish. This "Book of Kings" so often mentioned is therefore neither a source nor an authority of Chronicles. There is nothing to prove that the chronicler himself was actually acquainted with the book. Again, the close correspondence already noted between these references in Chronicles and the parallel notes in Kings suggests that the former are simply expanded and modified from the latter, and the chronicler had never seen the book he referred to. The Books of Kings had stated where additional information could be found, and Chronicles simply repeated the reference without verifying it. As some sections of Kings had come to be known by the names of certain prophets, the chronicler transferred these names back to the corresponding sections of the sources used by Kings. In these cases he felt he could give his readers not merely the somewhat vague reference to the original work as a whole, but the more definite and convenient citation of a particular paragraph. His descriptions of the additional subjects dealt with in the original authority may possibly, like other of his statements, have been constructed in accordance with his ideas of what that authority should contain; or more probably they refer to this authority the floating traditions of later times and writers. Possibly these references and notes of Chronicles are copied from the glosses which some scribe had written in the margin of his copy of Kings. If this be so, we can understand why we find references to the Midrash of Iddo and the Midrash of the book of Kings.[25]

In any case, whether directly or through the medium of a preliminary edition, called "The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah," our book of Kings was used by the chronicler. The supposition that the original sources of Kings were used by the chronicler or this immediate predecessor is fairly supported both by evidence and authority, but on the whole it seems an unnecessary complication.

Thus we fail to find in these various references to the "Book of Kings," etc., any clear indication of the origin of matter peculiar to Chronicles; nevertheless it is not difficult to determine the nature of the sources from which this material was derived. Doubtless some of it was still current in the form of oral tradition when the chronicler wrote, and owed to him its permanent record. Some he borrowed from manuscripts, which formed part of the scanty and fragmentary literature of the later period of the Restoration. His genealogies and statistics suggest the use of public and ecclesiastical archives, as well as of family records, in which ancient legend and anecdote lay embedded among lists of forgotten ancestors. Apparently the chronicler harvested pretty freely from that literary aftermath that sprang up when the Pentateuch and the earlier historical books had taken final shape.

But it is to these earlier books that the chronicler owes most. His work is very largely a mosaic of paragraphs and phrases taken from the older books. His chief sources are Samuel and Kings; he also lays the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Ruth under contribution. Much is taken over without even verbal alteration, and the greater part is unaltered in substance; yet, as is the custom in ancient literature, no acknowledgment is made. The literary conscience was not yet aware of the sin of plagiarism. Indeed, neither an author nor his friends took any pains to secure the permanent association of his name with his work, and no great guilt can attach to the plagiarism of one anonymous writer from another. This absence of acknowledgment where the chronicler is plainly borrowing from elder scribes is another reason why his references to the "Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah" are clearly not statements of sources to which he is indebted, but simply what they profess to be: indications of the possible sources of further information.

Chronicles, however, illustrates ancient methods of historical composition, not only by its free appropriation of the actual form and substance of older works, but also by its curious blending of identical reproduction with large additions of quite heterogeneous matter, or with a series of minute but significant alterations. The primitive ideas and classical style of paragraphs from Samuel and

[25] 2 Chron. xiii. 22; xxiv. 27. The LXX., however, does not read "Midrash" in either case; and it is quite possible that glosses have attached themselves to the text of Chronicles.

Kings are broken in upon by the ritualistic fervour and late Hebrew of the chronicler's additions. The vivid and picturesque narrative of the bringing of the Ark to Zion is interpolated with uninteresting statistics of the names, numbers, and musical instruments of the Levites.[26] Much of the chronicler's account of the revolution which overthrew Athaliah and placed Joash on the throne is taken word for word from the book of Kings; but it is adapted to the Temple order of the Pentateuch by a series of alterations which substitute Levites for foreign mercenaries, and otherwise guard the sanctity of the Temple from the intrusion, not only of foreigners, but even of the common people.[27] A careful comparison of Chronicles with Samuel and Kings is a striking object lesson in ancient historical composition. It is an almost indispensable introduction to the criticism of the Pentateuch and the older historical books. The “redactor” of these works becomes no mere shadowy and hypothetical personage when we have watched his successor the chronicler piecing together things new and old and adapting ancient narratives to modern ideas by adding a word in one place and changing a phrase in another.

[26] Cf. 2 Sam. vi. 12-20 with 1 Chron. xv., xvi.

[27] Cf. 2 Kings xi.; 2 Chron. xxiii.

Chapter IV. The Importance of Chronicles

Before attempting to expound in detail the religious significance of Chronicles, we may conclude our introduction by a brief general statement of the leading features which render the book interesting and valuable to the Christian student.

The material of Chronicles may be divided into three parts: the matter taken directly from the older historical books; material derived from traditions and writings of the chronicler's own age; the various additions and modifications which are the chronicler's own work.[28] Each of these divisions has its special value, and important lessons may be learnt from the way in which the author has selected and combined these materials.

The excerpts from the older histories are, of course, by far the best material in the book for the period of the monarchy. If Samuel and Kings had perished, we should have been under great obligations to the chronicler for preserving to us large portions of their ancient records. As it is, the chronicler has rendered invaluable service to the textual criticism of the Old Testament by providing us with an additional witness to the text of large portions of Samuel and Kings. The very fact that the character and history of Chronicles are so different from those of the older books enhances the value of its evidence as to their text. The two texts, Samuel and Kings on the one hand and Chronicles on the other, have been modified under different influences; they have not always been altered in the same way, so that where one has been corrupted the other has often preserved the correct reading. Probably because Chronicles is less interesting and picturesque, its text has been subject to less alteration than that of Samuel and Kings. The more interested scribes or readers become, the more likely they are to make corrections and add glosses to the narrative. We may note, for example, that the name “Meribbaal” given by Chronicles for one of Saul's sons is more likely to be correct than “Mephibosheth,” the form given by Samuel.[29]

The material derived from traditions and writings of the chronicler's own age is of uncertain historical value, and cannot be clearly discriminated from the author's free composition. Much of it was the natural product of the thought and feeling of the late Persian and early Greek period, and shares the importance which attaches to the chronicler's own work. This material, however, includes a certain amount of neutral matter: genealogies, family histories and anecdotes, and notes on ancient life and custom. We have no parallel authorities to test this material, we cannot prove the antiquity of the sources from which it is derived, and yet it may contain fragments of very ancient tradition. Some of the notes and narratives have an archaic flavour which can scarcely be artificial; their very lack of importance is an argument for their authenticity, and illustrates the strange tenacity with which local and domestic tradition perpetuates the most insignificant episodes.[30]

But naturally the most characteristic, and therefore the most important, section of the contents of Chronicles is that made up of the additions and modifications which are the work of the chronicler or his immediate predecessors. It is unnecessary to point out that these do not add much to our knowledge of the history of the monarchy; their significance consists in the light that they throw upon the period towards whose close the chronicler lived: the period between the final establishment of Pentateuchal Judaism and the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to stamp it out of existence; the period between Ezra and Judas Maccabæus. The chronicler is no exceptional and epoch-making writer, has little personal importance, and is therefore all the more important as a typical representative

[28] The last two classes are not easily distinguished; but the additions which introduce the Levitical system into earlier history are clearly the work of the chronicler or his immediate predecessor, if such a predecessor be assumed, or were found in somewhat late sources. This is also probably true of other explanatory matter.

[29] Cf. 2 Sam. iv. with 1 Chron. viii. 34, also 2 Sam. vii. 7 with 1 Chron. xvii. 6, and 2 Sam. xvii. 25 with 1 Chron. ii. 17. In both these instances Chronicles preserves the correct text.

[30] Cf. Book II., Chap. IV.

of the current ideas of his class and generation. He translates the history of the past into the ideas and circumstances of his own age, and thus gives us almost as much information about the civil and religious institutions he lived under as if he had actually described them. Moreover, in stating its estimate of past history, each generation pronounces unconscious judgment upon itself. The chronicler's interpretation and philosophy of history mark the level of his moral and spiritual ideas. He betrays these quite as much by his attitude towards earlier authorities as in the paragraphs which are his own composition; we have seen how his use of materials illustrates the ancient, and for that matter the modern, Eastern methods of historical composition, and we have shown the immense importance of Chronicles to Old Testament criticism. But the way in which the chronicler uses his older sources also indicates his relation towards the ancient morality, ritual, and theology of Israel. His methods of selection are most instructive as to the ideas and interests of his time. We see what was thought worthy to be included in this final and most modern edition of the religious history of Israel. But in truth the omissions are among the most significant features of Chronicles; its silence is constantly more eloquent than its speech, and we measure the spiritual progress of Judaism by the paragraphs of Kings which Chronicles leaves out. In subsequent chapters we shall seek to illustrate the various ways in which Chronicles illuminates the period preceding the Maccabees. Any gleams of light on the Hebrew monarchy are most welcome, but we cannot be less grateful for information about those obscure centuries which fostered the quiet growth of Israel's character and faith and prepared the way for the splendid heroism and religious devotion of the Maccabæan struggle.

Book II. Genealogies

Chapter I. Names. 1 Chron. i-ix

The first nine chapters of Chronicles form, with a few slight exceptions, a continuous list of names. It is the largest extant collection of Hebrew names. Hence these chapters may be used as a text for the exposition of any spiritual significance to be derived from Hebrew names either individually or collectively. Old Testament genealogies have often exercised the ingenuity of the preacher, and the student of homiletics will readily recollect the methods of extracting a moral from what at first sight seems a barren theme. For instance, those names of which little or nothing is recorded are held up as awful examples of wasted lives. We are asked to take warning from Mahalalel and Methuselah, who spent their long centuries so ineffectually that there was nothing to record except that they begat sons and daughters and died. Such teaching is not fairly derived from its text. The sacred writers implied no reflection upon the Patriarchs of whom they gave so short and conventional an account. Least of all could such teaching be based upon the lists in Chronicles, because the men who are there merely mentioned by name include Adam, Noah, Abraham, and other heroes of sacred story. Moreover, such teaching is unnecessary and not altogether wholesome. Very few men who are at all capable of obtaining a permanent place in history need to be spurred on by sermons; and for most people the suggestion that a man's life is a failure unless he secures posthumous fame is false and mischievous. The Lamb's book of life is the only record of the vast majority of honourable and useful lives; and the tendency to self-advertisement is sufficiently wide-spread and spontaneous already: it needs no pulpit stimulus. We do not think any worse of a man because his tombstone simply states his name and age, or any better because it catalogues his virtues and mentions that he attained the dignity of alderman or author.

The significance of these lists of names is rather to be looked for in an opposite direction. It is not that a name and one or two commonplace incidents mean so little, but that they suggest so much. A mere parish register is not in itself attractive, but if we consider even such a list, the very names interest us and kindle our imagination. It is almost impossible to linger in a country churchyard, reading the half-effaced inscriptions upon the headstones, without forming some dim picture of the character and history and even the outward semblance of the men and women who once bore the names.

> “For though a name is neither
> … hand, nor foot,
> Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
> Belonging to a man,”

yet, to use a somewhat technical phrase, it *connotes* a man. A name implies the existence of a distinct personality, with a peculiar and unique history, and yet, on the other hand, a being with whom we are linked in close sympathy by a thousand ties of common human nature and everyday experience. In its lists of what are now mere names, the Bible seems to recognise the dignity and sacredness of bare human life.

But the names in these nine chapters have also a collective significance: they stand for more than their individual owners. They are typical and representative, the names of kings, and priests, and captains; they sum up the tribes of Israel, both as a Church and a nation, down all the generations of its history. The inclusion of these names in the sacred record, as the express introduction to the annals of the Temple, and the sacred city, and the elect house of David, is the formal recognition

of the sanctity of the nation and of national life. We are entirely in the spirit of the Bible when we see this same sanctity in all organised societies: in the parish, the municipality, and the state; when we attach a Divine significance to registers of electors and census returns, and claim all such lists as symbols of religious privilege and responsibility.

But names do not merely suggest individuals and communities: the meanings of the names reveal the ideas of the people who used them. It has been well said that "the names of every nation are an important monument of national spirit and manners, and thus the Hebrew names bear important testimony to the peculiar vocation of this nation. No nation of antiquity has such a proportion of names of religious import."[31] Amongst ourselves indeed the religious meaning of names has almost wholly faded away; "Christian name" is a mere phrase, and children are named after relations, or according to prevailing fashion, or after the characters of popular novels. But the religious motive can still be traced in some modern names; in certain districts of Germany the name "Ursula" or "Apollonia" is a sure indication that a girl is a Roman Catholic and has been named after a popular saint.[32] The Bible constantly insists upon this religious significance, which would frequently be in the mind of the devout Israelite in giving names to his children. The Old Testament contains more than a hundred etymologies[33] of personal names, most of which attach a religious meaning to the words explained. The etymologies of the patriarchal names – "Abraham," father of a multitude of nations; "Isaac," laughter; "Jacob," supplanter; "Israel," prince with God – are specially familiar. The Biblical interest in edifying etymologies was maintained and developed by early commentators. Their philology was far from accurate, and very often they were merely playing upon the forms of words. But the allegorising tendencies of Jewish and Christian expositors found special opportunities in proper names. On the narrow foundation of an etymology mostly doubtful and often impossible, Philo, and Origen, and Jerome loved to erect an elaborate structure theological or philosophical doctrine. Philo has only one quotation from our author: "Manasseh had sons, whom his Syrian concubine bare to him, Machir; and Machir begat Gilead."[34] He quotes this verse to show that recollection is associated in a subordinate capacity with memory. The connection is not very clearly made out, but rests in some way on the meaning of Manasseh, the root of which means to forget. As forgetfulness with recollection restores our knowledge, so Manasseh with his Syrian concubine begets Machir. Recollection therefore is a concubine, an inferior and secondary quality.[35] This ingenious trifling has a certain charm in spite of its extravagance, but in less dexterous hands the method becomes clumsy as well as extravagant. It has, however, the advantage of readily adapting itself to all tastes and opinions, so that we are not surprised when an eighteenth-century author discovers in Old Testament etymology a compendium of Trinitarian theology.[36] *Ahiah*[37] is derived from *'ehad*, one, and *yah*, Jehovah, and is thus an assertion of the Divine unity; *Reuel*[38] is resolved into a plural verb with a singular Divine name for its subject: this is an indication of trinity in unity; *Ahilud*[39] is derived from *'ehad*, one, and *galud*, begotten, and signifies that the Son is *only-begotten*.

Modern scholarship is more rational in its methods, but attaches no less importance to these ancient names, and finds in them weighty evidence on problems of criticism and theology; and before proceeding to more serious matters, we may note a few somewhat exceptional names. As

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[31] Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*, i. 283 (Eng. trans.).

[32] Nestle, *Die Israelitischen Eigennamen*, p. 27. The present chapter is largely indebted to this standard monograph.

[33] Nestle.

[34] 1 Chron. vii. 14.

[35] Philo, *De Cong. Quær. Erud. Grat.*, 8.

[36] Hiller's *Onomasticon ap.*, Nestle 11.

[37] vii. 8.

[38] i. 35.

[39] xviii. 15.

pointed in the present Hebrew text, *Hazarmaveth*[40] and *Azmaveth*[41] have a certain grim suggestiveness. *Hazarmaveth*, court of death, is given as the name of a descendant of Shem. It is, however, probably the name of a place transferred to an eponymous ancestor, and has been identified with *Hadramawt*, a district in the south of Arabia. As, however, *Hadramawt*, is a fertile district of Arabia Felix, the name does not seem very appropriate. On the other hand *Azmaveth*, "strength of death," would be very suitable for some strong, death-dealing soldier. *Azubah*,[42] "forsaken," the name of Caleb's wife, is capable of a variety of romantic explanations. *Hazelelponi*[43] is remarkable in its mere form; and Ewald's interpretation, "Give shade, Thou who turnest to me Thy countenance," seems rather a cumbrous signification for the name of a daughter of the house of Judah. *Jushab-hesed*,[44] "Mercy will be renewed," as the name of a son of Zerubbabel, doubtless expresses the gratitude and hope of the Jews on their return from Babylon.[45] *Jashubi-lehem*,[46] however, is curious and perplexing. The name has been interpreted "giving bread" or "turning back to Bethlehem," but the text is certainly corrupt, and the passage is one of many into which either the carelessness of scribes or the obscurity of the chronicler's sources has introduced hopeless confusion. But the most remarkable set of names is found in 1 Chron. xxv. 4, where *Giddalti* and *Romantiezer*, *Joshbekashah*, *Mallothi*, *Hothir*, *Mahazioth*, are simply a Hebrew sentence meaning, "I have magnified and exalted help; sitting in distress,[47] I have spoken[48] visions in abundance." We may at once set aside the cynical suggestion that the author lacked names to complete a genealogy and, to save the trouble of inventing them separately, took the first sentence that came to hand and cut it up into suitable lengths, nor is it likely that a father would spread the same process over several years and adopt it for his family. This remarkable combination of names is probably due to some misunderstanding of his sources on the part of the chronicler. His parchment rolls must often have been torn and fragmentary, the writing blurred and half illegible; and his attempts to piece together obscure and ragged manuscripts naturally resulted at times in mistakes and confusion.

These examples of interesting etymologies might easily be multiplied; they serve, at any rate, to indicate a rich mine of suggestive teaching. It must, however, be remembered that a name is not necessarily a personal name because it occurs in a genealogy; cities, districts, and tribes mingle freely with persons in these lists. In the same connection we note that the female names are few and far between, and that of those which do occur the "sisters" probably stand for allied and related families, and not for individuals.

As regards Old Testament theology, we may first notice the light thrown by personal names on the relation of the religion of Israel to that of other Semitic peoples. Of the names in these chapters and elsewhere, a large proportion are compounded of one or other of the Divine names. *El* is the first element in *Elishama*, *Eliphelet*, *Eliada*, etc.; it is the second in *Othniel*, *Jehaleleel*, *Asareel*, etc. Similarly *Jehovah* is represented by the initial *Jeho-* in *Jehoshaphat*, *Jehoiakim*, *Jehoram*, etc., by the final *-iah* in *Amaziah*, *Azariah*, *Hezekiah*, etc. It has been calculated that there are a hundred and ninety names[49] beginning or ending with the equivalent of Jehovah, including most of the kings of Judah and many of the kings of Israel. Moreover, some names which have not these prefixes and affixes in their extant form are contractions of older forms which began or ended with a Divine name.

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[40] i. 20.

[41] viii. 36.

[42] ii. 18.

[43] iii. 20.

[44] iv. 3.

[45] Bertheau, i. 1.

[46] iv. 22.

[47] iv. 22.

[48] The translation of these words is not quite certain.

[49] Nestle, p. 68.

Ahaz, for instance, is mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions as Jahuhazi —*i. e.*, Jehoahaz – and Nathan is probably a contracted form of Nethaniah.

There are also numerous compounds of other Divine names. *Zur*, rock, is found in *Pedahzur*,[50] *Shaddai*, A.V. Almighty, in *Ammishaddai*[51]; the two are combined in *Zurishaddai*.[52] *Melech* is a Divine name in *Malchi-ram* and *Malchi-shua*. *Baal* occurs as a Divine name in *Eshbaal* and *Meribbaal*. *Abi*, father, is a Divine name in *Abiram*, *Abinadab*, etc., and probably also *Ahi* in *Ahiram* and *Ammi* in *Amminadab*.[53] Possibly, too, the apparently simple names *Melech*, *Zur*, *Baal*, are contractions of longer forms in which these Divine names were prefixes or affixes.

This use of Divine names is capable of very varied illustration. Modern languages have Christian and Christopher, Emmanuel, Theodosius, Theodora, etc.; names like Hermogenes and Heliogabalus are found in the classical languages. But the practice is specially characteristic of Semitic languages. Mohammedan princes are still called *Abdurrahman*, servant of the Merciful, and *Abdallah*, servant of God; ancient Phœnician kings were named *Ethbaal* and *Abdalonim*, where *alonim* is a plural Divine name, and the *bal* in Hannibal and Hasdrubal = *baal*. The Assyrian and Chaldæan kings were named after the gods Sin, Nebo, Assur, Merodach, *e. g.*, *Sin-akki-irib* (Sennacherib); *Nebuchadnezzar*; *Assur-bani-pal*; *Merodach-baladan*.

Of these Divine names El and Baal are common to Israel and other Semitic peoples, and it has been held that the Hebrew personal names preserve traces of polytheism. In any case, however, the Baal-names are comparatively few, and do not necessarily indicate that Israelites worshipped a Baal distinct from Jehovah; they may be relics of a time when Baal (Lord) was a title or equivalent of Jehovah, like the later Adonai. Other possible traces of polytheism are few and doubtful. In Baanah and Resheph we may perhaps find the obscure[54] Phœnician deities Anath and Reshaph. On the whole, Hebrew names as compared, for instance, with Assyrian afford little or no evidence of the prevalence of polytheism.

Another question concerns the origin and use of the name Jehovah. Our lists conclusively prove its free use during the monarchy and its existence under the judges. On the other hand, its apparent presence in Jochebed, the name of the mother of Moses, seems to carry it back beyond Moses. Possibly it was a Divine name peculiar to his family or clan. Its occurrence in *Yahubidi*, a king of Hamath, in the time of Sargon may be due to direct Israelite influence. Hamath had frequent relations with Israel and Judah.

Turning to matters of practical religion, how far do these names help us to understand the spiritual life of ancient Israel? The Israelites made constant use of El and Jehovah in their names, and we have no parallel practice. Were they then so much more religious than we are? Probably in a sense they were. It is true that the etymology and even the original significance of a name in common use are for all practical purposes quickly and entirely forgotten. A man may go through a life-time bearing the name of Christopher and never know its etymological meaning. At Cambridge and Oxford sacred names like “Jesus” and “Trinity” are used constantly and familiarly without suggesting anything beyond the colleges so called. The edifying phrase, “God encompasseth us,” is altogether lost in the grotesque tavern sign “The Goat and Compasses.” Nor can we suppose that the Israelite or the Assyrian often dwelt on the religious significance of the *Jeho-* or *-iah*, the *Nebo*, *Sin*, or *Merodach*, of current proper names. As we have seen, the sense of *-iah*, *-el*, or *Jeho-* was often so little present to men's minds that contractions were formed by omitting them. Possibly because these prefixes and affixes were so common, they came to be taken for granted; it was scarcely necessary to write them,

[50] Num. i. 10.

[51] Num. i. 12.

[52] Num. i. 6.

[53] Cf. p. 40.

[54] xi. 30; vii. 25 (Nestle).

because in any case they would be understood. Probably in historic times *Abi-*, *Ahi-*, and *Ammi-* were no longer recognised as Divine names or titles; and yet the names which could still be recognised as compounded of El and Jehovah must have had their influence on popular feeling. They were part of the religiousness, so to speak, of the ancient East; they symbolised the constant intertwining of religious acts, and words, and thoughts with all the concerns of life. The quality of this ancient religion was very inferior to that of a devout and intelligent modern Christian; it was perhaps inferior to that of Russian peasants belonging to the Greek Church; but ancient religion pervaded life and society more consciously than modern Christianity does; it touched all classes and occasions more directly, if also more mechanically. And, again, these names were not the fossil relics of obsolete habits of thought and feeling, like the names of our churches and colleges; they were the memorials of comparatively recent acts of faith. The name "Elijah" commemorated the solemn occasion on which a father professed his own faith and consecrated a new-born child to the true God by naming his boy "Jehovah is my God." This name-giving was also a prayer: the child was placed under the protection of the deity whose name it bore. The practice might be tainted with superstition; the name would often be regarded as a kind of amulet; and yet we may believe that it could also serve to express a parent's earnest and simple-minded faith. Modern Englishmen have developed a habit of almost complete reticence and reserve on religious matters, and this habit is illustrated by our choice of proper names. Mary, and Thomas, and James are so familiar that their Scriptural origin is forgotten, and therefore they are tolerated; but the use of distinctively Scriptural Christian names is virtually regarded as bad taste. This reticence is not merely due to increased delicacy of spiritual feeling: it is partly the result of the growth of science and of literary and historical criticism. We have become absorbed in the wonderful revelations of methods and processes; we are fascinated by the ingenious mechanism of nature and society. We have no leisure to detach our thoughts from the machinery and carry them further on to its Maker and Director. Indeed, because there is so much mechanism and because it is so wonderful, we are sometimes asked to believe that the machine made itself. But this is a mere phase in the religious growth of mankind: humanity will tire of some of its new toys, and will become familiar with the rest; deeper needs and instincts will reassert themselves; and men will find themselves nearer in sentiment than they supposed to the ancient people who named their children after their God. In this and other matters the East to-day is the same as of old; the permanence of its custom is no inapt symbol of the permanence of Divine truth, which revolution and conquest are powerless to change.

> "The East bowed low before the blast
> In patient, deep disdain;
> She let the legions thunder past,
> And plunged in thought again."

But the Christian Church is mistress of a more compelling magic than even Eastern patience and tenacity: out of the storms that threaten her, she draws new energies for service, and learns a more expressive language in which to declare the glory of God.

Let us glance for a moment at the meanings of the group of Divine names given above. We have said that, in addition to *Melech* in *Malchi-*, *Abi*, *Ahi*, and *Ammi* are to be regarded as Divine names. One reason for this is that their use as prefixes is strictly analogous to that of *El* and *Jeho-*. We have *Abijah* and *Ahijah* as well as *Elijah*, *Abiel* and *Ammiel* as well as *Eliel*, *Abiram* and *Ahiram* as well as *Jehoram*; *Ammishaddai* compares with *Zurishaddai*, and *Ammizabad* with *Jehozabad*, nor would it be difficult to add many other examples. If this view be correct, *Ammi* will have nothing to do with the Hebrew word for "people," but will rather be connected with the corresponding Arabic word for

"uncle."[55] As the use of such terms as "brother" and "uncle" for Divine names is not consonant with Hebrew theology in its historic period, the names which contain these prefixes must have come down from earlier ages, and were used in later times without any consciousness of their original sense. Probably they were explained by new etymologies more in harmony with the spirit of the times; compare the etymology "father of a multitude of nations" given to Abraham. Even *Abi-*, father, in the early times to which its use as a prefix must be referred, cannot have had the full spiritual meaning which now attaches to it as a Divine title. It probably only signified the ultimate source of life. The disappearance of these religious terms from the common vocabulary and their use in names long after their significance had been forgotten are ordinary phenomena in the development of language and religion. How many of the millions who use our English names for the days of the week ever give a thought to Thor or Freya? Such phenomena have more than an antiquarian interest. They remind us that religious terms, and phrases, and formulæ derive their influence and value from their adaptation to the age which accepts them; and therefore many of them will become unintelligible or even misleading to later generations. Language varies continuously, circumstances change, experience widens, and every age has a right to demand that Divine truth shall be presented in the words and metaphors that give it the clearest and most forcible expression. Many of the simple truths that are most essential to salvation admit of being stated once for all; but dogmatic theology fossilises fast, and the bread of one generation may become a stone to the next.

The history of these names illustrates yet another phenomenon. In some narrow and imperfect sense the early Semitic peoples seem to have called God "Father" and "Brother." Because the terms were limited to a narrow sense, the Israelites grew to a level of religious truth at which they could no longer use them; but as they made yet further progress they came to know more of what was meant by fatherhood and brotherhood, and gained also a deeper knowledge of God. At length the Church resumed these ancient Semitic terms; and Christians call God "Abba, Father," and speak of the Eternal Son as their elder Brother. And thus sometimes, but not always, an antique phrase may for a time seem unsuitable and misleading, and then again may prove to be the best expression for the newest and fullest truth. Our criticism of a religious formula may simply reveal our failure to grasp the wealth of meaning which its words and symbols can contain.

Turning from these obsolete names to those in common use —*El*; *Jehovah*; *Shaddai*; *Zur*; *Melech*– probably the prevailing idea popularly associated with them all was that of strength: *El*, strength in the abstract; *Jehovah*, strength shown in permanence and independence; *Shaddai*, the strength that causes terror, the Almighty from whom cometh destruction[56]; *Zur*, rock, the material symbol of strength, *Melech*, king, the possessor of authority. In early times the first and most essential attribute of Deity is power, but with this idea of strength a certain attribute of beneficence is soon associated. The strong God is the Ally of His people; His permanence is the guarantee of their national existence; He destroys their enemies. The rock is a place of refuge; and, again, Jehovah's people may rejoice in the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The King leads them to battle, and gives them their enemies for a spoil.

We must not, however, suppose that pious Israelites would consciously and systematically discriminate between these names, any more than ordinary Christians do between God, Lord, Father, Christ, Saviour, Jesus. Their usage would be governed by changing currents of sentiment very difficult to understand and explain after the lapse of thousands of years. In the year a. d. 3000, for instance, it will be difficult for the historian of dogmatics to explain accurately why some nineteenth-century Christians preferred to speak of "dear Jesus" and others of "the Christ."

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[55] Nestle.

[56] Joel i. 15; Isa. xiii. 6. It is not necessary here to discuss either the etymological or the theological history of these words in their earliest usage, nor need we do more than recall the fact that Jehovah was the term in common use as the personal name of the God of Israel, while El was rare and sometimes generic.

But the simple Divine names reveal comparatively little; much more may be learnt from the numerous compounds they help to form. Some of the more curious have already been noticed, but the real significance of this nomenclature is to be looked for in the more ordinary and natural names. Here, as before, we can only select from the long and varied list. Let us take some of the favourite names and some of the roots most often used, almost always, be it remembered, in combination with Divine names. The different varieties of these sacred names rendered it possible to construct various personal names embodying the same idea. Also the same Divine name might be used either as prefix or affix. For instance, the idea that "God knows" is equally well expressed in the names *Eliada* (El-yada'), *Jediael* (Yada'-el), *Jehoiada* (Jeho-yada'), and *Jedaiah* (Yada'-yah). "God remembers" is expressed alike by *Zachariah* and *Jozachar*; "God hears" by *Elishama* (El-shama'), *Samuel* (if for Shama'-el), *Ishmael* (also from Shama'-el), *Shemaiah*, and *Ishmaiah* (*both from* Shama' *and* Yah); "God gives" by *Elnathan*, *Nethaneel*, *Jonathan*, and *Nethaniah*; "God helps" by *Eliezer*, *Azareel*, *Joezer*, and *Azariah*; "God is gracious" by *Elhanan*, *Hananeel*, *Johanan*, *Hananiah*, *Baal-hanan*, and, for a Carthaginian, *Hannibal*, giving us a curious connection between the Apostle of love, John (Johanan), and the deadly enemy of Rome.

The way in which the changes are rung upon these ideas shows how the ancient Israelites loved to dwell upon them. Nestle reckons that in the Old Testament sixty-one persons have names formed from the root *nathan*, to give; fifty-seven from *shama*, to hear; fifty-six from *'azar*, to help; forty-five from *hanan*, to be gracious; forty-four from *zakhar*, to remember. Many persons, too, bear names from the root *yada'*, to know. The favourite name is *Zechariah*, which is borne by twenty-five different persons.

Hence, according to the testimony of names, the Israelites' favourite ideas about God were that He heard, and knew, and remembered; that He was gracious, and helped men, and gave them gifts: but they loved best to think of Him as God the Giver. Their nomenclature recognises many other attributes, but these take the first place. The value of this testimony is enhanced by its utter unconsciousness and naturalness; it brings us nearer to the average man in his religious moments than any psalm or prophetic utterance. Men's chief interest in God was as the Giver. The idea has proved very permanent; St. James amplifies it: God is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. It lies latent in names: Theodosius, Theodore, Theodora, and Dorothea. The other favourite ideas are all related to this. God hears men's prayers, and knows their needs, and remembers them; He is gracious, and helps them by His gifts. Could anything be more pathetic than this artless self-revelation? Men's minds have little leisure for sin and salvation; they are kept down by the constant necessity of preserving and providing for a bare existence. Their cry to God is like the prayer of Jacob, "If Thou wilt give me bread to eat and raiment to put on!" The very confidence and gratitude that the names express imply periods of doubt and fear, when they said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?" times when it seemed to them impossible that God could have heard their prayer or that He knew their misery, else why was there no deliverance? Had God forgotten to be gracious? Did He indeed remember? The names come to us as answers of faith to these suggestions of despair.

Possibly these old-world saints were not more preoccupied with their material needs than most modern Christians. Perhaps it is necessary to believe in a God who rules on earth before we can understand the Father who is in heaven. Does a man really trust in God for eternal life if he cannot trust Him for daily bread? But in any case these names provide us with very comprehensive formulæ, which we are at liberty to apply as freely as we please: the God who knows, and hears, and remembers, who is gracious, and helps men, and gives them gifts. To begin with, note how in a great array of Old Testament names God is the Subject, Actor, and Worker; the supreme facts of life are God and God's doings, not man and man's doings, what God is to man, not what man is to God. This is a foreshadowing of the Christian doctrines of grace and of the Divine sovereignty. And again we are left to fill in the objects of the sentences for ourselves: God hears, and remembers, and gives – what? All that we have to say to Him and all that we are capable of receiving from Him.

Chapter II. Heredity. 1 Chron. i. – ix

It has been said that Religion is the great discoverer of truth, while Science follows her slowly and after a long interval. Heredity, so much discussed just now, is sometimes treated as if its principles were a great discovery of the present century. Popular science is apt to ignore history and to mistake a fresh nomenclature for an entirely new system of truth, and yet the immense and far-reaching importance of heredity has been one of the commonplaces of thought ever since history began. Science has been anticipated, not merely by religious feeling, but by a universal instinct. In the old world political and social systems have been based upon the recognition of the principle of heredity, and religion has sanctioned such recognition. Caste in India is a religious even more than a social institution; and we use the term figuratively in reference to ancient and modern life, even when the institution has not formally existed. Without the aid of definite civil or religious law the force of sentiment and circumstances suffices to establish an informal system of caste. Thus the feudal aristocracy and guilds of the Middle Ages were not without their rough counterparts in the Old Testament. Moreover, the local divisions of the Hebrew kingdoms corresponded in theory, at any rate, to blood relationships; and the tribe, the clan, and the family had even more fixity and importance than now belong to the parish or the municipality. A man's family history or genealogy was the ruling factor in determining his home, his occupation, and his social position. In the chronicler's time this was especially the case with the official ministers of religion, the Temple establishment to which he himself belonged. The priests, the Levites, the singers, and doorkeepers formed castes in the strict sense of the word. A man's birth definitely assigned him to one of these classes, to which none but the members of certain families could belong.

But the genealogies had a deeper significance. Israel was Jehovah's chosen people, His son, to whom special privileges were guaranteed by solemn covenant. A man's claim to share in this covenant depended on his genuine Israelite descent, and the proof of such descent was an authentic genealogy. In these chapters the chronicler has taken infinite pains to collect pedigrees from all available sources and to construct a complete set of genealogies exhibiting the lines of descent of the families of Israel. His interest in this research was not merely antiquarian: he was investigating matters of the greatest social and religious importance to all the members of the Jewish community, and especially to his colleagues and friends in the Temple service. These chapters, which seem to us so dry and useless, were probably regarded by the chronicler's contemporaries as the most important part of his work. The preservation or discovery of a genealogy was almost a matter of life and death. Witness the episode in Ezra and Nehemiah[57]: “And of the priests: the children of Hobaiah, the children of Hakkoz, the children of Barzillai, which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name. These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found; therefore they were deemed polluted and put from the priesthood. And the governor said unto them that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim.” Cases like these would stimulate our author's enthusiasm. As he turned over dusty receptacles, and unrolled frayed parchments, and painfully deciphered crabbed and faded script, he would be excited by the hope of discovering some mislaid genealogy that would restore outcasts to their full status and privileges as Israelites and priests. Doubtless he had already acquired in some measure the subtle exegesis and minute casuistry that were the glory of later Rabbinism. Ingenious interpretation of obscure writing or the happy emendation of half-obliterated words might lend opportune aid in the recovery of a genealogy. On the other hand, there were vested interests ready to protest against the too easy acceptance of new claims. The priestly families of undoubted

[57] Ezra ii. 61-63; Neh. vii, 63-65.

descent from Aaron would not thank a chronicler for reviving lapsed rights to a share in the offices and revenues of the Temple. This part of our author's task was as delicate as it was important.

We will now briefly consider the genealogies in these chapters in the order in which they are given. Chap. i. contains genealogies of the patriarchal period selected from Genesis. The existing races of the world are all traced back through Shem, Ham, and Japheth to Noah, and through him to Adam. The chronicler thus accepts and repeats the doctrine of Genesis that God made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.[58] All mankind, "Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman,"[59] were alike descended from Noah, who was saved from the Flood by the special care of God; from Enoch, who walked with God; from Adam, who was created by God in His own image and likeness. The Israelites did not claim, like certain Greek clans, to be the descendants of a special god of their own, or, like the Athenians, to have sprung miraculously from sacred soil. Their genealogies testified that not merely Israelite nature, but human nature, is moulded on a Divine pattern. These apparently barren lists of names enshrine the great principles of the universal brotherhood of men and the universal Fatherhood of God. The chronicler wrote when the broad universalism of the prophets was being replaced by the hard exclusiveness of Judaism; and yet, perhaps unconsciously, he reproduces the genealogies which were to be one weapon of St. Paul in his struggle with that exclusiveness. The opening chapters of Genesis and Chronicles are among the foundations of the catholicity of the Church of Christ.

For the antediluvian period only the Sethite genealogy is given. The chronicler's object was simply to give the origin of existing races; and the descendants of Cain were omitted, as entirely destroyed by the Flood. Following the example of Genesis, the chronicler gives the genealogies of other races at the points at which they diverged from the ancestral line of Israel, and then continues the family history of the chosen race. In this way the descendants of Japheth and Ham, the non-Abrahamic Semites, the Ishmaelites, the sons of Keturah, and the Edomites are successively mentioned.

The relations of Israel with Edom were always close and mostly hostile. The Edomites had taken advantage of the overthrow of the southern kingdom to appropriate the south of Judah, and still continued to occupy it. The keen interest felt by the chronicler in Edom is shown by the large space devoted to the Edomites. The close contiguity of the Jews and Idumæans tended to promote mutual intercourse between them, and even threatened an eventual fusion of the two peoples. As a matter of fact, the Idumæan Herods became rulers of Judæa. To guard against such dangers to the separateness of the Jewish people, the chronicler emphasises the historical distinction of race between them and the Edomites.

From the beginning of the second chapter onwards the genealogies are wholly occupied with Israelites. The author's special interest in Judah is at once manifested. After giving the list of the twelve Patriarchs he devotes two and a half chapters to the families of Judah. Here again the materials have been mostly obtained from the earlier historical books. They are, however, combined with more recent traditions, so that in this chapter matter from different sources is pieced together in a very confusing fashion. One source of this confusion was the principle that the Jewish community could only consist of families of genuine Israelite descent. Now a large number of the returned exiles traced their descent to two brothers, Caleb and Jerahmeel; but in the older narratives Caleb and Jerahmeel are not Israelites. Caleb is a Kenizzite,[60] and his descendants and those of Jerahmeel appear in close connection with the Kenites.[61] Even in this chapter certain of the Calebites are called Kenites and

[58] Acts xvii. 26.

[59] Col. iii. 11.

[60] Josh. xiv. 6.

[61] 1 Sam. xxvii 10.

connected in some strange way with the Rechabites.[62] Though at the close of the monarchy the Calebites and Jerahmeelites had become an integral part of the tribe of Judah, their separate origin had not been forgotten, and Caleb and Jerahmeel had not been included in the Israelite genealogies. But after the Exile men came to feel more and more strongly that a common faith implied unity of race. Moreover, the practical unity of the Jews with these Kenizzites overbore the dim and fading memory of ancient tribal distinctions. Jews and Kenizzites had shared the Captivity, the Exile, and the Return; they worked, and fought, and worshipped side by side; and they were to all intents and purposes one nation, alike the people of Jehovah. This obvious and important practical truth was expressed as such truths were then wont to be expressed. The children of Caleb and Jerahmeel were finally and formally adopted into the chosen race. Caleb and Jerahmeel are no longer the sons of Jephunneh the Kenizzite; they are the sons of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah.[63] A new genealogy was formed as a recognition rather than an explanation of accomplished facts.

Of the section containing the genealogies of Judah, the lion's share is naturally given to the house of David, to which a part of the second chapter and the whole of the third are devoted.

Next follow genealogies of the remaining tribes, those of Levi and Benjamin being by far the most complete. Chap. vi., which is devoted to Levi, affords evidence of the use by the chronicler of independent and sometimes inconsistent sources, and also illustrates his special interest in the priesthood and the Temple choir. A list of high-priests from Aaron to Ahimaaz is given twice over (vv. 4-8 and 49-53), but only one line of high-priests is recognised, the house of Zadok, whom Josiah's reforms had made the one priestly family in Israel. Their ancient rivals the high-priests of the house of Eli are as entirely ignored as the antediluvian Cainites. The existing high-priestly dynasty had been so long established that these other priests of Saul and David seemed no longer to have any significance for the religion of Israel.

The pedigree of the three Levitical families of Gershom, Kohath, and Merari is also given twice over: in vv. 16-30 and 31-49. The former pedigree begins with the sons of Levi, and proceeds to their descendants; the latter begins with the founders of the guilds of singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, and traces back their genealogies to Kohath, Gershom, and Merari respectively. But the pedigrees do not agree; compare, for instance, the lists of the Kohathites: —

22-24.	36-38.
Kohath	Kohath
Amminadab	*Izhar*
Korah	Korah
Assir	
Elkanah	
Ebiasaph	Ebiasaph
Assir	Assir
Tahath	Tahath
Uriel	*Zephaniah*
Uzziah	*Azariah*
Shaul	etc.

We have here one of many illustrations of the fact that the chronicler used materials of very different value. To attempt to prove the absolute consistency of all his genealogies would be mere waste of time. It is by no means certain that he himself supposed them to be consistent. The frank juxtaposition of varying lists of ancestors rather suggests that he was prompted by a scholarly desire to preserve for his readers all available evidence of every kind.

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[62] Ver. 55.

[63] The occurrence of Caleb the son of Jephunneh in iv, 15, vi. 56, in no way militates against this view: the chronicler, like other redactors, is simply inserting borrowed material without correcting it. *Chelubai* in ii. 9 stands for *Caleb*; cf. ii. 18.

In reading the genealogies of the tribe of Benjamin, it is specially interesting to find that in the Jewish community of the Restoration there were families tracing their descent through Mephibosheth and Jonathan to Saul.[64] Apparently the chronicler and his contemporaries shared this special interest in the fortunes of a fallen dynasty, for the genealogy is given twice over. These circumstances are the more striking because in the actual history of Chronicles Saul is all but ignored.

The rest of the ninth chapter deals with the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the ministry of the Temple after the return from the Captivity, and is partly identical with sections of Ezra and Nehemiah. It closes the family history, as it were, of Israel, and its position indicates the standpoint and ruling interests of the chronicler.

Thus the nine opening chapters of genealogies and kindred matter strike the key-notes of the whole book. Some are personal and professional; some are religious. On the one hand, we have the origin of existing families and institutions; on the other hand, we have the election of the tribe of Judah and the house of David, of the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron.

Let us consider first the hereditary character of the Jewish religion and priesthood. Here, as elsewhere, the formal doctrine only recognised and accepted actual facts. The conditions which received the sanction of religion were first imposed by the force of circumstances. In primitive times, if there was to be any religion at all, it had to be national; if God was to be worshipped at all, His worship was necessarily national, and He became in some measure a national God. Sympathies are limited by knowledge and by common interest. The ordinary Israelite knew very little of any other people than his own. There was little international comity in primitive times, and nations were slow to recognise that they had common interests. It was difficult for an Israelite to believe that his beloved Jehovah, in whom he had been taught to trust, was also the God of the Arabs and Syrians, who periodically raided his crops, and cattle, and slaves, and sometimes carried off his children, or of the Chaldæans, who made deliberate and complete arrangements for plundering the whole country, rasing its cities to the ground, and carrying away the population into distant exile. By a supreme act of faith, the prophets claimed the enemies and oppressors of Israel as instruments of the will of Jehovah, and the chronicler's genealogies show that he shared this faith; but it was still inevitable that the Jews should look out upon the world at large from the standpoint of their own national interests and experience. Jehovah was God of heaven and earth; but Israelites knew Him through the deliverance He had wrought for Israel, the punishments He had inflicted on her sins, and the messages He had entrusted to her prophets. As far as their knowledge and practical experience went, they knew Him as the God of Israel. The course of events since the fall of Samaria narrowed still further the local associations of Hebrew worship.

> “God was wroth,
> And greatly abhorred Israel,
> So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,
> The tent which He placed among men;
>
> He refused the tent of Joseph,
> And chose not the tribe of Ephraim,
> But chose the tribe of Judah,
> The Mount Zion which He loved:
> And He built His sanctuary like the heights,
> Like the earth, which He hath established for ever.”[65]

[64] viii. 33-40; ix. 35-44. We have used Mephibosheth as more familiar, but Chronicles reads Meribbaal, which is more correct.

[65] Psalm lxxviii. 59, 60, 67-69.

We are doubtless right in criticising those Jews whose limitations led them to regard Jehovah as a kind of personal possession, the inheritance of their own nation, and not of other peoples. But even here we can only blame their negations. Jehovah *was* their inheritance and personal possession; but then He was also the inheritance of other nations. This Jewish heresy is by no means extinct: white men do not always believe that their God is equally the God of the negro; Englishmen are inclined to think that God is the God of England in a more especial way than He is the God of France. When we discourse concerning God in history, we mostly mean our own history. We can see the hand of Providence in the wreck of the Armada and the overthrow of Napoleon; but we are not so ready to recognise in the same Napoleon the Divine instrument that created a new Europe by relieving her peoples from cruel and degrading tyranny. We scarcely realise that God cares as much for the Continent as He does for our island.

We have great and perhaps sufficient excuses, but we must let the Jews have the benefit of them. God is as much the God of one nation as of another; but He fulfils Himself to different nations in different ways, by a various providential discipline. Each people is bound to believe that God has specially adapted His dealings to its needs, nor can we be surprised if men forget or fail to observe that God has done no less for their neighbours. Each nation rightly regards its religious ideas, and life, and literature as a precious inheritance peculiarly its own; and it should not be too severely blamed for being ignorant that other nations have their inheritance also. Such considerations largely justify the interest in heredity shown by the chronicler's genealogies. On the positive, practical side, religion *is* largely a matter of heredity, and ought to be. The Christian sacrament of baptism is a continual profession of this truth: our children are “clean”; they are within the covenant of grace; we claim for them the privileges of the Church to which we belong. That was also part of the meaning of the genealogies.

In the broad field of social and religious life the problems of heredity are in some ways less complicated than in the more exact discussions of physical science. Practical effects can be considered without attempting an accurate analysis of causes. Family history not only determines physical constitution, mental gifts, and moral character, but also fixes for the most part country, home, education, circumstances, and social position. All these were a man's inheritance more peculiarly in Israel than with us; and in many cases in Israel a man was often trained to inherit a family profession. Apart from the ministry of the Temple, we read of a family of craftsmen, of other families that were potters, of others who dwelt with the king for his work, and of the families of the house of them that wrought fine linen.[66] Religion is largely involved in the manifold inheritance which a man receives from his fathers. His birth determines his religious education, the examples of religious life set before him, the forms of worship in which as a child he takes part. Most men live and die in the religion of their childhood; they worship the God of their fathers; Romanist remains Romanist: Protestant remains Protestant. They may fail to grasp any living faith, or may lose all interest in religion; but such religion as most men have is part of their inheritance. In the Israel of the chronicler faith and devotion to God were almost always and entirely inherited. They were part of the great debt which a man owed to his fathers.

The recognition of these facts should tend to foster our humility and reverence, to encourage patriotism and philanthropy. We are the creatures and debtors of the past, though we are slow to own our obligations. We have nothing that we have not received; but we are apt to consider ourselves self-made men, the architects and builders of our own fortunes, who have the right to be self-satisfied, self-assertive, and selfish. The heir of all the ages, in the full vigour of youth, takes his place in the foremost ranks of time, and marches on in the happy consciousness of profound and multifarious wisdom, immense resources, and magnificent opportunity. He forgets or even despises the generations of labour and anguish that have built up for him his great inheritance. The genealogies are a silent

[66] iv. 14, 21-23.

protest against such insolent ingratitude. They remind us that in bygone days a man derived his gifts and received his opportunities from his ancestors; they show us men as the links in a chain, tenants for life, as it were, of our estate, called upon to pay back with interest to the future the debt which they have incurred to the past. We see that the chain is a long one, with many links; and the slight estimate we are inclined to put upon the work of individuals in each generation recoils upon our own pride. We also are but individuals of a generation that is only one of the thousands needed to work out the Divine purpose for mankind. We are taught the humility that springs from a sense of obligation and responsibility.

We learn reverence for the workers and achievements of the past, and most of all for God. We are reminded of the scale of the Divine working: —

> "A thousand years in Thy sight
> Are but as yesterday when it is past
> And as a watch in the night."

A genealogy is a brief and pointed reminder that God has been working through all the countless generations behind us. The bare series of names is an expressive diagram of His mighty process. Each name in the earlier lists stands for a generation or even for several generations. The genealogies go back into dim, prehistoric periods; they suggest a past too remote for our imagining. And yet they take us back to Adam, to the very beginning of human life. From that beginning, however many thousands or tens of thousands of years ago, the life of man has been sacred, the object of the Divine care and love, the instrument of the Divine purpose.

Later on we see the pedigree of our race dividing into countless branches, all of which are represented in this sacred diagram of humanity. The Divine working not only extends over all time, but also embraces all the complicated circumstances and relationships of the families of mankind. These genealogies suggest a lesson probably not intended by the chronicler. We recognise the unique character of the history of Israel, but in some measure we discern in this one full and detailed narrative of the chosen people a type of the history of every race. Others had not the election of Israel, but each had its own vocation. God's power, and wisdom, and love are manifested in the history of one chosen people on a scale commensurate with our limited faculties, so that we may gain some faint idea of the marvellous providence in *all* history of the Father from whom *every* family in heaven and on earth is named.

Another principle closely allied to heredity and also discussed in modern times is the solidarity of the race. Humanity is supposed to possess something akin to a common consciousness, personality, or individuality. Such a quality evidently becomes more intense as we narrow its scope from the race to the nation, the clan, and the family; it has its roots in family relationships. Tribal, national, humanitarian feelings indicate that the larger societies have taken upon themselves something of the character of the family. Thus the common feelings and mutual sympathies of mankind are due ultimately to blood relationship. The genealogies that set forth family histories are the symbols of this brotherhood or solidarity of our race. The chart of converging lines of ancestors in Israel carried men's minds back from the separate families to their common ancestor; again, the ancestry of ancestors led back to a still earlier common origin, and the process continued till all the lines met in Noah. Each stage of the process enlarged the range of every man's kinship, and broadened the natural area of mutual help and affection. It is true that the Jews failed to learn this larger lesson from their genealogies, but within their own community they felt intensely the bond of kinship and brotherhood. Modern patriotism reproduces the strong Jewish national feeling, and our humanitarianism is beginning to extend it to the whole world. By this time the facts of heredity have been more carefully studied and are better understood. If we drew up typical genealogies now, they would more fully and accurately represent the mutual relationships of our people. As far as they go,

the chronicler's genealogies form a clear and instructive diagram of the mutual dependence of man on man and family on family. The value of the diagram does not require the accuracy of the actual names any more than the validity of Euclid requires the actual existence of triangles called A B C, D E F. These genealogies are in any case a true symbol of the facts of family relations; but they are drawn, so to speak, in one dimension only, backwards and forwards in time. Yet the real family life exists in three dimensions. There are numerous cross-relations, cousinship of all degrees, as well as sonship and brotherhood. A man has not merely his male ancestors in the directly ascending line – father, grandfather, great-grandfather, etc. – but he has female ancestors as well. By going back three or four generations a man is connected with an immense number of cousins; and if the complete network of ten or fifteen generations could be worked out, it would probably show some blood bond throughout a whole nation. Thus the ancestral roots of a man's life and character have wide ramifications in the former generations of his people. The further we go back the larger is the element of ancestry common to the different individuals of the same community. The chronicler's genealogies only show us individuals as links in a set of chains. The more complete genealogical scheme would be better illustrated by the ganglia of the nervous system, each of which is connected by numerous nerve fibres with the other ganglia. The Church has been compared to the body, "which is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body." Humanity, by its natural kinship, is also such a body; the nation is still more truly "one body." Patriotism and humanity are instincts as natural and as binding as those of the family; and the genealogies express or symbolise the wider family ties, that they may commend the virtues and enforce the duties that arise out of these ties.

Before closing this chapter something may be said on one or two special points. Women are virtually ignored in these genealogies, a fact that rather indicates a failure to recognise their influence than the absence of such influence. Here and there a woman is mentioned for some special reason. For instance, the names of Zeruiah and Abigail are inserted in order to show that Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, together with Amasa, were all cousins of David. The same keen interest in David leads the chronicler to record the names of his wives. It is noteworthy that of the four women who are mentioned in St. Matthew's genealogy of our Lord only two – Tamar and Bath-shua (*i. e.*, Bath-sheba) – are mentioned here. Probably St. Matthew was careful to complete the list because Rahab and Ruth, like Tamar and possibly Bath-sheba, were foreigners, and their names in the genealogy indicated a connection between Christ and the Gentiles, and served to emphasise His mission to be the Saviour of the world.

Again, much caution is necessary in applying any principle of heredity. A genealogy, as we have seen, suggests our dependence in many ways upon our ancestry. But a man's relations to his kindred are many and complicated; a quality, for instance, may be latent for one or more generations and then reappear, so that to all appearance a man inherits from his grandfather or from a more remote ancestor rather than from his father or mother. Conversely the presence of certain traits of character in a child does not show that any corresponding tendency has necessarily been active in the life of either parent. Neither must the influence of circumstances be confounded with that of heredity. Moreover, very large allowance must be made for our ignorance of the laws that govern the human will, an ignorance that will often baffle our attempts to find in heredity any simple explanation of men's characters and actions. Thomas Fuller has a quaint "Scripture observation" that gives an important practical application of these principles: —

"Lord, I find the genealogy of my Saviour strangely chequered with four remarkable changes in four immediate generations:

"1. 'Rehoboam begat Abiam'; that is, a bad father begat a bad son.

"2. 'Abiam begat Asa'; that is, a bad father a good son.

"3. 'Asa begat Jehosaphat'; that is, a good father a good son.

"4. 'Jehosaphat begat Joram'; that is, a good father a bad son.

“I see, Lord, from hence that my father's piety cannot be entailed; that is bad news for me. But I see also that actual impiety is not always hereditary; that is good news for my son.”

Chapter III. Statistics

Statistics play an important part in Chronicles and in the Old Testament generally. To begin with, there are the genealogies and other lists of names, such as the lists of David's counsellors and the roll of honour of his mighty men. The chronicler specially delights in lists of names, and most of all in lists of Levitical choristers. He gives us lists of the orchestras and choirs who performed when the Ark was brought to Zion[67] and at Hezekiah's passover,[68] also a list of Levites whom Jehoshaphat sent out to teach in Judah.[69] No doubt family pride was gratified when the chronicler's contemporaries and friends read the names of their ancestors in connection with great events in the history of their religion. Possibly they supplied him with the information from which these lists were compiled. An incidental result of the celibacy of the Romanist clergy has been to render ancient ecclesiastical genealogies impossible; modern clergymen cannot trace their descent to the monks who landed with Augustine. Our genealogies might enable a historian to construct lists of the combatants at Agincourt and Hastings; but the Crusades are the only wars of the Church militant for which modern pedigrees could furnish a muster-roll.

We find also in the Old Testament the specifications and subscription-lists for the Tabernacle and for Solomon's temple.[70] These statistics, however, are not furnished for the second Temple, probably for the same reason that in modern subscription-lists the donors of shillings and half-crowns are to be indicated by initials, or described as “friends” and “sympathisers,” or massed together under the heading “smaller sums.”

The Old Testament is also rich in census returns and statements as to the numbers of armies and of the divisions of which they were composed. There are the returns of the census taken twice in the wilderness and accounts of the numbers of the different families who came from Babylon with Zerubbabel and later on with Ezra; there is a census of the Levites in David's time according to their several families[71]; there are the numbers of the tribal contingents that came to Hebron to make David king,[72] and much similar information.

Statistics therefore occupy a conspicuous position in the inspired record of Divine revelation, and yet we often hesitate to connect such terms as “inspiration” and “revelation” with numbers, and names, and details of civil and ecclesiastical organisation. We are afraid lest any stress laid on purely accidental details should distract men's attention from the eternal essence of the Gospel, lest any suggestion that the certainty of Christian truth is dependent on the accuracy of these statistics should become a stumbling-block and destroy the faith of some. Concerning such matters there have been many foolish questions of genealogies, profane and vain babblings, which have increased unto more ungodliness. Quite apart from these, even in the Old Testament a sanctity attaches to the number seven, but there is no warrant for any considerable expenditure of time and thought upon mystical arithmetic. A symbolism runs through the details of the building, furniture, and ritual alike of the Tabernacle and the Temple, and this symbolism possesses a legitimate religious significance; but its exposition is not specially suggested by the book of Chronicles. The exposition of such symbolism is not always sufficiently governed by a sense of proportion. Ingenuity in supplying subtle interpretations of minute details often conceals the great truths which the symbols are really intended to enforce. Moreover, the sacred writers did not give statistics merely to furnish materials for Cabbala and

[67] 1 Chron. xv.

[68] Cf. 2 Chron. xxix. 12 and xxx. 22.

[69] 2 Chron. xvii. 8.

[70] Exod. xxv-xxxix.; 1 Kings vi.; 1 Chron. xxix.; 2 Chron. iii., v.

[71] 1 Chron. xv. 4-10.

[72] 1 Chron. xii. 23-37.

Gematria or even to serve as theological types and symbols. Sometimes their purpose was more simple and practical. If we knew all the history of the Tabernacle and Temple subscription-lists, we should doubtless find that they had been used to stimulate generous gifts towards the erection of the second Temple. Preachers for building funds can find abundance of suitable texts in Exodus, Kings, and Chronicles.

But Biblical statistics are also examples in accuracy and thoroughness of information, and recognitions of the more obscure and prosaic manifestations of the higher life. Indeed, in these and other ways the Bible gives an anticipatory sanction to the exact sciences.

The mention of accuracy in connection with Chronicles may be received by some readers with a contemptuous smile. But we are indebted to the chronicler for exact and full information about the Jews who returned from Babylon; and in spite of the extremely severe judgment passed upon Chronicles by many critics, we may still venture to believe that the chronicler's statistics are as accurate as his knowledge and critical training rendered possible. He may sometimes give figures obtained by calculation from uncertain data, but such a practice is quite consistent with honesty and a desire to supply the best available information. Modern scholars are quite ready to present us with figures as to the membership of the Christian Church under Antoninus Pius or Constantine; and some of these figures are not much more probable than the most doubtful in Chronicles. All that is necessary to make the chronicler's statistics an example to us is that they should be the monument of a conscientious attempt to tell the truth, and this they undoubtedly are.

This Biblical example is the more useful because statistics are often evil spoken of, and they have no outward attractiveness to shield them from popular prejudice. We are told that “nothing is so false as statistics,” and that “figures will prove anything”; and the polemic is sustained by works like *Hard Times* and the awful example of Mr. Gradgrind. Properly understood, these proverbs illustrate the very general impatience of any demand for exact thought and expression. If “figures” will prove anything, so will texts.

Though this popular prejudice cannot be altogether ignored, yet it need not be taken too seriously. The opposite principle, when stated, will at once be seen to be a truism. For it amounts to this: exact and comprehensive knowledge is the basis of a right understanding of history, and is a necessary condition of right action. This principle is often neglected because it is obvious. Yet, to illustrate it from our author, a knowledge of the size and plan of the Temple greatly adds to the vividness of our pictures of Hebrew religion. We apprehend later Jewish life much more clearly with the aid of the statistics as to the numbers, families, and settlements of the returning exiles; and similarly the account-books of the bailiff of an English estate in the fourteenth century are worth several hundred pages of contemporary theology. These considerations may encourage those who perform the thankless task of compiling the statistics, subscription-lists, and balance-sheets of missionary and philanthropic societies. The zealous and intelligent historian of Christian life and service will need these dry records to enable him to understand his subject, and the highest literary gifts may be employed in the eloquent exposition of these apparently uninteresting facts and figures. Moreover, upon the accuracy of these records depends the possibility of determining a true course for the future. Neither societies nor individuals, for instance, can afford to live beyond their income without knowing it.

Statistics, too, are the only form in which many acts of service can be recognised and recorded. Literature can only deal with typical instances, and naturally it selects the more dramatic. The missionary report can only tell the story of a few striking conversions; it may give the history of the exceptional self-denial involved in one or two of its subscriptions; for the rest we must be content with tables and subscription-lists. But these dry statistics represent an infinitude of patience and self-denial, of work and prayer, of Divine grace and blessing. The city missionary may narrate his experiences with a few inquirers and penitents, but the great bulk of his work can only be recorded in the statement of visits paid and services conducted. We are tempted sometimes to disparage these

statements, to ask how many of the visits and services had any result; we are impatient sometimes because Christian work is estimated by any such numerical line and measure. No doubt the method has many defects, and must not be used too mechanically; but we cannot give it up without ignoring altogether much earnest and successful labour.

Our chronicler's interest in statistics lays healthy emphasis on the practical character of religion. There is a danger of identifying spiritual force with literary and rhetorical gifts; to recognise the religious value of statistics is the most forcible protest against such identification. The permanent contribution of any age to religious thought will naturally take a literary form, and the higher the literary qualities of religious writing, the more likely it is to survive. Shakespeare, Milton, and Bunyan have probably exercised a more powerful direct religious influence on subsequent generations than all the theologians of the seventeenth century. But the supreme service of the Church in any age is its influence on its own generation, by which it moulds the generation immediately following. That influence can only be estimated by a careful study of all possible information, and especially of statistics. We cannot assign mathematical values to spiritual effects and tabulate them like Board of Trade returns; but real spiritual movements will before long have practical issues, that can be heard, and seen, and felt, and even admit of being put into tables. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth”[73]; and yet the boughs and the corn bend before the wind, and the ships are carried across the sea to their desired haven. Tables may be drawn up of the tonnage and the rate of sailing. So is every one that is born of the Spirit. You cannot tell when and how God breathes upon the soul; but if the Divine Spirit be indeed at work in any society, there will be fewer crimes and quarrels, less scandal, and more deeds of charity. We may justly suspect a revival which has no effect upon the statistical records of national life. Subscription-lists are very imperfect tests of enthusiasm, but any widespread Christian fervour would be worth little if it did not swell subscription-lists.

Chronicles is not the most important witness to a sympathetic relationship between the Bible and exact science. The first chapter of Genesis is the classic example of the appropriation by an inspired writer of the scientific spirit and method. Some chapters in Job show a distinctly scientific interest in natural phenomena. Moreover, the direct concern of Chronicles is in the religious aspects of social science. And yet there is a patient accumulation of data with no obvious dramatic value: names, dates, numbers, specifications, and ritual which do not improve the literary character of the narrative. This conscientious recording of dry facts, this noting down of anything and everything that connects with the subject, is closely akin to the initial processes of the inductive sciences. True, the chronicler's interests are in some directions narrowed by personal and professional feeling; but within these limits he is anxious to make a complete record, which, as we have seen, sometimes leads to repetition. Now inductive science is based on unlimited statistics. The astronomer and biologist share the chronicler's appetite for this kind of mental food. The lists in Chronicles are few and meagre compared to the records of Greenwich Observatory or the volumes which contain the data of biology or sociology; but the chronicler becomes in a certain sense the forerunner of Darwin, Spencer, and Galton. The differences are indeed immense. The interval of two thousand odd years between the ancient annalist and the modern scientists has not been thrown away. In estimating the value of evidence and interpreting its significance, the chronicler was a mere child compared with his modern successors. His aims and interests were entirely different from theirs. But yet he was moved by a spirit which they may be said to inherit. His careful collection of facts, even his tendency to read the ideas and institutions of his own time into ancient history, are indications of a reverence for the past and of an anxiety to base ideas and action upon a knowledge of that past. This foreshadows the reverence of modern science for experience, its anxiety to base its laws and theories upon observation of what has actually occurred. The principle that the past determines and interprets the present and

[73] John iii. 8.

the future lies at the root of the theological attitude of the most conservative minds and the scientific work of the most advanced thinkers. The conservative spirit, like the chronicler, is apt to suffer its inherited prepossessions and personal interests to hinder a true observation and understanding of the past. But the chronicler's opportunities and experience were narrow indeed compared with those of theological students to-day; and we have every right to lay stress on the progress which he had achieved and the onward path that it indicated rather than on the yet more advanced stages which still lay beyond his horizon.

Chapter IV. Family Traditions. 1 Chron. i. 10, 19, 46; ii. 3, 7, 34; iv. 9, 10, 18, 22, 27, 34-43; v. 10, 18-22; vii. 21-23; viii. 13

Chronicles is a miniature Old Testament, and may have been meant as a handbook for ordinary people, who had no access to the whole library of sacred writings. It contains nothing corresponding to the books of Wisdom or the apocalyptic literature; but all the other types of Old Testament literature are represented. There are genealogies, statistics, ritual, history, psalms, and prophecies. The interest shown by Chronicles in family traditions harmonises with the stress laid by the Hebrew Scriptures upon family life. The other historical books are largely occupied with the family history of the Patriarchs, of Moses, of Jephthah, Gideon, Samson, Saul, and David. The chronicler intersperses his genealogies with short anecdotes about the different families and tribes. Some of these are borrowed from the older books; but others are peculiar to our author, and were doubtless obtained by him from the family records and traditions of his contemporaries. The statements that "Nimrod began to be mighty upon the earth"[74]; that "the name of one" of Eber's sons "was Peleg, because in his days the earth was divided"[75]; and that Hadad "smote Moab in the field of Midian,"[76] are borrowed from Genesis. As he omits events much more important and more closely connected with the history of Israel, and gives no account of Babel, or of Abraham, or of the conquest of Canaan, these little notes are probably retained by accident, because at times the chronicler copied his authorities somewhat mechanically. It was less trouble to take the genealogies as they stood than to exercise great care in weeding out everything but the bare names.

In one instance,[77] however, the chronicler has erased a curious note to a genealogy in Genesis. A certain Anah is mentioned both in Genesis and Chronicles among the Horites, who inhabited Mount Seir before it was conquered by Edom. Most of us, in reading the Authorised Version, have wondered what historical or religious interest secured a permanent record for the fact that "Anah found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father." A possible solution seemed to be that this note was preserved as the earliest reference to the existence of mules, which animals played an important part in the social life of Palestine; but the Revised Version sets aside this explanation by substituting "hot springs" for "mules," as these hot springs are only mentioned here, the passage becomes a greater puzzle than ever. The chronicler could hardly overlook this curious piece of information, but he naturally felt that this obscure archæological note about the aboriginal Horites did not fall within the scope of his work. On the other hand, the tragic fates of Er and Achar[78] had a direct genealogical significance. They are referred to in order to explain why the lists contain no descendants of these members of the tribe of Judah. The notes to these names illustrate the more depressing aspects of history. The men who lived happy, honourable lives can be mentioned one after another without any comment; but even the compiler of pedigrees pauses to note the crimes and misfortunes that broke the natural order of life. The annals of old families dwell with melancholy pride on murders, and fatal duels, and suicides. History, like an ancient mansion, is haunted with unhappy ghosts. Yet our interest in tragedy is a testimony to the blessedness of life; comfort and enjoyment are too monotonously common to be worth recording, but we are attracted and excited by exceptional instances of suffering and sin.

Let us turn to the episodes of family life only found in Chronicles. They may mostly be arranged in little groups of two or three, and some of the groups present us with an interesting contrast.

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[74] i. 10.

[75] i. 19.

[76] i. 46.

[77] Cf. Gen. xxxvi. 24 and 1 Chron. i. 40.

[78] *I.e.*, Achan (ii. 3, 7).

We learn from ii. 34-41 and iv. 18 that two Jewish families traced their descent from Egyptian ancestors. Sheshan, according to Chronicles, was eighth in descent from Judah and fifth from Jerahmeel, the brother of Caleb. Having daughters but no son, he gave one of his daughters in marriage to an Egyptian slave named Jarha. The descendants of this union are traced for thirteen generations. Genealogies, however, are not always complete; and our other data do not suffice to determine even approximately the date of this marriage. But the five generations between Jerahmeel and Sheshan indicate a period long after the Exodus; and as Egypt plays no recorded part in the history of Israel between the Exodus and the reign of Solomon, the marriage may have taken place under the monarchy. The story is a curious parallel to that of Joseph, with the parts of Israelite and Egyptian reversed. God is no respecter of persons; it is not only when the desolate and afflicted in strange lands belong to the chosen people that Jehovah relieves and delivers them. It is true of the Egyptian, as well as of the Israelite, that "the Lord maketh poor and maketh rich."

"He bringeth low, He also lifteth up;
He raiseth up the poor out of the dust:
He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill,
To make them sit with princes
And inherit the throne of glory."[79]

This song might have been sung at Jarha's wedding as well as at Joseph's.

Both these marriages throw a sidelight upon the character of Eastern slavery. They show how sharply and deeply it was divided from the hopeless degradation of negro slavery in America. Israelites did not recognise distinctions of race and colour between themselves and their bondsmen so as to treat them as worse than pariahs and regard them with physical loathing. An American considers himself disgraced by a slight taint of negro blood in his ancestry, but a noble Jewish family was proud to trace its descent from an Egyptian slave.

The other story is somewhat different, and rests upon an obscure and corrupt passage in iv. 18. The confusion makes it impossible to arrive at any date, even by rough approximation. The genealogical relations of the actors are by no means certain, but some interesting points are tolerably clear. Some time after the conquest of Canaan, a descendant of Caleb married two wives, one a Jewess, the other an Egyptian. The Egyptian was Bithiah, a daughter of Pharaoh, *i. e.*, of the contemporary king of Egypt. It appears probable that the inhabitants of Eshtemoa traced their descent to this Egyptian princess, while those of Gedor, Soco, and Zanoah claimed Mered as their ancestor by his Jewish wife.[80] Here again we have the bare outline of a romance, which the imagination is at liberty to fill in. It has been suggested that Bithiah may have been the victim of some Jewish raid into Egypt, but surely a king of Egypt would have either ransomed his daughter or recovered her by force of arms. The story rather suggests that the chiefs of the clans of Judah were semi-independent and possessed of considerable wealth and power, so that the royal family of Egypt could intermarry with them, as with reigning sovereigns. But if so, the pride of Egypt must have been greatly broken since the time when the Pharaohs haughtily refused to give their daughters in marriage to the kings of Babylon.

Both Egyptian alliances occur among the Kenizzites, the descendants of the brothers Caleb and Jerahmeel. In one case a Jewess marries an Egyptian slave; in the other a Jew marries an Egyptian princess. Doubtless these marriages did not stand alone, and there were others with foreigners of varying social rank. The stories show that even after the Captivity the tradition survived that the

[79] 1 Sam. ii. 7, 8.

[80] Vv. 17, 18, as they stand, do not make sense. The second sentence of ver. 18 should be read before "and she bare Miriam" in ver. 17. Mered and Bithiah formed a tempting subject for the rabbis, and gave occasion for some of their usual grotesque fancies. Mered has been identified by them both with Caleb and Moses.

clans in the south of Judah had been closely connected with Egypt, and that Solomon was not the only member of the tribe who had taken an Egyptian wife. Now intermarriage with foreigners is partly forbidden by the Pentateuch; and the prohibition was extended and sternly enforced by Ezra and Nehemiah.[81] In the time of the chronicler there was a growing feeling against such marriages. Hence the traditions we are discussing cannot have originated after the Return, but must be at any rate earlier than the publication of Deuteronomy under Josiah.

Such marriages with Egyptians must have had some influence on the religion of the south of Judah, but probably the foreigners usually followed the example of Ruth, and adopted the faith of the families into which they came. When they said, “Thy people shall be my people,” they did not fail to add, “and thy God shall be my God.” When the Egyptian princess married the head of a Jewish clan, she became one of Jehovah's people; and her adoption into the family of the God of Israel was symbolised by a new name: “Bithiah,” “daughter of Jehovah.” Whether later Judaism owed anything to Egyptian influences can only be matter of conjecture; at any rate, they did not pervert the southern clans from their old faith. The Calebites and Jerahmeelites were the backbone of Judah both before and after the Captivity.

The remaining traditions relate to the warfare of the Israelites with their neighbours. The first is a colourless reminiscence, that might have been recorded of the effectual prayer of any pious Israelite. The genealogies of chap. iv. are interrupted by a paragraph entirely unconnected with the context. The subject of this fragment is a certain Jabez never mentioned elsewhere, and, so far as any record goes, as entirely “without father, without mother, without genealogy,” as Melchizedek himself. As chap. iv. deals with the families of Judah, and in ii. 55 there is a town Jabez also belonging to Judah, we may suppose that the chronicler had reasons for assigning Jabez to that tribe; but he has neither given these reasons, nor indicated how Jabez was connected therewith. The paragraph runs as follows[82]: “And Jabez was honoured above his brethren, and his mother called his name Jabez” (*Ya'bēç*), “saying, In pain” (*'ōçeb*) “I bore him. And Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, —

> ‘If Thou wilt indeed bless me
> By enlarging my possessions,
> And Thy hand be with me
> To provide pasture,[83] that I be not in distress’ (*'ōçeb*).

And God brought about what he asked.” The chronicler has evidently inserted here a broken and disconnected fragment from one of his sources; and we are puzzled to understand why he gives so much, and no more. Surely not merely to introduce the etymologies of Jabez; or if Jabez were so important that it was worth while to interrupt the genealogies to furnish two derivations of his name, why are we not told more about him? Who was he, when and where did he live, and at whose expense were his possessions enlarged and pasture provided for him? Everything that could give colour and interest to the narrative is withheld, and we are merely told that he prayed for earthly blessing and obtained it. The spiritual lesson is obvious, but it is very frequently enforced and illustrated in the Old Testament. Why should this episode about an utterly unknown man be thrust by main force into an unsuitable context, if it is only one example of a most familiar truth? It has been pointed out that Jacob vowed a similar vow and built an altar to El, the God of Israel[84]; but this is one of many coincidences. The paragraph certainly tells us something about the chronicler's views on prayer, but nothing that is not more forcibly stated and exemplified in many other passages; it is mainly interesting to us because

[81] Deut. vii. 3; Josh. xxiii. 12; Ezra ix. 1, x.; Neh. xiii. 23.

[82] iv. 9, 10.

[83] The reading on which this translation is based is obtained by an alteration of the vowels of the Masoretic text; cf. Bertheau, i. 1.

[84] Gen. xxviii. 20; xxxiii. 20.

of the light it throws on his methods of composition. Elsewhere he embodies portions of well-known works and apparently assumes that his readers are sufficiently versed in them to be able to understand the point of his extracts. Probably Jabez was so familiar to the chronicler's immediate circle that he can take for granted that a few lines will suffice to recall all the circumstances to a reader.

We have next a series of much more definite statements about Israelite prowess and success in wars against Moab and other enemies.

In iv. 21, 22, we read, "The sons of Shelah the son of Judah: Er the father of Lecah, and Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of them that wrought fine linen, of the house of Ashbea; and Jokim, and the men of Cozeba, and Joash, and Saraph, who had dominion in Moab and returned to Bethlehem."[85] Here again the information is too vague to enable us to fix any date, nor is it quite certain who had dominion in Moab. The verb "had dominion" is plural in Hebrew, and may refer to all or any of the sons of Shelah. But, in spite of uncertainties, it is interesting to find chiefs or clans of Judah ruling in Moab. Possibly this immigration took place when David conquered and partly depopulated the country. The men of Judah may have returned to Bethlehem when Moab passed to the northern kingdom at the disruption, or when Moab regained its independence.

The incident in iv. 34-43 differs from the preceding in having a definite date assigned to it. In the time of Hezekiah some Simeonite clans had largely increased in number and found themselves straitened for room for their flocks. They accordingly went in search of new pasturage. One company went to Gedor, another to Mount Seir.

The situation of Gedor is not clearly known. It cannot be the Gedor of Josh. xv. 58, which lay in the heart of Judah. The LXX. has Gerar, a town to the south of Gaza, and this may be the right reading; but whether we read Gedor or Gerar, the scene of the invasion will be in the country south of Judah. Here the children of Simeon found what they wanted, "fat pasture, and good," and abundant, for "the land was wide." There was the additional advantage that the inhabitants were harmless and inoffensive and fell an easy prey to their invaders: "The land was quiet and peaceable, for they that dwelt there aforetime were of Ham." As Ham in the genealogies is the father of Cainan, these peaceable folk would be Cainanites; and among them were a people called Meunim, probably not connected with any of the Maons mentioned in the Old Testament, but with some other town or district of the same name. So "these written by name came in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and smote their tents, and the Meunim that were found there, and devoted them to destruction as accursed, so that none are left unto this day. And the Simeonites dwelt in their stead."[86]

Then follows in the simplest and most unconscious way the only justification that is offered for the behaviour of the invaders: "because there was pasture there for their flocks." The narrative takes for granted —

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

The expedition to Mount Seir appears to have been a sequel to the attack on Gedor. Five hundred of the victors emigrated into Edom, and smote the remnant of the Amalekites who had survived the massacre under Saul[87]; "and they also dwelt there unto this day."

In substance, style, and ideas this passage closely resembles the books of Joshua and Judges, where the phrase "unto this day" frequently occurs. Here, of course, the "day" in question is the time

[85] This translation is obtained by slightly altering the Masoretic text.

[86] iv. 41; cf. R.V.

[87] 1 Sam. xv.

of the chronicler's authority. When Chronicles was written the Simeonites in Gedor and Mount Seir had long ago shared the fate of their victims.

The conquest of Gedor reminds us how in the early days of the Israelite occupation of Palestine "Judah went with Simeon his brother into the same southern lands," and they smote the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and devoted them to destruction as accursed[88]; and how the house of Joseph took Bethel by treachery.[89] But the closest parallel is the Danite conquest of Laish.[90] The Danite spies said that the people of Laish "dwelt in security, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure," harmless and inoffensive, like the Gedorites. Nor were they likely to receive succour from the powerful city of Zidon or from other allies, for "they were far from the Zidonians, and had no dealings with any man." Accordingly, having observed the prosperous but defenceless position of this peaceable people, they returned and reported to their brethren, "Arise, and let us go up against them, for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good; and are ye still? Be not slothful to go and to enter in to possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and the land," like that of Gedor, "is large, for God hath given it into your hand, a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth."

The moral of these incidents is obvious. When a prosperous people is peaceable and defenceless, it is a clear sign that God has delivered them into the hand of any warlike and enterprising nation that knows how to use its opportunities. The chronicler, however, is not responsible for this morality, but he does not feel compelled to make any protest against the ethical views of his source. There is a refreshing frankness about these ancient narratives. The wolf devours the lamb without inventing any flimsy pretext about troubled waters.

But in criticising these Hebrew clans who lived in the dawn of history and religion we condemn ourselves. If we make adequate allowance for the influence of Christ, and the New Testament, and centuries of Christian teaching, Simeon and Dan do not compare unfavourably with modern nations. As we review the wars of Christendom, we shall often be puzzled to find any ground for the outbreak of hostilities other than the defencelessness of the weaker combatant. The Spanish conquest of America and the English conquest of India afford examples of the treatment of weaker races which fairly rank with those of the Old Testament. Even to-day the independence of the smaller European states is mainly guaranteed by the jealousies of the Great Powers. Still there has been progress in international morality; we have got at last to the stage of Æsop's fable. Public opinion condemns wanton aggression against a weak state; and the stronger power employs the resources of civilised diplomacy in showing that not only the absent, but also the helpless, are always wrong. There has also been a substantial advance in humanity towards conquered peoples. Christian warfare even since the Middle Ages has been stained with the horrors of the Thirty Years' War and many other barbarities; the treatment of the American Indians by settlers has often been cruel and unjust; but no civilised nation would now systematically massacre men, women, and children in cold blood. We are thankful for any progress towards better things, but we cannot feel that men have yet realised that Christ has a message for nations as well as for individuals. As His disciples we can only pray more earnestly that the kingdoms of the earth may in deed and truth become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

The next incident is more honourable to the Israelites. "The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh" did not merely surprise and slaughter quiet and peaceable people: they conquered formidable enemies in fair fight.[91] There are two separate accounts of a war with the Hagrites, one appended to the genealogy of Reuben and one to that of Gad. The former is very brief and general, comprising nothing but a bare statement that there was a successful war and a consequent

[88] Judges i. 17.

[89] Judges i. 22-26.

[90] Judges xviii.

[91] Vv. 7-10, 18-22.

appropriation of territory. Probably the two paragraphs are different forms of the same narrative, derived by the chronicler from independent sources. We may therefore confine our attention to the more detailed account.

Here, as elsewhere, these Transjordanic tribes are spoken of as "valiant[92] men," "men able to bear buckler and sword and to shoot with the bow, and skilful in war." Their numbers were considerable. While five hundred Simeonites were enough to destroy the Amalekites on Mount Seir, these eastern tribes mustered "forty and four thousand seven hundred and threescore that were able to go forth to war." Their enemies were not "quiet and peaceable people," but the wild Bedouin of the desert, "the Hagrites, with Jetur and Naphish and Nodab." Nodab is mentioned only here; Jetur and Naphish occur together in the lists of the sons of Ishmael.[93] Ituræa probably derived its name from the tribe of Jetur. The Hagrites or Hagarenes were Arabs closely connected with the Ishmaelites, and they seem to have taken their name from Hagar. In Psalm lxxxiii. 6-8 we find a similar confederacy on a larger scale: —

"The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
Moab and the Hagarenes
Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre,
Assyria also is joined with them;
They have holpen the children of Lot."

There could be no question of unprovoked aggression against these children of Ishmael, that "wild ass of a man, whose hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him."[94] The narrative implies that the Israelites were the aggressors, but to attack the robber tribes of the desert would be as much an act of self-defence as to destroy a hornet's nest. We may be quite sure that when Reuben and Gad marched eastward they had heavy losses to retrieve and bitter wrongs to avenge. We might find a parallel in the campaigns by which robber tribes are punished for their raids within our Indian frontier, only we must remember that Reuben and Gad were not very much more law-abiding or unselfish than their Arab neighbours. They were not engaged in maintaining a *pax Britannica* for the benefit of subject nations; they were carrying on a struggle for existence with persistent and relentless foes. Another partial parallel would be the border feuds on the Northumbrian marches, when —

"… over border, dale, and fell
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh and mountain cell
The peasant left his lowly shed:
The frightened flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement,
And maids and matrons dropped the tear
While ready warriors seized the spear;
… the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy."[95]

[92] Deut. xxxiii. 20; 1 Chron. xii. 8, 21.

[93] Gen. xxv. 15.

[94] Gen. xvi. 12.

[95] *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, iv. 3.

But the Israelite expedition was on a larger scale than any "warden raid," and Eastern passions are fiercer and shriller than those sung by the Last Minstrel: the maids and matrons of the desert would shriek and wail instead of "dropping a tear."

In this great raid of ancient times "the war was of God," not, as at Laish, because God found for them helpless and easy victims, but because He helped them in a desperate struggle. When the fierce Israelite and Arab borderers joined battle, the issue was at first doubtful; and then "they cried to God, and He was entreated of them, because they put their trust in Him," "and they were helped against" their enemies; "and the Hagrites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them, and there fell many slain, because the war was of God"; "and they took away their cattle: of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand, and of slaves a hundred thousand." "And they dwelt in their stead until the captivity."

This "captivity" is the subject of another short note. The chronicler apparently was anxious to distribute his historical narratives equally among the tribes. The genealogies of Reuben and Gad each conclude with a notice of a war, and a similar account follows that of Eastern Manasseh: – "And they trespassed against the God of their fathers, and went a-whoring after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God destroyed before them. And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser, king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river of Gozan, unto this day."[96] And this war also was "of God." Doubtless the descendants of the surviving Hagrites and Ishmaelites were among the allies of the Assyrian king, and saw in the ruin of Eastern Israel a retribution for the sufferings of their own people; but the later Jews and probably the exiles in "Halah, Habor, and Hara," and by "the river of Gozan," far away in North-eastern Mesopotamia, found the cause of their sufferings in too great an intimacy with their heathen neighbours: they had gone a-whoring after their gods.

The last two incidents which we shall deal with in this chapter serve to illustrate afresh the rough-and-ready methods by which the chronicler has knotted together threads of heterogeneous tradition into one tangled skein. We shall see further how ready ancient writers were to represent a tribe by the ancestor from whom it traced its descent. We read in vii. 20, 21, "The sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eleadah his son, and Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead, whom the men of Gath that were born in the land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle."

Ezer and Elead are apparently brothers of the second Shuthelah; at any rate, as six generations are mentioned between them and Ephraim, they would seem to have lived long after the Patriarch. Moreover, they came down to Gath, so that they must have lived in some hill-country not far off, presumably the hill-country of Ephraim. But in the next two verses (22 and 23) we read, "And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him. And he went in to his wife, and she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Beriah, because it went evil with his house."

Taking these words literally, Ezer and Elead were the actual sons of Ephraim; and as Ephraim and his family were born in Egypt and lived there all their days, these patriarchal cattle-lifters did not come down from any neighbouring highlands, but must have come up from Egypt, all the way from the land of Goshen, across the desert and past several Philistine and Canaanite towns. This literal sense is simply impossible. The author from whom the chronicler borrowed this narrative is clearly using a natural and beautiful figure to describe the distress in the tribe of Ephraim when two of its clans were cut off, and the fact that a new clan named *Beriah* was formed to take their place. Possibly we are not without information as to how this new clan arose. In viii. 13 we read of two Benjamites, "*Beriah* and Shema, who were heads of fathers' houses of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who put to flight

[96] Vv. 25, 26. Note the curious spelling *Tilgath-pilneser* for the more usual *Tiglath-pileser*.

the inhabitants of Gath." Beriah and Shema probably, coming to the aid of Ephraim, avenged the defeat of Ezer and Elead; and in return received the possessions of the clans, who had been cut off, and Beriah was thus reckoned among the children of Ephraim.[97]

The language of ver. 22 is very similar to that of Gen. xxxvii. 34, 35: "And Jacob mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him"; and the personification of the tribe under the name of its ancestor may be paralleled from Judges xxi. 6: "And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother."

Let us now reconstruct the story and consider its significance. Two Ephraimite clans, Ezer and Elead, set out to drive the cattle "of the men of Gath, who were born in the land," *i. e.*, of the aboriginal Avvites, who had been dispossessed by the Philistines, but still retained some of the pasture-lands. Falling into an ambush or taken by surprise when encumbered with their plunder, the Ephraimites were cut off, and nearly all the fighting men of the clans perished. The Avvites, reinforced by the Philistines of Gath, pressed their advantage, and invaded the territory of Ephraim, whose border districts, stripped of their defenders, lay at the mercy of the conquerors. From this danger they were rescued by the Benjamite clans Shema and Beriah, then occupying Aijalon[98]; and the men of Gath in their turn were defeated and driven back. The grateful Ephraimites invited their allies to occupy the vacant territory and in all probability to marry the widows and daughters of their slaughtered kinsmen. From that time onwards Beriah was reckoned as one of the clans of Ephraim.

The account of this memorable cattle foray is a necessary note to the genealogies to explain the origin of an important clan and its double connection with Ephraim and Benjamin. Both the chronicler and his authority recorded it because of its genealogical significance, not because they were anxious to perpetuate the memory of the unfortunate raid. In the ancient days to which the episode belonged, a frontier cattle foray seemed as natural and meritorious an enterprise as it did to William of Deloraine. The chronicler does not think it necessary to signify any disapproval it is by no means certain that he did disapprove – of such spoiling of the uncircumcised; but the fact that he gives the record without comment does not show that he condoned cattle-stealing. Men to-day relate with pride the lawless deeds of noble ancestors, but they would be dismayed if their own sons proposed to adopt the moral code of mediæval barons or Elizabethan buccaneers.

In reviewing the scanty religious ideas involved in this little group of family traditions, we have to remember that they belong to a period of Israelite history much older than that of the chronicler; in estimating their value, we have to make large allowance for the conventional ethics of the times. Religion not only serves to raise the standard of morality, but also to keep the average man up to the conventional standard; it helps and encourages him to do what he believes to be right as well as gives him a better understanding of what right means. Primitive religion is not to be disparaged because it did not at once convert the rough Israelite clansmen into Havelocks and Gordons. In those early days, courage, patriotism, and loyalty to one's tribesmen were the most necessary and approved virtues. They were fostered and stimulated by the current belief in a God of battles, who gave victory to His faithful people. Moreover, the idea of Deity implied in these traditions, though inadequate, is by no means unworthy. God is benevolent; He enriches and succours His people; He answers prayer, giving to Jabez the land and pasture for which he asked. He is a righteous God; He responds to and justifies His people's faith: "He was entreated of the Reubenites and Gadites because they put their trust in Him." On the other hand, He is a jealous God; He punishes Israel when they "trespass against the God of their fathers and go a-whoring after the gods of the peoples of the land." But the feeling here attributed to Jehovah is not merely one of personal jealousy. Loyalty to Him meant a great deal more than a preference for a god called Jehovah over a god called Chemosh. It involved a special

[97] Cf. Bertheau, i. 1.

[98] In Josh. xix. 42, xxi. 24, Aijalon is given to Dan; in Judges i. 34 it is given to Dan, but we are told that Amorites retained possession of it, but became tributary to the house of Joseph; in 2 Chron. xi. 10 it is given to "Judah and Benjamin." As a frontier town, it frequently changed hands.

recognition of morality and purity, and gave a religious sanction to patriotism and the sentiment of national unity. Worship of Moabite or Syrian gods weakened a man's enthusiasm for Israel and his sense of fellowship with his countrymen, just as allegiance to an Italian prince and prelate has seemed to Protestants to deprive the Romanist of his full inheritance in English life and feeling. He who went astray after other gods did not merely indulge his individual taste in doctrine and ritual: he was a traitor to the social order, to the prosperity and national union, of Israel. Such disloyalty broke up the nation, and sent Israel and Judah into captivity piecemeal.

Chapter V. The Jewish Community In The Time Of The Chronicler

We have already referred to the light thrown by Chronicles on this subject. Besides the direct information given in Ezra and Nehemiah, and sometimes in Chronicles itself, the chronicler by describing the past in terms of the present often unconsciously helps us to reconstruct the picture of his own day. We shall have to make occasional reference to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, but the age of the chronicler is later than the events which they describe, and we shall be traversing different ground from that covered by the volume of the "Expositor's Bible" which deals with them.

Chronicles is full of evidence that the civil and ecclesiastical system of the Pentateuch had become fully established long before the chronicler wrote. Its gradual origin had been forgotten, and it was assumed that the Law in its final and complete form had been known and observed from the time of David onwards. At every stage of the history Levites are introduced, occupying the subordinate position and discharging the menial duties assigned to them by the latest documents of the Pentateuch. In other matters small and great, especially those concerning the Temple and its sanctity, the chronicler shows himself so familiar with the Law that he could not imagine Israel without it. Picture the life of Judah as we find it in 2 Kings and the prophecies of the eighth century, put this picture side by side with another of the Judaism of the New Testament, and remember that Chronicles is about a century nearer to the latter than to the former. It is not difficult to trace the effect of this absorption in the system of the Pentateuch. The community in and about Jerusalem had become a Church, and was in possession of a Bible. But the hardening, despiritualising processes which created later Judaism were already at work. A building, a system of ritual, and a set of officials were coming to be regarded as the essential elements of the Church. The Bible was important partly because it dealt with these essential elements, partly because it provided a series of regulations about washings and meats, and thus enabled the layman to exalt his everyday life into a round of ceremonial observances. The habit of using the Pentateuch chiefly as a handbook of external and technical ritual seriously influenced the current interpretation of the Bible. It naturally led to a hard literalism and a disingenuous exegesis. This interest in externals is patent enough in the chronicler, and the tendencies of Biblical exegesis are illustrated by his use of Samuel and Kings. On the other hand, we must allow for great development of this process in the interval between Chronicles and the New Testament. The evils of later Judaism were yet far from mature, and religious life and thought in Palestine were still much more elastic than they became later on.

We have also to remember that at this period the zealous observers of the Law can only have formed a portion of the community, corresponding roughly to the regular attendants at public worship in a Christian country. Beyond and beneath the pious legalists were "the people of the land," those who were too careless or too busy to attend to ceremonial; but for both classes the popular and prominent ideal of religion was made up of a magnificent building, a dignified and wealthy clergy, and an elaborate ritual, alike for great public functions and for the minutiæ of daily life.

Besides all these the Jewish community had its sacred writings. As one of the ministers of the Temple, and, moreover, both a student of the national literature and himself an author, the chronicler represents the best literary knowledge of contemporary Palestinian Judaism; and his somewhat mechanical methods of composition make it easy for us to discern his indebtedness to older writers. We turn his pages with interest to learn what books were known and read by the most cultured Jews of his time. First and foremost, and overshadowing all the rest, there appears the Pentateuch. Then there is the whole array of earlier Historical Books: Joshua, Ruth, Samuel, and Kings. The plan of Chronicles excludes a direct use of Judges, but it must have been well known to our author. His appreciation of the Psalms is shown by his inserting in his history of David a cento of passages from Psalms xcvi., cv., and cvi.; on the other hand, Psalm xviii. and other lyrics given in the books of

Samuel are omitted by the chronicler. The later Exilic Psalms were more to his taste than ancient hymns, and he unconsciously carries back into the history of the monarchy the poetry as well as the ritual of later times. Both omissions and insertions indicate that in this period the Jews possessed and prized a large collection of psalms.

There are also traces of the Prophets. Hanani the seer in his address to Asa[99] quotes Zech. iv. 10: “The eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.” Jehoshaphat's exhortation to his people, “Believe in the Lord your God; so shall ye be established,”[100] is based on Isa. vii. 9: “If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.” Hezekiah's words to the Levites, “Our fathers … have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs,”[101] are a significant variation of Jer. ii. 27: “They have turned their back unto Me, and not their face.” The Temple is substituted for Jehovah.

There are of course references to Isaiah and Jeremiah and traces of other prophets; but when account is taken of them all, it is seen that the chronicler makes scanty use, on the whole, of the Prophetical Books. It is true that the idea of illustrating and supplementing information derived from annals by means of contemporary literature not in narrative form had not yet dawned upon historians; but if the chronicler had taken a tithe of the interest in the Prophets that he took in the Pentateuch and the Psalms, his work would show many more distinct marks of their influence.

An apocalypse like Daniel and works like Job, Proverbs, and the other books of Wisdom lay so far outside the plan and subject of Chronicles that we can scarcely consider the absence of any clear trace of them a proof that the chronicler did not either know them or care for them.

Our brief review suggests that the literary concern of the chronicler and his circle was chiefly in the books most closely connected with the Temple; viz., the Historical Books, which contained its history, the Pentateuch, which prescribed its ritual, and the Psalms, which served as its liturgy. The Prophets occupy a secondary place, and Chronicles furnishes no clear evidence as to other Old Testament books.

We also find in Chronicles that the Hebrew language had degenerated from its ancient classical purity, and that Jewish writers had already come very much under the influence of Aramaic.

We may next consider the evidence supplied by the chronicler as to the elements and distribution of the Jewish community in his time. In Ezra and Nehemiah we find the returning exiles divided into the men of Judah, the men of Benjamin, and the priests, Levites, etc. In Ezra ii. we are told that in all there returned 42,360, with 7,337 slaves and 200 “singing men and singing women.” The priests numbered 4,289; there were 74 Levites, 128 singers of the children of Asaph, 139 porters, and 392 Nethinim and children of Solomon's servants. The singers, porters, Nethinim, and children of Solomon's servants are not reckoned among the Levites, and there is only one guild of singers: “the children of Asaph.” The Nethinim are still distinguished from the Levites in the list of those who returned with Ezra, and in various lists which occur in Nehemiah. We see from the Levitical genealogies and the Levites in 1 Chron. vi., ix., etc, that in the time of the chronicler these arrangements had been altered. There were now three guilds of singers, tracing their descent to Heman, Asaph, and Ethan[102] or Jeduthun, and reckoned by descent among the Levites. The guild of Heman seems to have been also known as “the sons of Korah.”[103] The porters and probably eventually the Nethinim were also reckoned among the Levites.[104]

[99] 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

[100] 2 Chron. xx. 20.

[101] 2 Chron. xxix. 6.

[102] 1 Chron. vi. 31-48, xv. 16-20; cf. psalm titles.

[103] 1 Chron. vi. 33, 37; cf. Psalm lxxxviii. (title).

[104] 1 Chron. xvi. 38, 42.

We see therefore that in the interval between Nehemiah and the chronicler the inferior ranks of the Temple ministry had been reorganised, the musical staff had been enlarged and doubtless otherwise improved, and the singers, porters, Nethinim, and other Temple servants had been promoted to the position of Levites. Under the monarchy many of the Temple servants had been slaves of foreign birth; but now a sacred character was given to the humblest menial who shared in the work of the house of God. In after-times Herod the Great had a number of priests trained as masons, in order that no profane hand might take part in the building of his temple.

Some details have been preserved of the organisation of the Levites. We read how the porters were distributed among the different gates, and of Levites who were over the chambers and the treasuries, and of other Levites how —

"They lodged round about the house of God, because the charge was upon them, and to them pertained the opening thereof morning by morning.

"And certain of them had charge of the vessels of service; for by tale were they brought in, and by tale were they taken out.

"Some of them also were appointed over the furniture, and over all the vessels of the sanctuary, and over the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices.

"And some of the sons of the priests prepared the confection of the spices.

"And Mattithiah, one of the Levites who was the first-born of Shallum the Korahite, had the set office over the things that were baked in pans.

"And some of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the shewbread to prepare it every sabbath."[105]

This account is found in a chapter partly identical with Neh. xi., and apparently refers to the period of Nehemiah; but the picture in the latter part of the chapter was probably drawn by the chronicler from his own knowledge of Temple routine. So, too, in his graphic accounts of the sacrifices by Hezekiah and Josiah,[106] we seem to have an eyewitness describing familiar scenes. Doubtless the chronicler himself had often been one of the Temple choir "when the burnt-offering began, and the song of Jehovah began also, together with the instruments of David, king of Israel; and all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; and all this continued till the burnt-offering was finished."[107] Still the scale of these sacrifices, the hundreds of oxen and thousands of sheep, may have been fixed to accord with the splendour of the ancient kings. Such profusion of victims probably represented rather the dreams than the realities of the chronicler's Temple.

Our author's strong feeling for his own Levitical order shows itself in his narrative of Hezekiah's great sacrifices. The victims were so numerous that there were not priests enough to flay them; to meet the emergency the Levites were allowed on this one occasion to discharge a priestly function and to take an unusually conspicuous part in the national festival. In zeal they were even superior to the priests: "The Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests." Possibly here the chronicler is describing an incident which he could have paralleled from his own experience. The priests of his time may often have yielded to a natural temptation to shirk the laborious and disagreeable parts of their duty; they would catch at any plausible pretext to transfer their burdens to the Levites, which the latter would be eager to accept for the sake of a temporary accession of dignity. Learned Jews were always experts in the art of evading the most rigid and minute regulations of the Law. For instance, the period of service appointed for the Levites in the Pentateuch was from the age of thirty to that of fifty.[108] But we gather from Ezra and Nehemiah that comparatively few Levites

[105] 1 Chron. ix. 26-32; cf. 1 Chron. xxiii. 24-32.

[106] 2 Chron. xxix. – xxxi.; xxxiv.; xxxv.

[107] 2 Chron. xxix. 27, 28.

[108] Num. iv. 3, 23, 35.

could be induced to throw in their lot with the returning exiles; there were not enough to perform the necessary duties. To make up for paucity of numbers, this period of service was increased; and they were required to serve from twenty years old and upward.[109] As the former arrangement had formed part of the law attributed to Moses, in course of time the later innovation was supposed to have originated with David.

There were, too, other reasons for increasing the efficiency of the Levitical order by lengthening their term of service and adding to their numbers. The establishment of the Pentateuch as the sacred code of Judaism imposed new duties on priests and Levites alike. The people needed teachers and interpreters of the numerous minute and complicated rules by which they were to govern their daily life. Judges were needed to apply the laws in civil and criminal cases. The Temple ministers were the natural authorities on the Torah; they had a chief interest in expounding and enforcing it. But in these matters also the priests seem to have left the new duties to the Levites. Apparently the first "scribes," or professional students of the Law, were mainly Levites. There were priests among them, notably the great father of the order, "Ezra the priest the scribe," but the priestly families took little share in this new work. The origin of the educational and judicial functions of the Levites had also come to be ascribed to the great kings of Judah. A Levitical scribe is mentioned in the time of David.[110] In the account of Josiah's reign we are expressly told that "of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters"; and they are described as "the Levites that taught all Israel."[111] In the same context we have the traditional authority and justification for this new departure. One of the chief duties imposed upon the Levites by the Law was the care and carriage of the Tabernacle and its furniture during the wanderings in the wilderness. Josiah, however, bids the Levites "put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, did build; there shall no more be a burden upon your shoulders; now serve the Lord your God and His people Israel."[112] In other words, "You are relieved of a large part of your old duties, and therefore have time to undertake new ones." The immediate application of this principle seems to be that a section of the Levites should do all the menial work of the sacrifices, and so leave the priests, and singers, and porters free for their own special service; but the same argument would be found convenient and conclusive whenever the priests desired to impose any new functions on the Levites.

Still the task of expounding and enforcing the Law brought with it compensations in the shape of dignity, influence, and emolument; and the Levites would soon be reconciled to their work as scribes, and would discover with regret that they could not retain the exposition of the Law in their own hands. Traditions were cherished in certain Levitical families that their ancestors had been "officers and judges" under David[113]; and it was believed that Jehoshaphat had organised a commission largely composed of Levites to expound and administer the Law in country districts.[114] This commission consisted of five princes, nine Levites, and two priests; "and they taught in Judah, having the book of the law of the Lord with them; and they went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught among the people." As the subject of their teaching was the Pentateuch, their mission must have been rather judicial than religious. With regard to a later passage, it has been suggested that "probably it is the organisation of justice as existing in his own day that he" (the chronicler) "here carries back to Jehoshaphat, so that here most likely we have the oldest testimony to the synedrium of Jerusalem as a court of highest instance over the provincial synedria, as also to its composition and presidency."[115] We can scarcely doubt that the form the chronicler has given to the tradition is derived from the

[109] 1 Chron. xxiii. 24, 27. Probably "twenty" should be read for "thirty" in ver. 3.

[110] 1 Chron. xxiv. 6.

[111] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 13; xxxv. 3.

[112] 2 Chron. xxxv. 3; cf. 1 Chron. xxiii 26.

[113] 1 Chron. xxvi. 29.

[114] 2 Chron. xvii. 7, 9.

[115] Wellhausen, *History of Israel*, p. 191; cf. 2 Chron. xix. 4-11.

institutions of his own age, and that his friends the Levites were prominent among the doctors of the Law, and not only taught and judged in Jerusalem, but also visited the country districts.

It will appear from this brief survey that the Levites were very completely organised. There were not only the great classes, the scribes, officers, porters, singers, and the Levites proper, so to speak, who assisted the priests, but special families had been made responsible for details of service: "Mattithiah had the set office over the things that were baked in pans; and some of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the shewbread, to prepare it every sabbath."[116]

The priests were organised quite differently. The small number of Levites necessitated careful arrangements for using them to the best advantage; of priests there were enough and to spare. The four thousand two hundred and eighty-nine priests who returned with Zerubbabel were an extravagant and impossible allowance for a single temple, and we are told that the numbers increased largely as time went on. The problem was to devise some means by which all the priests should have some share in the honours and emoluments of the Temple, and its solution was found in the "courses." The priests who returned with Zerubbabel are registered in four families: "the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua; … the children of Immer; … the children of Pashhur; … the children of Harim."[117] But the organisation of the chronicler's time is, as usual, to be found among the arrangements ascribed to David, who is said to have divided the priests into their twenty-four courses.[118] Amongst the heads of the courses we find Jedaiah, Jeshua, Harim, and Immer, but not Pashhur. Post-Biblical authorities mention twenty-four courses in connection with the second Temple. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, belonged to the course of Abijah[119]; and Josephus mentions a course "Eniakim."[120] Abijah was the head of one of David's courses; and Eniakim is almost certainly a corruption of Eliakim, of which name Jakim in Chronicles is a contraction.

These twenty-four courses discharged the priestly duties each in its turn. One was busy at the temple while the other twenty-three were at home, some perhaps living on the profits of their office, others at work on their farms. The high-priest, of course, was always at the Temple; and the continuity of the ritual would necessitate the appointment of other priests as a permanent staff. The high-priest and the staff, being always on the spot, would have great opportunities for improving their own position at the expense of the other members of the courses, who were only there occasionally for a short time. Accordingly we are told later on that a few families had appropriated nearly all the priestly emoluments.

Courses of the Levites are sometimes mentioned in connection with those of the priests, as if the Levites had an exactly similar organisation.[121] Indeed, twenty-four courses of the singers are expressly named.[122] But on examination we find that "course" for the Levites in all cases where exact information is given[123] does not mean one of a number of divisions which took work in turn, but a division to which a definite piece of work was assigned, *e. g.*, the care of the shewbread or of one of the gates. The idea that in ancient times there were twenty-four alternating courses of Levites was not derived from the arrangements of the chronicler's age, but was an inference from the existence of priestly courses. According to the current interpretation of the older history, there must have been under the monarchy a very great many more Levites than priests, and any reasons that existed for organising twenty-four priestly courses would apply with equal force to the Levites. It is true that

[116] 1 Chron. ix. 31, 32.

[117] Ezra ii. 36-39.

[118] 1 Chron. xxiv. 1-19.

[119] Luke i. 5.

[120] *Bell. Jud.*, IV. iii. 8.

[121] 1 Chron. xxiv. 20-31; 2 Chron. xxxi. 2.

[122] 1 Chron. xxv.

[123] 1 Chron. xxvi.; Ezra vi. 18; Neh. xi. 36.

the names of twenty-four courses of singers are given, but in this list occurs the remarkable and impossible group of names already discussed: —

"*I-have-magnified*, *I-have-exalted-help*; *Sitting-in-distress*, *I-have-spoken In-abundance Visions*"[124] which are in themselves sufficient proof that these twenty-four courses of singers did not exist in the time of the chronicler.

Thus the chronicler provides material for a fairly complete account of the service and ministers of the Temple; but his interest in other matters was less close and personal, so that he gives us comparatively little information about civil persons and affairs. The restored Jewish community was, of course, made up of descendants of the members of the old kingdom of Judah. The new Jewish state, like the old, is often spoken of as "Judah"; but its claim to fully represent the chosen people of Jehovah is expressed by the frequent use of the name "Israel." Yet within this new Judah the old tribes of Judah and Benjamin are still recognised. It is true that in the register of the first company of returning exiles the tribes are ignored, and we are not told which families belonged to Judah or which to Benjamin; but we are previously told that the chiefs of Judah and Benjamin rose up to return to Jerusalem. Part of this register arranges the companies according to the towns in which their ancestors had lived before the Captivity, and of these some belong to Judah and some to Benjamin. We also learn that the Jewish community included certain of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh.[125] There may also have been families from the other tribes; St. Luke, for instance, describes Anna as of the tribe of Asher.[126] But the mass of genealogical matter relating to Judah and Benjamin far exceeds what is given as to the other tribes,[127] and proves that Judah and Benjamin were co-ordinate members of the restored community, and that no other tribe contributed any appreciable contingent, except a few families from Ephraim and Manasseh. It has been suggested that the chronicler shows special interest in the tribes which had occupied Galilee – Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun, and Issachar – and that this special interest indicates that the settlement of Jews in Galilee had attained considerable dimensions at the time when he wrote. But this special interest is not very manifest; and later on, in the time of the Maccabees, the Jews in Galilee were so few that Simon took them all away with him, together with their wives and their children and all that they had, and brought them into Judæa.

The genealogies seem to imply that no descendants of the Transjordanic tribes or of Simeon were found in Judah in the age of the chronicler.

Concerning the tribe of Judah, we have already noted that it included two families which traced their descent to Egyptian ancestors, and that the Kenizzite clans of Caleb and Jerahmeel had been entirely incorporated in Judah and formed the most important part of the tribe. A comparison of the parallel genealogies of the house of Caleb gives us important information as to the territory occupied by the Jews. In ii. 42-49 we find the Calebites at Hebron and other towns of the south country, in accordance with the older history; but in ii. 50-55 they occupy Bethlehem and Kirjath-jearim and other towns in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The two paragraphs are really giving their territory before and after the Exile; during the Captivity Southern Judah had been occupied by the Edomites. It is indeed stated in Neh. xi. 25-30 that the children of Judah dwelt in a number of towns scattered over the whole territory of the ancient tribe; but the list concludes with the significant sentence, "So they *encamped* from Beer-sheba unto the valley of Hinnom." We are thus given to understand that the occupation was not permanent.

We have already noted that much of the space allotted to the genealogies of Judah is devoted to the house of David.[128] The form of this pedigree for the generations after the Captivity indicates

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[124] Recently a complaint was received at the General Post-office that some newspapers sent from France had failed to arrive. It was stated that the names of the papers were —*Il me manque*; *Plusieurs; Journaux*; *i. e.*, I am short of "Several" "Papers."

[125] 1 Chron. ix. 3.

[126] Luke ii. 36.

[127] Levi of course excepted.

[128] 1 Chron. iii.

that the head of the house of David was no longer the chief of the state. During the monarchy only the kings are given as heads of the family in each generation: “Solomon's son was Rehoboam, Abijah his son, Asa his son,” etc., etc.; but after the Captivity the first-born no longer occupied so unique a position. We have all the sons of each successive head of the family.

The genealogies of Judah include one or two references which throw a little light on the social organisation of the times. There were “families of scribes which dwelt at Jabez”[129] as well as the Levitical scribes. In the appendix[130] to the genealogies of chap. iv. we read of a house whose families wrought fine linen, and of other families who were porters to the king and lived on the royal estates. The immediate reference of these statements is clearly to the monarchy, and we are told that “the records are ancient”; but these ancient records were probably obtained by the chronicler from contemporary members of the families, who still pursued their hereditary calling.

As regards the tribe of Benjamin, we have seen that there was a family claiming descent from Saul.

The slight and meagre information given about Judah and Benjamin cannot accurately represent their importance as compared with the priests and Levites, but the general impression conveyed by the chronicler is confirmed by our other authorities. In his time the supreme interests of the Jews were religious. The one great institution was the Temple; the highest order was the priesthood. All Jews were in a measure servants of the Temple; Ephesus indeed was proud to be called the temple-keeper of the great Diana, but Jerusalem was far more truly the temple-keeper of Jehovah. Devotion to the Temple gave to the Jews a unity which neither of the older Hebrew states had ever possessed. The kernel of this later Jewish territory seems to have been a comparatively small district of which Jerusalem was the centre. The inhabitants of this district carefully preserved the records of their family history, and loved to trace their descent to the ancient clans of Judah and Benjamin; but for practical purposes they were all Jews, without distinction of tribe. Even the ministry of the Temple had become more homogeneous; the non-Levitical descent of some classes of the Temple servants was first ignored and then forgotten, so that assistants at the sacrifices, singers, musicians, scribes, and porters, were all included in the tribe of Levi. The Temple conferred its own sanctity upon all its ministers.

In a previous chapter the Temple and its ministry were compared to a mediæval monastery or the establishment of a modern cathedral. In the same way Jerusalem might be compared to cities, like Ely or Canterbury, which exist mainly for the sake of their cathedrals, only both the sanctuary and city of the Jews came to be on a larger scale. Or, again, if the Temple be represented by the great abbey of St. Edmundsbury, Bury St. Edmunds itself might stand for Jerusalem, and the wide lands of the abbey for the surrounding districts, from which the Jewish priests derived their free-will offerings, and first-fruits, and tithes. Still in both these English instances there was a vigorous and independent secular life far beyond any that existed in Judæa.

A closer parallel to the temple on Zion is to be found in the immense establishments of the Egyptian temples. It is true that these were numerous in Egypt, and the authority and influence of the priesthood were checked and controlled by the power of the kings; yet on the fall of the twentieth dynasty the high-priest of the great temple of Amen at Thebes succeeded in making himself king, and Egypt, like Judah, had its dynasty of priest-kings.

The following is an account of the possessions of the Theban temple of Amen, supposed to be given by an Egyptian living about b. c. 1350[131]: —

“Since the accession of the eighteenth dynasty, Amen has profited more than any other god, perhaps even more than Pharaoh himself, by the Egyptian victories over the peoples of Syria and

[129] ii. 55.

[130] iv. 21-23.

[131] Maspero, *Ancient Egypt and Assyria*, p. 60.

Ethiopia. Each success has brought him a considerable share of the spoil collected upon the battle-fields, indemnities levied from the enemy, prisoners carried into slavery. He possesses lands and gardens by the hundred in Thebes and the rest of Egypt, fields and meadows, woods, hunting-grounds, and fisheries; he has colonies in Ethiopia or in the oases of the Libyan desert, and at the extremity of the land of Canaan there are cities under vassalage to him, for Pharaoh allows him to receive the tribute from them. The administration of these vast properties requires as many officials and departments as that of a kingdom. It includes innumerable bailiffs for the agriculture; overseers for the cattle and poultry; treasurers of twenty kinds for the gold, silver, and copper, the vases and valuable stuffs; foremen for the workshops and manufactures; engineers; architects; boatmen; a fleet and an army which often fight by the side of Pharaoh's fleet and army. It is really a state within the state."

Many of the details of this picture would not be true for the temple of Zion; but the Jews were even more devoted to Jehovah than the Thebans to Amen, and the administration of the Jewish temple was more than "a state within the state": it was the state itself.

Chapter VI. Teaching By Anachronism. 1 Chron. ix. (cf. xv., xvi., xxiii. – xxvii., etc.)

"And David the king said, … Who then offereth willingly?.. And they gave for the service of the house of God … ten thousand darics." – 1 Chron. xxix. 1, 5, 7.

Teaching by anachronism is a very common and effective form of religious instruction; and Chronicles, as the best Scriptural example of this method, affords a good opportunity for its discussion and illustration.

All history is more or less guilty of anachronism; every historian perforce imports some of the ideas and circumstances of his own time into his narratives and pictures of the past: but we may distinguish three degrees of anachronism. Some writers or speakers make little or no attempt at archæological accuracy; others temper the generally anachronistic character of their compositions by occasional reference to the manners and customs of the period they are describing; and, again, there are a few trained students who succeed in drawing fairly accurate and consistent pictures of ancient life and history.

We will briefly consider the last two classes before returning to the first, in which we are chiefly interested.

Accurate archæology is, of course, part of the ideal of the scientific historian. By long and careful study of literature and monuments and by the exercise of a lively and well-trained imagination, the student obtains a vision of ancient societies. Nineveh and Babylon, Thebes and Memphis, rise from their ashes and stand before him in all their former splendour; he walks their streets and mixes with the crowds in the market-place and the throng of worshippers at the temple, each "in his habit as he lived." Rameses and Sennacherib, Ptolemy and Antiochus, all play their proper parts in this drama of his fancy. He can not only recall their costumes and features: he can even think their thoughts and feel their emotions; he actually lives in the past. In *Marius the Epicurean*, in Ebers's *Uarda*, in Maspero's *Sketches of Assyrian and Egyptian Life*, and in other more serious works we have some of the fruits of this enlightened study of antiquity, and are enabled to see the visions at second hand and in some measure to live at once in the present and the past, to illustrate and interpret the one by the other, to measure progress and decay, and to understand the Divine meaning of all history. Our more recent histories and works on life and manners and even our historical romances, especially those of Walter Scott, have rendered a similar service to students of English history. And yet at its very best such realisation of the past is imperfect; the gaps in our information are unconsciously filled in from our experience, and the ideas of the present always colour our reproduction of ancient thought and feeling. The most accurate history is only a rough approximation to exact truth; but, like many other rough approximations, it is exact enough for many important practical purposes.

But scholarly familiarity with the past has its drawbacks. The scholar may come to live so much amongst ancient memories that he loses touch with his own present. He may gain large stores of information about ancient Israelite life, and yet not know enough of his own generation to be able to make them sharers of his knowledge. Their living needs and circumstances lie outside his practical experience; he cannot explain the past to them because he does not sympathise with their present; he cannot apply its lessons to difficulties and dangers which he does not understand.

Nor is the usefulness of the archæologist merely limited by his own lack of sympathy and experience. He may have both, and yet find that there are few of his contemporaries who can follow him in his excursions into bygone time. These limitations and drawbacks do not seriously diminish the value of archæology, but they have to be taken into account in discussing teaching by anachronism,

and they have an important bearing on the practical application of archæological knowledge. We shall return to these points later on.

The second degree of anachronism is very common. We are constantly hearing and reading descriptions of Bible scenes and events in which the centuries before and after Christ are most oddly blended. Here and there will be a costume after an ancient monument, a Biblical description of Jewish customs, a few Scriptural phrases; but these are embedded in paragraphs which simply reproduce the social and religious ideas of the nineteenth century. For instance, in a recent work, amidst much display of archæological knowledge, we have the very modern ideas that Joseph and Mary went up to Bethlehem at the census, because Joseph and perhaps Mary also had property in Bethlehem, and that when Joseph died "he left her a small but independent fortune." Many modern books might be named in which Patriarchs and Apostles hold the language and express the sentiments of the most recent schools of devotional Christianity; and yet an air of historical accuracy is assumed by occasional touches of archæology. Similarly in mediæval miracle-plays characters from the Bible appeared in the dress of the period, and uttered a grotesque mixture of Scriptural phrases and vernacular jargon. Much of such work as this may for all practical purposes be classed under the third degree of anachronism. Sometimes, however, the spiritual significance of a passage or an incident turns upon a simple explanation of some ancient custom, so that the archæological detail makes a clear addition to its interest and instructiveness. But in other cases a little archæology is a dangerous thing. Scattered fragments of learned information do not enable the reader in any way to revive the buried past; they only remove the whole subject further from his interest and sympathy. He is not reading about his own day, nor does he understand that the events and personages of the narrative ever had anything in common with himself and his experience. The antique garb, the strange custom, the unusual phrase, disguise that real humanity which the reader shares with these ancient worthies. They are no longer men of like passions with himself, and he finds neither warning nor encouragement in their story. He is like a spectator of a drama played by poor actors with a limited stock of properties. The scenery and dresses show that the play does not belong to his own time, but they fail to suggest that it ever belonged to any period. He has a languid interest in the performance as a spectacle, but his feelings are not touched, and he is never carried away by the acting.

We have laid so much stress on the drawbacks attaching to a little archæology because they will emphasise what we have to say about the use of pure anachronism. Our last illustration, however, reminds us that these drawbacks detract but little from the influence of earnest men. If the acting be good, we forget the scenery and costumes; the genius of a great preacher more than atones for poor archæology, because, in spite of dress and custom, he makes his hearers feel that the characters of the Bible were instinct with rich and passionate life. We thus arrive at our third degree of pure anachronism.

Most people read their Bible without any reference to archæology. If they dramatise the stories, they do so in terms of their own experience. The characters are dressed like the men and women they know: Nazareth is like their native village, and Jerusalem is like the county town; the conversations are carried on in the English of the Authorised Version. This reading of Scripture is well illustrated by the description in a recent writer of a modern prophet in Tennessee[132]: —

"There was nought in the scene to suggest to a mind familiar with the facts an Oriental landscape – nought akin to the hills of Judæa. It was essentially of the New World, essentially of the Great Smoky Mountains. Yet ignorance has its licence. It never occurred to Teck Jepson that his Bible heroes had lived elsewhere. Their history had to him an intimate personal relation, as of the story of an ancestor, in the homestead ways and closely familiar. He brooded upon these narratives, instinct with dramatic interest, enriched with poetic colour, and localised in his robust imagination, till he could trace Hagar's wild wanderings in the fastnesses, could show where Jacob slept and piled his altar of

[132] Craddock, *Despot of Bromsgrove Edge*. Teck Jepson is, of course, an imaginary character, but none the less representative.

stones, could distinguish the bush, of all others on the 'bald,' that blazed with fire from heaven when the angel of the Lord stood within it. Somehow, even in their grotesque variation, they lost no dignity in their transmission to the modern conditions of his fancy. Did the facts lack significance because it was along the gullied red clay roads of Piomingo Cove that he saw David, the smiling stripling, running and holding high in his hand the bit of cloth cut from Saul's garments while the king had slept in a cave at the base of Chilhowie Mountain? And how was the splendid miracle of translation discredited because Jepson believed that the chariot of the Lord had rested in scarlet and purple clouds upon the towering summit of Thunderhead, that Elijah might thence ascend into heaven?"

Another and more familiar example of "singular alterations in date and circumstances" is the version in *Ivanhoe* of the war between Benjamin and the other tribes: —

"How long since in Palestine a deadly feud arose between the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of the Israelitish nation; and how they cut to pieces well-nigh all the chivalry of that tribe; and how they swore by our blessed Lady that they would not permit those who remained to marry in their lineage; and how they became grieved for their vow, and sent to consult his Holiness the Pope how they might be absolved from it; and how, by the advice of the Holy Father, the youth of the tribe of Benjamin carried off from a superb tournament all the ladies who were there present, and thus won them wives without the consent either of their brides or their brides' families."

It is needless to say that the chronicler was not thus hopelessly at sea about the circumstances of ancient Hebrew history; but he wrote in the same simple, straightforward, childlike spirit. Israel had always been the Israel of his own experience, and it never occurred to him that its institutions under the kings had been other than those with which he was familiar. He had no more hesitation in filling up the gaps in the book of Kings from what he saw round about him than a painter would have in putting the white clouds and blue waters of to-day into a picture of skies and seas a thousand years ago. He attributes to the pious kings of Judah the observance of the ritual of his own times. Their prophets use phrases taken from post-Exilic writings. David is regarded as the author of the existing ecclesiastical system in almost all matters that do not date back to Moses, and especially as the organiser of the familiar music of the Temple. David's choristers sing the hymns of the second Temple. Amongst the contributions of his nobles towards the building of the Temple, we read of ten thousand darics, the daric being a coin introduced by the Persian king Darius.

But we must be careful to recognise that the chronicler writes in perfect good faith. These views of the monarchy were common to all educated and thoughtful men of his time; they were embodied in current tradition, and were probably already to be met with in writing. To charge him with inventing them is absurd; they already existed, and did not need to be invented. He cannot have coloured his narrative in the interests of the Temple and the priesthood. When he lived, these interests were guaranteed by ancient custom and by the authoritative sanction of the Pentateuchal Law. The chronicler does not write with the strong feeling of a man who maintains a doubtful cause; there is no hint of any alternative view which needs to be disproved and rejected in favour of his own. He expatiates on his favourite themes with happy, leisurely serenity, and is evidently confident that his treatment of them will meet with general and cordial approval.

And doubtless the author of Chronicles "served his own generation by the will of God," and served them in the way he intended. He made the history of the monarchy more real and living to them, and enabled them to understand better that the reforming kings of Judah were loyal servants of Jehovah and had been used by Him for the furtherance of true religion. The pictures drawn by Samuel and Kings of David and the best of his successors would not have enabled the Jews of his time to appreciate these facts. They had no idea of any piety that was not expressed in the current observances of the Law, and Samuel and Kings did not ascribe such observances to the earlier kings of Judah. But the chronicler and his authorities were able to discern in the ancient Scriptures the genuine piety of David and Hezekiah and other kings, and drew what seemed to them the obvious conclusion that these pious kings observed the Law. They then proceeded to rewrite the history in

order that the true character of the kings and their relation to Jehovah might be made intelligible to the people. The only piety which the chronicler could conceive was combined with observance of the Law; naturally therefore it was only thus that he could describe piety. His work would be read with eager interest, and would play a definite and useful part in the religious education of the people. It would bring home to them, as the older histories could not, the abiding presence of Jehovah with Israel and its leaders. Chronicles interpreted history to its own generation by translating older records into the circumstances and ideas of its own time.

And in this it remains our example. Chronicles may fall very far short of the ideal and yet be superior to more accurate histories which fail to make themselves intelligible to their own generation. The ideal history no doubt would tell the story with archæological precision, and then interpret it by modern parallels; the historian would show us what we should actually have seen and heard if we had lived in the period he is describing; he would also help our weak imagination by pointing us to such modern events or persons as best illustrate those ancient times. No doubt Chronicles fails to bring before our eyes an accurate vision of the history of the monarchy; but, as we have said, all history fails somewhat in this respect. It is simply impossible to fulfil the demand for history that shall have the accuracy of an architect's plans of a house or an astronomer's diagrams of the orbit of a planet. Chronicles, however, fails more seriously than most history, and on the whole rather more than most commentaries and sermons.

But this lack of archæological accuracy is far less serious than a failure to make it clear that the events of ancient history were as real and as interesting as those of modern times, and that its personages were actual men and women, with a full equipment of body, mind, and soul. There have been many teachers and preachers, innocent of archæology, who have yet been able to apply Bible narratives with convincing power to the hearts and consciences of their hearers. They may have missed some points and misunderstood others, but they have brought out clearly the main, practical teaching of their subject; and we must not allow amusement at curious anachronisms to blind us to their great gifts in applying ancient history to modern circumstances. For instance, the little captive maid in the story of Naaman has been described by a local preacher as having illuminated texts hung up in her bedroom, and (perambulators not being then in use) as having constructed a go-cart for the baby out of an old tea-chest and four cotton reels. We feel inclined to smile; but, after all, such a picture would make children feel that the captive maid was a girl whom they could understand and might even imitate. A more correct version of the story, told with less human interest, might leave the impression that she was a mere animated doll in a quaint costume, who made impossibly pious remarks.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.