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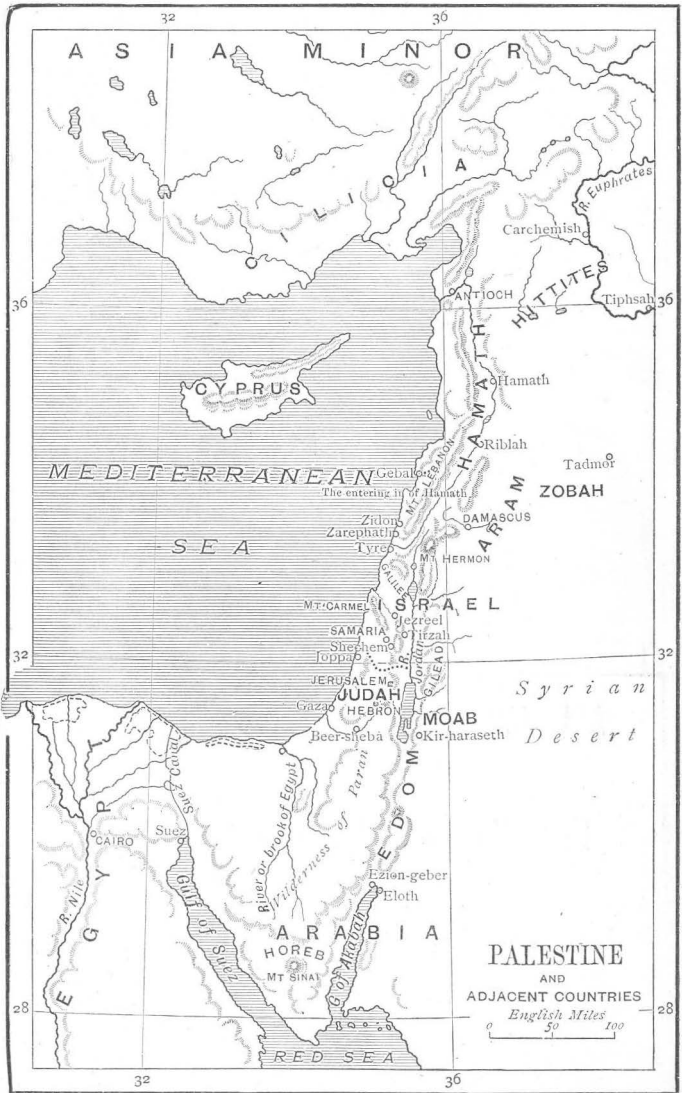


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Rivingtons' Books of the Bible

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THE  
SECOND BOOK OF KINGS

WITH

*INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND MAPS*

EDITED BY

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## PREFACE

THE notes in this edition aim at guiding the reader of the text, rather than at using it as the starting-point for the discussion of difficult questions. Thus where a point is not known with some degree of probability, it is as a rule passed by in silence; and details of little significance are not discussed.

The editor has kept recent theories about the Old Testament and the religion of Israel constantly in mind, and without obtruding them prematurely, hopes that he has prepared the way so that when the time comes for facing them, as come it must, there will be less shock than if the traditional views had been confidently asserted. He has also taken care to illustrate the Bible narrative by citing parallel passages from the Assyrian monuments, &c.

It seems unnecessary in a school book to give references to the authorities used, even in the Preface. It will be enough to commend Dr. Lumby's edition in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges to those who desire more elaborate notes.

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# INTRODUCTION

## *THE COMPOSITION AND CONTENTS OF THE BOOKS OF KINGS*

THE Books of Kings were certainly not written straight off as we have them now. Nor were they composed as Gibbon or Mommsen compose history. The writer, whoever he was,<sup>1</sup> adopted a simpler method. He took a bit from this previous writer, and a bit from that, and then pieced them together into a framework of his own invention. We all remember how his framework goes. "Now the rest of the acts of Menahem and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead. In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years." Sentences like this occur again and again to finish off one reign and begin another, and we may attribute them all to the compiler, who arranged and put together the records and the narratives which he borrowed from elsewhere.

But whence did he take this other material? He tells us. He mentions (a) the Book of the Acts of Solomon, for Solomon's reign; (b) the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, and (c) the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, for the reigns of the kings of the two kingdoms after the division. What, then, were these books? Let us first rid ourselves of a common mistake: they are none of them the same as that which we find in our Bibles under the name of the two Books of Chronicles. Our Books of Chronicles only

<sup>1</sup> It is thought that he lived at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. The last date mentioned in 2 Kings is 562 (xxv. 27-30).

tell us about the kings of Judah, so they cannot be (c). They are not called the Book of the Acts of Solomon, and they include many more reigns than his, so they cannot be (a). And they cover a great deal more ground than (b) did, for they begin with Adam, and only come to the kings of Judah (after Solomon) in chap. x. of the second Book.<sup>1</sup> Thus we are driven to the conclusion that the Books of the Chronicles of Israel and Judah which are quoted in Kings are lost, except so far as bits of them are preserved in the quotations.

Let us then see what we can learn from the Books of Kings themselves. We find that Solomon and other kings each kept a recorder or chronicler (see e.g. 2 Kings xviii. 18). His duty was to keep the official records, or chronicles, of the reign. And we conclude that the Books of Chronicles referred to by the compiler of the Books of Kings were either these records themselves or else books based upon them. But these chronicles would only relate political history, the public and official doings of the kings. And there must have been other records besides these, from which the compiler of the Books of Kings borrowed. It is thought, then, that (a) archives were also kept in the Temple, which would contain lists of the Temple properties, and a record of the Dedication and the like (1 Kings vi.-viii.). (b) We learn from 2 Chron. that various prophets wrote histories of the events of their times, viz. :—

Under Uzziah and Hezekiah, Isaiah (2 Chron. xxvi. 22, xxxii. 32) ;

under Manasseh, Hozai (or "the seers," R.V. margin, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 19) ;

while at the death of Josiah (2 Chron. xxxv. 25) Jeremiah wrote Lamentations (not the book so called in our Bibles, which was composed twenty-five years later).

And no doubt the later writers of history made use of these prophetic narratives. It seems almost certain, for example, that the story of Elisha was first written down by some members of the schools of the prophets ; and then this account was used by the compiler of Kings.

Out of these varying materials, then, our Books of Kings were put together, and Hebrew scholars notice differences of style between the different parts, which are, to some extent, traceable even in the English translation.

<sup>1</sup> Other and stronger reasons for the conclusion may be seen in any book on the date of the composition of the Books of Chronicles.

1 Kings contains the history of Solomon, and then of the divided kingdoms down to the deaths of Ahab of Israel in 853 B.C., and of Jehoshaphat of Judah in 849. 2 Kings gives the history of all the succeeding reigns in both kingdoms; viz.: in the north, of two kings of the house of Omri (Ahaziah and Jehoram); of five kings of the house of Jehu (Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II., and Zechariah); and of the five kings who followed with brief inglorious reigns, till the Assyrians destroyed the kingdom. These twelve reigns only lasted 131 years. The history of the southern kingdom lasts 136 years longer; but there were only sixteen reigns (including that of Queen Athaliah) in the whole 263 years contained in 2 Kings, and all the kings were of the house and lineage of David. At last, in 586, the Babylonians burned the Temple, carried the people captive, and dethroned the last son of David who sat on an earthly throne. Of the subsequent history only a single and trivial incident is mentioned, and the book ends quite abruptly. The narrative is not carried on in any other book of the Bible, for Ezra and Nehemiah are the continuation of 2 Chronicles, not of 2 Kings.

The period embraced.

The book also begins quite abruptly, for its first word is "and." Accordingly it is admitted on all hands that 1 Kings and 2 Kings are really only a single book. The case is the same with 1 and 2 Samuel; and the divisions of each of the larger books into two parts are only arbitrary, and were made first by the writers of the Septuagint, who translated the books into Greek.<sup>1</sup> They regarded the (double) Book of Samuel and the (double) Book of Kings as four books on the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Hence, 1 Samuel is called in Greek (Septuagint) and Latin (Vulgate) 1 Kings, and what we call 2 Kings is called 4 Kings. And this is what is meant when, in the heading in our Bibles, the book is called "The second Book of the Kings, commonly called the fourth Book of the Kings"; for when the Authorised Version was made the Vulgate titles for the books were the common, and the Hebrew titles the uncommon names for them. Three hundred years have just reversed the position, and it would be truer now to say "The second Book of the Kings, sometimes called the fourth."

The Books of Kings really continuous.

There is some reason for thinking that the two books of Samuel and the two books of Kings once formed a single

<sup>1</sup> From them it has been adopted by modern printers of Hebrew Bibles.



whole, an anonymous compilation, to which in each generation men would have felt free to add what they could; and if so, the books are not only composed of materials of very different dates, but also put together by at least two and probably more compilers. Throughout 2 Kings, however, the compilation is the work of a single hand, unless the last four verses were a later addition.

Be that as it may, 2 Kings is in any case the last section of a composite historical work, which took its present shape about 560 B.C. There is no particular reason why it should begin where it does; while at the end the compiler brought it down to his own time, but died before the power of Babylon began to wane, and that of the Persians to rise, bringing with it the dawn of a happier era for the Jews.

### THE TEXT

The  
Hebrew  
text,

and the  
Septuagint  
(Greek)  
text.

There is no need to say much about the text of 2 Kings, for such has been the minute accuracy of Jewish copyists and printers, and the zeal with which any copies containing erroneous (or even divergent) readings have been destroyed, that the Hebrew text of our Bibles has been unaltered for centuries. But this system of stereotyping one particular text had its beginning; and the Greek translation, the Septuagint, was made before the Hebrew was thus unalterably fixed. We find, therefore, in the Septuagint various deviations from the Hebrew, which sometimes bring us closer to the original. But the Septuagint itself is to be found in two sets of manuscripts, whose readings vary to a certain extent; and the translation from the Hebrew was not always made by very learned and careful men. It would, therefore, be a grave mistake to desert our present Hebrew text for the Septuagint, though it sometimes happens that a reference to the Septuagint explains some difficulty. A word or a sentence may have dropped out or have been misread in the Hebrew, and the mistake have been faithfully reproduced for centuries by the copyists, while all the time the key lay in the Septuagint. There are hardly any such instances in 2 Kings, but xvi. 6 affords an example.

## THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF ISRAEL

Palestine is a small country about the size of Belgium, with now only a tenth part of its population, but in Solomon's time with perhaps half. In the great movements of the nations it naturally played but a small part, out of all comparison with its moral and religious significance. Its only importance in the eyes of the world lay in its position on the high road between Asia and Africa. Successive powers overran Western Asia in turn, the Hittites, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Macedonia, with vast armies far outnumbering those of Israel and Judah, and each, in turn, had its wars with Egypt, and Palestine lay on the route of the advancing forces. Once only did the Israelites rise to anything like the footing of these great world-powers, and that was in the days of David and Solomon. The centralization of the nation under a military monarchy first delivered them, under Saul and David, from the hands of their Philistine oppressors; soon afterwards, under David, they stretched their borders to the east and south-east, subduing Edom, Moab, and Ammon; then, further away towards the north-east, capturing Damascus, and defeating Zobah and even Syrians from beyond the Euphrates. It would seem that at this epoch the great powers were dormant: the Hittites were dying down, Assyria was passing through a period of decline, Babylon did not interfere, and with Egypt Solomon entered into an alliance, marrying the daughter of Pharaoh. Another power of almost equal importance was Phœnicia, with her navy and trade, her colonies and maritime enterprise. And with her, too, Solomon entered into alliance and treaty.

The political aggrandizement of these reigns was naturally accompanied by a great advance in civilization and luxury. There is a vast difference between the simplicity of Saul's court and retinue, and the magnificence of Solomon. This increase of outward majesty was closely connected with the choice of Jerusalem as the permanent capital, and the adornment of it with costly buildings. Solomon was also famous for his learning, which was doubtless, like his taste for architecture, a link between him and the older civilizations of Egypt and Babylon. But, unhappily, Solomon's splendour was built up by severe taxation and oppression, and his admission of alien worships undermined the religious unity of the nation, and sapped the best men's confidence in the royal house of Judah.

**The importance of Palestine in history.**

**Only once really independent—under Solomon.**

**Growth of luxury and the arts.**

The weakness of the later kings.

When Solomon died, and Rehoboam's ill-timed roughness led to the division of the kingdoms, the nation quickly lost all its political influence on the world around. Wars between the two divisions, and the invasion of Shishak, king of Egypt, crippled their resources; and on the north-east the power of Damascus quickly rose, till Asa invoked the aid of Benhadad, its king, against Baasha, and in the next generation the king of Syria defeated the united forces of Israel and Judah. For nearly 150 years the struggle between the northern kingdom and Syria continued, and on the whole Israel had the worst of it. But at last a far greater power, the king of Assyria, attacked Damascus in the rear, and so gave Israel a short breathing space of prosperity under Jeroboam II. His death, however, was followed by internal dissensions and war between the two kingdoms; and once again Judah being hard pressed by Israel, now in alliance with Damascus, summoned aid from the north-east, and the Assyrians overran Syria and both parts of Palestine. The kingdom of Damascus was destroyed in 732, and that of Samaria in 722: but Jerusalem was delivered by the destruction of Sennacherib's host in 701, and lasted another hundred years, till Nineveh was destroyed by Babylon, and the victorious Nebuchadnezzar sweeping westward subjugated Judah, and on its revolting again annihilated it.

The northern kingdom the stronger.

When we compare the relative importance of the two kingdoms, it is needful to correct the prejudice that the religious influence of Jerusalem inevitably raises. Politically the northern kingdom soon became the greater, although it was always far more subject to revolutions. Unlike Jerusalem, the seat of government in the north was frequently changed: it was first at Shechem, then successively at Penuel and Tirzah, till Omri built Samaria, which remained the capital till the end. Again, while the south remained true to the House of David, the dynasties in the north were changed still more often than the capitals. Jeroboam was succeeded by his son Nadab; and Baasha, who dethroned Nadab, by his son; then Zimri's revolt only succeeded for seven days, when he was displaced by Omri. Thus two dynasties passed away in half a century; the third, that of Omri, lasted for four reigns, and the next, that of Jehu, for five; and then the confusion began again, and the kingdom came to an end with a number of "phantom kings," who held a merely nominal power for brief periods. But in the midst of this rapid succession of dynasties the two great families of Omri and Jehu succeeded

for 150 years in maintaining peace and order, a court of some splendour at home, and a fairly successful policy abroad. Moab, for example, which had, it seems, taken advantage of the divisions of Israel to throw off the yoke of subjection, was reconquered by Omri; and for forty (?) years it paid tribute to Samaria, only, however, to revolt again in the later days of Ahab.<sup>1</sup>

Religiously, the northern tribes still worshipped Jehovah, Its and Jehovah only, until Jezebel introduced the Phœnician idolatry. gods. And Jeroboam's opposition to the exclusive claims of the Temple at Jerusalem, though selfishly political in motive, is not to be regarded as an open defiance of God's known will. For it is clear that the consciences of good men of that period felt no strain in offering sacrifices to God in various spots up and down the country ("high places"). Thus Solomon sacrificed both at Gibeon and at Jerusalem; and Elijah offered sacrifice on Mount Carmel; and there is no breath of blame attaching to either in the matter.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the law laid down in Deuteronomy,<sup>3</sup> that there should be only a single central sanctuary, was either not yet promulgated, or forgotten. And, indeed, it only became practically possible to carry it out, first, when the nation had been united under the monarchy of David and Solomon, and the Temple built as the national centre of worship; and again, after the destruction of the northern kingdom, in the days of Hezekiah, when he could invite the remnant to join in his great Passover at Jerusalem (2 Chron. xxx.). And even so, the high places were not finally put down until the great movement of religious fervour, due to the discovery of the book of the law (*i.e.* Deuteronomy) in the Temple in the time of Josiah.<sup>4</sup> Jeroboam, then, was not so much guilty of what in modern language we should call schism, as of idolatry. He did defy what he knew to be God's express command, by setting up calves as emblems of Jehovah, emblems, too, which, to men of that age and country, suggested His identification with the sun and various gods of the heathen. But still he meant to worship Jehovah, the

The calf-images of Jeroboam.

<sup>1</sup> See "The Moabite Stone," p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> At a later date, however, the compiler of Kings throws back blame on the kings who did not put down all ceremonial worship at high places, and confine sacrifice to Jerusalem, leaving to country towns and villages only the services of the synagogue, namely, prayer and reading, without sacrifice or incense.

<sup>3</sup> Especially in chap. xii.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Kings xxii.

Baal-worship established by Ahab.

national God of the children of Israel, and it was not till Ahab fell under Jezebel's influence that any king of Ephraim acted like Solomon, and allowed the worship of alien gods to be openly practised. At last Jezebel went much further than Solomon, for she hunted down the prophets of Jehovah, and sought to enforce her idolatrous worships on all Ahab's subjects. The worship of Jehovah, however, lingered on in secret,<sup>1</sup> and was restored by Jehu, who extirpated Baal-worship so that it never appeared again in Israel. Yet in spite of Elijah and Elisha, of Amos and Hosea, true spiritual religion declined, in the northern kingdom, till it was too feeble to bear the chastisement of the captivity, and died out in exile.

Condition of Judah.

The loss of by far the greater part of the territory governed by Solomon reduced the southern kingdom to a very humble position. It was overrun by the Egyptians, and for some time suffered from constant wars with Ephraim. And though Asa succeeded in repelling a second Egyptian invasion, and in averting the threatened attack of Baasha, still, so long as the dynasties of Omri and Jehu governed Israel, Judah was comparatively insignificant: her chief effort was to get a port on the Red Sea and trade with the East. And when Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram or Joram, married<sup>2</sup> Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, the prevailing influence at Jerusalem was, for twenty years, that of Samaria. A successful conspiracy, however, put an end to Athaliah's usurpation, and led to a religious reformation within and independence without; and Amaziah and Uzziah won victories over Edom and other neighbouring tribes. But under Ahaz, as has been already said, Judah was again hard pressed by the allied forces of Israel and Syria, and under his successors it was almost annihilated by the Assyrian invasions. And so it sank lower and lower in political importance till Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and abolished the kingdom. But outward appearances were deceptive; the greater glories of Samaria were built on no sure foundation, and soon fell to ruin, and the hope of the children of Israel lay in the weaker, but more religious,<sup>3</sup> kingdom of Judah, and the line of David.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xix. 18 (R. V.).

<sup>2</sup> It is quite likely that this alliance was forced on the reluctant Jehoshaphat by the superior power of Samaria.

<sup>3</sup> In Judah, too, there were times of idolatry and immorality. Ahaz and Manasseh were worse than any of the northern kings, except, perhaps, Ahab. But there were many religious revivals, e.g. under Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

## THE PROPHETS

A prophet properly means a spokesman, one appointed to speak in someone else's name. Aaron is Moses' prophet (Ex. vii. 1, iv. 16). Jeremiah is as Jehovah's mouth (Jer. xv. 19, i. 9). The prophets therefore usually begin their utterance with "Thus saith the LORD"; and their message is constantly called "the word of the LORD." This message might or might not contain a prediction of the future. Moses *e.g.* is a typical prophet (Deut. xviii. 18); he spoke to the people on God's behalf (Ex. xx. 19), but there is but little prediction in his sayings. And the same might be said of Samuel. Jonah again (we are told) predicted the immediate destruction of Nineveh, but this was averted by the people's penitence: yet he was none the less a true prophet, because his warnings had their effect. When the prophets predict, as they often do, it is for the benefit primarily of those of their own day who heard them; God sent them to warn or encourage, to threaten or kindle hope. It is true that their words often had depths of meaning beyond what their contemporaries, or probably they themselves, realized; and it was only in our Lord that their prophecies were "fulfilled," filled out fully, as *e.g.* Isaiah liii. But there was always a primary reference to the needs of the moment, and it has been a disastrous mistake to look upon prophecy merely as "the history of events before they come to pass."

Another common error is to think of the prophets as almost isolated, each in his generation. On the contrary, there were always numbers of prophets from the days of Samuel (1 Sam. iii. 1, 20, 21, ix. 9, x. 5) to the Captivity. For prophecy was a profession for which men were trained in what were called "the schools of the prophets," an institution said to have been founded by Samuel. These schools were something like monasteries and something like theological colleges. They were religious houses, where men lived in common: the younger in preparation for the prophets' work of preaching the word, the elder often, as it would seem, employed like mediæval monks in keeping records of events (see p. viii.), as well as in religious exercises and in training the younger members. We hear of such schools in Samuel's time at Gibeah and Ramah (1 Sam. x. 10, xix. 20), in Elisha's days at Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal, and perhaps Carmel (2 Kings ii. 3, 5, iv. 38, and iv. 25, etc.); all

of them, we may notice, in the northern kingdom. The prophets seem to have worn a hairy mantle as a sort of uniform (Zech. xiii. 4; 2 Kings i. 8); and they often enforced their meaning by symbolic acts (2 Kings xiii. 15-19).

Of these numerous prophets some were true, some false. The false cried "Jehovah saith" when He had not sent them (Ezek. xiii. 6). They said what would be popular, or gain them favour with the king; or, since the prophets were looked upon with half-superstitious dread as having power with God, they threatened ruin in order that the king might buy off their curses (Amos vii. 12). The true prophet was practically much like a Christian preacher; he tried to teach people to be righteous and God-fearing. (*Cf.* the prophets in 1 Cor. xiv). For a long time they spoke and did not write their message. Only when men persisted in unbelief did they put their warnings on record, that men might know that there had been a prophet among them (*e.g.* see Jer. xxxvi).

Prophecy was not confined to Israel, or to the worshippers of the true God; for while some prophesied in the name of Jehovah, others did so in the name of Baal (2 Kings x. 19). And there were the oracles in Greece, and in Arabia Mahomed. Sometimes, especially among the worshippers of idols, we find the prophets raving in frenzy, like the howling and dancing dervishes of to-day. (See 1 Kings xviii. 28, and compare 1 Sam. xix. 20-24). 1 Sam. x. 5 and 2 Kings iii. 15 connect music with prophecy. "But the method of true revelation has nothing in common with the art of the diviner. . . . The characteristic of the true prophet is that he retains his consciousness and self-control under revelation."<sup>1</sup>

The following prophets are mentioned in 2 Kings:—Elijah (i. 2 and 2 Chron. xxi. 12), Elisha (ii.-xiii.), Jonah (xiv. 25), Isaiah (xix., xx), and Huldah the prophetess (xxii. 14). In the chapters of 2 Chronicles which treat of this period, besides the above-mentioned and those who wrote the prophetic histories (see p. viii.), we hear of Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (xxiv. 20), two prophets not named (xxv. 7, 15), Oded (xxviii. 9), Jeremiah (xxxvi. 12, 21). Further, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and perhaps Joel and Obadiah wrote their prophecies in this period. (See Appendix, pp. 109-112.)

<sup>1</sup> ROBERTSON SMITH, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2nd ed., pp. 288, 289.

## THE GODS OF THE HEATHEN

In the Books of Kings mention is made of the worship of several gods and goddesses besides Jehovah, the LORD.<sup>1</sup> At this period, among the Semitic<sup>2</sup> peoples each nation was supposed to have its own special god, who protected it; he was, as it were, attached to the soil (2 Kings xvii. 26 foll.), and to go outside his territory was to pass into the sphere of some other god (1 Sam. xxvi. 19). Immigrants, however, often brought their worship with them, and combined it with the local cult: a proceeding which caused little difficulty among polytheists (2 Kings xvii. 41). Moreover, the ideas connected with the different gods of kindred tribes would be very similar, and so their worships were often confused.<sup>3</sup> The ordinary Israelite of this date never thought of Jehovah as the god of the heathen or of the whole earth; but it was his duty as a Hebrew to worship Jehovah, and to worship any other god was faithlessness, like that of an unfaithful wife. The gods of the other nations existed, each in his sphere (*e.g.* see Judges xi. 24), but were not to be treated with reverence. The idea that there was but one God of all the nations of the earth was held by a few, *e.g.* by prophets like Amos and Isaiah; and then the experiences of the captivity in Babylon widened men's conceptions of Jehovah's sway; but the idea of a single Catholic or universal religion only began to inspire missionary effort under the influence of our Lord and of St. Paul.

Accordingly just as the God of Israel was Jehovah, so the god of Moab was Chemosh, and the god of Ammon a deity known to us by the names of Milcom and Molech, words which mean "king," and are not proper names at all. We know very little of the worship of Chemosh, except that the king of Moab offered up his eldest son to the god (2 Kings iii. 27), a practice which at times threatened to take root in Israel, but which was forbidden in the name of Jehovah by

<sup>1</sup> This word, when printed in capitals, always represents Jehovah, the personal name of God. The later Jews, from reverence, never pronounced this sacred name, but used a word meaning "lord" instead. Hence the Sept. *κύριος* and English LORD. In this way the tradition of the true pronunciation died out; but it was probably Yahweh. The vowels of Jehovah are certainly wrong, the consonants right.

<sup>2</sup> Those supposed to be descended from Shem, viz. the Hebrews and kindred races.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Ashtar-Chemosh occurs on the Moabite Stone (see p. 14).



His prophets and representatives (*e.g.* Micah vi. 7.) Molech was propitiated by the burning of children in his honour. This horrible rite was established in Jerusalem by Ahaz and Manasseh (see also Jer. vii. 31); but, so far as we know, was never practised in the northern kingdom.

Baal means the owner of the land, lord, husband; and in old days it had so little suggestion of evil that the title was applied to Jehovah. Thus Saul called one of his sons Esh-baal, and Jonathan his son Merib-baal (1 Chron. viii. 33, 34, see R.V. margin). But later on the title becomes the proper name of the god of the Phœnicians,<sup>1</sup> who was also called Melkarth, and was identified by the Greeks with Heracles. Ashtoreth (ō) was his consort, and was perhaps associated with the Moon or the planet Venus; in Herodotus i. 105 it is probably her temple (at Ashkelon) that is called the temple of Aphrodite. Both Baal and Ashtoreth were worshipped under several titles, like the gods of Greece and Rome, and so we find in the Bible the plural forms Baalim and Ashtaroth. The worship of these gods was generally licentious and immoral.

Some think that Asherah (ē like French ê)<sup>2</sup> was another and distinct goddess of fertility; others that the word means the sacred emblem of Ashtoreth. But more probably the pole or tree, called the Asherah, was used as a sacred emblem and even embodiment of any god or goddess; for it seems that idolatrous worshippers of Jehovah Himself might associate an Asherah with Him, since Jehu, who stamped out the worship of Baal, left an Asherah standing at Samaria (2 Kings xiii. 6).

The worship of all these gods was from time to time practised among the Israelites, and that for several reasons. First, Solomon and Ahab in spite of the law (Ex. xxxiv. 16) married foreigners, and their wives—especially Ahab's wife Jezebel—introduced their native gods. Secondly, the settlers planted in the northern kingdom by Sargon brought their ancestral worships with them. Thirdly, Jehovah was a holy and righteous God, and therefore demanded purity and righteousness in His worshippers; and at least in the southern kingdom His worship was spiritual, not idolatrous and sensuous; and therefore the debased worships of the heathen were more congenial to superstitious and immoral men. For religion and character are closely connected. As is the man, so is his idea of God. And as his idea of God, so will his conduct tend to be.

<sup>1</sup> See note on iii. 2.    <sup>2</sup> The word is mistranslated "grove" in A. V.

## THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

Assyria is the northern part of the great plain of Mesopotamia, and is bounded by the mountains of Armenia on the north, and by Media on the east. The capital was Nineveh on the Tigris, which lay about 250 miles north of Babylon, which is on the Euphrates, and about 400 east of Antioch and the Mediterranean.

Like the Babylonians, the Assyrians were of mixed descent, but they spoke a Semitic language,<sup>1</sup> akin to Hebrew, Aramaic, Phœnician, Arabic, etc. From very early days there were constant wars between Nineveh and Babylon, and the balance of power often changed : but Nineveh was on the whole the superior from B.C. 900 for three centuries, until about 607 (just before the close of the Jewish monarchy, with which 2 Kings ends) Nineveh was destroyed, and the seventy years of Babylonian supremacy began, only to end in the victories of Cyrus the Persian.

Ever since its destruction Nineveh has been deserted, but in the middle of this century the site was rediscovered by Sir Henry Layard, and vast numbers of relics unearthed, some of which are to be seen in the British Museum. In particular, there were a great number of monuments inscribed in "cuneiform" character, that is, where the elements of which the letters are formed are not, as in our alphabet, straight lines and circles, but wedge-shaped,<sup>2</sup> like arrow-heads. The key to the inscription was found when Sir Henry Rawlinson deciphered the great monument of Darius Hystaspes at Behistun ; and thus matter of the greatest historical interest was made known, and ever since then Assyriology has been throwing more and more light on Old Testament History.

The Assyrians were in some ways a highly civilized people, skilful in architecture and sculpture, with libraries and a literature, with carefully kept records, and some knowledge of Natural Science. And they were great conquerors. But

<sup>1</sup> Aramaic gradually replaced the old Assyrian language in Assyria, as it also ousted Hebrew in Palestine. See note on xviii. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Cuneus is the Latin for wedge.

though year after year they overran the neighbouring countries, they had but little influence on their subjects, for they were incapable of organizing the conquered provinces, or civilizing those under their sway. Their one idea was to root up the vanquished from their homes and transplant them to some other district,<sup>1</sup> in order as it seems to destroy local patriotism and obliterate national distinctions. Thus though they have been called the Romans of Asia, they made no such mark on other countries as the Roman conquests left in France, Spain, and even Britain.

The Assyrians naturally often came into contact with the Israelites, and the records of these incidents, owing to the comparative exactness of the Assyrian chronology, give us fixed dates of great importance in Bible History. We learn the following facts from the Assyrian monuments :—

In 854 *Shalmaneser* II. defeated at Karkar Ahab, king of Samaria, and Benhadad II., king of Damascus.

In 842 he took tribute from Jehu, whom he miscalls "the son of Omri." The picture of the Hebrew ambassador prostrate before Shalmaneser is to be seen on the Black Obelisk in the British Museum.

In 740 *Tiglath-pileser* II. says he conquered towns near Hamath, which had revolted from him to Azariah (= Uzziah, king of Judah).

In 738 he took tribute from Menahem of Samaria (xv. 19) and Rezin of Damascus.

In 734 he conquered Israel, "the land of the house of Omri," slew Pekah, made Hoshea king in his place, and deported many of the Israelites to Assyria (xv. 29, 30; xvi. 7).

In 732 he captured Damascus and slew Rezin (xvi. 9).

In 728 he received tribute from Ahaz, king of Judah.

In 727 *Tiglath-pileser* died and *Shalmaneser* IV. succeeded him.

[During *Shalmaneser's* reign, of which we have no Assyrian annals, So king of Egypt encouraged Hoshea to revolt from Assyria, and in 725 *Shalmaneser* began the siege of Samaria (xvii. 3-5).]

In 722 *Sargon*<sup>2</sup> made himself king, and captured Samaria. He deported 27,280 of the inhabitants of the northern kingdom, and in their place settled men of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 2 Kings xvii. 6, 24; xviii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Mentioned by name in the Bible only in Isaiah xx. 1, but see notes on xvii. 6, xviii. 10.

other captured countries (xvii. 6, 24). Sargon also calls himself conqueror of Judah, but on what grounds is not known. In the same year Merodach-Baladan made himself king of Babylon.

In 710 Sargon drove Merodach-Baladan from Babylon.

In 705 Sargon died, and his son *Sennacherib* succeeded. Merodach-Baladan raised a revolt in Babylon, but without success (xx. 12).

In 701 Sennacherib overran all Palestine. He relates how he conquered Hezekiah's fenced cities and exacted vast sums from him, but significantly does not say that he captured Jerusalem itself, nor how the campaign ended (xviii. 13-xix. 36).

In 681 Sennacherib was succeeded by his son *Esar-haddon* (xix. 37).

Except for the captivity of Manasseh (not in Kings, but in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11), and an allusion to the war in which Nineveh was finally overthrown (2 Kings xxiii. 29), we hear no more of the Assyrians in the historical books of the Bible.

It will be clear from the above that Assyria (capital, Nineveh) is a wholly different nation from Syria (capital, Damascus).

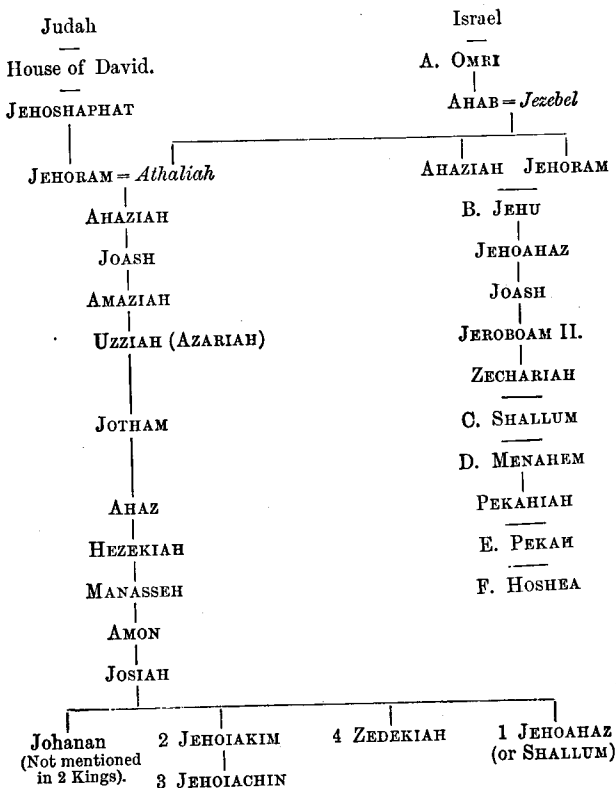
*THE VALUE OF THE HISTORICAL BOOKS  
OF THE BIBLE*

In the Books of Kings we have the common everyday history of the children of Israel. It seems, for the most part, to be much like the history of any other nation: there are wars, revolutions and conspiracies, the rise and fall of dynasties, dull periods alternating with great crises. And we begin to wonder why such narratives should have a place in the Bible. The question has more answers than one. The history is told partly to show that God does care about politics and national events: for in truth He is interested in all that may lawfully and honourably interest us. Secondly, there are lessons of national morality to be studied in history, just as we find in biography lessons about the characters of individuals. Righteousness, for example, does exalt a nation (Prov. xiv. 34), and luxury and oppression, such as Amos and Hosea describe as existing in Israel under Jeroboam II., soon entail ruin. And again, though kings or states may, like Jeroboam I., try to create a religion, the result of their efforts will have no power to build up national unity; thus the ten tribes, when carried away captive, seem to have been absorbed by their conquerors, just because they lacked the religious steadfastness of the Babylonian captives from Jerusalem. Thirdly, we see how God controls the movements of nations so that, though they know it not, they carry out His will. And so we see the wisdom of God manifest in History as well as in Nature.

So much would be true of any history. But, in the case of the history of the children of Israel, we may add that the nation was being trained by God to be the home of His Son when the time should come for Him to enter the world in flesh, and the record of that training exhibits some striking features of God's character, His patience, His readiness to put up with imperfect things in an imperfect age, His determination to leave men free to choose between good and evil. And we see, too, in some parts of the story—for example, the career of Manasseh—God's hatred of evil, and His "jealousy" in punishing all worship of other gods.

We expect, then, to find in the Books of Kings commonplace details, and the ordinary events of history; but, as we look into the story deeper, we see more and more of God's working behind it. It is very easy to treat the book as a collection of stories of more or less interest, but it will take a wise man to learn half of what it has to teach.

TABLE OF THE REIGNING DYNASTIES  
IN THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS



Sovereigns are printed in capitals, women in italics.

The numerals indicate the order in which Josiah's successors reigned.

*CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE*

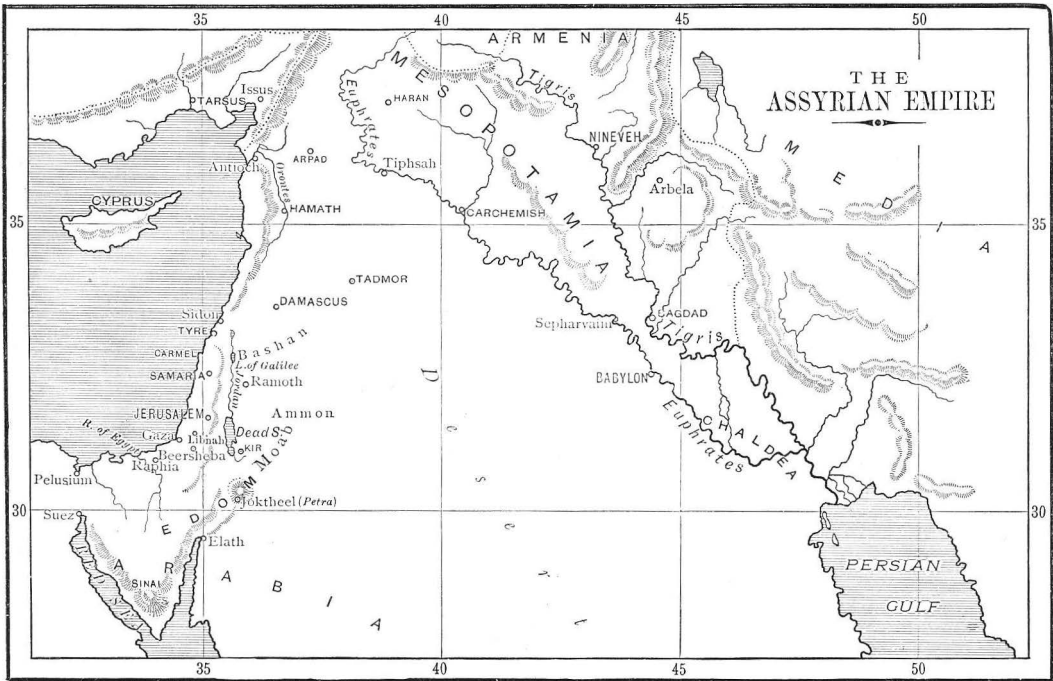
<i>JUDAH.</i>	<i>ISRAEL.</i>
934. REHOBOAM.	934. { JEROBOAM.
917. ABIJAH.	912. { NADAB.
914. ASA.	911. { BAASHA.
	888. { ELAH.
	887. { OMRI.
873. JEHOSEPHAT.	876. { AHAB.
	853. { AHAZIAH.
849. JEHORAM.	852. { JEHORAM.
Revolt of Edom and Libnah.	Elijah's ascension.
	Elisha's career.
	War with Moab.
	War with Syria (Benhadad II.)
	Hazael seizes the throne of Syria.
843. AHAZIAH (slain by Jehu). ATHALIAH seizes the throne.	843. { JEHU.
	Hazael conquers all the country east of Jordan.
838. Athaliah slain. JOASH set on the throne. Joash repairs the Temple. " buys off the Syrians.	816. { JEHOIAH.
	Further Syrian successes. Benhadad III. succeeds Hazael.
800. AMAZIAH. Defeats Edom. Is defeated by Israel.	801. { JOASH.
	Death of Elisha. Victories over Syria and Judah.
780. UZZIAH (or AZARIAH). Fortifies Elath. Defeats Philistines and Arabians. The Ammonites pay tribute.	786. { JEROBOAM II.
	The kingdom extended to its old frontiers. Amos and Hosea prophesy.
	747. { ZECHARIAH.
	SHALLUM.
740. JOTHAM. Isaiah's call.	746. { MENAHEM.
	738. { PEKAHIAH.

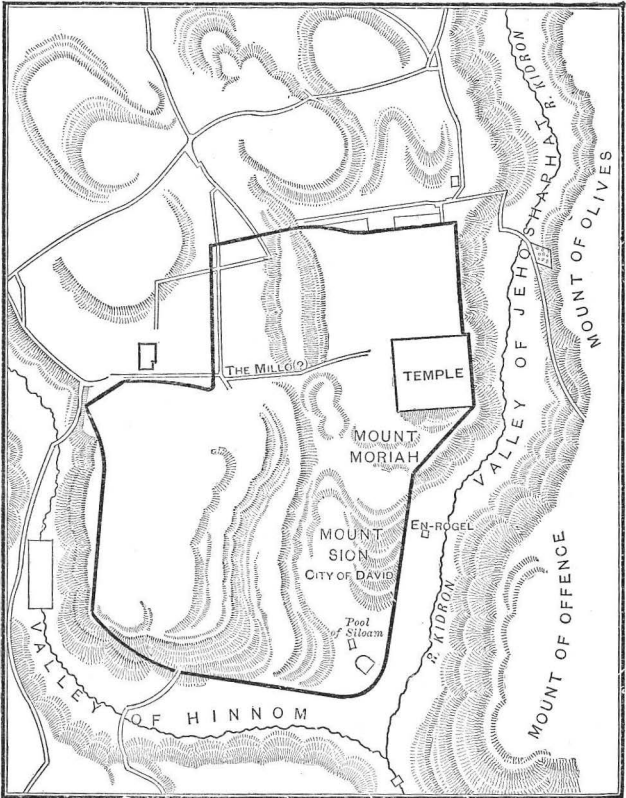
JUDAH.	ISRAEL.
735. AHAZ.	737. PEKAH.
Israel and Syria combine against Judah.	734. Tiglath-pileser carries Galilee captive.
	HOSHEA.
723. HEZEKIAH.	722. End of the northern kingdom.
Hezekiah's illness. Merodach-Baladan's embassy.	Sargon deports 27,000 of the people to Mesopotamia.
Isaiah and Micah prophesy.	
701. Sennacherib's invasion.	
696. MANASSEH.	
641. AMON.	
639. JOSIAH.	
622. Josiah's reformation.	
Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk prophesy.	
609. JEHOAHAZ.	
608. JEHOIAKIM.	
607. Destruction of Nineveh.	
605. Babylon defeats Egypt at Carchemish.	
597. JEHOIACHIN.	
Capture of Jerusalem and first deportation of inhabitants (including Ezekiel).	
596. ZEDEKIAH.	
586. End of the kingdom of Judah.	Destruction of the Temple and second deportation.





# THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE





JERUSALEM.

## THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

### I.

<sup>1</sup>THEN Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. Israel.  
Ahaziah.

<sup>2</sup>And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick : and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. <sup>3</sup>But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? <sup>4</sup>Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.

<sup>5</sup>And when the messengers turned back unto him,

1 The first word should be *And*: the division between this book and 1 Kings is quite arbitrary, and they originally formed one book together.

*Moab.* See chap. iii. 4.

2 *Baal-zebub*, "lord of flies," *i.e.* the god who is able to control them. Flies are often a serious plague in a hot country.

*Ekron* was the northernmost of the five chief cities of the Philistines.

3 LORD in capital letters represents Jehovah (probably pronounced Yahweh), the personal name of the God of Israel, as Apollo and Minerva were personal names. It is a pity that it is translated by a title. See also Introduction, p. xvii.

*Tishbite*, *i.e.* born at Tishbeh in Gilead, a place not otherwise known.

*Is it because there is no God in Israel?* R.V., and so also in vv. 6 and 16.

Israel.  
Ahaziah.

he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back? <sup>6</sup>And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Is it [not] because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to enquire of Baal-zebub the God of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. <sup>7</sup>And he said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words? <sup>8</sup>And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.

<sup>9</sup>Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. <sup>10</sup>And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. <sup>11</sup>Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. <sup>12</sup>And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

<sup>13</sup>And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with

8 *Hairy man*, i.e. man with a garment of hair. He wore the rough mantle, which is mentioned in Zech. xiii. 4 as the usual dress of a prophet. This garb was also worn by John the Baptist.

9 *Man of God*. See note on iv. 9.

10 The captain's peremptory orders, uttered in a tone of scorn, showed that he had no respect for the man of God or for God Himself. And Elijah, on the principle that "He that despiseth you despiseth Me," called down punishment on him. The old covenant was full of such terrors, for in rough days men needed rough lessons; but our Lord rebuked His fiery apostles when they proposed to call down a similar punishment on the Samaritans who would not receive them (Luke ix. 54).

his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. <sup>14</sup>Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight. <sup>15</sup>And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king. <sup>16</sup>And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, is it [not] because there is no God in Israel to enquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

<sup>17</sup>So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son. <sup>18</sup>Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

## II.

<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went

<sup>16</sup> *Is it because there is no God in Israel?* as in verse 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Jehoram* was Ahaziah's brother.

It is difficult to reconcile this reckoning with iii. 1, and viii. 16. Either this verse contains an error, or it may have happened that during the last years of Jehoshaphat's reign his son Jehoram reigned with him (see note on viii. 16); and if so his reign is here supposed to begin six years earlier than in the other passages.

<sup>18</sup> *The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel*, i.e. the official records of the public acts of the kings, used by the compiler of the Books of Kings but now lost to us (see note on viii. 23, and Introduction p. viii.).

## II.

1 As Elijah always appears abruptly, both at his first mention in the narrative (1 Kings xvii. 1), and before the contest on Carmel (xviii. 7), and in Naboth's vineyard (xxi. 20), and in

Israel.  
 Jehoram.  
 1. The  
 translation  
 of Elija.h.

with Elisha from Gilgal. <sup>2</sup>And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el. <sup>3</sup>And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. <sup>4</sup>And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent

2 Kings i., so he leaves the world without the usual forewarnings of sickness or old age.

Elisha waited on Elijah as an attendant. See chap. iii. 11.

*Gilgal* must have been *above* Bethel, as verse 2 shows; it is therefore not the Gilgal of Josh. v. 9, which was 3700 feet below Bethel. It was probably in the hill country of Ephraim.

We learn from chapter iv. 38 that there was a "school of prophets" here. These were something like monasteries and something like theological colleges. They were religious houses, where men lived in common; the younger in preparation for the prophet's work of preaching the word, the elder often, as it would seem, employed like mediæval monks in keeping records of events, as well as in religious exercises, and in training the younger members (see note on iii. 13). We hear of schools at this period at Jericho, Bethel, Gilgal, and perhaps Carmel (iv. 25). Samuel was the founder of the institution; he established such schools at Gibeah and Ramah.

<sup>2</sup> *Bethel*, the scene of Jacob's dream, fell to Benjamin at the division of territory, but seems to have been practically Ephraimite. It was of old a sacred place, and was chosen by Jeroboam I. as one of the two centres for his idolatrous worship of Jehovah under the form of a calf: and here the man of God from Judah denounced Jeroboam's sin (see chap. xxiii. 17). Now, in Elijah's time, there is a school of the prophets there.

Elijah felt sure that some scene of awe like that on Horeb (1 Kings xix.) was before him, and wished to spare Elisha the strain of witnessing it.

<sup>3</sup> *Sons of the prophets* means young men being trained as prophets.

<sup>4</sup> *Jericho* lies 600 feet *below* the Mediterranean, just above the north end of the Dead Sea. It is six miles from the Jordan, which is here crossed by fords. It was rebuilt in Ahab's time, in spite of the curse Joshua had laid upon the man who should do so.

me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. <sup>5</sup>And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. <sup>6</sup>And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. <sup>7</sup>And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan. <sup>8</sup>And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

<sup>9</sup>And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. <sup>10</sup>And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. <sup>11</sup>And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

<sup>12</sup>And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

<sup>13</sup>He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of

8 They now entered Gilcad, which was Elijah's native district.

9 The eldest son received twice as much as the other sons, and Elisha asks for an eldest son's portion.

12 *The chariots*, R.V. Elisha means that Elijah is the true strength and defence of Israel, as we say "a host in himself"; and now he is leaving the nation unprotected (cf. xiii. 14). There is no allusion in the words to the chariot of fire.



Israel.  
Jehoram.

Jordan; <sup>14</sup>and he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

<sup>15</sup>And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

<sup>16</sup>And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send. <sup>17</sup>And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not. <sup>18</sup>And when they came again to him (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

a. Miracles  
of Elisha.

<sup>19</sup>And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren. <sup>20</sup>And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. <sup>21</sup>And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. <sup>22</sup>So the waters were healed

14 Elisha is not asking a question in doubt, but only putting his prayer in the form of a question.

16 Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 12. They expect to find his body, and wish to bury it.

18 The Jews always expected Elijah to return (cf. Mal. iv. 5, 6; John i. 21), and it is still a Jewish custom at the Passover to fill a wine cup, and leave the door open for him, if so be he should come at last.

19 We now begin a series of stories about Elisha, drawn no doubt from a narrative, written by some other prophet, and like that from which the compiler of Kings derived his account of the career of Elijah (1 Kings xvii.—2 Kings ii.).

20 *Cruse*, a cup or bottle, from the same root as crock and cruet.

unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake. Israel.  
Jehoram.

<sup>23</sup> And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. <sup>24</sup> And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them. <sup>25</sup> And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

## III.

<sup>1</sup> Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. <sup>2</sup> And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made. <sup>3</sup> Neverthe- 3. War  
with Moab.

<sup>23</sup> *Little children*, R. V., 'young lads.' The same word is used by Solomon of himself when sixteen (1 Kings iii. 7).

<sup>24</sup> This stern assertion of his dignity as Jehovah's accredited messenger is like Elijah's severity in chapter i., and is not Christian in spirit (Luke vi. 28).

<sup>25</sup> *Carmel* is the mountain ridge that bounds the valley of Jezreel on the south, and jutting out into the sea breaks the evenness of the coast of Palestine. The highest point (1700 feet high) is about seven miles inland. Here Elijah met and defeated the 450 prophets of Baal, and it is still called Elijah's Mount. It seems from chapter iv. <sup>25</sup> that it was a frequent resort of Elisha's, and probably there was a school of prophets here.

## III.

<sup>1</sup> On the chronology see notes on i. 17; viii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Image*, R. V., 'pillar or obelisk.' These were generally either cairns or isolated stones, and were regarded as embodiments of some divine power. In the Old Testament we sometimes hear of their being put up by worshippers of Jehovah to mark some signal mercy or revelation from God; but here they are spoken of as if necessarily idolatrous.

The word *Baal* originally meant lord, husband, owner of land, and in this sense it is often applied to the gods, and even to

Israel.  
Jehoram.

less he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

<sup>4</sup>And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool. <sup>5</sup>But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

<sup>6</sup>And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same

Jehovah. But later on its use is restricted, and it becomes the proper name of the god of the Zidonians. This stage is not quite reached in this book, for it is in Hebrew *the* Baal, and Hebrew does not use the article before proper names. This Baal was also called Melkarth, and by the Greeks was identified with Heracles. He was the husband of Ashtoreth. The worship of Baal was introduced into Israel from Phœnicia by Jehoram's parents, Ahab and Jezebel (daughter of the King of Zidon). Jehoram did not succeed in stamping out Baal worship (see x. 18-28, and compare verse 13).

<sup>3</sup> Jeroboam, the leader of the revolt of the ten tribes, and their first king, set up calves at Dan and Bethel as emblems of Jehovah; for he wished to keep his subjects from resorting to the Temple at Jerusalem (1 Kings xii. 26-33). He was thus guilty of idolatry and schism, but he claimed to be still worshipping the one God of Israel. Ahab went further, for he broke the first commandment as well as the second; but the calves no doubt remained all through his reign, for he had not wholly abjured Jehovah (see 1 Kings xx. and xxii.).

<sup>4</sup> The Moabites dwelt on the east side of the Dead Sea, a district suitable for sheep farming. They were closely akin to the Israelites, and spoke practically the same language. Their national god was called Chēmōsh. David conquered them, but they seem to have recovered their freedom at the death of Solomon and the division of the kingdoms. Omri, Ahab's father, conquered them again, and exacted this enormous tribute (alluded to also in Isaiah xvi. 1); but in the middle of Ahab's reign they began to reassert their independence; no doubt his wars with the Syrians gave them their opportunity. In the Moabite Stone (see note at the end of the chapter) we have a record of the relations between Israel and Moab from the Moabite point of view.

*With the wool.* The word *with* is not in the Hebrew, and no doubt it was only the fleeces and not the sheep that were sent. (So R. V.)

<sup>6</sup> *The same time,* R. V., 'at that time.' *Numbered,* R. V., 'mustered.'

time, and numbered all Israel. <sup>7</sup>And he went and sent Israel. to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Jehoram. Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses. <sup>8</sup>And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom.

<sup>9</sup>So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them. <sup>10</sup>And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab! <sup>11</sup>But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. <sup>12</sup>And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king

*7 And he went and sent*—a Hebrew idiom. We should now say, he proceeded to send.

Jehoshaphat had entered into close alliance with Ahab (1 Kings xxii.), and Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, had married Ahab's daughter Athaliah. The answer Jehoshaphat gives to the invitation here and in 1 Kings xxii. 4 sounds more like the answer of a dependent than of an ally on equal terms.

<sup>8</sup> Should they pass by the north or by the south of the Dead Sea? Jehoshaphat decided on the south in order to bring up the forces of Edom.

<sup>9</sup> Edom lay to the S.E. of the Dead Sea, and its inhabitants were closely akin to the Israelites (Genesis xxxvi.).

*The king of Edom* was a "deputy" governing in the name of the king of Judah (see 1 Kings xxii. 47, and chap. viii. 20).

*Fetches a compass*—made a circuit (R. V.).

<sup>10</sup> Jehoram speaks as a worshipper of Jehovah, however misguided.

<sup>11</sup> For Jehoshaphat's question compare 1 Kings xxii. 5, 7.

*Which poured water on the hands of Elijah*, i.e. waited on him as his servant.

Israel.  
Jehoram.

of Edom went down to him. <sup>13</sup>And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. <sup>14</sup>And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. <sup>15</sup>But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. <sup>16</sup>And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches. <sup>17</sup>For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be

<sup>13</sup> Jehoram, for lack of power or of will, had not entirely put down the worship of Baal. (See note on v. 2.) He is here treated as inheriting the guilt of his parents' sins, just as in the next verse he is saved by his association with Jehoshaphat.

To be a prophet meant to profess to bring messages from some deity; and this was not confined to Israel, or to the worshippers of the true God, for while some prophesied in the name of Jehovah, others did so in the name of Baal (x. 19). And of the former some were true, some false, crying, "Jehovah saith," when He had not sent them (Ezek. xiii. 6). Even the true prophets would not have a *direct* message every time, but would go about preaching what they knew to be always God's will, viz. peace, righteousness, and true religion. In this way men could be trained to be prophets by profession, as they are nowadays trained to be preachers.

Jehoram's answer is a confession that Jehovah, not Baal, is master of his fate.

<sup>14</sup> *The LORD of Hosts* (Säbäoth) probably meant originally Jehovah, who leads the armies of Israel to victory. In later times it was thought to mean ruler of the hosts of angels.

<sup>15</sup> *The hand of the LORD* here means God's power inspiring the prophet.

There is no other passage in the Bible (unless 1 Samuel x. 5 be one) which connects music or any other physical influence with true inspiration, though David drove out the evil spirit which possessed Saul by playing on the harp (1 Samuel xvi. 23).

<sup>16, 17</sup> The rain would fall up in the mountains, and pour down the valleys, and trenches were to be prepared lest it should all run away too quickly.

filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your Israel. cattle, and your beasts. <sup>18</sup>And this is but a light thing Jehoram. in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand. <sup>19</sup>And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones. <sup>20</sup>And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

<sup>21</sup>And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border. <sup>22</sup>And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood: <sup>23</sup>and they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil. <sup>24</sup>And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country. <sup>25</sup>And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in

17 *Cattle* for food, *beasts* for carrying burdens, etc.

20 In the *meat-offering* there was no meat in our sense of the word, for the sacrifice consisted of flour or cakes. (Formerly the word "meat" meant anything to eat, as in sweet-meat.) In the R.V. these sacrifices are therefore called meal-offerings. The daily sacrifice, as prescribed in Exodus xxix. 38, consisted of a burnt-offering, with a meal-offering and a drink-offering. Both these last seem to have merely meant that the offerer brought a present or paid tribute to God.

21 *And upward* means those who were older than the boys, who could only just carry arms.

22 *Red*, partly from the sandstones of Moab and Edom (*i.e.* the "red" land), partly from the rays of the rising sun.

23 The Moabites thought the allies had turned their hands against one another, as was so often the case.

Israel.  
Jehoram.

Kir-haraseth left them the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it.

<sup>26</sup> And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not. <sup>27</sup> Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land.

<sup>25</sup> *Kir-haraseth* was the capital, and no doubt the only fortified city in Moab.

<sup>26</sup> Apparently Mesha thought the Edomites might desert the Israelites and join him.

<sup>27</sup> Mesha's horrible act seemed to the nations round Israel a reasonable way of appeasing the wrath of their gods; they offered the costliest sacrifice they could think of. Molech the god of the Ammonites was regularly propitiated by burning children in his honour (cf. also xvii. 31). In the case of Abraham, who was first told to sacrifice Isaac only in order to be the more emphatically forbidden to do so, God taught the Israelites that He could take no pleasure in such sacrifices. But without this teaching they would no doubt have acted like their neighbours, as is shown by the story of Jephthah and his daughter (see also Micah vi. 7, 8). Moreover Ahaz and Manasseh actually sacrificed their children to Molech (xvi. 3; xxi. 6), and no doubt others followed their example (Jeremiah vii. 31; Ezekiel xvi. 21). Here Mesha sacrificed his son to Chemosh.

*And there was great indignation, etc.* It is very doubtful what is meant. Perhaps Judah and Edom felt that Israel had punished Moab with relentless cruelty, and now in horror at Mesha's desperate act, broke away from the alliance. Or it may be meant that God was wroth, and allowed Israel and his allies to be defeated, so that they withdrew from their attack on the king of Moab.

## THE MOABITE STONE

Mesha, the king of Moab, mentioned in 2 Kings iii., built a high-place at Dibon in honour of the national god Chemosh. And there he set up a block of stone with an inscription describing his exploits, which was discovered in 1869, and is now in Paris. The language is Moabite, which is merely like another dialect of Hebrew, and the characters are almost the same as are found in the Siloam inscription (see note on 2 Kings xx. 20), and in certain Phœnician inscriptions, etc. This character was the common parent of (a) the Greek, and therefore of all European alphabets, and of (b) the later or "square" character used in Hebrew Bibles, etc. In the shape of some of the letters, our alphabets are more like the old than is the ordinary Hebrew letter of to-day.

The inscription begins as follows :

"I am Mesha, son of Chemoshmelek (?), king of Moab, the Dibonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I reigned after my father. And I made this high-place for Chemosh, a high-place of salvation, because he had let me see my pleasure on all them that hated me.

"Omri was King over Israel, and he afflicted Moab many days, because Chemosh was angry with his land. And his son succeeded him ; and he also said, I will afflict Moab. In my days said he thus ; but I saw my pleasure on him, and on his house, and Israel perished with an everlasting destruction.

"And Omri took possession of the land of Medeba, and (Israel) dwelt therein, during his days and half his son's days, forty years ; but Chemosh restored it in my days. . . .

"And Chemosh said to me, Go, take Nebo against Israel. And I went by night, and fought against it from break of day till noon. And I took it, and slew the whole of it, 7000 men and . . . and women, and . . . and maidservants, for I had devoted it to Ashtor-Chemosh. And I took thence the vessels of Jehovah, and I dragged them before Chemosh."

Mesha goes on to enumerate the walls, gates, towers, reservoirs, and roads that he built, mentioning in one place "the help of the prisoners of Israel."



Israel.

Jehoram.

We may notice that—

(1) Jehovah and Chemosh are put on a level, the one as the god of Israel, the other as the god of Moab (*cf.* p. xvii. and note on xx. 23).

(2) Ashtor-Chemosh is a sort of combined deity, made by fusing Chemosh with Ashtor (probably a male form of Ashtoreth, for whom see note on xi. 5).

(3) Dibon, Medeba, and Nebo all belonged to the district which Sihon, king of the Amorites, took from Moab (Num. xxi. 26-30). On Sihon's defeat it was given to Reuben and Gad; and in Jephthah's time (Judges xi. 12-26) Moab and Ammon in vain reasserted their claim; but in later times the towns are generally spoken of as belonging to Moab (*e.g.* Isaiah xv. 2).

(4) It seems that this inscription was erected in the days of Ahab, or at any rate before the defeat of Moab related in 2 Kings iii. When the inscription says Moab was subject forty years during Omri's reign and half Ahab's, it is inconsistent with the chronology of 1 Kings, which assigns to Omri twelve and to Ahab's whole reign twenty-two years. Again in 2 Kings i. 1, iii. 5, we are told that Mesha revolted after Ahab's death, not in the middle of his reign. It is easier to guess at reconciliations of these discrepancies than to be sure the guesses are right.

## IV.

<sup>1</sup>Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. <sup>2</sup>And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil. <sup>3</sup>Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. <sup>4</sup>And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. <sup>5</sup>So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. <sup>6</sup>And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. <sup>7</sup>Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

Israel.  
Jehoram.  
4. Elisha's  
miracles.

<sup>8</sup>And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by,

1 We learn from this narrative that the "sons of the prophets," though they lived in what we may call communities (see note on ii. 1), married, and had private property. Some think that they only joined the community for a time.

The law allowed the old custom by which the creditor sold the debtor and his family into bondage, but added the rule that in the seventh year he should be allowed to go free.

4 This miracle, like our Lord's miracles, was wrought from compassion and not for display.

8 Shunem was in the tribe of Issachar, not very far from Nazareth, but overlooking the valley of Jezreel. Elisha apparently went round visiting the schools of the prophets, and seems to have habitually passed through Shunem on his way to Mount Carmel. (See note on ii. 25.)

Israel.  
Jehoram.

he turned in thither to eat bread. <sup>9</sup>And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. <sup>10</sup>Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. <sup>11</sup>And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

<sup>12</sup>And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. <sup>13</sup>And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people. <sup>14</sup>And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. <sup>15</sup>And he said, Call her. And when he had called her she stood in the door. <sup>16</sup>And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. <sup>17</sup>And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

<sup>18</sup>And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that

<sup>9</sup> *Man of God* means one devoted to God's service, and so well fitted to be His spokesman or prophet. The phrase is used of many of the Old Testament prophets, and is applied by St. Paul to the Christian clergy (1 Timothy vi. 11; 2 Timothy iii. 17).

<sup>10</sup> The prophet's chamber was built on the roof, a part of the house much used in the East, and it probably had a separate staircase leading to it.

*Stool*, the same word in Hebrew as "throne," probably what would be now called a divan.

<sup>12</sup> Gehazi waited on Elisha, as Elisha had on Elijah (iii. 11).

<sup>13</sup> Elisha only deals with the woman through Gehazi. (Contrast v. 27.) He asked whether she was suffering any injustice that a word in high quarters would get set straight. Her answer means that she has no quarrel with any neighbour.

<sup>14</sup> Apparently the Shunammite withdrew at the end of v. 13.

he went out to his father to the reapers. <sup>19</sup>And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. <sup>20</sup>And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. Israel.  
Jehoram

<sup>21</sup>And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. <sup>22</sup>And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. <sup>23</sup>And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well. <sup>24</sup>Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee. <sup>25</sup>So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel.

And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite: <sup>26</sup>run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.

<sup>27</sup>And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. <sup>28</sup>Then she

<sup>23</sup> *New moon* means the first day of the (lunar) month. This and the seventh day of the week were clearly the regular days for religious service.

<sup>24</sup> *Slacken me not the riding* (R.V.), the point of the change being that the servant really ran on foot, driving the ass which his mistress rode.

<sup>25</sup> *Carmel*. See note on ii. 25.

<sup>26</sup> *Is it well? It is well*. The Hebrew is in each case a single word *Shalom*, familiar to us in its Arabic form as "salaam"; it means literally Peace, and was the common form of greeting (Matt. x. 12, 13). The woman was not deceiving Gehazi, but as in v. 23 refusing to discuss the matter. We should say "All right" in the same sense (in ix. 11 the same word is rendered "Is all well?").

Israel.  
Jehoram.

said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me? <sup>29</sup>Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. <sup>30</sup>And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

<sup>31</sup>And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

<sup>32</sup>And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. <sup>33</sup>He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. <sup>34</sup>And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. <sup>35</sup>Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. <sup>36</sup>And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. <sup>37</sup>Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

<sup>38</sup>And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. <sup>39</sup>And one went out into the fields

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Elijah at Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 21).

<sup>37</sup> For further mention of the Shunammite see viii. 1-6.

<sup>38</sup> *Gilgal*. See note on ii. 1.

*Sitting before him, i.e.* like disciples "at his feet."

*Pottage*, what is made in a pot, broth (Fr. *potage*).

<sup>39</sup> The plant must have been like a cucumber or pumpkin, with leaves like a vine's,

to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not. <sup>40</sup>So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof. <sup>41</sup>But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.

<sup>42</sup>And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. <sup>43</sup>And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof. <sup>44</sup>So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the LORD.

## v.

<sup>1</sup>Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.

<sup>42</sup> *Baal-shalisha*. The land of Shalisha was either part of or next to the hill-country of Ephraim, and this was some village in the district.

<sup>43</sup> *Servitor*, Gehazi. We get a hint in this verse as to the size of this "school of the prophets."

## v.

<sup>1</sup> *Syria*. Heb. Aram. The district to the north-east of Palestine is usually meant by this name. It was conquered by David (2 Sam. viii.), but in the days of Solomon Rezon made himself king in Damascus (see on v. 12), and he and his successors united under their leadership thirty-two petty kings, who lost their independence (1 Kings xx. 24), and were gradually merged in the powerful kingdom of Syria. The Syrians were near

Israel.  
Jehoram.

<sup>2</sup> And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. <sup>3</sup> And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. <sup>4</sup> And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel. <sup>5</sup> And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

<sup>6</sup> And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

kindred of the Israelites, and their language, Aramean, or Aramaic, is very like Hebrew. We hear of five kings of Syria after Rezon:—

(a) Benhadad I., who helped Asa against Baasha (1 Kings xv. 18).

(b) Benhadad II., probably the son of (a), who fought with Ahab (1 Kings xx.) and his successors with varying success, and was now on the throne.

(c) Hazāel, who after the murder of (b) seized the throne (viii. 15), and pressed Israel hard (x. 32; xiii. 3), and even threatened Judah (xii. 17).

(d) Benhadad III., son of Hazāel, who was defeated by Israel (xiii. 25).

(e) Rezin (xv. 37), who in alliance with Israel attacked Judah, but was conquered and his kingdom annihilated by Tiglath-Pileser II., king of Assyria (xvi. 9).

*The LORD had given deliverance unto Syria.* The victories of the Syrians are not due to their national god Rimmon, as no doubt they thought, but (as the writer knows) they are the work of Jehovah, the one God of all the earth.

The leprosy of Naaman was clearly not of a severe or very infectious kind, and of course the Syrians did not observe the strict Levitical rules about isolating the leper.

4 *His lord*, viz. Benhadad.

5 Apparently nearly £14,000 in all. 3000 shekels or "pieces" make a talent, so that the gold was much the most valuable part of what Naaman took with him. See note on v. 22.

<sup>7</sup>And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. Israel.  
Jehoram.

<sup>8</sup>And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. <sup>9</sup>So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. <sup>10</sup>And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

<sup>11</sup>But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. <sup>12</sup>Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a

10 Naaman is to be taught that Jehovah Himself works the cure, and that the humility of faith is required of him. Therefore the prophet keeps himself out of sight, refuses all reward (*v.* 16), and sends the great man to perform a trivial act that in itself could do no good. The simplicity of the Christian sacraments teaches the same lessons.

11 *Strike*, R. V. 'wave,' make passes in the air.

12 *Damascus*—a most beautiful city in a fertile plain, amidst parched and barren wastes; a trade centre, famous in all ages. It is mentioned in the story of Abraham (*Genesis xv.* 2), and became the capital of the kingdom of Syria (see note on *v.* 1). After its destruction by the Assyrians Damascus revived, and was famous under the Persians and the Greeks. St. Paul was converted on his way to Damascus. It often figures in later history and fiction, *e.g.* the *Arabian Nights*. It still has more than 100,000 inhabitants. The words damask and damson are both derived from its name. Its rivers Abana (U-U) and Pharpar are beautiful compared with the muddy impetuous Jordan with its desolate banks.



Israel.  
Jehoram.

rage. <sup>13</sup>And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? <sup>14</sup>Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

<sup>15</sup>And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant. <sup>16</sup>But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused. <sup>17</sup>And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. <sup>18</sup>In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he

<sup>13</sup> The "servants" may have been, like a king's "ministers," of high rank; but even so their words "My father" and their zeal do great credit to Naaman, who was thus a second time saved by his servants.

<sup>15</sup> *Blessing*, R. V. 'present.'

<sup>17</sup> Naaman considers that the soil of "the Holy Land" belongs to Jehovah, and that He can only be rightly worshipped on His own soil, and so he takes with him enough to offer sacrifice on.

The *burnt offering* was an offering in which the victim was consumed *entirely* on the altar, thus signifying whole-hearted devotion.

The *sacrifice* here meant is a peace offering, wherein part of the victim (the fat) was burnt on God's altar, part eaten by the priest, but most of it was eaten by the offerer and his family. The idea of the sacrifice was peace with God. As the centre of family life is the common meal, so in the peace offering man brought his food to eat it in the precincts of God's house. It was, therefore, a joyful sacrifice, with none of the ideas of self-denial that we unfortunately regard as essential to the word "sacrifice."

<sup>18</sup> *Rimmon* was the local god of Damascus.

leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of **Israel**.  
 Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of **Jehoram**.  
 Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.  
 19 And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed  
 from him a little way.

20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God,  
 said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian,  
 in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but,  
 as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take some-  
 what of him. 21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And  
 when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted  
 down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?  
 22 And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me,  
 saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from  
 mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the  
 prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and  
 two changes of garments. 23 And Naaman said, Be  
 content, take two talents. And he urged him, and  
 bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two  
 changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his  
 servants; and they bare them before him. 24 And when  
 he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and  
 bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and

19 As yet God had not taught the Israelites to expect a single universal or catholic religion for all nations, though from time to time some individuals may have been more enlightened than the rest. There is, therefore, here no question of teaching the true religion to the heathen, and so Elisha in the name of God accepts an imperfect worship from a sincere but imperfectly enlightened Syrian.

20 *As the LORD liveth.* Gehazi's own words should have reminded him that Jehovah would know and punish. Like other profane people, he used the oath without realizing what he said.

22 *Mount Ephraim,* R.V. 'the hill country of Ephraim,' not a single mountain, but the fertile uplands in the centre of Palestine.

*A talent of silver* is estimated at nearly £400, a talent being about 90 lbs. avoird.

24 *Tower,* R.V. 'hill.' The Hebrew word Ophel is also often used to describe a certain part of Jerusalem, and probably means a hill rather than a tower.

Israel.  
Jehoram.

they departed. <sup>25</sup>But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. <sup>26</sup>And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? <sup>27</sup>The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

## VI.

6. Two  
more of  
Elisha's  
miracles.

<sup>1</sup>And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. <sup>2</sup>Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. <sup>3</sup>And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. <sup>4</sup>So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. <sup>5</sup>But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. <sup>6</sup>And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. <sup>7</sup>Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.

<sup>8</sup>Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and

<sup>26</sup> *Is it a time to receive, etc.* Gehazi's greed had lessened the impressiveness of Elisha's treatment of Naaman (see note on v. 10), and very likely Naaman thought that Elisha had been weak enough to change his mind and invent a plausible lie.

*Oliveyards, etc.* Gehazi no doubt had been planning to spend the money in these ways.

## VI.

<sup>1</sup> *The sons of the prophets* means those who dwelt in the schools of the prophets (see notes on ii. 1; iii. 13).

took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. <sup>9</sup>And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. <sup>10</sup>And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. <sup>11</sup>Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel? <sup>12</sup>And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber.

Israel.  
Jehoram.

<sup>13</sup>And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. <sup>14</sup>Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. <sup>15</sup>And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? <sup>16</sup>And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. <sup>17</sup>And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and

<sup>10</sup> He sent a scout to find out if Elisha's warning had been needed.

<sup>13</sup> *Dothan* was in the heart of the kingdom of Israel, just south of the valley of Jezreel, and within a few miles of Samaria. (v. 19.) The Syrians did not besiege Samaria till v. 24, but already their "bands" (v. 23)—that is, plundering forays—met with no resistance.

<sup>17</sup> *Open his eyes that he may see.* Cf. Numbers xxiv. 15-17. The prophet sees what others do not see; he is a man who has insight into things moral, spiritual, political, past, present, or future. What he saw now was perhaps rather a vision, that suggested the resources at God's command, than the actual powers He was about to use.

*The mountain, viz. that on which Dothan was situated.*

Israel.  
Jehoram.

he saw : and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

<sup>18</sup> And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

<sup>19</sup> And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city : follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.

<sup>20</sup> And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw ; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

<sup>21</sup> And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them ? shall I smite them ? <sup>22</sup> And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them : wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow ? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. <sup>23</sup> And he prepared great provision for them : and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

7. The siege  
of Samaria.

<sup>24</sup> And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria. <sup>25</sup> And there was a great famine in Samaria : and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver.

<sup>18</sup> *When they came down to him, i.e. from their position of the night before down to the open space round the walls of the city.*

<sup>22</sup> *If you would not butcher prisoners of war in cold blood, much more spare these men.*

<sup>25</sup> *Eighty pieces of silver, i.e. shekels, would be worth £10. A cab measured about three pints. Dove's dung is very likely the nickname of some plant.*

<sup>26</sup> And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. <sup>27</sup> And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor or out of the winepress? <sup>28</sup> And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow. <sup>29</sup> So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.

<sup>30</sup> And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh. <sup>31</sup> Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.

<sup>32</sup> But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and the king sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him? <sup>33</sup> And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?

31 Elisha, the king thought, ought to have delivered them.

32 *The elders*, the chief men of Samaria.

*Hold the door fast against him* (R. V.). That the king did come hard on the messenger's heels is shown by vii. 2 and 17.

33 *And he said* means the king, who has quickly repented of his order to have Elisha executed, and has come now to ask if it is worth while to hold out any longer.

## VII.

Israel.  
Jehoram.

<sup>1</sup>Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. <sup>2</sup>Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

<sup>3</sup>And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? <sup>4</sup>If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die. <sup>5</sup>And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there. <sup>6</sup>For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. <sup>7</sup>Wherefore they arose and fled in the

<sup>1</sup> *The measure* (seah) was six cabs, or about a peck. Taking the shekel at half a crown, these prices would be one more and one less than those now current in England.

*The gate* means the open space near the gate, which was used for marketing as well as for the king's court (cf. x. 8, 9).

<sup>4</sup> *Fall unto* means desert to.

<sup>6</sup> *The Hittites* were once a great nation. Traces of them are found in Cappadocia, Hamath (near Antioch), and Carchemish on the Euphrates, and they once fought with Assyria and with Egypt on equal terms. But by Solomon's time they had dwindled down to a few petty kingdoms, with Carchemish as their centre.

Egypt was governed by a single king, always called Pharaoh by the Israelites; so what is here meant must have been dependent princes or petty kings.

twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life. Israel.  
Jehoram.

<sup>8</sup>And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.

<sup>9</sup>Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household. <sup>10</sup>So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were. <sup>11</sup>And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within.

<sup>12</sup>And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city. <sup>13</sup>And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see. <sup>14</sup>They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see. <sup>15</sup>And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king. <sup>16</sup>And the people went

<sup>13</sup> *They are as all the multitude, i.e. the horsemen are all at the point of starvation like the rest of us, and will not fear the risk. (Cf. v. 4.)*

<sup>14</sup> *Two chariots with horses (R.V.), i.e. four horses in all.*



Israel.  
Jehoram.

out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.

<sup>18</sup>And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria.

<sup>19</sup>And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, if the LORD should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. <sup>20</sup>And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

#### VIII.

& Further  
accounts of  
Elisha.

<sup>1</sup>Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.

<sup>2</sup>And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

<sup>3</sup>And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land. <sup>4</sup>And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the

#### VIII.

1 *Now Elisha had spoken (R. V.).*

Probably this famine is that mentioned in iv. 38, and the events of Elisha's life are not mentioned in order. But it is not necessary to suppose that Gehazi was not yet a leper. *The woman* is of course the Shunammite of chap. iv.

great things that Elisha hath done. <sup>5</sup>And it came to Israel. pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored Jehoram. a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life. <sup>6</sup>And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

<sup>7</sup>And Elisha came to Damascus; and Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither. <sup>8</sup>And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and enquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? <sup>9</sup>So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? <sup>10</sup>And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die. <sup>11</sup>And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept. <sup>12</sup>And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their

7 Perhaps Elisha went to Damascus to seek out Hazael to carry out the order given to Elijah on Horeb (1 Kings xix. 15).

8 Hazael (حزق) was probably captain of the Syrian host.

10 *Thou shalt surely recover* (R. V.). This is best taken as "Tell him what you like, he will die."

11 Elisha fixed his eyes on Hazael till Hazael was out of countenance.

12 In warfare of this date it was common to slay all males, however young.

Israel.  
Jehoram.

children, and rip up their women with child. <sup>13</sup> And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

<sup>14</sup> So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldst surely recover. <sup>15</sup> And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

Judah.  
Jehoram.

<sup>16</sup> And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign. <sup>17</sup> Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. <sup>18</sup> And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. <sup>19</sup> Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him alway a light, and to his children.

<sup>20</sup> In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. <sup>21</sup> So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed

<sup>13</sup> *But what is thy servant, which is but a dog, that he should do this great thing?* (R. V.) Hazael is not repudiating the charge of cruelty, but is affecting humility. Dogs are scavengers and unclean animals in the East, and are never spoken of with respect in the Bible, except that watch-dogs are mentioned once or twice.

<sup>15</sup> *He took.* This may not have been Hazael himself.

<sup>16</sup> On the difficulties in the chronology see note on i. 17. The words "Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah" are often taken to imply that Jehoram reigned at first as coadjutor to his father (cf. xv. 5); in this way the discrepancies can be reconciled. But, as is pointed out in R. V. margin, these words are omitted in some ancient authorities.

<sup>18</sup> *The daughter of Ahab* and Jezebel, viz. Athaliah (see chap. xi).

<sup>19</sup> *A light*—a lamp burning in his house, a sign of life and peace (cf. Job xviii. 5, 6). <sup>20</sup> *Edom.* See note on iii. 9.

<sup>21</sup> There is probably some mistake in the name *Zair*, which is found nowhere else.

him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents. <sup>22</sup>Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time. <sup>23</sup>And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>24</sup>And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

<sup>25</sup>In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign. <sup>26</sup>Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel. <sup>27</sup>And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab: for he was the son in law of the house of Ahab.

<sup>28</sup>And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. <sup>29</sup>And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which

The Edomites surrounded Jehoram, but he cut his way through; *the people*, however, *i. e.* his army, fled, and *so* (R. V. instead of *yet*) Edom regained its independence, which (in spite of xiv. 7) it never lost again. Ps. cxxxvii. 7 shows that the Edomites became the bitter enemies of the Jews (cf. Amos i. 11, 12, and Obadiah).

<sup>22</sup> *Libnah* was a strong city in the "lowland," near the Philistines, mentioned again xix. 8.

<sup>23</sup> We learn more about Jehoram from 2 Chron. xxi., but that is not what is meant in this verse. Each king had a recorder (xviii. 18), who kept an official "chronicle" of public events. These chronicles were used by the compiler of Kings, and (directly or indirectly) by the compiler of Chronicles, but perished long before the birth of Christ (cf. note on i. 18, and Introduction, p. viii.).

<sup>24</sup> *The city of David*, not Bethlehem, but part of Jerusalem.

<sup>25</sup> Joram and Jehoram are really the same name, and both forms are used for each of the two kings.

<sup>26</sup> Athaliah was really the *granddaughter* of Omri (see v. 18); but Omri was the founder of the dynasty, and gave his name to it (see note on x. 32).

<sup>29</sup> *Jezreel* was a royal residence. It was situated on the pass

Judah.  
Ahaziah.

the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

## IX.

Israel.  
Jehu's  
conspiracy.

<sup>1</sup>And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead: <sup>2</sup>and when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber; <sup>3</sup>then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.

<sup>4</sup>So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead. <sup>5</sup>And when he came, behold the captains of the host were sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain. <sup>6</sup>And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the

whence on the west the Kishon flowed down to the Mediterranean, and on the east a tributary flowed down to the Jordan. Here was Naboth's vineyard and Ahab's ivory palace.

Ramah here means Ramoth-gilead, one of the chief fortresses in Gilead, which was the name of the fertile country east of Jordan between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, the territory of the tribe of Gad. Ramoth-gilead was a bone of contention between Israel and Syria. Ahab met his death (1 Kings xxii.) in attempting to recover it from the Syrians, but it seems to have been now in Israel's possession (ix. 14).

## IX.

<sup>1</sup> *Children*, R.V. 'sons' (see note on vi. 1).

*Box*, R.V. 'vial.'

<sup>2</sup> Jehu had been marked out as king years before, when Elijah was on Horeb (1 Kings xix. 16).

people of the LORD, even over Israel. <sup>7</sup> And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. <sup>8</sup> For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab every man child, and him that is shut up and left in Israel: <sup>9</sup> and I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah: <sup>10</sup> and the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her. And he opened the door, and fled.

<sup>11</sup> Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said unto him, Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication. <sup>12</sup> And they said, It is false; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. <sup>13</sup> Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.

<sup>14</sup> So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria. <sup>15</sup> But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of

<sup>7</sup> For Jezebel's attempt to destroy the worshippers of Jehovah see 1 Kings xviii. 4; xix. 10. But she did not succeed in stamping them out (1 Kings xix. 18).

<sup>8</sup> R.V., "Him that is shut up and him that is left at large," *i.e.* bond and free, or young and old, the young being under restraint, and the grown-up free.

<sup>9</sup> Both these families had been extirpated (see 1 Kings xv. 29; xvi. 11).

<sup>11</sup> The other captains recognized the messenger as a prophet by his dress, and called him mad in derision. But Jehu thinks they have prompted his action, and are only dissembling. (The Hebrew makes the "ye" emphatic.)

<sup>13</sup> Matters must have been ripe for a revolution. Perhaps the king's lingering at Jezreel was unpopular with the army.

*Put it under him*, thus building up a throne or divan.

Israel.  
Jehu.

the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, then let none go forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel.

<sup>16</sup>So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram. <sup>17</sup>And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace? <sup>18</sup>So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again. <sup>19</sup>Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. <sup>20</sup>And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously. <sup>21</sup>And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite.

<sup>22</sup>And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many? <sup>23</sup>And Joram turned his hands,

<sup>17</sup> *Is it peace?* Is all well? (See note on iv. 26). Jehoram did not yet suspect the truth, but feared bad news from the seat of war.

<sup>18</sup> Jehu's answer means, What is it to you?

<sup>21</sup> *Against*, 'to meet' (R.V.). Naboth had been murdered by Jezebel in order that Ahab might steal his land (1 Kings xxi.).

<sup>22</sup> *Whoredom* here means idolatry, unfaithfulness to Jehovah the true Lord and "husband" of the nation.

*Witchcrafts*, i.e. heathen incantations and divinations.

<sup>23</sup> *Turned his hands*, i.e. wheeled round.

and fled, and said to Ahaziah, There is treachery, O Israel. Ahaziah. <sup>24</sup>And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot. <sup>25</sup>Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him; <sup>26</sup>Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the LORD.

<sup>27</sup>But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there. <sup>28</sup>And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David. <sup>29</sup>And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.

<sup>30</sup>And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. <sup>31</sup>And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his

<sup>25</sup> *Laid this burden upon him, i.e.* uttered this oracle against him (R.V. margin).

<sup>27</sup> It is not meant that Jehu pursued Ahaziah in person, but *qui facit per alium facit per se*. Gur and Ibleam are not known. Megiddo was a fortress commanding the valley of Jezreel, the chief battlefield of the country. Here Barak defeated Sisera (Judges v. 19), Gideon the Midianites (Judges vi. 33), and the Egyptians Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 29); and Mount Gilboa, where Saul was defeated, overlooks the valley.

<sup>30</sup> *Painted her eyes* (R.V.), *i.e.* eyelids, with antimony, to make the eyes look more brilliant. And she put on her crown, meaning to die like a queen. The window must have overlooked the city wall close to the gate.

<sup>31</sup> *Is it peace, thou Zimri, thy master's murderer?* (R.V.) Zimri slew Elah, but reigned only a week, and was slain by Omri, Ahab's



Israel.  
Jehu.

master? <sup>32</sup>And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. <sup>33</sup>And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot.

<sup>34</sup>And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. <sup>35</sup>And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. <sup>36</sup>Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel. <sup>37</sup>And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.

X.

<sup>1</sup>And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's children, saying, <sup>2</sup>Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and there are with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour; <sup>3</sup>look even out the best and meetest of

father (1 Kings xvi. 9-19). Jezebel attributes to Jehu like guilt and a like fate.

<sup>32</sup> In a polygamous country eunuchs are employed to wait upon the women in the harem.

<sup>34</sup> Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians.  
<sup>36, 37</sup> See v. 10 and 1 Kings xxi. 23.

X.

<sup>1</sup> Sons will include grandsons, and of course Ahab had many wives.

There seems to be some confusion in the verse: read "Sent from Jezreel to the rulers of Samaria."

<sup>2</sup> Jehu forces them to take one side or the other at once; delay might have been fatal to him, whereas if they decided to resist him he was ready for the conflict.

your master's sons, and set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house. Israel.  
Jehu.

<sup>4</sup>But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand? <sup>5</sup>And he that was over the house, and he that was over the city, the elders also, and the bringers up of the children, sent to Jehu, saying, We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou that which is good in thine eyes.

<sup>6</sup>Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye be mine, and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to-morrow this time. Now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up. <sup>7</sup>And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him them to Jezreel.

<sup>8</sup>And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning. <sup>9</sup>And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these? <sup>10</sup>Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the LORD hath done that which he spake by his servant Elijah. <sup>11</sup>So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

<sup>12</sup>And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. And as he was at the shearing house in the way, <sup>13</sup>Jehu

<sup>8</sup> *The gate* was like the market-place of our towns, the scene of all public events (cf. vii. 1).

<sup>9</sup> "I appeal to you for righteous judgment: Are not these treacherous murderers far more guilty than I?"

Israel.  
Jehu.

met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who are ye? And they answered, We are the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen. <sup>14</sup>And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, even two and forty men; neither left he any of them.

<sup>15</sup>And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot.

<sup>16</sup>And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot.

<sup>17</sup>And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to Elijah.

<sup>18</sup>And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much. <sup>19</sup>Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live.

<sup>13</sup> According to 2 Chronicles xxii. 1 and 8 *brethren* really means nephews. Ahaziah's nephews would be great-nephews of king Jehoram, and great-grandchildren of the queen-mother (this is the true force of the word translated *queen*) Jezebel.

<sup>14</sup> *The pit* means a tank used for washing the sheep.

<sup>15</sup> The Rechabites were of Kenite, that is, of Arabian descent, and kept up their nomad habits (see Jer. xxxv. 7). They were connected with Israel because Moses had married a Kenite (Judges i. 16). They are now best known as having been teetotalers (Jer. xxxv. 6).

*Right, i. e.* loyal in affection to me. It is Jehu who says, "If it be," etc.

<sup>16</sup> Jehu deceived himself; his zeal was not really for true religion, but for his own advancement (see *vv.* 29-31).

<sup>19</sup> *Prophets of Baal* (see note on iii. 13).

But Jehu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might <sup>Israel.</sup> destroy the worshippers of Baal. <sup>Jehu.</sup> 20 And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it. 21 And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another. 22 And he said unto him, that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments. 23 And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only. 24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him. 25 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal. 26 And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them. 27 And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of

24 *And they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt-offerings. Now Jehu had appointed, etc. (R. V.).*

25 *The guard means a body of men trained to run before the royal chariot (e.g. 1 Kings i. 5); they formed a regular part of the king's retinue in both kingdoms.*

*The city of the house of Baal probably to be understood as the citadel. The Temple of Baal seems to have been more of a building than was Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem, which chiefly consisted of open courts. Went means penetrated.*

26, 27 *Images, R. V. 'pillars or obelisks' (see note on iii. 2). Probably v. 27 refers to the chief pillar, which was of stone, and v. 26 to smaller ones made of wood.*

Israel.  
Jehu.

Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day.  
<sup>28</sup> Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

<sup>29</sup> Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Beth-el, and that were in Dan. <sup>30</sup> And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel. <sup>31</sup> But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.

<sup>32</sup> In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; <sup>33</sup> from Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites,

*27 Draught-house—'dung-hill.'*

*Unto this day* is an instance of the compiler of the Books of Kings copying word for word from his authority, for the phrase must have been written before the destruction of Samaria, whereas the compiler lived long after (see Introduction, p. vii.).

<sup>28</sup> Baal-worship never revived in Israel. Henceforth the religion of the northern kingdom was that established by Jeroboam I., the idolatrous worship of Jehovah under the form of golden calves.

<sup>32</sup> We now enter on a period of a century, in which very few events are recorded. In the first half Syria pressed Israel harder and harder. In xiii. 5 and 25 we hear of temporary alleviations: at last Jeroboam II. (xiv. 25), who reigned forty years or more, restored to the northern kingdom the glory it had in the days of Omri, Syria being engaged in resisting the attacks of Assyria.

Jehu, as we learn from an Assyrian inscription, paid tribute to Shalmaneser II., king of Assyria, no doubt in order to enlist his aid against Damascus. The date of this event was 842 B.C.

This inscription is very important as a help to the chronology of the kings, as it shows that Jehu was on the throne in this year. It also calls him Jehu son of Omri, in spite of his ferocity against all Omri's descendants: the fact was Omri was the first famous king of Israel, and the founder of Samaria the capital city.

*Coasts* does not mean the sea-shore, but the borders (cf. Fr. *côte*).

<sup>33</sup> For *Gilead* see note on viii. 29. *Bashan* lay to the north of Gilead, opposite the Sea of Galilee. The half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in Bashan, Gad in Gilead, and Reuben further to the south.

and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, Israel. which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan. Jehu.

<sup>34</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? <sup>35</sup> And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead. <sup>36</sup> And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty and eight years.

#### XI.

<sup>1</sup> And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that Judah. her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed Athaliah's royal. <sup>2</sup> But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, usurpation sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and and death.

The *Arnon* flows into the Dead Sea, and formed the boundary between Reuben and Moab, though Moab often crossed it, and possessed itself of towns north of the river (see p. 14).

<sup>35</sup> Jehu was evidently a capable officer, and he managed his conspiracy with great skill and promptness. He was astute in implicating the rulers of Samaria in the murder of Ahab's family, and in trapping the devotees of Baal worship. He seemed to have looked upon himself as God's tool in exterminating the house of Ahab. But he deceived himself, and his motives were not pure, as may be inferred by his continuing the idolatrous worship of golden calves (*v.* 31). He sought his own advancement rather than the glory of God. Hence, though he was in part rewarded for his zeal against the wicked (*v.* 30), yet the guilt of the blood he had shed from ambitious motives rested on him and his house. And so the prophet Hosea, under Jeroboam II. (the fourth generation of his dynasty), proclaims, "Yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu" (Hosea i. 4, and compare 1 Kings xvi. 7).

#### XI.

<sup>1</sup> Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, had practically governed Judah, first through her husband Jehoram, and then through her son Ahaziah, and now she lays aside all pretence and reigns in her own name. As her mother introduced Baal-worship into Israel, so did she in Judah, and in both cases it lasted only till the deaths of the queens.

<sup>2</sup> Jehosheba was only half-sister to Ahaziah, not being the daughter of Athaliah; she was married to Jehoiada the high priest.

Judah.  
Athaliah.

stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain. <sup>3</sup>And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land.

<sup>4</sup>And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them the king's son. <sup>5</sup>And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house; <sup>6</sup>and a third part shall be at the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down. <sup>7</sup>And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king. <sup>8</sup>And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain: and be ye with the king as he

Round the central building of the Temple were sundry chambers, used probably for storing vestments, etc. Perhaps *the bedchamber* means the place where they stored beds.

<sup>4</sup> *Fetched the captains over hundreds of the Carites and of the guard* (R.V.). The Carites were a body-guard of foreign mercenaries, like the Swiss guard of Louis XVI. They seem to have come from Caria, but others identify them with the Cherethites (akin to the Philistines), who formed the body-guard under David. (For *the guard* see note on x. 25.)

<sup>5</sup> Jehoiada chooses the time when all the Temple police would naturally be in the Temple, viz. the time of the change of the day and night watches. We learn from Chronicles that there were five of the captains mentioned in v. 4. They are now told off to five posts: three captains with three detachments, formed of those just entering on their duty, watch the three entrances from the palace, where Athaliah would be; the other watch under two captains guard the young king himself in the Temple.

<sup>6</sup> Nothing is known of *the gate of Sur*. *The house* in this verse is the royal palace.

<sup>8</sup> *Ranges*, i.e. in modern English, ranks of soldiers.

goeth out and as he cometh in. <sup>9</sup>And the captains over **Judah.**  
 the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada **Athaliah.**  
 the priest commanded: and they took every man  
 his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with  
 them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to  
 Jehoiada the priest. <sup>10</sup>And to the captains over hun-  
 dreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields,  
 that were in the temple of the LORD. <sup>11</sup>And the guard  
 stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round  
 about the king, from the right corner of the temple  
 to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar and  
 the temple. <sup>12</sup>And he brought forth the king's son, and  
 put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony;  
 and they made him king, and anointed him; and they  
 clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

<sup>13</sup>And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and  
 of the people, she came to the people into the temple  
 of the LORD. <sup>14</sup>And when she looked, behold, the king  
 stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and  
 the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land  
 rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her  
 clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason.

<sup>15</sup>But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of  
 the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto  
 them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that

10 Spoils won by David in his wars and dedicated.

11 The altar of burnt-offerings is meant which stood outside the Holy Place in front of the porch. The guard was posted in two lines, stretching from the corner of the altar to the ends of the Temple porch, thus keeping clear a triangular space.

12 *The Testimony* means the two tables of stone with the Ten Commandments written on them, which were kept in the Ark. (For the ceremony cf. Deut. xvii. 18-20.)

13 *The people* were crowding into the Temple courts, and the revolution was popular. (v. 20.)

14 *The king stood by the pillar* (or *on the platform*) R. V., some well-known place, either near one of the two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, which were erected by Solomon (1 Kings vii. 15-22), or on the scaffold Solomon used at the dedication of the Temple (2 Chron. vi. 13). Cf. xxiii. 3.

15 *Have her forth between the ranks* (R. V.), so that she cannot escape.



Judah.  
Athaliah.

followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD. <sup>16</sup>And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain.

<sup>17</sup>And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD's people; between the king also and the people.

<sup>18</sup>And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD. <sup>19</sup>And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings. <sup>20</sup>And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house. <sup>21</sup>Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.

## XII.

Judah.  
Joash.

<sup>1</sup>In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zibiah of Beer-sheba. <sup>2</sup>And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him. <sup>3</sup>But the high places were not taken away: the

<sup>16</sup> *And they laid hands on her*; R. V. "So they made way for her," conducting her between the two lines of soldiers, till they came to the chief gate of the palace.

<sup>18</sup> *Images* (so R. V.)—not the same word as in x. 26, 27. The word here implies a likeness to the object represented, and so is rightly rendered image.

<sup>19</sup> See note on v. 4.

## XII.

<sup>3</sup> *The high-places*. They were all well-known spots, used for religious observances from time immemorial. Men chose hills for

people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places. Judah.  
Joash.

<sup>4</sup>And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD, <sup>5</sup>let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found.

<sup>6</sup>But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house. <sup>7</sup>Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house. <sup>8</sup>And the

worship as nearer heaven, and more open to the rays of the sun, which, if not itself divine, seemed at least an emblem of the divine. The law which we find in Deuteronomy, that the Israelites were to offer sacrifices in only one spot chosen of God, had never yet been observed; and we find many instances in which men like Gideon and Samuel offered sacrifices at high-places. The compiler of Kings, who blames Solomon and other kings of Judah for allowing the worship in the high-places, lived at a later date, after the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah.

4 Under Athaliah the Temple had fallen out of repair, and Jehoash sets about its restoration.

Even the money of every one that passeth (the account); R. V. in current money, *i.e.* money that passes from hand to hand without dispute. It would not be coined money at this date, but would be bars of standard purity, weighed again at each transaction. The verse mentions three sources of money: (a) apparently money offered in lieu of "holy (or dedicated) things," perhaps burnt-offerings (cf. note on v. 16); (b) moneys paid at the conclusion of a vow (cf. Acts xxi. 24)—the amount was assessed or set according to age and sex (Lev. xxvii. 2-8); (c) free-will offerings.

5 Every man of his acquaintance. The priests, we are told in 2 Chron. xxiv. 5, were to go about the country collecting these moneys.

8 Whether the priests embezzled part of the money collected or not is not stated; but finding themselves unequal to the task, the

Judah.  
Joash.

priests consented to receive no more money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house.

<sup>9</sup>But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD. <sup>10</sup>And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD.

<sup>11</sup>And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD, <sup>12</sup>and to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it. <sup>13</sup>Howbeit there were not made for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of the LORD: <sup>14</sup>but they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD. <sup>15</sup>Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faith-

priests agreed to hand over to others both the work and the sums that should be collected in future.

9 This is the origin of our alms-boxes in church.

*The altar* is that of burnt-offering in the Court of the Priests.

*The priests that kept the door* were three in number (xxv. 18), and were charged with keeping order in the Temple. In the New Testament they are called the captains or officers of the Temple.

10 *The king's scribe*—secretary, originally merely to write letters, etc. Such an office being necessarily a confidential one, Secretary readily becomes a high title, as in England Secretary of State. The scribes in our Lord's time were quite different, their profession being to study the Law of Moses and expound it.

*Told, i.e.* counted. The new mode of collection was more popular, as giving greater security against misuse of the funds.

fully. <sup>16</sup>The trespass money and sin money was not brought into the house of the LORD: it was the priests'.

Judah.

Joash.

<sup>17</sup>Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>18</sup>And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and in the king's house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.

<sup>19</sup>And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>20</sup>And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla. <sup>21</sup>For Jozachar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

## XIII.

<sup>1</sup>In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen

Israel.

Jehoahaz.

<sup>16</sup> When a sin or trespass offering was made, unless the offender was the High Priest or the whole nation, part of the victim was given to the priest. It was often more convenient to send the money value of the lamb than to offer the lamb itself, and naturally the priests encouraged this commutation of the sacrifice into a fine. Hence, covetous priests could be said to "feed on the sin of God's people, and to set their heart on their iniquity." (Hosea iv. 8.)

<sup>17</sup> *Gath* was one of the five cities of the Philistines. Hazael had clearly mastered the northern kingdom, and was wishing to make his empire as extensive as Solomon's.

<sup>19</sup> For the murder of Zechariah the son of Jehoiada by Joash see 2 Chron. xxiv. 17-22.

For *the chronicles* see note on viii. 25.

<sup>20</sup> *The Millo* was some castle or fort on the walls of Jerusalem. But as there is no article here, we ought perhaps to read Beth-Millo as a single word.

Israel.  
Jehoahaz.

years. <sup>2</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

<sup>3</sup>And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all their days. <sup>4</sup>And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. <sup>5</sup>(And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as before-time. <sup>6</sup>Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, but walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria.) <sup>7</sup>Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing.

<sup>8</sup>Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? <sup>9</sup>And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead.

<sup>3</sup> Not *all their days* (see v. 25), but either *continually* (R.V.), or all the days of Jehoahaz.

<sup>5</sup> Either Jeroboam II. is meant by the *saviour* (see xiv. 27), or else the Assyrians, who were pressing westwards and forcing Syria to defend itself instead of attacking Israel.

*Tents, i.e.* homes. The Israelites had not long given up tents, and taken to living in houses.

<sup>6</sup> *Grove*, R.V. 'Asherah' (ē, pronounced like 'share'). The rendering 'grove' is due to a mistake, and the word means the wooden symbol of a god or goddess, whether a pole like a May-pole, or a living tree. This emblem was used in connexion with more than one god, and even with the worship of Jehovah when debased; but some hold that the pole always represented a particular goddess of fertility. The Asherah was worshipped as if charged with divine power.

<sup>7</sup> R.V. *in threshing, i.e.* when corn is threshed.

<sup>10</sup>In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Israel Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years. <sup>11</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: but he walked therein. <sup>12</sup>And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, and his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? <sup>13</sup>And Joash slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam<sup>1</sup> sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

<sup>14</sup>Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. <sup>15</sup>And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. <sup>16</sup>And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. <sup>17</sup>And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them. <sup>18</sup>And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. <sup>19</sup>And the man of God was

Elisha's  
death.

9, 10 Here again Joash and Jehoash are but two forms of the same name.

<sup>12</sup> See xiv. 8-14.

<sup>14</sup> *Over his face* only means over him. So R. V.

*The chariots of Israel.* See note on ii. 12.

<sup>15</sup> The prophets often enforced their messages by symbolic acts (see e.g. 1 Kings xi. 30, xxii. 11).

<sup>17</sup> There were several *Apheks*; this is probably the one on the east of the Sea of Galilee.

Israel. wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten  
Joash. five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.

<sup>20</sup>And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. <sup>21</sup>And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

<sup>22</sup>But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. <sup>23</sup>And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet. <sup>24</sup>So Hazael king of Syria

20 *Elisha* is a far less striking figure than *Elijah*. In fact there is very little that calls for notice in his character. He generally shows himself as kind-hearted, considerate, sympathetic. Yet he was a tower of strength to Israel in the war with Syria, and punished with death those who mocked him, and inflicted a terrible disease on Gehazi, who was more deserving of his punishment because he knew better. Elisha was acceptable at court, whereas *Elijah* was always in opposition. Elisha's dealings with Naaman show him as a wise guide of souls, disinterested for himself, demanding faith and humility by the most searching test, but also knowing when to make allowances. It is said of him in *Ecclesiasticus* xlviii. 12-14, "In all his days he was not moved by fear of any ruler, and no one brought him into subjection. Nothing was too high for him; and when he was laid on sleep his body prophesied. As in life he did wonders, so in death were his works marvellous."

*The Moabites.* See note on iii. 4. They must have recovered their strength since iii. 25, and we hear of them as independent in Amos and Isaiah, and again of similar marauding "bands" in xxiv. 2.

*At the coming in of the year, i.e.* at the season for military operations.

<sup>22</sup> This verse is meant to carry our thoughts back to v. 4, that we may see in what follows the long-delayed answer to the prayers of Jehoahaz.

died; and Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead. <sup>25</sup> And **Israel.**  
 Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand **Joash.**  
 of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had  
 taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war.  
 Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities  
 of Israel.

<sup>25</sup> A complete reversal of the state of things described in *v.* 7.  
 The cities which Jehoahaz had lost and Joash recovered were on  
 the west of Jordan, for Syria had conquered Bashan and Gilead  
 before the reign of Jehoahaz (*x.* 32, 33).

#### A LIST OF THE INCIDENTS RECORDED IN ELISHA'S LIFE.

- Elisha is called by Elijah (1 Kings xix. 16-21).  
 „ ministers to him (2 Kings iii. 11).  
 „ follows him to the end (2 Kings ii. 1-18).  
 „ heals the waters (ii. 19-22).  
 „ punishes the mockers (ii. 23, 24).  
 „ saves the Israelites on the Moabite Expedition (iii.)  
 „ befriends the widow who was in debt (iv. 1-7).  
 The story of the Shunammite (iv. 8-37; viii. 1-6).  
 Elisha heals the pottage (iv. 38-41).  
 „ feeds the multitude (iv. 42-44).  
 „ heals Naaman and punishes Gehazi (v).  
 „ recovers the axe-head (vi. 1-7).  
 „ and the Syrians at Dothan (vi. 8-23).  
 „ and the famine at Samaria (vi. 24-vii. 20).  
 „ foretells Ben-hadad's death and Hazael's victories  
     over Israel (viii. 8-15).  
 „ instigates Jehu's revolt (ix).  
 „ on his death-bed promises victory to Joash (xiii. 14-19).  
 A dead man raised by contact with his bones (xiii. 20, 21).



## XIV.

Judah.  
Amaziah.

<sup>1</sup>In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah.

<sup>2</sup>He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup>And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did. <sup>4</sup>Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places.

<sup>5</sup>And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the king his father. <sup>6</sup>But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

<sup>7</sup>He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.

<sup>8</sup>Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let

<sup>4</sup> See note on xii. 3.

<sup>6</sup> See Deut. xxiv. 16. In early times the children were often thus put to death, as in the case of Achan (Josh. vii. 24); but as men learned to respect the individual more, and not to look upon him *merely* as a member of the family, they felt the injustice of visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children. (Cf. Ezek. xviii.) As a matter of fact both God and man deal with sinners both ways; the children *are* the worse off for having a bad father, but they are not on that account doomed to death either here or hereafter.

<sup>7</sup> *Edom.* See notes on iii. 9; viii. 21.

*The Valley of Salt* is at the south end of the Dead Sea, where the rivers from Edom flow into that sea. *Selah* was one of the chief cities of Edom, probably the same as Petra, for *Selah* also means a rock. Pronounce the word *Jokthē-ēl*. We learn more about this expedition in 2 Chron. xxv. 5-16.

us look one another in the face. <sup>9</sup> And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. <sup>10</sup> Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of this, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee? <sup>11</sup> But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Beth-shemesh, which belongeth to Judah. <sup>12</sup> And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to their tents. <sup>13</sup> And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits. <sup>14</sup> And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

[<sup>15</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? <sup>16</sup> And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.]

<sup>17</sup> And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of

8 *Let us look one another in the face* is simply a challenge to engage in battle.

9 Any chance accident may crush Judah, while Israel in its grandeur will look on undisturbed.

11 *Beth-shemesh* in the north of Judah, near the Philistines and the Israelitish frontier.

13 *The gate of Ephraim* was no doubt the gate on the chief road to Ephraim and the north; so that the city was laid bare of its defences on the side towards Samaria.

15, 16 These verses are out of place here. See xiii. 12, 13.

Judah.  
Amaziah.

Israel fifteen years. <sup>18</sup>And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>19</sup>Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. <sup>20</sup>And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.

Uzziah.

<sup>21</sup>And all the people of Judah took Amaziah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. <sup>22</sup>He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

Israel.  
Jeroboam  
II.

<sup>23</sup>In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years. <sup>24</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. <sup>25</sup>He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God

<sup>19</sup> *Lachish*, a strongly-fortified town in the "lowland" of Judah, south-west of Jerusalem, mentioned again xviii. 14.

<sup>21</sup> *Azariah* is generally called Uzziah, *e.g.* xv. 13.

<sup>22</sup> *Elath*, or *Eloth*, was situated at the head of the Gulf of Akabah, the eastern fork of the Red Sea. Solomon and Jehoshaphat had used Ezion-geber, which is close by Eloth, as a naval station; but after Jehoshaphat's death Edom had revolted (viii. 20), and Eloth was ruined. It was now restored by Uzziah.

*After that the king slept with his fathers* means king Amaziah.

<sup>25</sup> *Coast*. See note on x. 32. Jeroboam II. recovered Gilead and Bashan. See note on xiii. 25.

*Hamath*, a town and kingdom to the north of Israel, on the Orontes, on which river Antioch was afterwards built. Hamath was tributary to David and Solomon. (See *v.* 28.) *The entering of Hamath* is the regular name for the mountain pass leading to it, the northern boundary of Israel.

*The sea of the plain*, of the Arābah (R. V.), *i.e.* the Dead Sea. "Plain" is a mistranslation, for what is meant is the remarkable cleft in which flow the Jordan southwards and the Edomite streams northwards into the Dead Sea. Almost the whole of it is *below* the level of the Mediterranean, and the Dead Sea itself 1300 ft. below. On either side of this deep and narrow valley the uplands of Palestine, Moab etc., rise to 3000 feet or more *above* the Mediterranean.

of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant <sup>Israel.</sup> Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of <sup>Jeroboam</sup> Gath-hepher. <sup>II.</sup> <sup>26</sup>For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. <sup>27</sup>And the LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

<sup>28</sup>Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? <sup>29</sup>And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

*By the hand of, i. e.* by means of, a common Hebrew idiom.

*Jonah.* There is no reference here to the Book of Jonah as we have it, and it is very doubtful whether that book can have been written by the prophet mentioned here. Whether this be so or not, it was in the reign of Jeroboam II. that the prophets first began to *write* down their message, besides (or instead of) delivering it by word of mouth. Both Amos and Hosea unquestionably belong to this reign, and amidst its seeming prosperity warned men of the coming disaster.

*Gath-hepher* was in the tribe of Zabulon, near Nazareth.

<sup>26</sup> See note on ix. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Jeroboam II. was, in a worldly sense, the greatest of the kings of Israel, except perhaps Omri. And in his reign there was much outward profession of devotion to Jehovah (worshipped under the form of calves). But under the surface all was corrupt at home, and much of the success abroad was due to the Assyrians' westward progress, which as yet only weakened Damascus, but in another generation would overwhelm Israel. We learn far more of the condition of the kingdom from Amos and Hosea than from 2 Kings. See Appendix, p. 110.

*Damascus* and *Hamath* are here regarded as belonging to Judah, because they had once been subject to David and Solomon (p. xi.), and the Assyrian inscriptions (p. xx.) perhaps imply that Hamath still retained some special connection with Judah. Probably all that is meant here is that these two kingdoms paid tribute to Jeroboam II.

<sup>29</sup> In the R. V. the name is spelt Zechariah.

## XV.

Judah.  
Uzziah  
(Azariah).

<sup>1</sup>In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign. <sup>2</sup>Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jeholiah of Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done; <sup>4</sup>save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places.

<sup>5</sup>And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son was over the house, judging the people of the land. <sup>6</sup>And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>7</sup>So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

<sup>1</sup> The reckoning in this verse is inconsistent with that of xiv. 17. And similar discrepancies occur in most of the chronological statements that follow between this point and the end of the northern kingdom. It is better to leave these unsolved than to insert, as Archbishop Ussher did (see the margin of A.V. on v. 8), eleven years' interregnum, of which there is no trace in the records. We can, however, fix certain dates from the Assyrian records (see p. xx).

<sup>5</sup> We are told in 2 Chron. xxvi. that Uzziah took upon himself to enter the Holy Place to offer incense, and for this act of sacrilege was smitten with leprosy.

*Several, i.e.* separate, isolated. For *house* read household, since Jotham's office was the same as that of Eliakim in xix. 2.

<sup>6</sup> We learn from 2 Chron. xxvi. that Uzziah made war successfully on the Philistines and other tribes to the south of Judah, and also did much for the internal welfare of the kingdom. At the end of his reign he leagued himself with Hamath against Assyria, as we learn from the monuments. It was "in the year that king Uzziah died" that Isaiah was called to be a prophet; and we are told in 2 Chron. xxvi. 22 that he wrote a history of Uzziah's reign.

<sup>8</sup>In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah <sup>Israel.</sup> did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel <sup>Zachariah</sup> in Samaria six months. <sup>9</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. <sup>10</sup>And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. <sup>11</sup>And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. <sup>12</sup>This was the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation. And so it came to pass.

<sup>13</sup>Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine <sup>Shallum.</sup> and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. <sup>14</sup>For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. <sup>15</sup>And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

<sup>16</sup>Then Menahem smote Tiphshah, and all that were <sup>Menahem.</sup> therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it; and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up. <sup>17</sup>In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria. <sup>18</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not all

<sup>12</sup> See x. 30.

<sup>14</sup> *Tirzah*, an ancient Canaanite city, which was the residence of the northern kings from Jeroboam to Omri. Its exact site is not known, but there can be no doubt that it was in the hill-country of Ephraim.

<sup>16</sup> *Tiphshah* in 1 Kings iv. 24 is Thapsacus on the Euphrates; but here it probably means some town otherwise unknown, near Samaria. Menahem made Tirzah his headquarters.

*Coasts, i.e. borders.*

**Israel.** his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,  
**Menahem.** who made Israel to sin. <sup>19</sup>And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand. <sup>20</sup>And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land.

<sup>21</sup>And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? <sup>22</sup>And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.

**Pekahiah.** <sup>23</sup>In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years. <sup>24</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. <sup>25</sup>But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room. <sup>26</sup>And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

**Pekah.** <sup>27</sup>In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of

<sup>19</sup> *Pul*, the same as Tiglath-Pileser (*v.* 29). His inscriptions record that he received tribute from Menahem in 738.

*To confirm the kingdom in his hand.* There were two parties, one seeking alliance with Egypt, the other with Assyria. The latter under Menahem was for the time successful.

<sup>20</sup> Fifty shekels are the sixtieth part of a talent, so the rich men must have numbered 60,000, and paid about £6 each.

<sup>25</sup> *Palace*, R.V. castle: some stronghold like the keep of a Norman castle.

The sense is that Pekahiah, Argob, and Arieah (pronounce Ar-yeh) were slain by Pekah and his company of Gileadites. There was now a turn of the wheel, and the party opposed to Assyria gained the upper hand.

Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years. <sup>28</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. <sup>29</sup>In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. <sup>30</sup>And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah. <sup>31</sup>And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

<sup>32</sup>In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign. <sup>33</sup>Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. <sup>34</sup>And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done.

<sup>35</sup>Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD.

<sup>29</sup> All these five towns mentioned were in the north, in or near the tribe of Naphtali. For *Gilead* see note on viii. <sup>29</sup>. *Galilee* seems to be used here in a narrower sense than in our Lord's time, when it included Zabulon and Issachar as well as Naphtali. These places are referred to in Isaiah ix. 1 as "the people that sat in darkness." For the immediate motive which brought Tiglath-Pileser to invade Israel see xvi. 7-9. The date is 734 B.C. The Assyrians, like the Persians later, often transplanted masses of population (cf. xvii. 23, 24; xviii. 32).

<sup>30</sup> It was under Assyrian influence, as we learn from the monuments, that Pekah was removed and Hoshea put in his place.

The date in this verse is certainly wrong, for Pekah outlived Jotham (see xvi. 5).

<sup>35</sup> Jotham restored the northern gate of the Temple, which stood on higher ground than the other gates.



Judah.  
Jotham.

<sup>36</sup>Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>37</sup>In those days the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah. <sup>38</sup>And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

<sup>37</sup> The confederacy was now formed, though Judah was not hard pressed till after Jotham's death. (xvi. 5.)

*Rezin* (ě). We have not heard of any king of Syria since Benhadad, more than fifty years before, was defeated by Joash. (xiii. 25.) Syria was now feeling the full force of the Assyrian attack, and having allied itself with Israel, sought to force Judah to lend its aid also.

<sup>38</sup> *The city of David* was part of Jerusalem.

#### PARALLEL PASSAGES FROM THE INSCRIPTIONS OF TIGLATH-PILESER.

In 738 Tiglath-Pileser records that he received tribute among others from Minihimmi of Samirina, *i.e.* Menahem of Samaria (see *v.* 20.)

In 734 "The land of the house of Omri . . . the whole of its inhabitants, together with their possessions, I deported. Pekah their king I slew. Hoshea over them I appointed. Ten [talents, etc.] I received from them" (see *vv.* 29 and 30).

The northern kingdom was called the land of the house of Omri, because Omri, whose dynasty lasted fifty years, and who was the builder of the capital, seemed to foreigners the founder of the kingdom (see note on *x.* 32).

Tiglath-Pileser exaggerates his deportations; he only carried captive "the land of Zabulon and the land of Naphtali, (the region) beyond Jordan, (and) Galilee of the nations." (Isaiah ix. 1).

In 732 he conquered Damascus (xvi. 9).

## XVI.

<sup>1</sup>In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Judah.  
Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. Ahaz.

<sup>2</sup>Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. <sup>3</sup>But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel. <sup>4</sup>And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places and on the hills, and under every green tree.

<sup>5</sup>Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. <sup>6</sup>At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.

<sup>7</sup>So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of

<sup>3</sup> This horrible rite was practised in honour of Molech, the Ammonite god. Other passages show that the children were really burnt, but it is possible that they were slain first (see note on iii. 27). No king of Israel adopted this rite, but Jeroboam I. introduced idolatry, and Ahab the worship of Baal, and in these points Ahaz resembled them.

<sup>4</sup> On the *high-places*, see note on xii. 3.

Trees are often supposed to be charged with divine power, *e.g.* the oak oracle at Dodona. In Palestine the green trees were probably only another form of the Asherah (see note on xiii. 6).

<sup>5</sup> See note on xv. 37. The confederates intended to depose Ahaz, and substitute a nominee of their own (Isaiah vii. 6).

*Could not overcome him* only means that they were unable to capture Jerusalem, for they inflicted much damage on the country districts (2 Chronicles xxviii. 5-15). Isaiah vii.-ix. dates from this crisis.

<sup>6</sup> Read, "The king of Syria recovered Elath to Edom . . . and the Edomites came to Elath." The words Aram (Syria) and Edom were scarcely distinguishable in Hebrew. In the second case the Septuagint has Edomites. On Elath see note on xiv. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah the prophet, who was a far-seeing statesman, opposed this disastrous step in vain. Ahaz is mentioned among the tributaries of Tiglath-Pileser in his inscriptions,

Judah.  
Ahaz.

Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me. <sup>8</sup>And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria. <sup>9</sup>And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.

<sup>10</sup>And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. <sup>11</sup>And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made it against king Ahaz came from Damascus. <sup>12</sup>And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon. <sup>13</sup>And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar. <sup>14</sup>And he brought also the brasen altar, which was before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of

<sup>9</sup> We learn from the monuments that Tiglath-Pileser conquered Israel (chap. xv. 29) before he attacked Damascus. His first move would relieve the pressure on Ahaz.

*Kir* was probably part of Mesopotamia.

The kingdom of Syria never recovered from this disaster, though the city of Damascus sprang up again (see note on v. 12).

<sup>10</sup> Ahaz went to do homage and pay tribute to Tiglath-Pileser. Why he was so much struck by the altar he saw is unknown. Perhaps it violated the rules of Exodus xx. 25, 26.

<sup>13</sup> On these different kinds of sacrifice see notes on iii. 20 and v. 17.

<sup>14</sup> The new altar was first set up in front of the great brazen altar of Solomon; but soon this was removed to the north, so as to leave the new altar in the place of honour, and he now calls it "the great altar" or "high altar."

the altar. <sup>15</sup>And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the <sup>Judah.</sup> priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning <sup>Ahaz.</sup> burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to enquire by. <sup>16</sup>Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded.

<sup>17</sup>And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones. <sup>18</sup>And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria.

<sup>19</sup>Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>20</sup>And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

## XVII.

<sup>1</sup>In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began <sup>Israel.</sup> Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel <sup>Hoshea.</sup> nine years. <sup>2</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.

<sup>3</sup>Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria;

<sup>15</sup> *The blood of the sacrifice, i.e. of the peace-offerings.*

*To enquire by.* We often hear of "enquiring of God," especially in 1 Samuel, but we do not know what mode of divination was used, except that sometimes lots were drawn.

<sup>17</sup> *The lavers* were used for washing the sacrificial victims, and their *bases* were pedestals on which they were moved about. *The sea* was for the priests to wash in. Solomon had furnished the Temple with the most costly fittings, part of which Ahaz now turned to money, in order to pay his tribute to Assyria. (See also xxv. 13, 16.)

<sup>18</sup> The meaning of this verse is very uncertain.

Israel.  
Hoshea.

and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. <sup>4</sup>And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. <sup>5</sup>Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.

Captivity  
of Samaria.

<sup>6</sup>In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

<sup>7</sup>For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, <sup>8</sup>and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the

3 Hoshea was first befriended by Tiglath-Pileser (see note on xv. 30). He now submits to his successor Shalmaneser, and then is tempted to revolt by the delusive promises of Egypt.

4 Egypt was now alarmed at the westward advance of the Assyrians, and tried to organize a policy of resistance. But after vaunting professions she failed at the crisis, and was called by Rabshakeh "A bruised reed" (chap. xviii. 21), and by Isaiah (xxx. 7), "Rahab the sit-still." ('Rahab' means 'blusterer.') Two years *after* the fall of Samaria an Egyptian army under So advanced to meet Sargon, the king of Assyria, and was routed by him at Raphia, in the south of the Philistine country. History repeated itself a century later, when Zedekiah, king of Jerusalem, was lured to his ruin by promises of help from Egypt (see chap. xxiv. 7-20; Ezekiel xvii. 15; Jeremiah xxxvii. 5-8).

6 We learn from the monuments that Shalmaneser died during the siege, and it was the next king of Assyria, Sargon, who captured Samaria.

Sargon says in his annals: "The city of Samaria I besieged, I took; 27,280 of its inhabitants I carried into captivity; fifty of their chariots I seized; the rest of their possessions I let (my dependents) have; my officers I appointed over them; the tribute of the former king I laid upon them."

"In their place I settled the men of conquered countries."

The places mentioned in v. 6 are in northern Mesopotamia, west of Nineveh, except Media, which is further east.

8 (The statutes) *of the kings of Israel, i.e.* Jeroboam and Ahab principally.

LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. <sup>9</sup>And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. <sup>10</sup>And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: <sup>11</sup>and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: <sup>12</sup>for they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

<sup>13</sup>Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. <sup>14</sup>Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God. <sup>15</sup>And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged

9 *High-places.* See note on xii. 3.

*From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city* means throughout the whole country. The parts where watchmen would be needed would be lonely pastures.

10 *Images and groves,* R. V. 'pillars and Asherim.' See notes on iii. 2; xiii. 6. *Green tree.* See note on xvi. 4.

13 This verse illustrates the function of the prophets, which was to be God's mouthpiece in declaring His will and preaching righteousness, and especially in calling the people to repentance. Threats and promises were naturally part of their message, and the prophets often foretold the future. But it is a mistake to look on prediction as their main office. Prophet means forth-teller, not fore-teller. Seer means one who sees more than others see (cf. note on vi. 17).

15 *Vanity* is often used in the Bible of false gods. Idol really means the same thing, a show without substance.

Israel.

them, that they should not do like them. <sup>16</sup>And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove [an Asherah], and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. <sup>17</sup>And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

<sup>18</sup>Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. <sup>19</sup>Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. <sup>20</sup>And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. <sup>21</sup>For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. <sup>22</sup>For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; <sup>23</sup>until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

<sup>16</sup> *The host of heaven* means the stars.

<sup>17</sup> On the burning of children in honour of Molech see note on xvi. 3.

<sup>19</sup> The influence of Israel was great in the days of Athaliah (xi. 1). But the idolatries of Ahaz and Manasseh came from outside.

<sup>21</sup> For the sin of Jeroboam see note on iii. 3.

<sup>23</sup> The following prophets spoke specially to Israel: the man of God which came out of Judah (1 Kings xiii.), Ahijah the Shilonite (1 Kings xiv.), Elijah, Elisha, Amos and Hosea, beside others of less importance.

*Unto this day.* The captives for the most part had not moral and religious vigour enough to hold together in their exile, and were absorbed into the nations among whom they dwelt, unlike the captives from Judah 150 years later. But some Israelites remained in their homes, and some returned again, or joined other Jews in foreign lands, so that the Samaritans, the Jews of Palestine, and "the dispersion," all were partly descended from the northern tribes, and in later days we hear of members of

<sup>24</sup> And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, **Israel.** and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and **The new settlers in Samaria.** from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.

<sup>25</sup> And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them. <sup>26</sup> Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land. <sup>27</sup> Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. <sup>28</sup> Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

<sup>29</sup> Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the

several of these tribes. The idea that the ten tribes will some day reappear is based on a misunderstanding of prophecy. And to identify the English with them, as some do, is to defy the witness of feature, language, history and common sense.

<sup>24</sup> *Hamath.* See note on xiv. 25. The other places have not been identified with certainty; they were probably in Mesopotamia.

<sup>25</sup> *Lions* are now extinct in Palestine, as are wolves in England; but they must once have been common, and they would increase in number when the country was depopulated.

<sup>26</sup> *The manner of the god of the land.* Each country was supposed to have its own god, who was, as it were, attached to the soil. To leave his territory was to pass into the sphere of some other god. (1 Samuel xxvi. 19.) And an immigrant must take care to propitiate the local god in the right way ("manner"). Thus Jehovah was the God of Israel and Judah, Chemosh of Moab, etc. (cf. p. xvii.).

<sup>29</sup> To propitiate Jehovah did not mean that they must forsake their ancestral worships; for these no doubt still appealed to them



## Israel.

Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. <sup>30</sup>And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, <sup>31</sup>and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

<sup>32</sup>So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. <sup>33</sup>They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.

<sup>34</sup>Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel; <sup>35</sup>with whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: <sup>36</sup>but the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. <sup>37</sup>And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you,

more than did the religion of Jehovah, which even in its most debased form was purer and less licentious.

<sup>31</sup> We see that burning children was not confined to the worshippers of Molech. It is likely that both Molech and the gods here mentioned represented the sun, which in a hot country is viewed rather as a destructive than as a beneficent power.

<sup>32</sup> *Of the lowest of them.* The meaning is really "from *any* of them," not confining the priesthood to one tribe or family.

<sup>33</sup> *From among whom they had been carried away* (R. V.).

<sup>34</sup> *Unto this day* refers to the time of the compiler of Kings. At a later date the Samaritans had, as the small remnant of them still have, a pure and unadulterated worship of Jehovah, based on the Pentateuch.

<sup>37</sup> At the time of the compiler, who wrote all the section *vv.* 7-41, written copies of the Law were familiar to Jews.

ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not **Israel.** fear other gods. <sup>38</sup>And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods. <sup>39</sup>But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. <sup>40</sup>Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner.

<sup>41</sup>So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

## XVIII.

<sup>1</sup>Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son **Judah.** of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz **Hezekiah.** king of Judah began to reign. <sup>2</sup>Twenty and five years **r. Reform-** old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned **ation of** twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name **religion.** also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.

<sup>3</sup>And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. <sup>4</sup>He removed the high places, and brake the images [the pillars], and cut down the groves [the Asherah], and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it *Nehushtan*. <sup>5</sup>He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah,

3-6 We learn much more about the religious revival under Hezekiah from 2 Chron. xxix.-xxxi. His prayer in 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19 is especially worthy of notice and imitation.

<sup>4</sup> *The high-places.* This is the first attempt to put them down. See note on xii. 3. Verse 22 shows that they were used for the worship of Jehovah. Hezekiah's aim was to centralize and purify the worship of Jehovah. The introduction of foreign rites had no doubt corrupted it, and reform could only begin by putting down all offering of sacrifices except at Jerusalem.

*Nehushtan.* Probably the popular view is wrong, and we should read (with R.V. margin), "it was called *Nehushtan*"; the word means "a thing of brass," and was the ordinary name for the serpent *before* it was destroyed.

Judah.  
Hezekiah.

nor any that were before him. <sup>6</sup> For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

<sup>7</sup> And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. <sup>8</sup> He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

Israel.  
Captivity  
of Samaria.

<sup>9</sup> And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. <sup>10</sup> And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. <sup>11</sup> And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes: <sup>12</sup> because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them.

Judah.  
Hezekiah.  
a. Sennacherib's invasion.

<sup>13</sup> Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. <sup>14</sup> And Hezekiah

7 The death of Sargon in 705 was the signal for a revolt among the subjects of the Assyrian empire, and Sennacherib spent four years in the east before he could take the western rebels in hand. Hezekiah joined in the revolt in reliance on promises of aid from the Philistines and Egypt, and in opposition to Isaiah's advice.

8 *Gaza*, the southernmost of the five cities of the Philistines.

*From the tower of the watchmen.* See note on xvii. 9.

10 *They took it, i.e.* Sargon and his sons, not Shalmaneser, who died during the siege.

10-13 The dates in these verses are inconsistent with the Assyrian monuments, which reckon twenty-one years between the fall of Samaria and Sennacherib's invasion.

13 The passage which begins at this verse and ends xx. 19 we have repeated in Isaiah xxxvi.-xxxix. with some alterations, as well as in an abbreviated form in 2 Chron. xxxii.

Sennacherib's real aim was not Judah but Egypt; but Judah had rebelled, and he must also protect his line of communications with Nineveh.

king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, Judah. saying, I have offended; return from me: that which Hezekiah. thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. <sup>15</sup>And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house. <sup>16</sup>At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

<sup>17</sup>And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field. <sup>18</sup>And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and

Hezekiah pays tribute.

3. Rab-shakeh's mission.

<sup>14</sup> *Lachish*, a fortified town south-west of Jerusalem, and therefore on the way to the Egyptian frontier. The fine would amount to nearly £250,000.

In the British Museum is a representation in *bas-relief* with this inscription: "Sennacherib, King of multitudes, King of Assyria, seats himself upon a lofty throne, and receives the spoil of the city of Lachish."

<sup>16</sup> *Pillars*, or door-posts (R. V.), not the same word as in *v.* 4.

<sup>17</sup> We do not know why Sennacherib thus "broke the covenant" (Isaiah xxxiii. 8), and put forward further claims, content with nothing less than the annihilation of the Jewish kingdom (*v.* 32).

*Tartan*, *Rab-saris* (ā), and *Rab-shakeh* (ā) are all titles, not names, and may be roughly rendered Field Marshal, High Chamberlain, and High Steward.

We are told in 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4 (cf. chap. xx. 20) that Hezekiah cut off the water supply that otherwise the besiegers would have used. The pool then was probably inside the walls, but the conduit ran through and brought water for the washing of clothes. The conduit would of course have been stopped.

Judah.  
Hezekiah.

Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.

<sup>19</sup>And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? <sup>20</sup>Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? <sup>21</sup>Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. <sup>22</sup>But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem? <sup>23</sup>Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. <sup>24</sup>How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? <sup>25</sup>Am I now come up with-

18 Shebna had once held Eliakim's higher office, but had been degraded (Isaiah xxii. 15-21).

*Scribe.* See note on xii. 10.

*The recorder's* duty was to chronicle events, statistics, and the like. Much of 2 Kings is derived, directly or indirectly, from the recorders' chronicles.

<sup>21</sup> On Egypt see note on xvii. 4. Pharaoh is the Bible name for all kings of Egypt alike.

<sup>22</sup> Hezekiah's reform (*v.* 4) could be thus represented by "men of the old school."

<sup>23</sup> Rabshakeh is here scornful. He challenges the Jews to find 2000 riders if they can. It is better therefore to read with R. V. margin, "make a wager with my master," instead of "give pledges."

<sup>24</sup> *Captain* means rather governor of a province, satrap. The least of them would be more than a match for Judah.

<sup>25</sup> Rabshakeh boldly claims Jehovah's prompting for his attack, no doubt on the grounds mentioned in *v.* 22.

out the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD Judah.  
Hezekiah. said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

<sup>26</sup>Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

<sup>27</sup>But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own water with you?

<sup>28</sup>Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria: <sup>29</sup>thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: <sup>30</sup>neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, the LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. <sup>31</sup>Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern: <sup>32</sup>until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD

<sup>26</sup> *Syrian, i.e.* Aramaic, the language of Mesopotamia and of Damascus, and by our Lord's time of Palestine also. The "Hebrew" mentioned once or twice in the New Testament is really Aramaic. The language is closely allied to Hebrew. Parts of Ezra and Daniel are written in Aramaic, called Chaldee in the margin of the R. V. What is now called Syriac is a later dialect of this language.

<sup>32</sup> Submission to Assyria must involve deportation. The passage shows that our phrase, "the captivity" of Israel or Judah, is misleading; the "captives" would be free and prosperous.

Judah.  
Hezekiah.

will deliver us. <sup>33</sup>Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? <sup>34</sup>Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Henah, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? <sup>35</sup>Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?

<sup>36</sup>But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

<sup>37</sup>Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.

<sup>34</sup> *Arpad* was near *Hamath*, in northern Syria. Tiglath-pileser records his conquest of both cities in 740. *Hena* and *Ivah* seem to have been near *Sepharvaim*, in Mesopotamia.

The case of Samaria would, Rabshakeh thought, prove Jehovah's powerlessness. The prophet's answer to such questions was that Assyria was "the rod of God's anger" (Isaiah x. 5 and 15), the tool He used for chastisement, and that at any moment He could humble "the stout heart of the king of Assyria" (Isaiah x. 12, cf. below chap. xix. 25-28). In this way the prophets showed that God was not defeated, nor had He really forsaken His people, though He allowed their enemies to triumph over them.

## XIX.

<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. Judah.  
Hezekiah.

<sup>2</sup>And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. <sup>3</sup>And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. <sup>4</sup>It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left. <sup>5</sup>So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

<sup>6</sup>And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. <sup>7</sup>Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. 4. Isaiah  
reassures  
the king.

<sup>8</sup>So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. <sup>9</sup>And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out 5. Senna  
cherib's  
letter

<sup>3</sup> The crisis is at hand, and we cannot help ourselves.

<sup>7</sup> *I will put a spirit in him* (R. V.), *i.e.* he shall feel an impulse. The *rumour* probably refers to *v.* 9. Isaiah did not yet know how God would deliver Jerusalem.

<sup>8</sup> The "great host" with Rabshakeh was not enough to carry Jerusalem by storm, so he returns to Sennacherib.

*Libnah* was a few miles nearer Jerusalem than Lachish. (See also viii. 22.)

<sup>9</sup> *King of Ethiopia.* Tirhakah succeeded his father So as king of Ethiopia and Egypt. Ethiopia is what we now call the Soudan.



Judah. to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto  
 Hezekiah. Hezekiah, saying,

<sup>10</sup>Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. <sup>11</sup>Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? <sup>12</sup>Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezech, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar? <sup>13</sup>Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?

<sup>14</sup>And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said,

O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. <sup>16</sup>LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God. <sup>17</sup>Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, <sup>18</sup>and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of

<sup>12</sup> *Haran* (Carrhæ) is west of Nineveh, near the Euphrates. The other places were no doubt also in Mesopotamia.

<sup>15</sup> *That sittest upon the cherubim* (R. V.). Properly the singular is cherub, the plural cherubim, while "cherubims" is a mere blunder. No one knows for certain what these figures really were. Here the cherubim are said to form the throne on which God is seated (cf. Ezek. x. 1-20; Psalm xcix. 1). They were symbols meant to suggest the power and majesty of God.

*Even Thou alone*, in marked contrast to the words of Rabshakeh and Sennacherib.

<sup>16</sup> *Ear* and *eye*, in the strict sense, do not apply to God, who is spirit without body. But men have no "heavenly" language by which to speak of God as He really is, and therefore must fall back on the language of daily life, as is constantly done throughout the Bible.

men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have <sup>Judah.</sup> destroyed them. <sup>Hezekiah.</sup> <sup>19</sup> Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

<sup>20</sup> Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. <sup>6. Isaiah's</sup> <sup>prophecy.</sup> <sup>21</sup> This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him;

## I.

The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn;

The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

<sup>22</sup> Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed?  
And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice,  
and lifted up thine eyes on high?  
Even against the Holy One of Israel.

## II.

<sup>23</sup> By thy messengers thou hast reproached the LORD,  
and hast said,

“With the multitude of my chariots am I come up  
To the height of the mountains,

To the innermost parts of Lebanon.

And I will cut down the tall cedars thereof:

And the choice fir trees thereof:

And I will enter into his farthest lodging-place,

The forest of his fruitful field.

<sup>21</sup> This prophecy, though not regular poetry, illustrates the principle on which Hebrew poetry was composed. The effect of rhythm is produced by couplets (or triplets), where the idea of the first line is repeated over again in other words, and sometimes a little more fully. The translation here printed is that of the R. V.

*The virgin.* The note of triumph is at once struck. The fortress that has never been brought low (since David won it) shall not succumb now.

<sup>23</sup> The last couplet means, “I will go throughout the land, and overrun all the well-wooded parks.” The A. V. has *the forest of his Carmel*, but Carmel is not a proper name here.

Judah.  
Hezekiah.

24 I have digged and drunk strange waters,  
And with the sole of my feet will I dry up all  
the rivers of Egypt."

III.

25 Hast thou not heard how I have done it long ago,  
And formed it of ancient times ?  
Now have I brought it to pass  
That thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced  
cities into ruinous heaps.  
26 Therefore their inhabitants were of small power,  
They were dismayed and confounded ;  
They were as the grass of the field, and as the green  
herb,  
As the grass on the house tops, and as corn  
blasted before it be grown up.

IV.

27 But I know thy sitting down, and thy going out,  
and thy coming in,  
And thy raging against me.  
28 Because of thy raging against me,  
And for that arrogancy is come up into mine ears,  
Therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my  
bridle in thy lips,  
And I will turn thee back by the way by which  
thou camest.

V.

29 And this shall be the sign unto thee,  
Ye shall eat this year that which groweth of itself,

24 Sennacherib will not be daunted by difficulties of water ; he can make wells where there are none (as round Jerusalem, where Hezekiah had stopped all the springs), and when he has come to Egypt his army will be able to drink up the Nile itself. (Compare the stories of Xerxes' army drinking rivers dry.)

25 "I" now means Jehovah, who rebukes Sennacherib's presumption.

28 Sennacherib is like a bull or a horse, with all his strength under the control of a master hand.

29 *Thee* means Hezekiah. These abrupt changes are very common in Hebrew poetry, e.g. the Psalms.

And in the second year that which springeth of the **Judah.**  
 same ; **Hezekiah**

And in the third year sow ye and reap,  
 And plant vineyards and eat the fruit thereof.

<sup>30</sup> And the remnant that is escaped of the house of  
 Judah shall again take root downward,  
 And bear fruit upward.

<sup>31</sup> For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant,  
 And they that escape out of mount Zion :  
 The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.

<sup>32</sup> Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of  
 Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an  
 arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast  
 a bank against it. <sup>33</sup> By the way that he came, by  
 the same shall he return, and shall not come into this  
 city, saith the LORD. <sup>34</sup> For I will defend this city,  
 to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's  
 sake.

<sup>35</sup> And it came to pass that night, that the angel of **7. The**  
 the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the **Great De-**  
 Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand : and **liverance.**  
 when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were  
 all dead corpses. <sup>36</sup> So Sennacherib king of Assyria de-  
 parted, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

The point of "the sign" seems to be that though brought low  
 Judah shall recover. Sennacherib will not return next year with  
 another army, and they may wait in confidence for the stress  
 caused by the invasion to pass away. The sign itself was that  
 as soon as the siege was raised they should find enough self-sown  
 corn to avert starvation, and even to produce a crop for the next  
 year (perhaps a Sabbatical year); and after that things would  
 resume their normal course.

<sup>35</sup> It is not stated that the destruction of the army took place  
 before Jerusalem, and according to Herodotus (see note below) it  
 was just within the Egyptian frontier.

Psalms xlvi. xviii. and lxxvi. are very likely songs of triumph  
 at Sennacherib's overthrow. According to Stanley, Isaiah's words  
 are used every year in Moscow in commemoration of the deliver-  
 ance of Russia (and all Europe) by the disasters which befell  
 Napoleon in his retreat from Moscow. Once he lost 20,000 horses  
 by frost in a single night. Read also Byron's poem, "The  
 Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold."

Judah.  
Hezekiah.

<sup>37</sup>And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhad-don his son reigned in his stead.

<sup>37</sup> Sennacherib's death occurred twenty years after "the great deliverance."

*Armenia*, R. V. Ararat, the chief mountain of Armenia.

### SENNACHERIB'S DISASTER.

The story of this event reached Herodotus, when about 250 years afterwards he travelled in Egypt. Herodotus' informants were Egyptian priests, and they not unnaturally ascribed it to their own gods.

"The next king, I was told, was a priest of Hephestus (Pthah) called Sethos." (It is conjectured that the priests ignored Tirhakah from jealousy as he was an Ethiopian, and that Sethos only had command of the defence of the frontier.) "He held the Egyptian warriors in no account, as though he would have no need of them . . . Afterwards therefore when Sennacherib, king of the Arabians" (conceived by Herodotus to run up to if not to cross the Euphrates) "and Assyrians, invaded Egypt with a vast army, the warriors would not come to his aid." The priest then appealed to the god, who in a dream bade him go boldly forward to meet the invaders, and promised to help him. Sethos then armed such tradesmen and artisans as he could get together, and marched out to Pelusium, near the north end of the Suez Canal. "As the two armies lay here opposite to one another a host of field mice poured upon them [the Assyrians] by night, and ate up their quivers and bow [strings], and the [leather] handles of their shields, so that next day they were without arms, and were put to flight, and many of them were slain. There stands to this day a stone statue of Sethos in the Temple of Pthah, with a mouse on his hand, and an inscription, 'Look on me and fear the gods.'"—*Hdt.* ii. 141.

As the mouse is sometimes used as a symbol for a plague (*e.g.* 1 Samuel vi. 4), it may have been some pestilence, such as cholera, that destroyed the army. But too much import-

ance must not be attached to the statue Herodotus describes, because we find in other parts of the world statues of gods with mice and stories of mice eating bow-strings.

Sennacherib, of course, says nothing of his disappointment. His account of the Jewish part of the campaign of 701 runs thus: "The commander, nobles, and people of Ekron [the Philistine city] who had thrown Padi their king, owning allegiance to Assyria, into fetters of iron, and had delivered him as a foe to Hezekiah, king of Judah, who imprisoned him in darkness—their heart trembled. [For the confederacy see note on xviii. 7.] The kings of Egypt, the archers, the chariots, the horses of the king of Miluchchi [probably Ethiopia]; forces innumerable they summoned together, and they came to their aid. In front of Altakû [Eltekeh, Joshua xix. 44] they drew up before me their battle array; they called forward their troops. In reliance upon Asshur, my lord, I fought with them, and effected their defeat. The charioteers, and the sons of the kings of Egypt, together with the charioteers of the king of Miluchchi, my hands captured alive in the midst of the battle.

"Then I drew near to the city of Ekron. The commanders, the nobles, who had been guilty of rebellion I put to death; on stakes round about the city I impaled their corpses. Those inhabitants of the city who had committed mischief and wrong I counted as spoil; to the rest of them, who had not been guilty of rebellion and of execrable deeds and had not committed the same crimes, I proclaimed amnesty. Padi, their king, from the midst of Jerusalem I brought out; I seated him on the throne of his sovereignty over them; and the tribute of my sovereignty I laid upon him.

"And Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six of his strong cities, fortresses, and smaller towns round about their border without number . . . I besieged, I took. 200,150 people, small and great, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen and sheep without number from the midst of them I brought out, and I counted them as spoil. Himself, as a bird in a cage, in the midst of Jerusalem, his royal city, I shut up. Siege-works against him I erected, and the exit of the great gate of his city I blocked up. His cities, which I had plundered, from his domain I cut off; and to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, to Padi, king of Ekron, and to Zilbel, king of Gaza, I gave them; I diminished his territory. To the former payment of their yearly tribute, the tribute of subjection to my sovereignty,

I added; I laid it upon them. Himself, Hezekiah, the terror of the splendour of my sovereignty, overwhelmed: the Arabians and his dependents, whom he had introduced for the defence of Jerusalem, his royal city, and to whom he had granted pay, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver . . . couches of ivory, lofty thrones of ivory, elephant skins, an abundant treasure, and, in addition, his daughters, the women of his palace, his male and female attendants, unto Nineveh, my royal city, he caused to be brought after me. For the payment of tribute, and the rendering of homage, he sent his envoy."

Here the record of the year ends, really at the point reached in xviii. 16. On what followed Sennacherib is discreetly silent, and passes on to the next year without further explanation.

## XX.

<sup>1</sup>In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

Judah.  
Hezekiah.  
8. The  
king's sick-  
ness and  
recovery.

<sup>2</sup>Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, <sup>3</sup>I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

<sup>4</sup>And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, <sup>5</sup>Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. <sup>7</sup>And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

<sup>8</sup>And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? <sup>9</sup>And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten

<sup>1</sup> *In those days*, always a vague expression in Heb. It is probable that the events of this chapter preceded Sennacherib's invasion.

<sup>3</sup> For Hezekiah's song of lament and thanksgiving see Isaiah xxxviii.

<sup>4</sup> *The middle part of the city* R.V., *i.e.* probably the valley between the palace, which adjoined the Temple, and either the southern or the western part of the city.

<sup>9</sup> The word translated *degrees* is the same as is translated *dial*



Judah.  
Hezekiah.

degrees? <sup>10</sup> And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. <sup>11</sup> And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD; and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

9. The  
Babylonian  
embassy.

<sup>12</sup> At that time Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. <sup>13</sup> And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

<sup>14</sup> Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.

in v. 11, and means literally steps. (Degree is similarly derived from *gradus*.) There must have been some contrivance by which the shadow of a pole or tower fell on a flight of steps. Sun-dials are said to have been invented in Babylon, and Ahaz may have learnt their use when on his visit to the Assyrians at Damascus (xvi. 10). He seems to have introduced star-worship into Jerusalem (xxiii. 12), which may point to Babylonian influence on him. It is impossible for us to explain what occurred. Some think there was an eclipse, others some curious effect of refraction (like mock suns and the mirage).

<sup>12</sup> Merodach (Isaiah xxxix.) is the correct form, derived from a Babylonian god of that name (cf. the name Evil-merodach in chap. xxv. 27). Babylon always chafed under the Assyrian yoke, and in 710 her king Merodach-Baladan revolted against Sargon. He was quickly defeated and put to flight, only to reappear five years later on Sargon's death and raise a revolt against Sennacherib with the same want of success.

He no doubt wished to draw Hezekiah into alliance with himself, and Hezekiah was proud of receiving an embassy from so distant a prince.

<sup>14</sup> Isaiah was adverse to all foreign alliances, whether with Assyria (see note on xvi. 7), Egypt (see notes on xvii. 4, xviii. 7), or Babylon. Judah must abandon all thought of a strong foreign policy, and go her own way trusting in God alone.

<sup>15</sup> And he said, What have they seen in thine house? **Judah.**  
 And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in **Hezekiah.**  
 mine house have they seen; there is nothing among  
 my treasures that I have not shewed them. <sup>16</sup> And  
 Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.  
<sup>17</sup> Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house,  
 and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto  
 this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be  
 left, saith the LORD. <sup>18</sup> And of thy sons that shall issue  
 from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away;  
 and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king  
 of Babylon. <sup>19</sup> Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is  
 the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he  
 said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?

<sup>20</sup> And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his  
 might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and  
 brought water into the city, are they not written in the  
 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>21</sup> And  
 Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son  
 reigned in his stead.

18 Hezekiah's son Manasseh was carried to Babylon by the Assyrians (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11), and if this embassy preceded Sennacherib's invasion all Hezekiah's treasures were soon surrendered to the Assyrian king (xviii. 15). But the prediction seems to refer rather to the "captivities" of xxiv. 13 and xxv. 13.

19 Hezekiah is not accepting a punishment with submission, for Isaiah's words are rather a presage of the penalties that will fall on the disobedience of his successors. The king feels that the future is beyond his control; enough if he himself can live in peace with God, and not forfeit His promises (*truth*).

20 *A conduit.* The chronicler is more precise: "Hezekiah also stopped the upper spring of the waters of Gihon, and brought them straight down on the west side of the city of David" (2 Chron. xxxii. 30). Now a tunnel has recently been found leading from the Virgin's fountain, near the south-east corner of the Temple, through the hill to the pool of Siloam. And this is very likely the conduit here spoken of. If so, the city of David was on the south-east of Jerusalem, and Gihon, if not itself the Virgin's fountain, must have been fed from it, and therefore be on the east of Jerusalem in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

21 Hezekiah was a sincerely religious man of cultivated and poetical temperament, and, as is often the case with such men, he sometimes seemed weak; but he could be very determined

when he felt sure he was right. He met the threats of Micah (see Jeremiah xxvi. 18) and the warnings of Isaiah by resolving to serve God with all his heart; and not only put down the foreign idolatries which his father Ahaz had introduced, but dared to do what must have been unpopular with many, when he broke up the brazen serpent and suppressed the superstitious worship of Jehovah carried on at the high-places. In foreign policy he vacillated, sometimes entering on wide schemes and perilous alliances; but in distress he turned again to Isaiah, and accepted his policy of waiting on events in quietness and confidence. At home he encouraged agriculture, and gathered much wealth (2 Chronicles xxxii. 28, 29), and carried out improvements in the water supply of the capital. But we learn from Micah that at this time the peasants in the country were oppressed by the great men of the city, and we do not hear of any effort to relieve them. Himself a poet (Isaiah xxxviii.), Hezekiah patronized literature and art, or at least church music (2 Chronicles xxix. 25). He organized the priests' courses and the Temple services (2 Chronicles xxxi. 2), perhaps compiling the first collection of Psalms (2 Chronicles xxix. 30). And from Proverbs xxv. 1 we learn that the "men of Hezekiah" made a collection of the proverbs attributed to Solomon. For the traditional Jewish view of his character see Ecclesiasticus xlvi. 17-25.

### INSCRIPTION ON THE WALL OF THE CONDUIT LEADING TO THE POOL OF SILOAM

"[Behold] the piercing through! And this was the manner of the piercing through. Whilst yet (the miners were lifting up) the pick, each towards his fellow, and whilst yet there were three cubits to be (cut through, there was heard) the voice of each calling to his fellow, for there was a fissure (?) in the rock on his right hand. . . . And on the day of the piercing through the miners (*lit.* hewers) smote each so as to meet his fellow, pick against pick; and there flowed the water from the source to the pool, 1200 cubits; and one hundred cubits was the height of the rock over the head of the miners."

The length of the tunnel is more than 1700 ft. (1200 cubits=1800ft.) The character is the old Hebrew (see p. 13), and the inscription, if not of the time of Hezekiah, is older still.

## XXI.

<sup>1</sup>Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzi-bah. <sup>2</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. <sup>3</sup>For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove [an Asherah], as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. <sup>4</sup>And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. <sup>5</sup>And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. <sup>7</sup>And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: <sup>8</sup>neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave

Judah.  
Manasseh.

<sup>3</sup> *Baal.* See note on iii. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *The two courts, i.e.* the inner court of the Priests, where the altar of Burnt-offering stood before the entrance to the central building; and the outer court where the people stood, which was on a rather lower level. Both courts were open to the sky, though the outer one contained colonnades, etc.

<sup>6</sup> See note on xvi. 3. For *observed times* R.V. has "practised augury." *Dealt with them that had familiar spirits* (R.V.), *i.e.* who professed to receive revelations from spirits. We hear of such under Ahaz in Isaiah iii. 2, 3.

<sup>7</sup> *The graven image of Asherah* (R.V.). The A.V. is obviously wrong, but the R.V. seems to assume, what is very doubtful, that Asherah is the name of a goddess. More likely what Manasseh set up was merely an emblem of divine power, "a carved Asherah." "Graven," in the Bible, includes wood-carving, and the Asherah was always wood.

Judah.  
Manasseh.

their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. <sup>9</sup>But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

<sup>10</sup>And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, <sup>11</sup>Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: <sup>12</sup>therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. <sup>13</sup>And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.

<sup>14</sup>And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; <sup>15</sup>because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.

<sup>16</sup>Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

<sup>11</sup> The Amorites etc. were annihilated because of their licentious religious orgies; and Manasseh was worse, for he sinned against light.

<sup>13</sup> A builder uses line and plummet in construction, but here and in two or three other passages Jehovah is said to use them in destruction.

<sup>16</sup> Tradition has it that Isaiah was sawn asunder by Manasseh, but probably the child-murders are meant (cf. xxiv. 4).

<sup>17</sup> We hear in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11-19, that Manasseh was carried away by Esarhaddon to Babylon (the inscriptions record

<sup>18</sup> And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in Judah. the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: **Manasseh.** and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

<sup>19</sup> Amon was twenty and two years old when he began Judah. to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. **Amon.** And

his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. <sup>20</sup> And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did.

<sup>21</sup> And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: <sup>22</sup> and he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD.

<sup>23</sup> And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. <sup>24</sup> And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

<sup>25</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>26</sup> And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

his paying tribute to Esarhaddon), and that he repented, was released, and cleansed the Temple of the idols that desecrated it. In his affliction he composed a prayer (2 Chron. xxxiii. 19), but the beautiful composition in our Apocrypha is not thought to be his.

## XXII.

Judah.  
Josiah.

<sup>1</sup>Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. <sup>2</sup>And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

<sup>3</sup>And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying, <sup>4</sup>Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people: <sup>5</sup>and let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, <sup>6</sup>unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. <sup>7</sup>Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

The  
discovery  
of the book  
of the law.

<sup>8</sup>And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the

<sup>3</sup> Shaphan's was a leading family at this time. He is the father of Abikam (*v.* 12), who protected Jeremiah from king Jehoiakim (*Jer.* xxvi. 24), and grandfather of Gedaliah (*chap.* xxv. 22-25).  
*Scribe.* See note on xii. 10.

<sup>4, 5</sup> Cf. xii. 9-15, and notes there.

<sup>8</sup> This incident, which seems at first sight rather trivial, has proved to be of the greatest importance to students of the Bible. When the attempt is made to fix the dates of various institutions or of the composition of different books of the Bible, this passage gives the starting-point of the discussion. What exactly did Hilkiah find? and when was it put into writing? This is naturally the ground of much dispute; but it is agreed on all hands that it was the Book of Deuteronomy which so impressed Josiah, even if it was not this book and nothing but this book which was found in the Temple (see note at the end of the chapter).

house of the LORD. And Hilkiab gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. Judah.  
Josiah.

<sup>9</sup>And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiab the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

<sup>11</sup>And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. <sup>12</sup>And the king commanded Hilkiab the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, <sup>13</sup>Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

<sup>14</sup>So Hilkiab the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

<sup>15</sup>And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, <sup>16</sup>Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and

<sup>11</sup> He read, probably, Deut. xxviii. 15-68 with its threats against disobedience to God's law, or Deut. xiii. with its condemnation of soothsaying and the worship of the gods of the heathen.

<sup>14</sup> Huldah was, like Miriam and Deborah, a chosen mouthpiece of God's will. We hear also of prophetesses in 1 Cor. xi. 5, Acts xxi. 9.

*The wardrobe, i.e. the Temple vestry where the priests' robes were kept. In the college, R.V. in the second quarter, i.e. some district or suburb of the city.*



Judah.  
Josiah.

upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: <sup>17</sup>because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. <sup>18</sup>But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard; <sup>19</sup>because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. <sup>20</sup>Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

<sup>19</sup> *A curse*, a by-word for misery, so that men would in cursing say, 'May you be like Jerusalem.'

<sup>20</sup> The promise was not fulfilled in the letter (xxiii. 29).

### THE BOOK FOUND BY HILKIAH IN THE TEMPLE.

(1) We must remember that reading and writing were not commonly known in Moses' time (though no doubt he could do both himself), and therefore the Law was for the most part delivered orally to the people (cf. Exodus xviii. 13-26), and therefore

(2) That things may have been believed and practised long before they were written down. There is still no written law against murder in England other than the Bible.

(3) There is little doubt that whatever the original basis, the law was constantly being amplified by new decisions as new cases occurred. (Compare the development of English law, and see *e.g.* Numb. xxvii. 1-11.)

(4) Matt. xxiii. 2, 3, and other passages, show that the later decisions were held to be given in the spirit of Moses, and to be only expositions and applications of principles laid down by him.

(5) New decisions were probably revised and codified from time to time, and these codes constitute what may be called the different strata of legislation which scholars detect in the Pentateuch.

(6) The Book of Deuteronomy (or at any rate the great central portion) is a single whole, shown by its style to be the composition as a piece of literature of a single man at a single time, though the rules inculcated may well be much older.

(7) A great part of the rest of the Pentateuch, especially of Genesis and Exodus, was put into writing long before Josiah's time, and the narratives and laws therein contained probably existed long before they were written down.

(8) Another part of the rest of the Pentateuch, especially of Leviticus and Numbers, was put into its present form after the close of the Jewish monarchy, though again the narratives and practices had been no doubt known for a very long time (at least in all except details). After the time of Ezra there seem to have been no additions to or alterations of the Pentateuch, though traditions continued to grow.

(9) On the evidence at present before the world, it seems most likely that the book found by Hilkiah in the Temple was the great central portion of Deuteronomy and nothing else, and that this book was the composition of someone in the 7th century B.C.

(10) Accordingly it is probable that the law requiring only a single sanctuary for all sacrifices was only promulgated in or about Hezekiah's time, and that the distinction between priests and Levites was only created by the action of Josiah (see chap. xxiii. 9 and Ezek. xliv. 10-16, xlviii. 11, passages written during the exile, whereas in Deuteronomy priests and Levites are not distinguished).

(11) To a Christian our Lord's use of the Old Testament, especially of Deuteronomy (three times over in His temptation, and elsewhere), marks it out as one of God's instruments for teaching men truth and righteousness; and our use of it for such purposes is unaffected by the uncertainty as to the dates and authors of its different parts.

The above is of course only a sketch and an introduction to a very large subject. It represents the present writer's present opinions.

## XXIII.

Judah.  
Josiah.  
Reforma-  
tion of  
religion.

<sup>1</sup>And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup>And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

<sup>4</sup>And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove [Asherah], and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el.

<sup>5</sup>And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto

<sup>2</sup> *The prophets.* See note on iii. 13. Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah would probably be among the number.

<sup>3</sup> *The pillar.* See note on xi. 14.

<sup>4</sup> *The priests of the second order* means the chief priests next after the High Priest (cf. xxv. 18).

*Keepers of the door.* See note on xii. 9.

*Kidron* is a brook in the valley on the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives.

*Beth-el.* See note on ii. 2. Josiah has the ashes carried beyond the frontiers of Judah.

<sup>5</sup> *Idolatrous priests* means those who ministered at the high-places, professing to worship Jehovah, but no doubt in ways contaminated with idolatry. The Hebrew word suggests that they dressed in black.

Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, Judah  
and to all the host of heaven. <sup>6</sup>And he brought out Josiah.  
the grove [Asherah] from the house of the LORD, without  
Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the  
brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast  
the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the  
people. <sup>7</sup>And he brake down the houses of the sodomites,  
that were in the house of the LORD, where the women  
wove hangings for the grove [Asherah].

<sup>8</sup>And he brought all the priests out of the cities of  
Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had  
burned incense, from Geba to Beer-sheba, and brake down  
the high places of the gates that were in the entering in  
of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which  
were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.  
<sup>9</sup>Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up  
to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat  
of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

<sup>10</sup>And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of  
the children of Hinnom, that no man might make  
his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to

*Planets*, better—the signs of the zodiac; it is another form of  
the word Mazzaroth in Job xxxviii. 32.

<sup>6</sup> *The children of the people*, the common people (R.V.), in  
contrast with the rich who had rock-hewn sepulchres.

<sup>8</sup> *Geba* was in Benjamin, close to the northern frontier of the  
southern kingdom, *Beer-sheba* in the far south.

*Gates*. See note on x. 8. "High places" had been erected even  
in Jerusalem in the open places of public resort. Nothing is  
known of the particular gate.

<sup>9</sup> They were probably appointed to do the menial offices about  
the Temple as Levites.

*Unleavened bread* stands for all the portions of the sacrifices  
that fell to the priests. No leaven was ever admitted to the  
Temple.

<sup>10</sup> This valley lies on the south and west of Jerusalem, and  
joins the Valley of Jehoshaphat, near the pool of Siloam. Hence-  
forth it was used for refuse, and fires were kept constantly burning  
to destroy what was thrown there, and so Ge-Hinnom (the Hebrew  
for valley is Ge, to be pronounced 'gay'), or Gehenna, was used  
for the place of torment hereafter.

Judah.  
Josiah.

Molech. <sup>11</sup>And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. <sup>12</sup>And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king brake down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

<sup>13</sup>And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. <sup>14</sup>And he brake in pieces the images [pillars], and cut down the groves [Asherim], and filled their places with the bones of men.

<sup>15</sup>Moreover the altar that was at Beth-el, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove [Asherah]. <sup>16</sup>And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the

*Molech.* See note on xvi. 3.

<sup>11</sup> The chariot and horses would be used in processions in honour of the sun. For *suburbs* read *precincts* (R. V.), viz. those of the Temple.

<sup>12</sup> The altars of Ahaz were meant for the worship of the stars.

<sup>13</sup> *The mount of corruption* or *offence* (from the Latin rendering) is still the name of the southern part of the Mount of Olives, which was supposed to be the scene of these idolatrous worships.

*Ashtoreth* (ō) was the partner of Baal. She was akin to the Greek Aphrodite, and her worship equally licentious.

*Chemosh* (ë) was the Moabite god.

*Milcom* is the same as Molech; both words only mean king.

<sup>15</sup> Having purged Judah, Josiah tries to purify the worship of the remnant still left in the northern kingdom. For Jeroboam see note on iii. 3.

sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. <sup>17</sup>Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el. <sup>18</sup>And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria. <sup>19</sup>And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el. <sup>20</sup>And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

Judah.  
Josiah.

<sup>21</sup>And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant. <sup>22</sup>Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; <sup>23</sup>but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.

<sup>24</sup>Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the

17 *Title*, R.V. monument. This nameless prophet was sent to Beth-el to denounce Jeroboam's idolatry (1 Kings xiii.). He foretold that the altar would be thus polluted by Josiah. As he was returning, he was induced to disobey God by a lying prophet who lived at Beth-el, *i.e.* in the country afterwards called Samaria (*v.* 18). In consequence he was slain by a lion and buried at Beth-el, and the lying prophet had himself buried in the same grave in order that his bones also might escape disturbance.

20 In Deut. xiii. the command is given to slay idolaters, and not merely the priests but the whole city if guilty.

24 See note on xxi. 6. *Images* is here *Tērāphim*, a sort of household gods. They were idols of some size, as is shown by the story of Michal's concealing David's escape by putting the *Teraphim* in the bed (1 Samuel xix. 13).

Judah.  
Josiah.

abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiab the priest found in the house of the LORD. <sup>25</sup>And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.

<sup>26</sup>Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. <sup>27</sup>And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

<sup>28</sup>Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah ?

The king's  
death.

<sup>29</sup>In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at

29 Assyria was conquered by the Babylonians and Medes, and Nineveh was captured about 607. Nechoh must have been on his way to join the confederacy against Assyria, and Josiah as an Assyrian vassal thought it necessary to oppose him.

*Megiddo.* See note on ix. 27. *Seen him.* Cf. xiv. 8.

Josiah came to the throne at the age of eight, and his second son was born when he was only 14, if we may trust the numbers in xxii. 1 and xxiii. 36. We only know of one event in his life, the great reform of religion which he carried out when he was 25. In his zeal he slew the idolatrous priests at Bethel, and thus did what Christ would have forbidden, but which Deuteronomy commanded, and Christians have at times practised. But when he molested the bones of the dead he did a wrong which even under the old covenant Amos had condemned (Amos ii. 1). Still he was much praised for his religious zeal, as for example by Jesus the son of Sirach, in the words, "He behaved himself uprightly in the conversion of the people, and took away the abominations of iniquity. He set his heart right towards the Lord: in the days of wicked men he made godliness to prevail" (Eccclus. xlix. 2, 3).

Megiddo, when he had seen him. <sup>30</sup>And his servants **Judah.** carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

<sup>31</sup>Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he **Jehoahaz.** began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. <sup>32</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

<sup>33</sup>And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. <sup>34</sup>And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there. <sup>35</sup>And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaoh-nechoh.

<sup>36</sup>Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he **Jehoiakim.** began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of

<sup>30</sup> *Jehoahaz* is called Shallum in Jeremiah xxii. 11, and was not the eldest but the fourth son of Josiah.

<sup>31</sup> This is not Jeremiah the prophet, who was a priest of Anathoth in Benjamin.

<sup>33</sup> Nechoh insisted on having his own nominee on the throne.

*Riblah*, a city on the river Orontes, between Hamath (see note on xiv. 25) and Damascus.

The amount is about £40,000.

<sup>34</sup> The name is not changed in sense; *El-iakim* is "God will establish," and *Jeho-iakim* "Jehovah will establish." *Jehoiakim* was Josiah's second son. Of the eldest we only know the name *Johanah*.



Judah.  
Jehoiakim.

Pedaiah of Rumah. <sup>37</sup> And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

## XXIV.

<sup>1</sup> In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets. <sup>3</sup> Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; <sup>4</sup> and also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon.

<sup>5</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>6</sup> So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

<sup>7</sup> And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

<sup>37</sup> Jehoiakim built himself a palace by forced labour (Jer. xxii. 13-19). He put a prophet named Uriah to death for foretelling the ruin of the city (Jer. xxvi. 20-23).

## XXIV.

<sup>1</sup> After the fall of the Assyrian Empire, Egypt and Babylon disputed the spoils, and in 605 Nechoh was defeated at Carchemish, the old Hittite city on the Euphrates, by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, who a few months later succeeded his father as king. From this victory dates the short-lived Babylonian supremacy which was so fatal to the Jews. It ended in 538 with the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, who founded the Persian Empire and allowed the Jews to return from their exile to Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> This was not yet the regular invasion, but merely marauding expeditions.

*The Chaldees* means the inhabitants of Babylon and its neighbourhood.

<sup>7</sup> The Egyptians had been defeated at Carchemish, and though

<sup>8</sup>Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of El-nathan of Jerusalem. <sup>9</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. Judah.  
Jehoiachin.

<sup>10</sup>At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. <sup>11</sup>And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. <sup>12</sup>And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. <sup>13</sup>And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. <sup>14</sup>And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. <sup>15</sup>And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the

they still made great professions as of old (see note on xvii. 4), they lost all power, and were about one hundred years later conquered by Cambyses the son of Cyrus, and made part of the Persian Empire. From that day to this (except under their Macedonian kings the Ptolemies, 320-30 B.C.) Egypt has never been an independent power.

*The river of Egypt* is not the Nile, but a stream not far east of the Suez Canal, which formed the boundary between Egypt and Palestine.

<sup>11</sup> We have now got to the regular siege, which was begun before Nebuchadnezzar arrived in person.

<sup>12</sup> *Went out to, i.e.* surrendered. The queen-mother was always a very important person (*e.g.* Athaliah), and that is why her name is always recorded.

<sup>13</sup> In Ezra i. 11 we are told that no less than 5400 vessels were carried away by Nebuchadnezzar and restored by Cyrus. *As the LORD had said.* See xx. 17.

<sup>14</sup> Among others the priest-prophet Ezekiel was at this time carried into exile.

Judah.  
Jehoiachin.

mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. <sup>16</sup>And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

Zedekiah.

<sup>17</sup>And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah. <sup>18</sup>Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. <sup>19</sup>And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. <sup>20</sup>For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

XXV.

The fall of  
Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. <sup>2</sup>And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

<sup>3</sup>And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. <sup>4</sup>And the city was broken up, and

<sup>17</sup> Zedekiah was Josiah's third son, and Jehoiachin's *father's* brother.

<sup>20</sup> We learn from the Book of Jeremiah that Zedekiah was a man of weak character, deluded by false prophets and promises of help from Egypt. In vain did Jeremiah urge him to submit to Babylon. The verse means that God let them fill up the cup of their iniquity, till the time was ripe for their punishment.

XXV.

<sup>4</sup> *Then a breach was made in the city* (R.V.). The gate here spoken of probably led out towards the Kidron valley and the Mount of Olives.

all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate <sup>Judah.</sup> between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now <sup>Zedekiah.</sup> the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain. <sup>5</sup>And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

<sup>6</sup>So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. <sup>7</sup>And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

<sup>8</sup>And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: <sup>9</sup>and he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. <sup>10</sup>And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. <sup>11</sup>Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away. <sup>12</sup>But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

<sup>13</sup>And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in

*And the king went by the way of the Arābah (R.V.).* See note on xiv. 25. Jericho is in the Arabah commanding one of the fords of the Jordan.

<sup>6</sup> *Riblah.* See note on xxiii. 33.

<sup>7</sup> Ezekiel (xii. 13) had foretold six years before, "I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans, yet shall he not see it though he shall die there."

<sup>13</sup> *The two pillars* were called Jachin and Boaz, and were erected in the Temple porch by Solomon.

*The bases and the sea.* See notes on xvi. 17.

Judah.

the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon. <sup>14</sup>And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. <sup>15</sup>And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away. <sup>16</sup>The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all these vessels was without weight. <sup>17</sup>The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.

<sup>18</sup>And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: <sup>19</sup>and out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land that were found in the city: <sup>20</sup>and Nebuzar-adan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah: <sup>21</sup>and the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land.

The remnant.

<sup>22</sup>And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of

<sup>17</sup> *Chapter* is what we now call capital. In these pillars they were of what we should consider disproportionate height.

<sup>18</sup> *Keepers of the door.* See note on xii. 9.

<sup>19</sup> These were the king's "cabinet ministers." In the Persian kingdom there were seven men "which saw the king's face" (so R. V. here also), *i. e.* had the right to enter the presence without being introduced. See Esther i. 14; Herodotus iii. 84.

*The scribe, the captain of the host* (R. V.), *i. e.* the Secretary at War.

<sup>22</sup> *Gedaliah.* See note on xxii. 3.

Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler. <sup>23</sup>And when all Judah the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. <sup>24</sup>And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you. <sup>25</sup>But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah. <sup>26</sup>And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

<sup>27</sup>And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; <sup>28</sup>and he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon; <sup>29</sup>and changed his prison garments:

Release of  
Jehoiachin.

<sup>23</sup> *Mizpah* in Benjamin was a few miles north of Jerusalem.

<sup>25</sup> We hear more of this dastardly murder and what followed in Jeremiah xl.-xliii. *Ishmael* was probably angry that one not of the seed-royal should be put in command over his head.

<sup>26</sup> Jeremiah opposed this panic-stricken flight into Egypt, but was forced to go with the rest.

<sup>27</sup> *Evil-merodach* was the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>29</sup> *And he (Jehoiachin) changed* (R.V.). Jehoiachin had a miserable life. When eighteen years old he reigned for three months, and then was a prisoner thirty-seven years, and at last was allowed his liberty, but was still confined to Babylon. This release was looked upon by the compiler of Kings as the dawn of a better day for the Jews, at least that is thought to be why it is mentioned here. It occurred in 562, and gives a clue to the

Judah.

and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. <sup>30</sup>And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

date of the compiler. (See p. x.) Notice the abrupt end of the book; there is no reason to think that it was ever continued any further.

## APPENDIX

### THE STATE OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM AS DESCRIBED BY HOSEA AND AMOS.

THE Book of Amos is the earliest of the prophetic writings that can be dated with certainty. He was not a prophet by profession, but a shepherd; and he was sent, although his home was near Bethlehem in Judah, to speak against Israel in the prosperous days of Jeroboam II. He came to Bethel and uttered his warnings in spite of the sneers and threats of the priest of Bethel (vii.). Jehovah's day of judgment (he says) is at hand, and He will punish the nations for their unrighteousness (i., ii.); and if Israel has known Him best, that is the very reason why she should be chastised (iii. 2). Jehovah made the whole universe (iv. 13 and v. 8), and governs the movements of all nations (ix. 7), and looks for righteousness (v.); and Israel is no special favourite that she should be let off. "The sinful kingdom" has learnt nothing by past visitations (iv.). The hour is ripe for an overwhelming catastrophe (viii.). The people must be carried captive and sifted, but at the last the remnant shall have peace (ix.).

Hosea was a subject of the northern kingdom, and probably a regular prophet. He also began to speak God's message in the reign of Jeroboam II., but lived on to witness the confusion that followed and the alternate alliances with Assyria and Egypt (vii. 11, etc.). He has been called the prophet of Divine love, for while he indignantly condemns Israel's sins and foretells their punishment, he never thinks that God will forsake her (xi. 8): in the end she will be rescued as by a resurrection from the dead (vi. 1-3). The prophet's own wife was unfaithful to him; but his love for her never failed, and he sets himself to win her back (i.-iii.). And God will do the same for Israel (ii. 14, 15, 20), but it must be by the discipline of a captivity (ix. 3; xi. 11).



The two prophets tell us much of the internal condition of Israel in the eighth century B.C. The long wars with Syria had brought famine and pestilence (Amos iv. 6, 10). The poorer classes are impoverished and broken. The rich meanwhile have absorbed the land, and become more and more luxurious (Amos iii. 12, 15 ; vi. 3-6) and immoral (Hos. iv. 11 ; vii. 5). Robbery (Hos. vii. 1) and corruption (Amos v. 10-12) are rampant. The very women are drunken and cruel (Amos iv. 1). In a word, the rich have become richer, the poor poorer, and both worse.

Meanwhile there was plenty of religious activity of a kind (Amos v. 21, 22 ; Hos. ii. 11). Jehovah was worshipped under the form of a golden calf (Hos. x. 5, where Beth-aven, "the house of sin," is the prophet's scornful name for Bethel, "the house of God," and xiii. 2) ; and men made pilgrimages to the shrines at Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba (Amos v. 5).

But the priests were utterly demoralized ; instead of giving judgment (Hos. v. 1) they looked greedily for the fines that came in instead of sin-offerings (Hos. iv. 8, see note on 2 Kings xii. 16), and spent them on drink (Amos ii. 8). In Hos. vi. 9 they are even charged with highway robbery and murder. The saying "like people, like priest" shall be borne out in their punishment (Hos. iv. 9).

Nor did the prophets protest. If they spoke, it was sure to be from some mercenary motive (Amos vii. 12). They shall fall with the priests (Hos. iv. 5).

And yet the nation was confident of Jehovah's support. Had He not delivered them from Syria and enlarged their borders ? When would His great "day" of judgment dawn ? for with it would surely come further extension of frontier "Woe unto you," says Amos (v. 18), "that desire the day of the LORD ! Wherefore would ye have the day of the LORD ? It is darkness and not light . . . even very dark and no brightness in it."

For those who had ears to hear the words of Amos and Hosea revealed the rottenness in the state, and those who would not hear were soon brought to their senses by the succession of disasters that followed the death of Jeroboam II.

### THE PROPHETS OF HEZEKIAH'S TIME.

Isaiah lived at Jerusalem, and was probably a man of good birth and a statesman. He was called to be a prophet in the year that king Uzziah died (vi., 740 B.C.), and gave counsel

in God's name to Ahaz and Hezekiah, especially on foreign affairs. The policy he advocated was "quietness and confidence" in Jehovah (xxx. 15), in opposition to that of forming alliances with either Assyria, Egypt, or Babylon (see notes on 2 Kings xvi. 7, xvii. 4, xviii. 7, xx. 14). At the same time he denounced the sins both of rich and poor, and called for earnest reform. He declared that God used Assyria as a scourge, but would soon humble his pride (x. 5-15). And he forecast a glorious future when the remnant should be rescued from the oppressor, and should live at peace under the rule of an ideal King (xi., the Messiah), when the wolf should dwell with the lamb (xi. 6), and Egypt and Assyria should worship Jehovah together side by side with Israel (xix. 19-25).

Isaiah's contemporary Micah, on the other hand, came from the country, and was a man of the people. He has nothing to say about foreign policy, and to him Jerusalem is the focus of the nation's sins (i. 5, iii. 10). He therefore looks to the coming of a Messiah, a second David, from Bethlehem (v. 2); and declares that in his reign horses and chariots and fenced cities shall be cut off (v. 10, 11) and godly simplicity prevail.

In both prophets we find denunciation of those that join house to house and field to field (Isaiah v. 8; Micah ii. 2). Clearly the small proprietors were being crushed out and robbed (Isaiah iii. 14, 15; Micah iii. 2, 3), and could get no redress. In the capital drunkenness was rife (Isaiah v. 11, 12, 22; xxviii. 7, 8; Micah ii. 11), and Isaiah denounces the women's love of dress (iii. 16-24) and frivolity (xxxii. 9-11). Both prophets scorn a merely external religion of sabbaths and sacrifices (Isaiah i. 10-17; Micah vi. 6-8), and in God's name demand sincerity, repentance, and righteousness.

### THE PROPHETS OF THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

The prophets Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel belong to the period of the fall of Jerusalem. Of Zephaniah nothing is known except that he prophesied under Josiah, and it seems before the great Reformation related in 2 Kings xxiii. Habakkuk came a little later, when the Babylonian power was growing formidable.

Jeremiah was a priest from Anathoth, in Benjamin, but his career was entirely in Jerusalem. He began to prophesy under Josiah, and outlived the destruction of Jerusalem,

when after Gedaliah's death (2 Kings xxv. 25, 26) he was carried against his will by the fugitives into Egypt (Jer. xliii.). His chief activity was during the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, and especially during the two sieges of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, which brought those reigns to disastrous conclusions. Jeremiah consistently counselled submission to Babylon, declared that her arms were irresistible, and that the Jewish nation, if stubborn, must undergo the chastisement of captivity, that so there might be "hope in her latter end." His forebodings were looked upon as unpatriotic, and likely to take the heart out of the defence; and so he nearly forfeited his life under Jehoiakim (xxvi., xxxvi.), was put in prison by Zedekiah, and was all but starved to death by the princes of the war party (xxxvii. and xxxviii.). Nebuchadnezzar, on the other hand, gave special instructions for his safety (xxxix. 11-14). The book is wholly out of chronological order. The following chapters throw light on the characters of the kings: xxii. (Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin), xxxvi. (Jehoiakim), xxxviii. (Zedekiah).

Ezekiel was also a priest, but was carried captive with Jehoiachin in 597. In Mesopotamia he saw the glory of the Lord, and was thus assured that Jehovah, though chastising His people's sins, would still be with them in their exile. The first half of the book dates from before the final deportation of 586, and foretells it; while the last part forecasts the restoration of the people, and the renewal of the Temple and Temple-worship. As the unity of the nation was broken up, Ezekiel insists on the responsibility of the individual, "the soul that sinneth, *it* shall die" (Ezekiel xviii. 20).

These prophets emphatically denounce the sins of kings, priests, and people, and we hear of the breach of each of the Ten Commandments. Violence (*e.g.* Hab. i. 2, 3; Ezekiel ix. 9) and idolatry (*e.g.* Zeph. i. 4-6; Ezekiel viii.) are perhaps the most prominent of the people's offences.

In both Jeremiah and Ezekiel we hear much of false prophets who encouraged delusive hopes of success against Babylon, said that Jehovah was bound to save His Temple at Jerusalem (Jer. vii. 4), and that the exiles would soon be restored to their land (Jer. xxviii.). While rebuking these flatterers, the true prophets had also to encourage those who abandoned themselves to despair (Jer. xviii. 12; Ezekiel xviii. and xxxvii.).

## CHANGES MADE BY THE REVISED VERSION IN THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

The following are the most important differences in 2 Kings between the (so-called) Authorised Version of 1611 and the Revised Version of 1884.

A. V.	R. V.
iii. 2. Image.	Pillar or obelisk.
iii. 6. To number (troops).	Muster.
iii. 20. Meat offering.	Meal offering or oblation. See Preface to R. V.
v. 22. Mount Ephraim.	The hill country of Ephraim.
xiii. 6. Grove (groves).	Asherah (Asherim). See Preface to R. V.
xiv. 25. The plain (of Jordan).	The Arabah.
The heathen (esp. in chap. xvii.).	The nations. See Preface to R. V.

The above changes are (except the last) regularly repeated throughout the O.T. The references are to the passages where there are notes upon them in this book.

i. 3, 6, 16. Is it not because there is not a God in Israel?	Is it because, etc.
ii. 23. Little children.	Young lads (margin).
v. 11. Strike his hand over the place.	Wave his hand.
v. 15. Take a blessing.	Take a present.
viii. 13. But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?	But what is thy servant, which is but a dog, that he should do this great thing?
ix. 1, 3. Box of oil.	Vial of oil.
ix. 8. Him that is shut up and left in Israel.	Him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel.
ix. 30. She painted her face.	She painted her eyes.
ix. 31. Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?	Is it peace, thou Zimri, thy master's murderer?
xi. 4, 19. Captains.	Carites (margin, executioners).
xi. 14 and xxiii. 3. Stood by a pillar.	Stood by the pillar (margin, on the platform).

## A. V.

xii. 4. Even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at.

xv. 25. Palace.

xvii. 32. Made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests.

xviii. 4. And he called it Nehushtan.

xix. 7. I will send a blast upon him.

xix. 15. Which dwellest between the cherubims.

xix. 23. I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel.

xix. 24. With the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.

xix. 25. Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it?

xix. 37. Armenia.

xx. 4. The middle court.

xx. 9-11. Degrees.

xxii. 14. The college.

xxiii. 6. The graves of the children of the people.

xxiii. 11. The suburb.

xxv. 4. And the city was broken up.

xxv. 19. The principal scribe of the host.

## R. V.

In current money, the money of the persons for whom each man is rated.

Castle.

Made unto them from among themselves priests.

It was called Nehushtan (margin).

I will put a spirit in him.

Which sittest upon the cherubim.

I will enter into his farthest lodging place, the forest of his fruitful field.

With the sole of my feet will I dry up all the rivers of Egypt.

Hast thou not heard how I have done it long ago, and formed it of ancient times?

Ararat.

The middle part of the city.

Steps.

The second quarter.

The graves of the common people.

The precincts.

Then a breach was made in the city.

The scribe, the captain of the host.

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