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Volume 3 -
2 Kings
By A. Fuller

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2 KINGS

INTRODUCTION TO 1 AND 2 KINGS

The Greek translators, known as the Septuagint, who separated the “Book of the Law of Moses” into five parts, and the “Book of Samuel” into two, made the division, which is now almost universally adopted, of the original “Book of Kings” into a “First” and a “Second Book.” The separation thus made was followed naturally in the early Latin versions, which were formed from the Greek; and when Jerome set forth the edition now called “The Vulgate,” he followed the custom which he found established. The general adoption of the Vulgate by the Western Church caused the arrangement introduced by the Septuagint to obtain almost universal acceptance.

The work is named from its contents, since the entire subject of the whole is the history of the “kings” of Israel and Judah from the accession of Solomon to the Babylonian captivity.

1. The unity of the work is proved by the marked and striking simplicity and regularity of the plan. The work is, from first to last a history of the kings in strict chronological order, on the same system, and on a uniform scale. Exceptions to this uniformity in the larger space bestowed on the reigns of a few monarchs are due to the principle of treating with the greatest fullness the parts of the history theocratically of most importance.

(As Solomon (1 Kings 1—11), Jeroboam (^{<1125>}1 Kings 12:25—14:20), Ahab (^{<1169>}1 Kings 16:29—22:40), Jehoram (2 Kings 3—9:26), Hezekiah (2 Kings 18—20), and Josiah (2 Kings 22; 23).)

A second evidence of unity is the general uniformity of style and language — a uniformity admitted by all writers, and one which is only slightly infringed in two or three instances, where the irregularity may be accounted for by a diversity in the sources used by the author and a close following of the language which he found in those sources.

(In the first chapter of the First Book of Kings, peculiarities of diction occur which connect it with the Books of Samuel, and are

sufficiently explained by the supposition that in this part of his work the author of the Books of Kings drew from a source which had been used also by the author of Samuel. The narratives in ^{<1204>}2 Kings 4:1-37, and ^{<1205>}2 Kings 8:1-6, contain some remarkable Aramaic forms, which have been regarded as evidences of late composition, but which are, it is probable, provincialisms — peculiarities of an Israelite author contemporary (or nearly so) with Elisha, whose words the compiler of Kings preserved unaltered.)

To these general heads of evidence may be added certain peculiarities of thought or expression which pervade the two books, all of them indicating with greater or less certainty a single author.

(The formulae which introduce and close the reign of almost every king, or which describe the ordinary sinfulness of the Israelite monarchs; others are less palpable and evident, and therefore, the more thoroughly to be relied upon: such as the habit of express allusion to the Law of Moses (^{<1206>}1 Kings 2:3; 6:12, etc.; ^{<1207>}2 Kings 10:31; 11:12, etc.); the perpetual reference to God's choice of David and of Jerusalem (^{<1208>}1 Kings 8:16,29; 9:3, etc.; 2 Kings 20; 21:4); the constant use of the phrase "man of God," (which occurs in Kings at least fifty-three times, and in twelve distinct chapters. In Samuel it is used about five times in two chapters. In Chronicles it is used six times — in four chapters); the habit of frequently prefixing the word "king" to the names of monarchs; and the like.)

2. Some have thought from the continuity of the narrative, from the general resemblance of the style, and from the common employment of a certain number of words and phrases, that the six "books," commencing with Judges and terminating with the Second Book of Kings, are the production of a single writer, and constitute in reality a single unbroken composition. Others consider these arguments far from conclusive. The continuity of the narrative is formal, and may be due to the after arrangements of a reviser, such as Ezra is commonly believed to have been.

So far as the mere idiom of the language goes, it is perhaps true that we cannot draw a marked line between Kings and Samuel. But many of the traits most characteristic of the writer of Kings are wholly wanting in the other (and probably earlier) composition. For these and other reasons the "Books of Kings" may claim distinctness and separateness.

(References to the Book of the Law, so constant in Kings, nowhere occur in Samuel. Samuel is incomplete and vague in respect of dates, which in Kings are given with extraordinary precision. The author of Samuel nowhere makes any mention of his sources, while the author of Kings is constantly alluding to his. The favorite usages of the writer of Kings, such as his employment of the phrase “man of God,” and his habit of prefixing the word “king” to the names of monarchs, although not absolutely unknown to the writer of Samuel, are with him comparatively rare and unfamiliar. Each character who is brought upon the scene, however familiar to one acquainted with Samuel, is given a descriptive epithet, such as, “the prophet,” “the priest,” “the son of,” etc., as if previously unknown, when first introduced.)

3. There are two grounds upon which, apart from all traditional notices, the date of a historical work may be determined, namely, the peculiarities of the diction, and the contents.

The language of Kings belongs unmistakably to the period of the captivity. It is later than that of Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Joel, and Nahum, earlier than that of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah.

(The words and phrases which have been thought to indicate a later date than the time of the captivity can be shown, in almost every instance, to have been in use during that time, or even previously.)

In general character it bears a close resemblance to the language of Jeremiah and Ezekiel; and may be assigned to the sixth century before our era.

The result obtainable from the contents is similar, only somewhat more definite. Assuming the last detached section of the work (¹²⁵⁷2 Kings 25:27-30) to be an integral portion of it, we obtain the year 561 B.C. — the first year of Evil-Merodach — as the earliest possible date of the completion of the composition.

(The rest of the work may have been written as early as 580 B.C., and the section in question may have been added afterward.)

Again, from the fact that the work contains no allusion at all to the return of the Jews from their captivity, we obtain for the latest possible date the year 538 B.C., the year of the return under Zerubbabel: or in other words

between the death of Nebuchadnezzar and the accession of Cyrus in Babylon. Linguistic and other considerations favor the belief that the actual completion was early in this period — about 560 B.C.; and it is not improbable that the greater part of the work was written as early as 580 B.C. — i.e. some twenty years previously.

4. Jewish tradition assigns the authorship of Kings to Jeremiah; and there are very weighty arguments in favor of this view. There is a very remarkable affinity between the language of Kings and that of the admitted writings of the prophet.

(Compare ^{<1274>}2 Kings 17:14 and ^{<2076>}Jeremiah 7:26; ^{<1275>}2 Kings 17:15 and ^{<2415>}Jeremiah 2:5; ^{<1085>}1 Kings 8:25 and ^{<2437>}Jeremiah 33:17; ^{<1212>}2 Kings 21:12 and ^{<2493>}Jeremiah 19:3; ^{<1227>}2 Kings 22:17 and ^{<2472>}Jeremiah 7:20, etc.)

The matter moreover, of the two works, so far as the same events are treated, is in the closest harmony, those points being especially singled out for insertion, of which Jeremiah had personal knowledge and in which he took a special interest. Another argument of very considerable force is drawn from the entire omission of any notice at all of Jeremiah in Kings, which would have been very strange and unnatural in any other historian, considering the important part which Jeremiah played in the transactions of so many reigns, but which is completely intelligible on the hypothesis of his authorship of Kings: it is then the natural fruit and sign of a becoming modesty and unselfishness.

(Compare ^{<1234>}2 Kings 23:34 with ^{<2422>}Jeremiah 22:12; ^{<1240>}2 Kings 24:1 with ^{<2420>}Jeremiah 25:1-9; ^{<1247>}2 Kings 24:7 with ^{<2442>}Jeremiah 46:2-12; ^{<1250>}2 Kings 25:1-12 with ^{<2490>}Jeremiah 39:1-10, etc.)

Still, though Jeremiah's authorship appears, all things considered, to be highly probable, we must admit that it has not been proved, and is therefore to some extent uncertain.

5. The author of Kings cites as authorities on the subject matter of his history three works:

(1) the “book of the acts of Solomon” (^{<1114>}1 Kings 11:41);

(2) the “book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel” (^{<1149>}1 Kings 14:19, etc.); and

(3) the “Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” (^{<1149>}1 Kings 14:29, etc.).

His own history was, at least in part, derived from these works. Lesser works were also open to him.

(Such as the following: “The Chronicles of King David” (^{<13724>}1 Chronicles 27:24), “The Acts of Samuel the Seer,” “The Acts of Nathan the prophet,” “The Acts of Gad the Seer” (^{<1329>}1 Chronicles 29:29), “The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite,” “The Visions of Iddo the Seer against Jeroboam the Son of Nebat” (^{<14029>}2 Chronicles 9:29), “The Acts of Shemaiah the prophet,” “Iddo the Seer on Genealogies” (^{<14125>}2 Chronicles 12:15), “The Commentary of the prophet Iddo” (^{<14132>}2 Chronicles 13:22), and the like.)

Further, the writer had probably access to a work of a different character from any of those quoted by the author of Chronicles, namely, a collection of the miracles of Elisha, made probably in one of the schools of the prophets.

Hence, the sources of Kings may be considered threefold, consisting, first, of certain general historical documents called the “Books of the Chronicles of the Kings;” secondly, of some special treatises on the history of particular short periods; and, thirdly, of a single work of a very peculiar character, the private biography of a remarkable man.

The “books of the chronicles of the kings” were probably of the nature of public archives, (See ^{<17023>}Esther 2:23; 6:1; 10:2.) — state-annals, that is, containing an account of the chief public events in the reign of each king, drawn up by an authorized person. With the Israelites the authorized person was probably in almost every case a prophet. The prophets regarded this as one of their principal duties, as we see by the examples of Isaiah (^{<14072>}2 Chronicles 26:22; Isaiah 36—38), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 39—43:7; 52), and Daniel (Daniel 1—6). At the close of every reign, if not even in its course, an addition was probably made to the “book of the chronicles of the kings” by the prophet who held the highest position at the period.

(Thus the “book of the acts of Solomon” was perhaps begun by Nathan, and was concluded either by Ahijah the Shilonite or by Iddo the Seer (^{<14029>}2 Chronicles 9:29). The “Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” was probably the work of Shemaiah (^{<14125>}2 Chronicles 12:15), Iddo (^{<14132>}2 Chronicles 13:22), Jehu the son of

Hanani (^{<1084>}2 Chronicles 20:34), Isaiah (^{<1062>}2 Chronicles 26:22), Jeremiah, and others of the prophetic order, each of whom wrote the history of the king or kings with whom he was himself contemporary. Similarly, with the “book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel,” Israelite prophets such as Ahijah, Micaiah the son of Imlah (^{<1218>}1 Kings 22:8), Elisha, and Jonah (^{<1245>}2 Kings 14:25), composed portions.)

But the prophets, in addition to these formal official writings, composed also historical works which were on a somewhat larger scale, and were especially more full in the account which they gave of religious matters. Compare for example, the difference between the prophetic monograph and the drier abstract of the “book of the chronicles,” contained in the historical chapters of Isaiah (Isaiah 36—39), and the parallel chapters of the Second Book of Kings (2 Kings 18—20). Compare also Jeremiah 39—44 with ^{<1231>}2 Kings 25:1-26. Further, comparing generally the history as given in Chronicles with the corresponding history in Kings, the author of Chronicles seems to have followed generally the separate works of the various prophetic writers: (See the introduction to Chronicles, and compare ^{<1329>}1 Chronicles 29:29; ^{<1409>}2 Chronicles 9:29; 12:15; 13:22, etc.) the author of Kings, mainly the official documents. In Chronicles nothing is more noticeable than the greater fullness of the religious history of Judah. (See particularly ^{<1321>}1 Chronicles 22:1-19; 28:1-21; 29:1-22; ^{<1408>}2 Chronicles 2:3-16; 13:4-18, etc.) This came chiefly from the several prophetic works, and marks a contrast between their character and the ordinary character of the state-annals.

The writer of Kings was mainly a compiler. He selected, arranged, and wove into a whole, the various narratives of earlier writers whereof he made use. This is evident, both from the retention of obsolete or provincial forms in particular narratives, and from the occurrence of a number of statements which were inappropriate at the time when the compiler wrote.

(Of this kind are the following:

1. The statement in ^{<1088>}1 Kings 8:8, that the staves of the ark continued where they were placed by Solomon.
2. The statement that the bondage of the Amorites, Hivites, etc., continued (^{<1021>}1 Kings 9:21).

3. The assertion that Israel was still in rebellion against the house of David (^{<1129>}1 Kings 12:19).
4. The declaration that Selah (Petra) kept the name of Joktheel, which Amaziah gave it (^{<1247>}2 Kings 14:7).
5. The assignment of a preference over all other kings of Judah, previous and subsequent, both to Hezekiah (^{<1285>}2 Kings 18:5) and to Josiah (^{<1225>}2 Kings 23:25).

The close verbal agreement between ^{<1285>}2 Kings 18:15—20:19, and Isaiah 36—39, can only have arisen from the writer's extracting without alteration Isaiah's account of the reign of Hezekiah as it occurred in the state-annals: and the verbal agreement between great part of Chronicles and Kings, is often best accounted for by supposing that the two writers made verbatim extracts from the same authority.

On the other hand the writer of Kings sometimes departed from the wording of his authors, and substituted expressions purely his own.

(The phrase "across the river" (^{<1024>}1 Kings 4:24) would not have been used to designate the tract west of the Euphrates by a Jew writing in Palestine in the reign of Solomon or Rehoboam. A contemporary of Jeroboam would not have spoken of "the cities of Samaria" (^{<1132>}1 Kings 13:32). The annals of Joash, son of Jehoahaz, did not, we may be sure, contain a statement that "God cast not Israel from his presence as yet" (^{<1233>}2 Kings 13:23).)

And there are passages evidently original.

(Besides the "formulae" at the beginning and end of reigns, the same hand may be traced in ^{<1270>}2 Kings 17:7-41; 21:7-16; 23:26,27; 24:3,4,6-20; 25:1-30.)

It is on these parts of the work that the argument in favor of Jeremiah's authorship especially rests.

6. Philologically speaking, the general condition of the text is good.

(Almost the only passages where the question of the true reading is of much importance are ^{<1112>}1 Kings 11:25, and ^{<1266>}2 Kings 16:6, in both which cases it is suspected that "Edom," should be read for "Syria.")

But the historian has to lament an unsoundness, which, though affecting in no degree the religious character of the books, detracts from their value as documents wherein is contained an important portion of the world's civil history. The numbers, as they have come down to us in Kings, are untrustworthy, being in part self-contradictory, in part opposed to other Scriptural notices, in part improbable, if not even impossible.

(The date in ^{<1100>}1 Kings 6:1, contradicts the chronology of Judges and Samuel, as well as ^{<4130>}Acts 13:20; ^{<1142>}1 Kings 14:21, is at variance with 1 Kings 12. The accession of Jehoram is variously placed in ^{<12017>}2 Kings 1:17 and ^{<12101>}2 Kings 3:1; ^{<2150>}2 Kings 15:1 is irreconcilable with ^{<12123>}2 Kings 14:23; 17:1 with ^{<2150>}2 Kings 15:30, etc.)

(Thus Josiah (according to the present numbers) must have been born to Amon when the latter was sixteen, Jehoiakim to Josiah when Josiah was fourteen, and Hezekiah to Ahaz when Ahaz was only eleven! See ^{<12802>}2 Kings 18:2 note.)

The defect would seem to have arisen from two causes, one common to the Hebrew Scriptures, the other unique to these books. The common cause is corruption, partly from the fact that error in them is rarely checked by the context, partly from the circumstance that some system of abbreviated numerical notation has been adopted by professional scribes, and that the symbols employed by them have been mistaken one for another. The peculiar cause of error seems to have been insertions into the text of chronological notes originally made in the margin by a commentator.

(Abbreviated forms of numerical notation are exceedingly ancient, and appear to have prevailed in all the great Oriental monarchies, notably in Egypt and Babylonia. The Hebrews certainly employed letters for numbers, in the same way as they do at present, as early as the time of the Maccabees; and it is probable that they employed either this or some other method of abbreviation from a much earlier date, perhaps even from the time of the Exodus. The full expression of the numbers in the sacred text belongs probably to the Talmudical period of superstitious regard for the mere letter of Scripture — the time when the characters were counted, when central letters were determined, and the practice commenced of writing them large.)

The first date which occurs (~~1101~~1 Kings 6:1) seems to be a gloss of this character, and it may be suspected that to a similar origin is due the whole series of synchronisms between the dynasties of Israel and Judah. It is probable that the original work gave simply the years assigned to each king in the “books of the chronicles,” without entering upon the further question, in what regnal year of the contemporary monarch in the sister kingdom each prince ascended the throne. The chief difficulties of the chronology, and almost all the actual contradictions, disappear if we subtract from the work these portions.

(As for instance in ~~1102~~1 Kings 16:22,23: “So Tibni died, and Omri reigned. (In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah) Omri reigned over Israel twelve years.” Here the removal of the words in brackets would evidently improve the sense.)

Excepting in this respect, the Books of Kings have come down to us, as to all essentials, in a thoroughly sound condition. The only place where the Septuagint Version differs importantly from the Hebrew text is in 1 Kings 12, where a long passage concerning Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, not now found in the Hebrew, occurs between ~~1124~~1 Kings 12:24 and ~~1125~~1 Kings 12:25. But this passage is clearly no part of the original narrative. It is a story after the fashion of the apocryphal Esdras, worked up out of the Scripture facts, with additions, which the Alexandrian writer may have taken from some Jewish authority whereto he had access, but which certainly did not come from the writer of Kings. None of its facts except possibly a single one — the age, namely, of Rehoboam at his accession

(See the note at ~~1128~~1 Kings 12:8,10.) belongs to the real narrative of our historian.

7. The primary character of the work is undoubtedly historical. It is the main object of the writer to give an account of the kings of Israel and Judah from Solomon’s accession to the captivity of Zedekiah.

The history is, however, written — not, like most history, from a civil, but from a religious point of view. The Jews are regarded, not as an ordinary nation, but as God’s people. The historian does not aim at exhibiting the mere political progress of the kingdoms about which he writes, but intends to describe to us God’s treatment of the race with which he had entered into covenant. Where he records the events of the civil history, his plan is

to trace cut the fulfillment of the combined warning and promise which had been given to David (<1072>2 Samuel 7:12-16).

Hence, events, which an ordinary historian would have considered of great importance, may be (and are) omitted by our author from the narrative; or touched slightly and hastily.

(Thus he takes no notice at all of the expedition of Zerah the Ethiopian (<1449>2 Chronicles 14:9-15; 16:8); of Jehoshaphat's war with Moab, Ammon, and Edom (<1401>2 Chronicles 20:1-25); of Uzziah's successes against the Philistines (<1436>2 Chronicles 26:6-8); or of Manasseh's capture by the Assyrians (<1431>2 Chronicles 33:11-13). He treats with the utmost brevity the conquest of Jerusalem by Shishak (<1145>1 Kings 14:25,26), the war between Abijam and Jeroboam (<1157>1 Kings 15:7), that of Amaziah with Edom (<1247>2 Kings 14:7), and that of Josiah with Pharaoh-Nechoh (<1239>2 Kings 23:29); events treated at length in the parallel passages of the Book of Chronicles.)

As a general rule, the military history of the two kingdoms, which was no doubt carefully recorded in the "Books of the Chronicles," is omitted by the writer of Kings, who is content for the most part to refer his readers to the state-annals for the events which would have made the greatest figure in an ordinary secular history.

On the other hand, the special aim of the writer induces him to assign a prominent piece and to give a full treatment to events which a secular historian would have touched lightly or passed over in silence. The teaching of the prophets, and their miracles, were leading points in the religious history of the time; it was owing to them especially that the apostasy of the people was without excuse; therefore the historian who has to show that, despite the promises made to David, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the whole twelve tribes carried into captivity, must exhibit fully the grounds for this severity, and must consequently dwell on circumstances which so intensely aggravated the guilt of the people.

The character of the history that he has to relate, its general tendency and ultimate issue, naturally throw over his whole narrative an air of gloom. The tone of the work tires harmonises with that of Jeremiah's undoubted writings, and furnishes an additional argument in favor of that prophet's authorship.

The style of Kings is, for the most part, level and uniform — a simple narrative style. Occasionally, a more lofty tone is breathed, the style rising with the subject matter, and becoming in places almost poetical (^{<1191>}1 Kings 19:11,12; ^{<1292>}2 Kings 19:21-31). The most striking chapters are 1 Kings 8; 18; 19; 2 Kings 5; 9; 18; 19; 20.

8. The general authenticity of the narrative contained in our books is admitted. Little is denied or questioned but the miraculous portions of the story, which cluster chiefly about the persons of Elijah and Elisha. Some critics admitting that the narrative generally is derived from authentic contemporary documents — either state-annals or the writings of contemporary prophets — maintain that the histories of Elijah and Elisha come from an entirely different source, being (they hold) collections of traditions respecting those persons made many years after their deaths, either by the writer of Kings or by some other person, from the mouths of the common people. Hence, according to them, their “legendary” or “mythical” character.

But there are no critical grounds for separating off the account of Elijah, or more than a small portion of the account of Elisha, (^{<1301>}2 Kings 4:1-37, and ^{<1401>}2 Kings 8:1-6, form the exceptions to the general rule.) from the rest of the composition. The history of Elijah especially is so intertwined with that of the kingdom of Israel, and is altogether of so public a nature, that the “chronicles of the kings of Israel” would almost necessarily have contained an account of it; and an important part of the history of Elisha is of a similar character. Further, it is quite gratuitous to imagine that the account was not a contemporary one, or that it was left for a writer living long subsequently to collect into a volume the doings of these remarkable personages. The probability is quite the other way. As the prophets themselves were the historians of the time, it would be only natural that Elisha should collect the miracles and other remarkable deeds of Elijah; and that his own should be collected after his decease by some one of the “sons of the prophets.” Add to this that the miracles, as related, have all the air of descriptions derived from eye-witnesses, being full of such minute circumstantial detail as tradition cannot possibly preserve. The whole result would seem to be that (unless we reject miracles altogether as unworthy of belief on account of an “a priori” impossibility) the account of the two great Israelite prophets in Kings must be regarded as entitled to acceptance equally with the rest of the narrative.

Both internal consistency and probability, and also external testimony, strongly support the general authenticity of the secular history contained in Kings. The empire of Solomon is of a kind with which early Oriental history makes us familiar; it occurs exactly at a period when there was room for its creation owing to the simultaneous weakness of Egypt and Assyria; its rapid spread, and still more rapid contraction, are in harmony with our other records of Eastern dominion; its art and civilization resemble these known to have prevailed about the same time in neighboring countries. The contact of Judaea with Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia, during the period covered by our books agrees with the Egyptian annals, and in some respects is most strikingly illustrated by the cuneiform inscriptions. Berosus, Manetho, Menander, Dius — the pagan historians of Babylon, Egypt, and Tyre — join with the monuments in the support which they furnish to our author's truthfulness and accuracy, as the comment appended to the text will prove abundantly.

Even the broader features of the chronology are both internally probable, and externally confirmed by the chronologies of other countries. The interval between the accession of Solomon and the captivity of Zedekiah is given as 433 1/2 years,

(This number is obtained by adding together the years of the kings of Judah. If parts of years are throughout counted as full years, this number is somewhat in excess. Clinton makes the actual time 429 years.)

which is divided among twenty-one monarchs, who belong to eighteen (or, excluding Jehoiachin, to seventeen) generations. This allows for each generation the very probable term of 25 1/2 years. During the portion of the history where the chronology is double, and where the chief internal difficulties occur, the divergence of the two schemes is but slight, amounting to no more than about twenty years in 240 or 250. Egyptian annals confirm approximately the Biblical dates for Shishak's invasion, and So's alliance. The Assyrian annals agree with the Hebrew in the date of the fall of Samaria, and in exhibiting Hazael and Jehu, Tiglath-Pileser and Ahaz, Sennacherib and Hezekiah, Esarhaddon and Manasseh, as contemporaries. The chronological difficulties, where such exist, do not at all exceed those with which every reader of profane historians is familiar, and which, in fact, pervade the whole of ancient chronology. They are partly to be accounted for by diversities in the mode of reckoning; while

occasionally no doubt they result from a corrupt reading, or from an unauthorized interpolation.

(In some systems, fractions of years are reckoned as years; in others, they are omitted altogether. In some, years are longer; in others, shorter than the true astronomical year. The differences which result from these causes mount up to something considerable in the course of centuries.)

THE BOOK OF SECOND KINGS

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 1

2 Kings 1:1. The Moabites, who had once lorded over Israel (~~OT~~Judges 3:12-14), were reduced to subjection by David, and treated with extreme severity (marginal reference). In the time of Ahab they were dependent on the kingdom of Israel, to which it has been generally supposed that they fell at the separation of Israel from Judah. The Moabite monument (see ~~OT~~2 Kings 3:4), discovered in 1869, has now given reason to believe that they then recovered their independence, but were again reduced by Omri, who, with his son Ahab, is said (in round numbers) to have “oppressed” them for “forty years.” Ahab’s death was seized upon as an occasion for revolt, and Moab (perhaps owing to Ahaziah’s sickness) easily regained her independence.

2 Kings 1:2. *A lattice* The “upper chamber” had probably a single latticed window, through which Ahaziah fell. Windows in the East are to this day generally closed by lattices of interlaced wood, which open outward; so that, if the fastening is not properly secured, one who leans against them may easily fall out.

Baal-zebul literally, “Lord (i.e., averter) of flies.” Flies in the East constitute one of the most terrible of plagues (~~PS~~Psalms 105:31; ~~EX~~Exodus 8:24); and Orientals would be as likely to have a “god of flies” as a god of storm and thunder. To inquire (~~OT~~2 Kings 1:3) of Baal-zebul was practically to deny Yahweh. Ahaziah cast aside the last remnant of respect for the old religion, and consulted a foreign oracle, as if the voice of God were wholly silent in his own country.

For Ekron see the marginal reference.

2 Kings 1:4. *Therefore ...* As a punishment for this insult to Yahweh.

2 Kings 1:8. *An hairy man* Either in allusion to his shaggy cloak of untanned skin; or, more probably, an expression descriptive of the prophet’s person, of his long flowing locks, abundant beard, and general

profusion of hair. His costume was that of a thorough ascetic. Generally the Jews wore girdles of linen or cotton stuff, soft and comfortable. Under the girdle they wore one or two long linen gowns or shirts, and over these they had sometimes a large shawl. Elijah had only his leather girdle and his sheepskin cape or “mantle.”

2 Kings 1:9. *Then the king sent unto him* i.e., in order to seize and punish him. Compare **1 Kings 18:10; 22:27.**

2 Kings 1:10. The charge of cruelty made against Elijah makes it needful to consider the question: What was Elijah’s motive? And the answer is: Sharply to make a signal example, to vindicate God’s honor in a striking way. Ahaziah had, as it were, challenged Yahweh to a trial of strength by sending a band of fifty to arrest one man. Elijah was not Jesus Christ, able to reconcile mercy with truth, the vindication of God’s honor with the utmost tenderness for erring men, and awe them merely by His presence (compare **John 18:6**). In Elijah the spirit of the Law was embodied in its full severity. His zeal was fierce; he was not shocked by blood; he had no softness and no relenting. He did not permanently profit by the warning at Horeb (**1 Kings 19:12** note). He continued the uncompromising avenger of sin, the wielder of the terrors of the Lord, such exactly as he had shown himself at Carmel. He is, consequently, no pattern for Christian men (**Luke 9:55**); but his character is the perfection of the purely legal type. No true Christian after Pentecost would have done what Elijah did. But what he did, when he did it, was not sinful. It was but executing strict, stern justice. Elijah asked that fire should fall — God made it fall; and, by so doing, both vindicated His own honor, and justified the prayer of His prophet.

2 Kings 1:17. The similarity of names in the two royal houses of Israel and Judah at this time, and at no other, seems to be the consequence of the close ties which united the two reigning families, and is well noted among the “undesigned coincidences” of the Old Testament. The accession of the Israelite Jehoram (Ahab’s brother) took place, according to **2 Kings 3:1**, in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat. Jehoram of Judah perhaps received the royal title from his father as early as his father’s sixteenth year, when he was about to join Ahab against the Syrians; the same year might then be called either the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat or the second year of Jehoram.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 2

2 Kings 2:1. The events of this chapter are related out of their chronological order. Elijah's translation did not take place until after the accession of Jehoram in Judah (~~2~~2 Chronicles 21:12), which was not until the fifth year of Jehoram of Israel (~~2~~2 Kings 8:16). The writer of Kings, having concluded his notices of the ministry of Elijah in ch. i., and being about to pass in 2 Kings 3 to the ministry of Elisha, thought it best to insert at this point the final scene of Elijah's life, though it did not occur until several years later.

Gilgal The modern Jiljilieh, on the highland between Nablous and Beitin (Bethel), about eight and a half miles from the latter, is now commonly supposed to be the Gilgal here mentioned. Some regard it as the ordinary residence of Elisha (~~2~~2 Kings 4:38).

2 Kings 2:2. *Tarry here* Elijah's motive in making this request is not clear. Perhaps he thought that so awful and sacred a scene as that which he was led to expect (~~2~~2 Kings 2:9), should be kept as secret as possible.

The LORD hath sent me to Bethel Elijah may have been directed to Bethel, because of the "School of the prophets" there, that the sight of him — if not his words — might console and encourage them before they lost him forever.

As the LORD liveth ... This double oath, repeated three times (~~2~~2 Kings 2:4,6), is very remarkable. The two clauses of it are separately used with some frequency (see ~~Judges~~Judges 8:19; ~~Ruth~~Ruth 3:13; ~~1 Samuel~~1 Samuel 1:26, etc.), but it is comparatively seldom that they are united (see the marginal references).

2 Kings 2:3. *Came forth to Elisha* It does not appear that any interchange of speech took place between "the sons of the prophets" (see the marginal reference note) and Elijah; but independent revelations had been made to the two "schools" at Bethel and Jericho (~~2~~2 Kings 2:5), and also to Elisha, with respect to Elijah's coming removal.

From thy head i.e. from his position as teacher and master. The teacher sat on an elevated seat, so that his feet were level with the heads of his pupils (compare ~~Acts~~Acts 22:3).

Hold ye your peace i.e. “Say nothing — disturb us not. The matter is too sacred for words.”

2 Kings 2:7. *Fifty men of the sons of the prophets* We see by this how large were the prophetic schools. It is implied that the “fifty” were only a portion of the school of Jericho. They ascended the abrupt heights behind the town, from where they would command a view of the whole course of the river and of the opposite bank for many miles.

2 Kings 2:8. *They were divided ...* The attestation to the divine mission of Elijah furnished by this miracle would tend to place him upon a par in the thoughts of men with the two great leaders of the nation named in the marginal references.

2 Kings 2:9. *Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me* Like Solomon, Elisha asks for no worldly advantage, but for spiritual power to discharge his office aright. The “double portion” is that which denotes the proportion of a father’s property which was the right of an eldest son (^(~~1217~~)Deuteronomy 21:17). Elisha therefore asked for twice as much of Elijah’s spirit as should be inherited by any other of the “sons of the prophets.” He simply claimed, i.e., to be acknowledged as Elijah’s firstborn spiritual son.

2 Kings 2:10. It would be better to omit the words “when I am,” which are not in the original. The sign was to be Elisha’s seeing the actual translation, which he did (^(~~1212~~)2 Kings 2:12).

2 Kings 2:11. *Elijah went up ...* No honest exegesis can explain this passage in any other sense than as teaching the translation of Elijah, who was taken from the earth, like Enoch (^(~~1052~~)Genesis 5:24), without dying. Compare Ecclesiasticus 48:9.

2 Kings 2:12. *The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof* These difficult words are probably said of Elijah, whom Elisha addresses as “the true defense of Israel, better than either the chariots or horsemen” which he saw. Hence, his rending his clothes in token of his grief.

2 Kings 2:14. *Where ...* Some prefer, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah, even he? And when he had smitten, etc.” Or, according to others, “now when he, etc.” Elisha’s smiting of the waters seems to have been tentative. He was not sure of its result. Hence, the form of his invocation

— “Where is the Lord God of Elijah? Is He here — i.e. — with me, or is He not?” Answered by the event, he appears never subsequently to have doubted.

2 Kings 2:16. Compare the marginal references. The words “cast him upon some mountain,” rather imply that they expected to find the prophet alive.

2 Kings 2:17. *Till he was ashamed* i.e. to refuse them any longer.

2 Kings 2:19. *The water is naught* i.e. “bad.”

And the ground barren Translate “and the land apt to miscarry.” The stream was thought to be the cause of untimely births, abortions, and the like, among the cattle, perhaps also among the people, that drank of it.

2 Kings 2:20. The “new cruse” and the “salt” are evidently chosen from a regard to symbolizm. The foul stream represents sin, and to cleanse it emblems of purity must be taken. Hence, the clean “new” dish previously unused, and thus untainted; and the salt, a common Scriptural symbol of incorruption (see **Leviticus 2:13**; **Ezekiel 43:24**; **Matthew 5:13**, etc.).

2 Kings 2:21. *The spring of the waters* The spring intended is probably that now called Ain-es-Sultan, which is not much more than a mile from the site of the ancient town. It is described as a large and beautiful fountain of sweet and pleasant water. The springs issuing from the eastern base of the highlands of Judah and Benjamin are to this day generally brackish.

2 Kings 2:23. As Beth-el was the older seat of the calf-worship (**1 Kings 12:32,33**; **13:1-32**), a prophet of Yahweh was not unlikely to meet with insult there.

By the way i.e. “by the usual road,” probably that which winds up the Wady Suweinit, under hills even now retaining some trees, and in Elisha’s time covered with a dense forest, the haunt of savage animals. Compare **1 Kings 13:24**; and for the general prevalence of beasts of prey in the country, both earlier and later than this, see **Judges 14:5**; **1 Samuel 17:31**; **2 Kings 17:25**; **Amos 5:19**, etc.

2 Kings 2:24. On this occasion only do we find Elisha a minister of vengeance. Perhaps it was necessary to show, at the outset of his career as a prophet, that he too, so mild and peaceful could, like Elijah, wield the terrors of God's judgments (¹¹⁹⁸1 Kings 19:19 note). The persons really punished were, not so much the children, as the wicked parents (¹¹²³2 Kings 2:23), whose mouth-pieces the children were, and who justly lost the gift of offspring of which they had shown themselves unworthy.

2 Kings 2:25. *Carmel* Where Elisha held gatherings for religious purposes (¹¹²³2 Kings 4:23-25) during one period of his life, if he did not actually reside there.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 3

2 Kings 3:1. *In the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat* This date agrees exactly with the statements that Jehoshaphat began to reign in the fourth year of Ahab (^{<124>}1 Kings 22:41), and Ahaziah in the 17th year of Jehoshaphat (^{<125>}1 Kings 22:51).

2 Kings 3:2. On the “evil” done by Ahab, see especially ^{<1160>}1 Kings 16:30-34. Jehoram, warned by the fate of his brother (^{<1001>}2 Kings 1:4 note), began his reign by a formal abolition of the Phoenician state religion introduced by Ahab — even if he connived at its continuance among the people (^{<1205>}2 Kings 10:26,27); and by a re-establishment of the old worship of the kingdom as arranged by Jeroboam.

2 Kings 3:4. Moab, the region immediately east of the Dead Sea and of the lower Jordan, though in part suited for agriculture, is in the main a great grazing country. Mesha resembled a modern Arab Sheikh, whose wealth is usually estimated by the number of his flocks and herds. His tribute of the wool of 100,000 lambs was a tribute in kind, the ordinary tribute at this time in the East.

Mesha is the monarch who wrote the inscription on the “Moabite stone” (^{<1201>}2 Kings 1:1 note). The points established by the Inscription are:

- 1.** That Moab recovered from the blow dealt by David (^{<1012>}2 Samuel 8:2,12), and became again an independent state in the interval between David’s conquest and the accession of Omri;
- 2.** That Omri reconquered the country, and that it then became subject to the northern kingdom, and remained so throughout his reign and that of his son Ahab, and into the reign of Ahab’s son and successor, Ahaziah;
- 3.** That the independence was regained by means of a war, in which Mesha took town after town from the Israelites, including in his conquests many of the towns which, at the original occupation of the holy land, had passed into the possession of the Reubenites or the Gadites, as Baal-Meon (^{<0238>}Numbers 32:38), Kirjathaim (^{<0237>}Numbers 32:37), Ataroth (^{<0234>}Numbers 32:34), Nebo (^{<0238>}Numbers 32:38), Jahaz (^{<0138>}Joshua 13:18), etc.;

4. That the name of Yahweh was well known to the Moabites as that of the God of the Israelites; and

5. That there was a sanctuary of Yahweh at Nebo, in the Trans-Jordanic territory, where “vessels” were used in His service.

2 Kings 3:7. The close alliance between the two kingdoms still subsisted. Jehoram therefore sends confidently to make the same request with respect to Moab that his father had made two years before with respect to Syria (marginal reference). Jehoshaphat consented at once, notwithstanding that his former compliance had drawn upon him the rebuke of a prophet (^{440D}2 Chronicles 19:2). Perhaps Jehoram’s removal of the Baal-worship (^{439E}2 Kings 3:2) weighed with him. He had himself been attacked by the Moabites in the preceding year; and though the attempt had failed, Jehoshaphat would feel that it might be renewed, and that it was important to seize the opportunity of weakening his enemy which now offered itself.

2 Kings 3:8. The readiest and most natural “way” was across the Jordan near Jericho into the Arboth-Moab, and then along the eastern shore of the Dead Sea to Moab proper, the tract south of the Arnon. But the way chosen was that which led to the Edomite country, namely, round the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and across the Arabah, or continuation of the Jordan and Dead Sea valley. Thus would be effected a junction with the forces of Edom, which had resumed its dependence on Judah, though the year before it had been in alliance with Moab (^{440D}2 Chronicles 20:22); and they would come upon the Moabites unprepared.

2 Kings 3:9. *Seven days’ journey* The distance of the route probably followed is not much more than 100 miles. But the difficulties of the way are great; and the army might not be able to move along it at a faster rate than about 15 miles a day.

No water The kings had probably expected to find sufficient water for both men and baggage animals in the Wady-el-Ahsey, which divides Edom from Moab, and which has a stream that is now regarded as perennial. But it was dried up — quite a possible occurrence with any of the streams of this region.

2 Kings 3:11. *A prophet of the LORD* i.e. of Yahweh. It was necessary to inquire thus definitely, as there were still plenty of prophets who were only prophets of Baal (**2 Kings 3:13**).

Here is Elisha Jehoram appears to have been ignorant of his presence with the host, and one of his “servants,” or officers, answered Jehoshaphat’s inquiry.

Which poured water An act signifying ministrations or attendance (compare **John 13:5ff**).

2 Kings 3:13. Jehoram’s humility in seeking (**2 Kings 3:12**) instead of summoning Elisha, does not save him from rebuke. His reformation (**2 Kings 3:2**) had been but a half reformation — a compromise with idolatry.

Nay: for the LORD hath called ... The force of this reply seems to be — “Nay, reproach me not, since I am in a sore strait — and not only I, but these two other kings also. The Lord — Yahweh — is about to deliver us into the hand of Moab. If thou canst not, or wilt not help, at least do not reproach.”

2 Kings 3:15. Music seems to have been a regular accompaniment of prophecy in the “schools of the prophets” (marginal reference), and an occasional accompaniment of it elsewhere (**Exodus 15:20**).

2 Kings 3:16. *Ditches* Or “pits” (**Jeremiah 14:3**). They were to dig pits in the broad valley or wady, wherein the water might remain, instead of flowing off down the torrent course.

2 Kings 3:17. No rain was to fall where the Israelites and their enemies were encamped; there was not even to be that all but universal accompaniment of rain in the East, a sudden rise of wind (compare **1 Kings 18:45**; **Psalm 147:18**; **Matthew 7:25**).

Cattle, and your beast The former are the animals brought for food. The latter are the baggage animals.

2 Kings 3:19. *Ye shall fell every good tree* This is not an infringement of the rule laid down in **Deuteronomy 20:19,20**. The Israelites were not forbidden to fell the fruit trees in an enemy’s country, as a part of the ravage of war, when they had no thoughts of occupying the

country. The plan of thus injuring an enemy was probably in general use among the nations of these parts at the time. We see the destruction represented frequently on the Assyrian monuments and mentioned in the inscriptions of Egypt.

And stop all wells of water The stoppage of wells was a common feature of ancient, and especially Oriental, warfare (compare ^{<1025>}Genesis 26:15-18).

Mar ... with stones The exact converse of that suggested in ^{<212>}Isaiah 5:2. The land in and about Palestine is so stony that the first work of the cultivator is to collect the surface stones together into heaps. An army marching through a land could easily undo this work, dispersing the stones thus gathered, and spreading them once more over the fields.

^{<111>}**2 Kings 3:20.** *When the meat offering was offered* i.e. about sunrise, when the morning sacrifice was offered. Compare ^{<1182>}1 Kings 18:29.

There came water by the way of Edom The Wady-el-Ahsy drains a considerable portion of northern Edom. Heavy rain had fallen during the night in some part of this tract, and with the morning a freshet of water came down the valley, filling the pits.

^{<111>}**2 Kings 3:21.** *And stood in the border* On the north side of the wady, ready to defend their territory.

^{<111>}**2 Kings 3:23.** The sun had risen with a ruddy light, as is frequently the case after a storm (compare ^{<4018>}Matthew 16:3), nearly over the Israelite camp, and the pits, deep but with small mouths, gleaming redly through the haze which would lie along the newly moistened valley, seemed to the Moabites like pools of blood. The preceding year, they and their allies had mutually destroyed each other (^{<4123>}2 Chronicles 20:23). It seemed to them, from their knowledge of the jealousies between Judah, Israel, and Edom, not unlikely that a similar calamity had now befallen their foes.

^{<111>}**2 Kings 3:25.** Kir-Haraseth, also Kir-Hareseth, is identified almost certainly with the modern Kerak, a strong city on the highland immediately east of the southern part of the Dead Sea. It was the great fortress of Moab, though not the capital, which was Rabbath or Rabbah. It was an important strong-hold at the time of the Crusades, and is still a place of

great strength. Kir seems to have meant “fortress.” It is found in Ciresium, Car-chemish, etc.

Kir-Haraseth resisted all the attempts to dismantle it; but the slingers found places on the hills which surrounded it, from where they could throw their stones into it and harass the garrison, though they could not take the town.

~~2 Kings~~ **2 Kings 3:26.** *To break through, even unto the king of Edom* Either because he thought that the king of Edom would connive at his escape or to take vengeance on him for having deserted his former allies (~~2 Kings~~ 2 Kings 3:8 note).

~~2 Kings~~ **2 Kings 3:27.** Compare the marginal reference. Mesha, when his sally failed, took, as a last resource, his first born son, and offered him as a burnt-offering to appease the manifest anger of his god Chemosh, and obtain his aid against his enemies. This act was thoroughly in accordance with Moabitish notions.

And there was great indignation against Israel Either the Israelites were indignant with themselves, or the men of Judah and the Edomites were indignant at the Israelites for having caused the pollution of this sacrifice, and the siege was relinquished.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 4

2 Kings 4:1. *The creditor is come ...* The Law of Moses, like the Athenian and the Roman law, recognized servitude for debt, and allowed that pledging of the debtor's person, which, in a rude state of society, is regarded as the safest and the most natural security (see the marginal reference). In the present case it would seem that, so long as the debtor lived, the creditor had not enforced his right over his sons, but now on his death he claimed their services, to which he was by law entitled.

2 Kings 4:2. *A pot of oil* Or, "an anointing of oil" — so much oil, i.e., as would serve me for one anointing of my person. The word used occurs only in this passage.

2 Kings 4:8. *And it fell on a day* The original of the expression here used, which occurs three times in the present narrative (**2 Kings 4:11,18**), is also found in **Job 1:6,13; 2:1**. The character of the expression perhaps supports the view that the author of Kings has collected from various sources his account of the miracles of Elisha, and has kept in each case the words of the original writer.

A great woman That is, "a rich woman." Compare **1 Samuel 25:2**; **2 Samuel 19:32**.

2 Kings 4:10. *A little chamber on the wall* The room probably projected like a balcony beyond the lower apartments — an arrangement common in the East.

A stool Rather, "a chair." The "chair" and "table," unusual in the sleeping-rooms of the East, indicate that the prophet was expected to use his apartment for study and retirement, not only as a sleeping-chamber.

2 Kings 4:13. *Thou hast been careful for us* For the prophet and his servant, who must have been lodged as well as his master.

I dwell among mine own people The woman declines Elisha's offer. She has no wrong to complain of, no quarrel with any neighbor, in respect of which she might need the help of one in power. She "dwells among her own people" — her friends, and dependents, with whom she lives peaceably.

2 Kings 4:16. *Do not lie* Compare a similar incredulity in ^{<0177>}Genesis 17:17; 18:12; ^{<010>}Luke 1:20. The expression, “do not lie,” which is harsh to us, accords with the plain, straightforward simplicity of ancient speech. It would not mean more than “deceive” (compare the marginal reference).

2 Kings 4:19. The child’s malady was a sunstroke. The inhabitants of Palestine suffered from this (^{<0106>}Psalm 121:6; ^{<010>}Isaiah 49:10; Judith 8:3).

2 Kings 4:22. *Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men and one of the asses* All the “young men” and all the “asses” were in the harvest field, the young men cutting and binding the sheaves, and placing them upon carts or wains, the donkeys drawing these vehicles fully laden, to the threshing-floor. Compare ^{<0113>}Amos 2:13.

2 Kings 4:23. Her husband did not connect the illness with his wife’s demand, but thought she wished to attend one of the prophet’s devotional services. It is evident that such services were now held with something like regularity on Carmel for the benefit of the faithful in those parts.

New moon By the Law the first day of each month was to be kept holy. Offerings were appointed for such occasions (^{<0281>}Numbers 28:11-15), and they were among the days on which the silver trumpets were to be blown (^{<0100>}Numbers 10:10; ^{<0103>}Psalm 81:3). Hence, “new moons” are frequently joined with “sabbaths” (see ^{<0113>}Isaiah 1:13; ^{<0107>}Ezekiel 45:17; ^{<0111>}Hosea 2:11; ^{<0231>}1 Chronicles 23:31).

It shalt be well Rather, as in the margin, “Peace.” i.e., “Be quiet — trouble me not with inquiries — only let me do as I wish.”

2 Kings 4:24. *Slack not thy riding* Translate, “delay me not in my riding, except I bid thee.” The servant went on foot with the donkey to urge it forward, as is the ordinary custom in the East.

2 Kings 4:25. The distance was about sixteen or seventeen miles.

2 Kings 4:27. *She caught him by the feet* To lay hold of the knees or feet has always been thought in the East to add force to supplication, and is practiced even at the present day. Compare ^{<0189>}Matthew 18:29; ^{<0112>}John 11:32.

2 Kings 4:28. Great grief shrinks from putting itself into words. The Shunammite cannot bring herself to say, “My son is dead;” but by

reproaching the prophet with having “deceived” her, she sufficiently indicates her loss.

2 Kings 4:29. *Salute him not* Compare the marginal reference. Salutation is the forerunner of conversation and one bent on speed would avoid every temptation to loiter.

Lay my staff upon the face of the child Perhaps to assuage the grief of the mother, by letting her feel that something was being done for her child.

2 Kings 4:31. *There was neither voice nor hearing* Compare ^{<1182>}1 Kings 18:29.

The child is not awakened See ^{<1183>}2 Kings 4:20. The euphemism by which death is spoken of as a sleep was already familiar to the Jews (see ^{<1102>}1 Kings 1:21 note).

2 Kings 4:33. *Prayed* Prayer was the only remedy in such a case as this (compare the marginal reference and ^{<5156>}James 5:16), though it did not exclude the use of other means (^{<1184>}2 Kings 4:34).

2 Kings 4:34. *Be stretched himself* Or, “prostrated himself.” The word is a different one from that used of Elijah, and expresses closer contact with the body. Warmth may have been actually communicated from the living body to the dead one; and Elisha’s persistence (^{<5115>}Hebrews 11:35), may have been a condition of the child’s return to life.

2 Kings 4:36. *Take up thy son* Compare Elijah’s action (marginal reference “t”) and our Blessed Lord’s (^{<1175>}Luke 7:15).

2 Kings 4:38. *There was a dearth in the land* Rather, “The famine was in the land.” The seven years’ dearth of which Elisha had prophesied (marginal reference) had begun.

The sons of the prophets See ^{<1176>}1 Kings 20:35 note. They were sitting before him as scholars before their master, hearing his instructions.

2 Kings 4:39. *A wild vine* Not a real wild vine, the fruit of which, if not very palatable, is harmless; but some climbing plant with tendrils. The plant was probably either the *Ecballium elaterium*, or “squirting cucumber,” the fruit of which, egg-shaped, and of a very bitter taste, bursts at the slightest touch, when it is ripe, and squirts out sap and seed grains; or the

Colocynthis, which belongs to the family of cucumbers, has a vine-shaped leaf, and bears a fruit as large as an orange, very bitter, from which is prepared the drug sold as colocynth. This latter plant grows abundantly in Palestine.

His lap full literally, “his shawl full.” The prophet brought the fruit home in his “shawl” or “outer garment.”

~~118E~~ **2 Kings 4:41.** *Then bring meal* The natural properties of meal would but slightly diminish either the bitterness or the unwholesomeness of a drink containing colocynth. It is evident, therefore, that the conversion of the food from a pernicious and unsavory mess into palatable and wholesome nourishment was by miracle.

~~118E~~ **2 Kings 4:42.** *Baal-shalisha* Fifteen Roman miles north of Lydda, in the Sharon plain to the west of the highlands of Ephraim. It was, apparently, the chief city of the “land of Shalisha” (marginal reference).

Bread of the first fruits It appears by this that the Levitical priests having withdrawn from the land of Israel (see ~~411B~~ 2 Chronicles 11:13,14), pious Israelites transferred to the prophets, whom God raised up, the offerings required by the Law to be given to the priests (~~048E3~~ Numbers 18:13; ~~658E4~~ Deuteronomy 18:4).

In the husk thereof “In his bag.” The word does not occur elsewhere in Scripture.

~~118E~~ **2 Kings 4:43.** This miracle was a faint foreshadowing of our Lord’s far more marvelous feeding of thousands with even scantier materials. The resemblance is not only in the broad fact, but in various minute particulars, such as the distribution through the hands of others; the material, bread; the surprised question of the servant; and the evidence of superfluity in the fragments that were left (see the marginal references). As Elijah was a type of the Baptist, so Elisha was in many respects a type of our Blessed Lord. In his peaceful, non-ascetic life, in his mild and gentle character, in his constant circuits, in his many miracles of mercy, in the healing virtue which abode in his bodily frame (~~021E1~~ 2 Kings 13:21), he resembled, more than any other prophet, the Messiah, of whom all prophets were more or less shadows and figures.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 5

2 Kings 5:1. *By him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria* An Assyrian monarch had pushed his conquests as far as Syria exactly at this period, bringing into subjection all the kings of these parts. But Syria revolted after a few years and once more made herself independent. It was probably in this war of independence that Naaman had distinguished himself.

But he was a leper leprosy admitted of various kinds and degrees (Leviticus 13; 14) Some of the lighter forms would not incapacitate a man from discharging the duties of a courtier and warrior.

2 Kings 5:2. No peace had been made on the failure of Ahab's expedition (**1 Kings 22:1-36**). The relations of the two countries therefore continued to be hostile, and plundering inroads naturally took place on the one side and on the other.

2 Kings 5:4. *One went in* Rather, "he went in," i.e. Naaman went and told his lord, the king of Syria.

2 Kings 5:5. *Six thousand pieces of gold* Rather, "six thousand shekels of gold." Coined money did not exist as yet, and was not introduced into Judea until the time of Cyrus. Gold was carried in bars, from which portions were cut when need arose, and the value was ascertained by weighing. If the gold shekel of the Jews corresponded, as some think, to the doric of the Persians, the value of the 6,000 shekels would be about 6,837 British pounds If the weight was the same as that of the silver shekel (see **Exodus 38:24** note), the value would exceed 12,000 British pounds.

The ancient practice of including clothes among gifts of honor in the East (**Genesis 41:42**; **Esther 6:8**; **Daniel 5:7**) continues to the present day.

2 Kings 5:6. *That thou mayest recover him* literally, "And thou shalt recover him." The Syrian king presumes that, if there is a cure for leprosy to be had in Israel, the mode of obtaining it will be well known to his royal brother.

2 Kings 5:7. *He rent his clothes* The action indicated alarm and terror quite as much as sorrow (^{<1039>}2 Samuel 13:19; ^{<1508>}Ezra 9:3; ^{<1447>}2 Chronicles 34:27; ^{<2872>}Jeremiah 36:22).

Consider, I pray you Jehoram speaks to his chief officers, and bids them mark the animus of the Syrian monarch. Compare the conduct of Ahab (^{<1107>}1 Kings 20:7).

2 Kings 5:8. *He shall know ... Israel* namely, “That which thou (the king of Israel) appearest to have forgotten, that there is a prophet — a real Yahweh prophet — in Israel.”

2 Kings 5:10. Elisha was not deterred from personally meeting Naaman because he was a leper. He sent a messenger because Naaman had over-estimated his own importance (^{<1151>}2 Kings 5:11), and needed rebuke.

And wash in Jordan Compare the marginal references. A command is given which tests the faith of the recipient, and the miracle is not performed until such faith is openly evidenced.

2 Kings 5:11. *He will surely come out to me* In the East a code of unwritten laws prescribes exactly how visits are to be paid, and how visitors are to be received, according to the worldly rank of the parties (compare ^{<1151>}2 Kings 5:21). No doubt, according to such a code, Elisha should have gone out to meet Naaman at the door of his house.

And call on the name of the LORD his God literally, “of Yahweh his God.” Naaman is aware that Yahweh is the God of Elisha. Compare the occurrence of the name of Yahweh on the “Moabite Stone” (^{<1191>}2 Kings 3:4 note).

Strike Better, as in the margin, “pass the fingers up and down the place” at a short distance. It seems implied that the leprosy was partial.

2 Kings 5:12. The Abana is the Barada, or true river of Damascus, which, rising in the anti-Libanus, flows westward from its foot and forms the oasis within which Damascus is placed. The Pharpar is usually identified with the Awaaj.

Naaman thinks that, if washing is to cure him, his own rivers may serve the purpose. Their water was brighter, clearer, and colder than that of Jordan.

2 Kings 5:14. *Seven times* Compare ^{<1186>}1 Kings 18:43. In both cases a somewhat severe trial was made of the individual's faith. Compare the seven compassings of Jericho, and the sudden fall of the walls (^{<1186>}Joshua 6:3-20).

2 Kings 5:15. *He returned* Naaman was grateful (compare ^{<2715>}Luke 17:15). From the Jordan to Samaria was a distance of not less than 32 miles. Naaman further went to Damascus, far out of his way, lengthening his necessary journey by at least three days. His special object in returning seems to have been to relieve his feelings of obligation by inducing the prophet to accept a "blessing," i.e. a gift.

There is no God ... Compare the marginal references; but in none of them are the expressions quite so strong as here. Naaman seems absolutely to renounce all belief in any other God but Yahweh.

2 Kings 5:16. *I will receive none* The prophets were in the habit of receiving presents from those who consulted them (^{<1007>}1 Samuel 9:7,8; ^{<1143>}1 Kings 14:3), but Elisha refused. It was important that Naaman should not suppose that the prophets of the true God acted from motives of self-interest, much less imagine that "the gift of God might be purchased with money" (^{<483>}Acts 8:20).

2 Kings 5:17. *Two mules' burden of earth* This earth, Naaman thought, spread over a portion of Syrian ground, would hallow and render it suitable for the worship of Yahweh.

2 Kings 5:18. Rimmon is known to us as a god only by this passage. The name is connected with a root "to be high." Hadad-rimmon (^{<321>}Zechariah 12:11), the name of a place near Megiddo, points to the identity of Rimmon with Hadad, who is known to have been the Sun, the chief object of worship to the Syrians.

When he leaneth on mine hand The practice of a monarch's "leaning on the hand" of an attendant was not common in the East (compare the marginal reference). It probably implied age or infirmity.

The LORD pardon thy servant in this thing Naaman was not prepared to offend his master, either by refusing to enter with him into the temple of Rimmon, or by remaining erect when the king bowed down and worshipped the god. His conscience seems to have told him that such

conduct was not right; but he trusted that it might be pardoned, and he appealed to the prophet in the hope of obtaining from him an assurance to this effect.

2 Kings 5:19. *So he departed ...* This clause should not be separated from the succeeding verse. The meaning is, “So he departed from him, and had gone a little way, when Gehazi bethought himself of what he would do, and followed after him.”

2 Kings 5:20. *This Syrian* The words are emphatic. Gehazi persuades himself that it is right to spoil a Syrian — that is, a Gentile, and an enemy of Israel.

As the LORD liveth These words are here a profane oath. Gehazi, anxious to make himself believe that he is acting in a proper, and, even, in a religious spirit, does not scruple to introduce one of the most solemn of religious phrases.

2 Kings 5:21. *He lighted down from the chariot* This was an act of quite uncalled-for courtesy. It indicates eagerness to honor the master in the person of his servant.

2 Kings 5:22. *From mount Ephraim* Bethel and Gilgal (**2 Kings 2:1**), at both of which there were “schools of the prophets,” were situated on Mount Ephraim.

A talent of silver A large demand in respect of the pretended occasion; but small compared with the amount which Naaman had pressed on the prophet (**2 Kings 5:4**). Gehazi had to balance between his own avarice, on the one hand, and the fear of raising suspicion on the other.

2 Kings 5:23. *Be content* i.e. “consent.”

2 Kings 5:24. *The tower* Rather, “the hill,” the well-known hill by Elisha’s house. The hill interrupted the view in the direction taken by Naaman, and Gehazi dismissed Naaman’s servants at this point lest they should be seen from his master’s residence.

2 Kings 5:25. Lest his absence should be noticed, Gehazi hastened, without being called, to appear before his master. In the East it is usual for servants to remain most of the day in their lord’s presence, only quitting it when given some order to execute.

~~1186~~ **2 Kings 5:26.** *Went not mine heart with thee?* i.e. “Was I not with thee in spirit — did I not see the whole transaction, as if I had been present at it?” He uses the verb “went,” because Gehazi has just denied his “going.”

Is it a time ... i.e. “Was this a proper occasion to indulge greed, when a Gentile was to be favorably impressed, and made to feel that the faith of the Israelites was the only true religion? Was it not, on the contrary, an occasion for the exhibition of the greatest unselfishness, that so a pagan might be won to the truth?”

And oliveyards and vineyards ... Gehazi’s thoughts had probably run on to the disposition which he would make of his wealth, and the prophet here follows them, enumerating his servant’s intended purchases.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 6

2 Kings 6:1. The writer returns here to the series of miracles which Elisha performed for the benefit of the prophetic schools under his care. The connection, in this point of view, is with **2 Kings 4:44**.

The place where we dwell with thee literally, “the place where we sit before thee,” i.e. “the place where we assemble and sit to bear thy teaching.” Elisha visited the sons of the prophets in circuit, staying a short time at each place where a “school” was established. Perhaps he was now visiting Jericho. Compare **2 Kings 2:5**.

2 Kings 6:2. *Take every man a beam* Trees were rare in most parts of Palestine, but plentiful in the Jordan Valley. Jericho was known in early times as “the city of palms” (**Deuteronomy 34:3**; **Judges 1:16**).

2 Kings 6:5. *The ax head* literally, as in the margin. The Jews used iron for the heads of axes at a very early date (see **Deuteronomy 19:5**). They probably acquired a knowledge of the smelting process in Egypt, where iron was employed at least from the time of the third Rameses.

2 Kings 6:6. No doubt there is something startling in the trivial character of this miracle, and of the few others which resemble it. But, inasmuch as we know very little as to the laws which govern the exercise of miraculous powers, it is possible that they may be so much under their possessor’s control that he can exercise them, or not exercise them, at pleasure. And it may depend on his discretion whether they are exercised in important cases only, or in trivial cases also. Elisha had evidently great kindness of heart. He could not see a grief without wishing to remedy it. And it seems as if he had sometimes used his miraculous power in pure good nature, when no natural way of remedying an evil presented itself.

2 Kings 6:8. *The king of Syria* Probably the great Benhadad (see **2 Kings 6:24**).

2 Kings 6:10. *Saved himself* Rather, he “was ware.” The verb used is the same which is translated “beware” in the preceding verse.

2 Kings 6:11. Benhadad supposed that there must be a traitor in his camp. He asks therefore, “Will no one denounce him?”

2 Kings 6:12. *In thy bedchamber* literally, “in the secret place of thy bedchamber,” i.e., “in the greatest possible secrecy.” The seclusion of the harem must be taken into account for the full appreciation of the force of the phrase. Probably the Syrian lord who answered Benhadad had received his intelligence from some of the Israelites.

2 Kings 6:13. *Dothan* See the marginal reference note. It was at no great distance from Shechem. Its ancient name still attaches to a Tel or hill of a marked character (compare **2 Kings 6:17**), from the foot of which arises a copious fountain.

2 Kings 6:16. *They that be with us ...* Elisha gave utterance to the conviction of all God’s saints when the world persecutes them (compare marginal references). God — they know — is on their side; they need “not fear what flesh can do unto them.” His angels — an innumerable host — are ever guarding those who love Him.

2 Kings 6:17. *Open his eyes that he may see* Elisha’s servant lacked the faith of his master. Elisha therefore prays that he may be given a vision of the spiritual world, and see, as if with the bodily eye, the angelic host (marginal references) which he himself knows to be present.

2 Kings 6:18. *They came down to him* The Syrians, who had been encamped on rising ground opposite the hill of Dothan, now descended and drew near to the city.

The blindness with which they were smitten was not real — blindness actual loss of sight — but a state of illusion in which a man sees things otherwise than as they are (compare **2 Kings 6:20**).

2 Kings 6:21. *My father* A term of respect used by Jehoram in his joy at seeing an army of Syrians delivered up to him by the prophet. That the king’s character was not changed appears from **2 Kings 6:31,32**.

Shall I smite them? shall I smite them? The repetition of the words mean, “Shall I utterly smite them?” Compare similar repetitions with similar meanings in **Genesis 22:17**; **Luke 22:15**.

2 Kings 6:22. *Wouldest thou smite ...* It is doubtful whether this sentence is really interrogative. Others translate — “Smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword,” etc. A contrast is intended between ordinary captives — those made with the sword and bow — and these particular prisoners who have been given into the king’s hand by God. The former, Jehoram is told, he may slay, if he pleases (^{6:13}Deuteronomy 20:13), the latter, he is informed, he must not slay (compare the marginal reference).

2 Kings 6:23. Jehoram did not merely follow the letter of the prophet’s direction, but understood its spirit and acted accordingly. The plundering bands which had been in the habit of ravaging the territory (^{6:2}2 Kings 5:2) ceased their incursions in consequence either of the miracle, or of the kind treatment which Elisha had recommended.

2 Kings 6:24. *After this* Perhaps some years after — when the miracle and the kind treatment were alike forgotten.

2 Kings 6:25. As the donkey was “unclean,” it would not be eaten except in the last resort; and its head would be its worst and cheapest part.

Cab This measure is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. According to the rabbinical writers it was the smallest of all the dry measures in use among the Jews, being the sixth part of a seah, which was the third part of an ephah. If it was about equal to two of our quarts, the “fourth part of a cab” would be about a pint.

Dove’s dung Most commentators understand by this expression a sort of pulse which is called “dove’s dung,” or “sparrow’s dung” in Arabic. But it is possible that the actual excrement of pigeons is meant. The records of sieges show that both animal and human excrement have been used as food — under circumstances of extreme necessity.

2 Kings 6:26. The walls of fortified towns had a broad space at the top, protected toward the exterior by battlements, along which the bulk of the defenders were disposed, and from which they hurled their missiles and shot their arrows. The king seems to have been going his rounds, to inspect the state of the garrison and the defenses.

2 Kings 6:27. *If the LORD do not help* The translation in the text is decidedly better than the marginal rendering. Some prefer to render — “Nay ... let Jehovah help thee. Whence, shall I help thee?”

Out of the barnfloor ... The king means that both were empty — that he had no longer any food in store; and therefore could not help the woman. Compare ^{<1100>}Hosea 9:2.

2 Kings 6:28. The king had assumed that the cry of the woman was for food. Her manner indicated that it was not so. He therefore proceeded to inquire what she wanted of him.

This woman Both women, it would seem, were present; and the aggrieved one pointed to the other.

2 Kings 6:29. The prophecy alluded to in the marginal references was now fulfilled, probably for the first time. It had a second accomplishment when Jerusalem was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar (^{<2340>}Lamentations 4:10), and a third in the final siege of the same city by Titus.

2 Kings 6:30. *Sackcloth* Jehoram hoped perhaps to avert Yahweh’s anger, as his father had done (^{<1212>}1 Kings 21:29). But there was no spirit of self-humiliation, or of true penitence in his heart (^{<1187>}2 Kings 5:7). See the next verse.

2 Kings 6:31. *God do so ...* Jehoram uses almost the very words of his wicked mother, when she sought the life of Elijah (marginal reference).

The head of Elisha Beheading was not an ordinary Jewish punishment. The Law did not sanction it. But in Assyria, Babylonia, and generally through the East, it was the most common form of capital punishment. It is not quite clear why Elisha was to be punished. Perhaps Jehoram argued from his other miracles that he could give deliverance from the present peril, if he liked.

2 Kings 6:32. *But Elisha sat ...* Translate, “And Elisha was sitting in his house, and all the elders were sitting with him, when the king sent, etc.”

The “elders,” — either “the elders of the city” or “the elders of the land,” — who may have been in session at Samaria now, as they had been at the time of a former siege (^{<1107>}1 Kings 20:7) — had gone to Elisha for

his advice or assistance. Their imminent peril drove them to acknowledge the power of Yahweh, and to consult with His prophet.

This son of a murderer i.e. of Ahab, the murderer, not only of Naboth, but also of all the prophets of the Lord (marginal reference), whom he allowed Jezebel to slay.

Hold him fast at the door The elders, public officials, not private friends of Elisha, could not have been expected to resist the entrance of the executioner at the mere request of the prophet. He therefore assigns a reason for his request — “the king is coming in person, either to confirm or revoke his order — will they detain the headsman until his arrival?”

~~1163~~ **2 Kings 6:33.** *The messenger* It has been proposed to change “messenger” into “king,” the two words being in Hebrew nearly alike, and the speech with which the chapter ends being considered only suitable in the mouth of the king, whose presence is indicated in ~~1170~~ 2 Kings 7:2,17. Others think that the words “and the king after him” have fallen out of the text.

Came down The messenger came down from off the wall to the level of the streets.

Behold this evil ... Jehoram bursts into the prophet’s presence with a justification of the sentence (~~1161~~ 2 Kings 6:31) he has pronounced against him. “Behold this evil — this siege with all its horrors — is from Yahweh — from Yahweh, Whose prophet thou art. Why should I wait for Yahweh — temporize with Him — keep as it were, on terms with Him by suffering thee to live — any longer? What hast thou to say in arrest of judgment?”

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 7

<1170> 2 Kings 7:1. The division between the chapters is most awkward here. Elisha, in this verse, replies to the king's challenge in **<1168> 2 Kings 6:33** — that his God, Yahweh, will give deliverance in the space of a day. On the morrow, by the same time in the day, the famine will have ceased, and food will be even cheaper than usual.

A measure of fine flour literally, “a seah of fine flour;” about a peck and a half.

For a shekel About 2 shillings 8 1/2 d.

Two measures of burley Or, “two seahs of barley;” about three pecks.

In the gate The “gates,” or “gateways,” of Eastern towns are favorite places for the despatch of various kinds of business. It would seem that at Samaria one of the gates was used for the grain market.

<1170> 2 Kings 7:2. *A lord* Rather, “the captain,” as in **<1247> Exodus 14:7**; **<1102> 1 Kings 9:22**; etc. The term itself, *shalish*^{<17991>} (derived from *shalosh*^{<17969>}, “three,”) may be compared with the Latin “tribunus.”

Windows Rather, “sluices” (compare **<1071> Genesis 7:11**). The “lord” means to say “If Yahweh were to open sluices in heaven, and pour down grain as He poured down rain in the time of the Deluge, even then could there be such abundance as thou speakest of?”

<1170> 2 Kings 7:3. The position of the lepers is in accordance with the Law of Moses (marginal references); and shows that the Law was still observed to some extent in the kingdom of Israel.

<1170> 2 Kings 7:5. *The twilight* The evening twilight (see **<1170> 2 Kings 7:9**).

The uttermost part of the camp The extreme boundary of the camp toward the city, not its furthest or most distant portion. Compare **<1170> 2 Kings 7:8**.

<1170> 2 Kings 7:6. It is a matter of no importance whether we say that the miracle by which God now performed deliverance for Samaria consisted in a mere illusion of the sense of hearing (compare **<1169> 2 Kings 6:19,20**); or

whether there was any objective reality in the sound (compare the marginal references).

The king of Israel hath hired The swords of mercenaries had been employed by the nations bordering on Palestine as early as the time of David (~~1006~~2 Samuel 10:6; ~~396~~1 Chronicles 19:6,7). Hence, the supposition of the Syrians was far from improbable.

The kings of the Hittites The Hittites, who are found first in the south (~~0237~~Genesis 23:7), then in the center of Judea (~~06108~~Joshua 11:3), seem to have retired northward after the occupation of Palestine by the Israelites. They are found among the Syrian enemies of the Egyptians in the monuments of the 19th dynasty (about 1300 B.C.), and appear at that time to have inhabited the valley of the Upper Orontes. In the early Assyrian monuments they form a great confederacy, as the most powerful people of northern Syria, dwelling on both banks of the Euphrates, while at the same time there is a second confederacy of their race further to the south, which seems to inhabit the anti-Lebanon between Hamath and Damascus. These southern Hittites are in the time of Benhadad and Hazael a powerful people, especially strong in chariots; and generally assist the Syrians against the Assyrians. The Syrians seem now to have imagined that these southern Hittites had been hired by Jehoram.

The kings of the Egyptians This is a remarkable expression, since Egypt elsewhere throughout Scripture appears always as a centralised monarchy under a single ruler. The probability is that the principal Pharaoh had a prince or princes associated with him on the throne, a practice not uncommon in Egypt. The period, which is that of the 22nd dynasty, is an obscure one, on which the monuments throw but little light.

~~1379~~**2 Kings 7:9.** The lepers began to think that if they kept this important matter secret during the whole night for their own private advantage, when the morning came they would be found out, accused, and punished (see margin).

~~1370~~**2 Kings 7:10.** *They called unto the porter ... and told them* The word “porter” is used like our “guard” and the meaning here is, not that the lepers called to any particular individual, but that they roused the body of men who were keeping guard at one of the gates.

2 Kings 7:12. *His servants* i.e., “high officers of the household,” not mere domestics.

I will shew you what the Syrians have done Jehoram sees in the deserted camp a stratagem like that connected with the taking of Ai (^{<0483>}Joshua 8:3-19). The suspicion was a very natural one, since the Israelites knew of no reason why the Syrians should have raised the siege.

2 Kings 7:13. *Behold ...* The Septuagint and a large number of the Hebrew MSS. omit the clause, “behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it.” But the text followed by our translators, which is that of the best manuscripts, is intelligible and needs no alteration. It is merely a prolix way of stating that the horsemen will incur no greater danger by going to reconnoitre than the rest of their countrymen by remaining in the city, since the whole multitude is perishing.

2 Kings 7:14. *Two chariot horses* Translate, “two horse-chariots.” They dispatched i.e. two war-chariots, with their proper complement of horses and men, to see whether the retreat was a reality or only a feint. The “horses” sent would be four or six, since chariots were drawn by either two or three horses.

2 Kings 7:15. The Syrians had fled probably by the great road which led from Samaria to Damascus through Geba, En-gannim, Beth-shean, and Aphek. It crosses the Jordan at the Jisr Mejamia, about thirty-five miles northeast of Samaria.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 8

2 Kings 8:1. The famine here recorded, and the conversation of the monarch with Gehazi, must have been anterior to the events related in 2 Kings 5 since we may be sure that a king of Israel would not have entered into familiar conversation with a confirmed leper. The writer of Kings probably collected the miracles of Elisha from various sources, and did not always arrange them chronologically. Here the link of connection is to be found in the nature of the miracle. As Elisha on one occasion prophesied plenty, so on another he had prophesied a famine.

Called for a famine A frequent expression (compare the marginal references). God's "calling for" anything is the same as His producing it (see ^{<1362>}Ezekiel 36:29; ^{<6017>}Romans 4:17).

2 Kings 8:2. The country of the Philistines — the rich low grain-growing plain along the seacoast of Judah — was always a land of plenty compared with the highlands of Palestine. Moreover, if food failed there, it was easily imported by sea from the neighboring Egypt.

2 Kings 8:3. During the Shunammite's absence in Philistia, her dwelling and her grain-fields had been appropriated by some one who refused to restore them. She therefore determined to appeal to the king. Such direct appeals are common in Oriental countries. Compare ^{<1165>}2 Kings 6:26; ^{<1044>}2 Samuel 14:4; ^{<1186>}1 Kings 3:16.

2 Kings 8:6. *A certain officer* literally, "a certain eunuch" (margin). Eunuchs were now in common use at the Samaritan court (compare ^{<1182>}2 Kings 9:32). They are ascribed to the court of David in Chronicles (^{<1330>}1 Chronicles 28:1); and we may conjecture that they were maintained by Solomon. But otherwise we do not find them in the kingdom of Judah until the time of Hezekiah (^{<2803>}Isaiah 56:3,4).

2 Kings 8:7. The hour had come for carrying out the command given by God to Elijah (marginal reference "e"), and by him probably passed on to his successor. Elisha, careless of his own safety, quitted the land of Israel, and proceeded into the enemy's country, thus putting into the power of the Syrian king that life which he had lately sought so eagerly (^{<1163>}2 Kings 6:13-19).

The man of God The Damascenes had perhaps known Elisha by this title from the time of his curing Naaman. Or the phrase may be used as equivalent to “prophet,” which is the title commonly given to Elisha by the Syrians. See ^{<1162>}2 Kings 6:12. Compare ^{<1253>}2 Kings 5:13.

^{<1188>}**2 Kings 8:8.** Hazael was no doubt a high officer of the court. The names of Hazael and Benhadad occur in the Assyrian inscription on the Black Obelisk now in the British Museum. Both are mentioned as kings of Damascus, who contended with a certain Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and suffered defeat at his hands. In one of the battles between this king and Benhadad, “Allah of Jezreel” is mentioned among the allies of the latter. This same Shalmaneser took tribute from Jehu. This is the point at which the Assyrian records first come in direct contact with those of the Jews.

^{<1189>}**2 Kings 8:9.** *Every good thing of Damascus* Probably, besides rich robes and precious metals, the luscious wine of Helbon, which was the drink of the Persian kings, the soft white wool of the anti-Libanus (^{<3278>}Ezekiel 27:18), damask coverings of couches (^{<3182>}Amos 3:12), and numerous manufactured articles of luxury, which the Syrian capital imported from Tyre, Egypt, Nineveh, and Babylon. Forty camels were laden with it, and this goodly caravan paraded the streets of the town, conveying to the prophet the splendid gift designed for him. Eastern ostentation induces donors to make the greatest possible show of their gifts, and each camel would probably bear only one or two articles.

Thy son Ben-hadad A phrase indicative of the greatest respect, no doubt used at the command of Benhadad in order to dispose the prophet favorably toward him. Compare ^{<1161>}2 Kings 6:21.

^{<1180>}**2 Kings 8:10.** Translate — “Go, say unto him, Thou shalt certainly live: howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall certainly die.” i.e., “Say to him, what thou hast already determined to say, what a courtier is sure to say (compare ^{<1125>}1 Kings 22:15), but know that the fact will be otherwise.”

^{<1181>}**2 Kings 8:11.** That is, “And he (Elisha) settled his countenance, and set it (toward Hazael), until he (Hazael) was ashamed.” Elisha fixed on Hazael a long and meaning look, until the latter’s eyes fell before his, and his cheek flushed. Elisha, it would seem, had detected the guilty thought

that was in Hazael's heart, and Hazael perceived that he had detected it. Hence the "shame."

2 Kings 8:12. *The evil that thou wilt do* The intention is not to tax Hazael with special cruelty, but only to enumerate the ordinary horrors of war, as it was conducted among the Oriental nations of the time. Compare the marginal references.

2 Kings 8:13. *But what, is thy servant a dog?* This is a mistranslation, and conveys to the English reader a sense quite different from that of the original. Hazael's speech runs thus — "But what is thy servant, this dog, that he should do this great thing?" He does not shrink from Elisha's words, or mean to say that he would be a dog, could he act so cruelly as Elisha predicts he will. On the contrary, Elisha's prediction has raised his hopes, and his only doubt is whether so much good fortune ("this great thing") can be in store for one so mean. "Dog" here, as generally (though not always) in Scripture, has the sense of "mean," "low," "contemptible."

2 Kings 8:14. Hazael omitted the clause by which Elisha had shown how those words were to be understood. He thus deceived his master, while he could flatter himself that he had not uttered a lie.

2 Kings 8:15. *A thick cloth* Probably, a cloth or mat placed between the head and the upper part of the bedstead, which in Egypt and Assyria was often so shaped that pillows (in our sense) were unnecessary.

The objection that Elisha is involved in the guilt of having suggested the deed, has no real force or value. Hazael was no more obliged to murder Benhadad because a prophet announced to him that he would one day be king of Syria, than David was obliged to murder Saul because another prophet anointed him king in Saul's room (**1 Samuel 16:1-13**).

2 Kings 8:16-19. The passage is parenthetical, resuming the history of the kingdom of Judah from **1 Kings 22:50**.

2 Kings 8:16. The opening words are — "In the fifth year of Joram, son of Ahab, king of Israel, and of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah;" but they contradict all the other chronological notices of Jehoshaphat (**1 Kings 22:42,51**; **2 Kings 3:1**; **2 Chronicles 20:31**), which give him a reign of at least twenty-three years. Hence, some have supposed that the words

“Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah,” are accidentally repeated. Those, however, who regard them and ^{<1117>}2 Kings 1:17 as sound, suppose that Jehoshaphat gave his son the royal title in his 16th year, while he advanced him to a real association in the empire seven years later, in his 23rd year. Two years afterward, Jehoshaphat died, and Jehoram became sole king.

^{<1117>}**2 Kings 8:17.** The “eight years” are counted from his association in the kingdom. They terminate in the twelfth year of Jehoram of Israel.

^{<1118>}**2 Kings 8:18.** Jehoshaphat’s alliance, political and social, with Ahab and Ahab’s family had not been allowed to affect the purity of his faith. Jehoram his son, influenced by his wife, Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, “walked in the way of the kings of Israel;” he allowed, i.e., the introduction of the Baal-worship into Judaea.

Among the worst of Jehoram’s evil doings must be reckoned the cruel murder of his six brothers (^{<1204>}2 Chronicles 21:4), whom he killed to obtain their wealth.

^{<1119>}**2 Kings 8:19.** The natural consequence of Jehoram’s apostasy would have been the destruction of his house, and the transfer of the throne of Judah to another family. Compare the punishments of Jeroboam (^{<1140>}1 Kings 14:10), Baasha (^{<1116>}1 Kings 16:2-4), and Ahab (^{<1213>}1 Kings 21:20-22). But the promises to David (marginal references) prevented this removal of the dynasty; and so Jehoram was punished in other ways (^{<1182>}2 Kings 8:22; ^{<1212>}2 Chronicles 21:12-19).

^{<1120>}**2 Kings 8:20.** Edom, which had been reduced by David (^{<1084>}2 Samuel 8:14; ^{<1115>}1 Kings 11:15,16), but had apparently revolted from Solomon (^{<1114>}1 Kings 11:14), was again subjected to Judah in the reign of Jehoshaphat (^{<1181>}2 Kings 3:8-26). The Edomites had, however, retained their native kings, and with them the spirit of independence. They now rose in revolt, and fulfilled the prophecy (^{<1274>}Genesis 27:40), remaining from henceforth a separate and independent people (^{<1052>}Jeremiah 25:21; 27:3; ^{<1001>}Amos 1:11, etc.). Kings of Edom, who seem to be independent monarchs, are often mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions.

^{<1121>}**2 Kings 8:21.** *Zair* Perhaps Seir, the famous mountain of Edom (^{<1146>}Genesis 14:6).

The people i.e., The Edomites. Yet, notwithstanding his success, Joram was forced to withdraw from the country, and to leave the natives to enjoy that independence (^{<1182>}2 Kings 8:22), which continued until the time of John Hyrcanus, who once more reduced them.

Libnah revolted Libnah being toward the southwest of Palestine (^{<1152>}Joshua 15:42), its revolt cannot well have had any direct connection with that of Edom. It had been the capital of a small Canaanite state under a separate king before its conquest by Joshua (^{<1100>}Joshua 10:30; 12:15), and may perhaps always have retained a considerable Canaanite population. Or its loss may have been connected with the attacks made by the Philistines on Jehoram's territories (^{<1216>}2 Chronicles 21:16,17).

^{<1184>}**2 Kings 8:24.** On the death of Jehoram, see ^{<1212>}2 Chronicles 21:12-19. His son is also called Jehoahaz (margin) by a transposition of the two elements of the name.

^{<1186>}**2 Kings 8:26.** Such names as Athaliah, Jehoram, and Ahaziah, indicate that the Baal-worshipping kings of Israel did not openly renounce the service of Yahweh. Athaliah is "the time for Yahweh;" Ahaziah "the possession of Yahweh;" Jehoram, or Joram, "exalted by Yahweh."

The daughter of Omri "Son" and "daughter" were used by the Jews of any descendants (compare ^{<1000>}Matthew 1:1). The whole race were "the children of Israel." Athaliah was the grand-daughter of Omri (see the margin). Her being called "the daughter of Omri" implies that an idea of special greatness was regarded as attaching to him, so that his name prevailed over that of Ahab. Indications of this ideal greatness are found in the Assyrian inscriptions, where the early name for Samaria is Beth-Omri, and where even Jehu has the title of "the son of Omri."

^{<1188>}**2 Kings 8:28.** This war of the two kings against Hazael seems to have had for its object the recovery of Ramoth-gilead, which Ahab and Jehoshaphat had vainly attempted fourteen years earlier (^{<1213>}1 Kings 22:3-36). Joram probably thought that the accession of a new and usurping monarch presented a favorable opportunity for a renewal of the war. It may also have happened that Hazael was engaged at the time upon his northern frontier with repelling one of those Assyrian attacks which seem by the inscriptions to have fallen upon him in quick succession during his earlier years. At any rate, the war appears to have been successful. Ramoth-gilead

was recovered (~~<1194>~~2 Kings 9:14), and remained probably thenceforth in the hands of the Israelites.

The Syrians wounded Joram According to Josephus, Joram was struck by an arrow in the course of the siege, but remained until the place was taken. He then withdrew to Jezreel (~~<1185>~~1 Kings 18:45; 21:1), leaving his army under Jehu within the walls of the town.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 9

2 Kings 9:1. *Box* Rather, “flask,” or “vial” (^{<900>}1 Samuel 10:1). Oil and ointment were commonly kept in open-mouthed jars, vases, or bottles made of glass, alabaster, or earthen-ware. Many such vessels have been found both in Egypt and Assyria. The “oil” was the holy oil, compounded after the receipt given in Exodus (^{<23>}Exodus 30:23-25).

2 Kings 9:3. *Flee, and tarry not* The probable object of these directions was at once to prevent questioning, and to render the whole thing more striking.

2 Kings 9:5. The chief officers — the generals — were assembled together in Jehu’s quarters, perhaps holding a council of war. The place of assembly seems to have been the great court. Hence, Jehu “went into the house” (^{<196>}2 Kings 9:6) entered, that is, one of the rooms opening into the court.

2 Kings 9:11. *This mad fellow* The captains, seeing his excited look, his strange action, and his extreme haste, call him (as soldiers would) “this wild fellow.”

2 Kings 9:13. *Took every man his garment, and put it under him* The outer cloak of the Jews was a sort of large shawl or blanket, which might well serve for a carpet of state. Such a carpet is commonly represented on the seat of an Assyrian throne in the Nineveh sculptures.

The stairs rose against the wall of the house from the pavement of the court to the level of the upper story, or of the roof. At the top of the stairs would be a flat platform, and this would form a throne, on which the new king could exhibit himself to his subjects.

Blew with trumpets On this recognized part of the ceremony of a coronation, see ^{<2114>}2 Kings 11:14; ^{<0510>}2 Samuel 15:10; ^{<1039>}1 Kings 1:39.

2 Kings 9:14. *Had kept* Rather, “was keeping watch.” The city had been taken: but the war continuing, and there being a danger of the Syrians recovering it, Joram and all Israel (i.e., the whole military force) were guarding the recent conquest, while Hazael threatened it.

2 Kings 9:18. *What hast thou to do with peace?* i.e., “What does it matter to thee whether my errand is one of peace or not?”

2 Kings 9:20. *The driving ... furiously* The word translated “driving” means “leading” or “conducting” a band. The watchman observed that the “company” (or, multitude) was led forward madly, and associated this strange procedure with the known character of Jehu. It is curious that some versions, as well as Josephus, give an opposite sense: “he driveth quietly.”

Jehu was properly “the grandson” of Nimshi, who was probably a more famous person than Jehoshaphat (**2 Kings 9:2**).

2 Kings 9:21. *Make ready* literally, (as in margin) “Blind,” i.e., “Harness the horses to the chariot.” The king had no suspicion of Jehu’s treason. Probably he imagined that he was bringing him important news from the seat of war. Ahaziah’s accompanying him is significant of the close friendship which united the uncle and the nephew. They went out not “against” Jehu, but rather “to meet him.”

In the portion of Naboth This is no longer called a “vineyard” (1 Kings 221:1-18); probably because it had been thrown into the palace garden, and applied to the purpose for which Ahab originally wanted it. The approach to the city on this side must have lain either through it, or close by it.

2 Kings 9:22. Joram had asked the usual question, “Is it peace?” — meaning simply, “Is all well?” In Jehu’s reply, by “whoredoms” we are probably to understand “idolatries,” acts of spiritual unfaithfulness; by “witchcrafts,” dealings with the Baal prophets and oracles. Compare **2 Kings 1:2** note.

2 Kings 9:23. *Turned his hands* The meaning is that Joram ordered his charioteer to turn round and drive back to the town.

2 Kings 9:24. *Jehu drew a bow ...* literally, as in the margin, i.e., “Jehu took a bow in his hand.” The arrow struck Jehoram’s back, between his two shoulders, as he fled.

2 Kings 9:25. *Rode together after Ahab* The Assyrian sculptures make it probable that Josephus was right in interpreting this “rode side by side behind Ahab in his chariot.” The Assyrian monarchs, when they go out

to war, are frequently attended by two guards, who stand behind them in the same chariot.

Burden Compare the use of the same word in Isaiah (^{<2310>}Isaiah 13:1; 15:1, etc.), and in Lamentations (^{<2124>}Lamentations 2:14), for a denunciation of woe.

^{<1125>}**2 Kings 9:26.** The passage from “Surely I have seen” to “Saith the Lord,” is exegetical of ^{<1125>}2 Kings 9:25, containing the “burden” there spoken of.

And the blood of his sons The murder of Naboth’s sons is here for the first time mentioned; but as the removal of the sons was necessary, if the vineyard was to pass to Ahab, we can well understand that Jezebel would take care to clear them out of the way.

^{<1125>}**2 Kings 9:27.** *By the way of the garden-house* Or “by the way of Beth-Gan,” which has been conjectured to be another name for En-Gannim, “the spring of the gardens.” Both are considered identical with Ginaea, the modern Jenin, which lies due south of Jezreel. The road from Jezreel (Zerin) to Jenin passes at first along the plain of Esdraelon, but after a while begins to rise over the Samaritan hills. Here probably was “the ascent of Gur, by Ibleam,” which may have occupied the site of the modern Jelama. Whether the soldiers attacked him there or not is uncertain. The words, “And they did so,” are not in the original.

Megiddo On its situation, see ^{<1121>}Joshua 12:21 note; and on the possible reconciliation of this passage with ^{<1219>}2 Chronicles 22:9, see the note there.

^{<1125>}**2 Kings 9:29.** *In the eleventh year* The twelfth according to ^{<1125>}2 Kings 8:25. The discrepancy may be best explained from two ways of reckoning the accession of Ahaziah, who is likely to have been regent for his father during at least one year. See ^{<1219>}2 Chronicles 21:19.

^{<1125>}**2 Kings 9:30.** *Painted her face* literally, “put her eyes in antimony” — i.e., dyed the upper and under eyelids, a common practice in the East, even at the present day. The effect is at once to increase the apparent size of the eye, and to give it unnatural brilliancy. Representations of eyes thus embellished occur on the Assyrian sculptures, and the practice existed among the Jews (marginal reference; and ^{<2440>}Jeremiah 4:30).

Tired her head Dressed (attired) her head, and no doubt put on her royal robes, that she might die as became a queen, in true royal array.

A window Rather, “the window.” The gate-tower had probably, as many of those in the Assyrian sculptures, one window only.

~~1184~~ **2 Kings 9:34.** Leaving the mangled body on the bare earth, Jehu went to the banquet. It was, no doubt, important that he should at once show himself to the court as king. In calling Jezebel “this cursed one,” Jehu means to remind his hearers that the curse of God had been pronounced upon her by Elijah (~~1185~~ 2 Kings 9:36), and so to justify his own conduct.

A king's daughter Merely as the widow of Ahab and mother of Jehoram, Jehu would not have considered Jezebel entitled to buriah. But she was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians (marginal reference), and so a princess born. This would entitle her to greater respect. Wilfully to have denied her burial would have been regarded as an unpardonable insult by the reigning Sidonian monarch.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 10

~~<200>~~ **2 Kings 10:1.** *Seventy sons* i.e., descendants; there were included among them children of Jehoram (~~<200>~~ 2 Kings 10:2,3, etc.).

~~<200>~~ **2 Kings 10:2.** *A fenced city* Or, “fenced cities.” If Samaria had refused to acknowledge Jehu, many other Israelite towns would have been sure to follow the example.

~~<200>~~ **2 Kings 10:3.** Jehu, placing his adversaries’ advantages before them in the most favorable light, called upon them to decide what they would do. The unscrupulous soldier shows shrewdness as well as courage, a sharp wit as well as a bold heart.

~~<200>~~ **2 Kings 10:4.** *Two kings* literally, “the two kings,” i.e., Jehoram and Ahaziah (~~<100>~~ 2 Kings 9:21-28).

~~<200>~~ **2 Kings 10:5.** The officer who had the charge of the place (~~<100>~~ 1 Kings 4:6 note) and the governor of the town (~~<100>~~ 1 Kings 22:26 note) seem to correspond to the “rulers” of ~~<200>~~ 2 Kings 10:1.

~~<200>~~ **2 Kings 10:6.** The heads of rivals, pretenders, and other obnoxious persons are commonly struck off in the East, and conveyed to the chief ruler, in order that he may be positively certified that his enemies have ceased to live. In the Assyrian sculptures we constantly see soldiers conveying heads from place to place, not, however, in baskets, but in their hands, holding the head by the hair.

~~<200>~~ **2 Kings 10:8.** *Two heaps* Probably placed one on either side of the gateway, to strike terror into the partisans of the late dynasty as they passed in and out of the town.

~~<200>~~ **2 Kings 10:9.** *Ye be righteous* i.e., “Ye are just, and can judge aright.” Jehu unfairly keeps back the fact that he had commanded the execution.

~~<200>~~ **2 Kings 10:10.** *Shall fall to the earth* i.e., “Shall remain unfulfilled” (compare the marginal reference). Jehu and others were but executing the word of the Lord.

2 Kings 10:11. *So Jehu slew* Rather, “And Jehu slew.” The reference is to fresh executions (compare **2 Kings 10:17**). He proceeded on his bloody course, not merely destroying the remainder of the kindred of Ahab, but further putting to death all the most powerful of Ahab’s partisans.

His priests Not the Baal priests generally, whose persecution came afterward (**2 Kings 10:19**), but only such of them as were attached to the court.

2 Kings 10:12. *The shearing-house* literally, as in margin. Perhaps already a proper name, Beth-eked, identical with the Beth-akad of Jerome, which is described as between Jezreel and Samaria; but not yet identified.

2 Kings 10:13. *The brethren of Ahaziah* Not the actual brothers of Ahaziah, who had all been slain by the Arabs before his accession to the throne (**2 Chronicles 21:17; 22:1**); but his nephews, the sons of his brothers (marginal reference). It is remarkable that they should have penetrated so far into the kingdom of Israel without having heard of the revolution.

The children of the king ... i.e.” the sons of Jehoram, and the children (sons and grandsons) of the queen-mother, Jezebel.” Some of both may well have been at Jezreel, though the younger branches of the royal family were at Samaria (**2 Kings 10:1**).

2 Kings 10:15. Jehonadab (compare the margin) belonged to the tribe of the Kenites, one of the most ancient in Palestine (**Genesis 15:19**). Their origin is unknown, but their habits were certainly those of Arah. Owing to their connection with Moses (**Numbers 24:21** note), they formed a friendship with the Israelites, accompanied them in their wanderings, and finally received a location in the wilderness of Judah (**Judges 1:16**). The character of this chief, Jonadab, is best seen in the rule which he established for his descendants (**Jeremiah 35:6,7**) — a rule said to be still observed at the present day. It would seem that he sympathised strongly with Jehu’s proceedings, and desired to give the countenance of his authority, such as it was, to the new reign. According to the Hebrew text, Jehu “saluted” (or blessed) Jehonadab. According to the Septuagint and Josephus, Jehonadab “saluted” (or blessed) the king. Further, the Hebrew text runs — “And Jehonadab answered, It is, it is.

Give (me) thy hand. And he gave (him) his hand, and took him up to him into the chariot.” Our translators appear to have preferred the Septuagint; but the Hebrew is more graphic. Jehu was no doubt glad to have the countenance of Jehonadab on his public entrance into Samaria. The ascetic had a reputation for sanctity, which could not fail to make his companionship an advantage to the but half-established monarch.

~~2007~~ **2 Kings 10:17.** Compare ~~2001~~ 2 Kings 10:11. Thus was finally completed the political revolution which transferred the throne from the house of Omri to that of Nimshi, the fifth of the royal families of Israel.

According to the saying of the LORD This emphatic reiteration (compare ~~2000~~ 2 Kings 10:10) marks, first, how in the mind of the writer all this history is viewed as deriving its special interest from its being so full and complete an accomplishment of Elijah’s prophecies; and, secondly, how at the time Jehu carefully put forward the plea that what he did had this object. It does not indicate that a single-minded wish to execute God’s will was Jehu’s predominate motive. Probably, even where he most strictly fulfilled the letter of prophecies, he was working for himself, not for God; and hence, vengeance was denounced upon his house even for the very “blood of Jezreel” (~~2004~~ Hosea 1:4).

~~2008~~ **2 Kings 10:18.** Though we cannot ascribe to Jehu a spirit of true piety (see ~~2009~~ 2 Kings 10:29), we can well enough understand how the soldier, trained in the Syrian wars, revolted against the unmanly and voluptuous worship of the Dea Syra, and wished to go back to the simple solemn service of Yahweh. These views and feelings it would have been dangerous to declare during the lifetime of Jezebel. Even after her death it was prudent to temporise, to wait until the party of Ahab was crushed politically, before broaching the religious question. Having now slain all the issue of Ahab in the kingdom of Israel, and all the influential men of the party (~~2007~~ 2 Kings 10:7,11,17), Jehu felt that he might begin his reformation of religion. But even now he uses “subtilty” rather than open violence. “Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much.”

~~2009~~ **2 Kings 10:19.** It appears from this verse that the “prophets” and “priests” of Baal were not identical. The former would correspond to the dervishes, the latter to the mullahs, of Muslim countries. By the “servants” of Baal are meant the ordinary worshippers.

2 Kings 10:20. *A solemn assembly* Jehu applies to his proposed gathering the sacred name assigned in the Law to the chiefest festivals of Yahweh (see ^{<1023>}Leviticus 23:36; ^{<1025>}Numbers 29:35; ^{<1018>}Deuteronomy 16:8).

2 Kings 10:21. In order to understand how such numbers could find room, we must remember that the ancient temples had vast courts around them, which could contain many thousands.

2 Kings 10:22. *The vestry* The sacred robes of the Baal priests seem to have been of linen, and were probably white. The vestry here mentioned may, probably, be the robe-chamber of the royal palace, from which the king gave a festal garment to each worshipper.

2 Kings 10:23. The presence of persons belonging to another religion was usually regarded by the ancients as a profanation of the rites. In the case of the Greek mysteries such intrusion is said to have been punished by death. Consequently Jehu could give these injunctions without arousing any suspicion.

2 Kings 10:25. *As soon as he had made an end of offering* The actual sacrificers were no doubt the priests of Baal; but Jehu is considered to have made the offering, since he furnished the victims. Compare ^{<1002>}1 Kings 8:62,63.

The guard literally, “the runners.” This name seems to have been given to the royal body-guard as early as the time of Saul (^{<10217>}1 Samuel 22:17, margin). It was their duty to run by the side of the king’s chariot as he moved from place to place.

Cast them out, and went Rather, “the captains hastened and went,” or “went hastily;” which gives a satisfactory sense. That the soldiers should have troubled themselves to cast the bodies of the slain out of the temple enclosure is very unlikely.

The city of the house of Baal i.e., the temple itself, as distinguished from the court in which it stood, is intended. The guard having slain all who were in the court, rushed on and entered the sanctuary, there no doubt completing the massacre, and further tearing down and bringing out the sacred objects mentioned in the next verse.

2 Kings 10:26. *The images* Or “pillars” of wood. The Phoenician pillar idols were mere columns, obelisks, or posts, destitute of any shaping into the semblance of humanity (compare ^{<1142>}1 Kings 14:23 note).

2 Kings 10:27. *And they brake down the image of Baal* The other images, it appears, were not images of Baal, but of inferior deities. The image of Baal, which was “broken down,” and not burned, would seem to have been of stone, perhaps erected in front of the temple.

2 Kings 10:29. To abolish the calf-worship was a thought which had probably never occurred to Jehu. He had religious feeling enough, and patriotism enough, to detest the utterly debasing Astarte worship; but the pure worship of Yahweh was altogether beyond and above him.

2 Kings 10:30. *And the LORD said unto Jehu* Probably by the mouth of Elisha. To a certain extent Jehu’s measures were acts of obedience, for which God might see fit to assign him a temporal reward.

Thy children ... This was accomplished in the persons of Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah, the son, grandson, great-grandson, and great-great-grandson of Jehu (compare the marginal references). No other family sat upon the throne of Israel so long. The house of Omri, which furnished four kings, held the crown for three generations only and for less than 50 years — that of Jehu reigned for five generations and for more than 100 years.

2 Kings 10:32. *To cut Israel short* literally, “to cut off in Israel,” i.e., to take away from Israel portions of its territory (see the marginal reference).

2 Kings 10:33. The loss of the entire trans-Jordanic territory seems to be intended, or at any rate its complete ruin and devastation (compare marginal reference “y”). This was the home of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and of the half tribe of Manasseh (^{<621>}Joshua 22:1-9). It was more accessible from Damascus than the region west of the river.

Aroer There were several places of this name. The one here mentioned is the most famous (compare ^{<826>}Deuteronomy 2:36 note).

Even Gilead and Bashan The writer had previously called the whole territory “Gilead;” now he distinguishes it, more accurately, into Gilead, the southern, and Bashan, the northern region (^{<1043>}1 Kings 4:13,19).

^{<2034>}**2 Kings 10:34.** *All his might* It is remarkable that this expression, which is not used by the author of Kings in connection with any other king of Israel, should be applied to Jehu, whose ill success in his struggle with Hazael has just been noted, and who submitted to the Assyrians and consented to become a tributary. Perhaps the word is used here in the sense of “personal courage” rather than of “power.”

^{<2035>}**2 Kings 10:36.** *In Samaria* The family of Ahab had made Jezreel a sort of second capital, and had reigned there, at least in part (^{<12015>}2 Kings 9:15-30). Jehu and his descendants seem to have fixed their residence wholly in Samaria (^{<1230>}2 Kings 13:1,10; 14:23; 15:8).

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 11

~~<210>~~ **2 Kings 11:1.** Athaliah, as wife of Joram and mother of Ahaziah, had guided both the internal and the external policy of the Jewish kingdom; she had procured the establishment of the worship of Baal in Judaea (~~<1288>~~ 2 Kings 8:18,27), and had maintained a close alliance with the sister kingdom (~~<1289>~~ 2 Kings 8:29; 10:13). The revolution effected by Jehu touched her nearly. It struck away from her the support of her relatives; it isolated her religious system, severing the communication with Phoenicia; and the death of Ahaziah deprived her of her legal status in Judaea, which was that of queen-mother (the ~~<1153>~~ 1 Kings 15:13 note), and transferred that position to the chief wife of her deceased son. Athaliah, instead of yielding to the storm, or merely standing on the defensive, resolved to become the assailant, and strike before any plans could be formed against her. In the absence of her son, hers was probably the chief authority at Jerusalem. She used it to command the immediate destruction of all the family of David, already thinned by previous massacres (~~<1204>~~ 2 Kings 10:14; ~~<1204>~~ 2 Chronicles 21:4,17), and then seized the throne.

~~<210>~~ **2 Kings 11:2.** *Jehosheba ... sister of Ahaziah* “Half-sister,” according to Josephus — daughter of Joram, not by Athaliah, but by another wife. She was married to Jehoiada the high priest, and was thus in a position to save and conceal her nephew, Joash, who was only one year old (compare ~~<210>~~ 2 Kings 11:3,21).

In the bedchamber literally, “in the chamber of mattresses” — probably a store-room in the palace in which mattresses were kept.

~~<210>~~ **2 Kings 11:3.** *And Athaliah did reign over the land* In these words the writer dismisses the entire reign of Athaliah, whereof he scorns to speak. We gather incidentally from ~~<210>~~ 2 Kings 12:5-12, compared with ~~<1207>~~ 2 Chronicles 24:7, that Athaliah used her power to establish the exclusive worship of Baal through the kingdom of Judah, and to crush that of Yahweh. She stopped the temple service, gave over the sacred vessels of the sanctuary to the use of the Baal priests, and employed the temple itself as a quarry from which materials might be taken for the construction of a great temple to Baal, which rose in the immediate neighborhood.

~~<210>~~ **2 Kings 11:4.** See the marginal reference.

The captains The word used here and in ^{<12119>}2 Kings 11:19, *hak-kari*^{<13746>}, designates a certain part of the royal guard, probably that which in the earlier times was known under the name of Cherethites (^{<10135>}1 Kings 1:38). Others see in the term an ethnic name — “Carians,” who seem certainly to have been much inclined to take service as mercenaries from an early date. Render the whole passage thus — “And in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the centurions of the Carians and the guardsmen (literally, ‘runners,’ ^{<12105>}2 Kings 10:25), etc.”

^{<12115>}**2 Kings 11:5-8.** Five divisions of the guard under their five captains are distinguished here. Three of the five divisions “enter in” on the Sabbath; the other two “go forth” on the Sabbath (^{<12110>}2 Kings 11:7). By the former phrase seems to be meant the mounting guard at the royal palace (the “king’s house,” where Athaliah then was); by the latter the serving of escort to the sovereign beyond the palace bounds. Jehoiada orders that of those whose business it would be to guard the palace on the ensuing Sabbath, one company or cohort should perform that task in the ordinary way, while another should watch the gate of Sur — or better, “the gate of the foundation” (^{<14235>}2 Chronicles 23:5) — that by which the palace was usually quitted for the temple, and a third should watch another of the palace gates, called “the gate of the guard” (see ^{<12119>}2 Kings 11:19). The two companies whose proper business it would be to serve as the royal escort beyond the palace walls, he orders to enter the temple, and surround the person of the young king.

^{<12116>}**2 Kings 11:6.** *That it be not broken down* The one word in the original text of which this is a translation occurs nowhere else; and its meaning is very doubtful.

^{<12118>}**2 Kings 11:8.** *Within the ranges* Rather, “within the ranks.” If anyone tried to break through the soldiers’ ranks to the king, or even to disturb their order, he was to be immediately slain.

^{<12111>}**2 Kings 11:11.** *From the right corner ...* Rather, “from the right side of the temple buildings to the left side” — i.e., right across the temple court from the one side to the other, by the altar of burnt offerings, etc. This altar stood exactly in front of the temple-porch. Here the king was stationed; and before him and behind him, (“round about” him) stood the soldiers, drawn up several ranks deep across the entire court, just in front of the sacred building.

<2112>2 Kings 11:12. *The testimony* i.e., “The Book of the Law” which was kept in the ark of the covenant (^{<63126>}Deuteronomy 31:26). This Jehoiada placed on the king’s head at the moment of coronation, perhaps to indicate that the king was not to be above, but under, the direction of the Law of his country.

<2114>2 Kings 11:14. *By a pillar* Rather, “upon the pillar” probably a sort of stand, or pulpit, raised on a pillar. Under the later monarchy the Jewish king seems to have had a special place assigned him in the temple-court, from which on occasions he addressed the people (marginal references).

<2115>2 Kings 11:15. *Have her forth without the ranges* Rather, “Conduct her out between your ranks.” Guard her, i.e., on all sides, that the people may not fall upon her and kill her as she passes through the court, thereby polluting the temple.

<2116>2 Kings 11:16. *And they laid hands on her* Most modern critics render — “and they gave her space,” i.e., they cleared a way for her, and allowed her to walk out of the temple not only unharmed but untouched.

<2117>2 Kings 11:17. *A covenant* Rather, “the covenant,” which either was already an established part of a coronation (marginal reference “k”), or at least became such afterward.

<2118>2 Kings 11:18. A temple had been built to Baal at Jerusalem itself by Athaliah, Ahaziah, or Jehoram. According to Josephus, it was constructed in the reign of Jehoram. Its exact position is uncertain.

Images The word used here is not the same as in ^{<2106>}2 Kings 10:26, but a word which implies likeness. The Phoenicians had fashioned images, besides their unfashioned pillar-idols.

The priest appointed ... The temple worship having been discontinued during Athaliah’s rule, it devolved on Jehoiada now to re-establish it (see marginal reference). He had already summoned the Levites out of all the cities of Judah (^{<4232>}2 Chronicles 23:2), and had made use of them in the events of the day. He therefore proceeded at once to assign the custody of the temple to a particular course, before conducting the young king to the palace.

~~<2119>~~ **2 Kings 11:19.** They conducted the king down from the temple hill, across the valley of the Tyropoeum, and up the opposite hill to the royal palace, entering it not by the “horse-gate” (~~<2116>~~ 2 Kings 11:16), where Athaliah had just been slain, but by the “gate of the guard” (~~<2106>~~ 2 Kings 11:6), which was probably the main gate of the palace on the eastern side (see ~~<230>~~ 2 Chronicles 23:20).

~~<2111>~~ **2 Kings 11:20.** *They slew Athaliah with the sword* This is one of the many little repetitions which mark the manner of the writer, and which generally contain some little point which has not been mentioned before (compare ~~<2116>~~ 2 Kings 11:16).

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 12

2 Kings 12:2. *All his days ...* i.e., so long as Jehoiada was his adviser” (compare ^{<1205>}2 Chronicles 24:15-22). Jehoiada was, practically speaking, regent during the minority of Jehoash, i.e., 10 or 12 years. An increase of power to the priestly order was the natural consequence. Jehoiada bore the title of “high priest” (^{<1210>}2 Kings 12:10), which had been dropped since the time of Eleazar (^{<1206>}Joshua 20:6), and the Levitical order from this time became more mixed up with public affairs and possessed greater influence than previously. Jehoiada’s successors traced their office to him rather than to Aaron (^{<1208>}Jeremiah 29:26).

2 Kings 12:3. The worship on the “high places” seems to have continued uninterruptedly to the time of Hezekiah, who abolished it (^{<1204>}2 Kings 18:4). It was, however, again established by Manasseh, his son (^{<1203>}2 Kings 21:3). The priests at this time cannot have regarded it as idolatrous, or Jehoiada would have put it during his regency.

2 Kings 12:4. It is remarkable that the first movement toward restoring the fabric of the temple should have come, not from Jehoiada, but from Jehoash (compare ^{<1204>}2 Chronicles 24:4). Jehoiada had, it seems, allowed the mischief done in Athaliah’s time to remain unrepaired during the whole term of his government.

The money of every one ... Three kinds of sacred money are here distinguished — first, the half shekel required in the Law (^{<1203>}Exodus 30:13) to be paid by every one above twenty years of age when he passed the numbering; secondly, the money to be paid by such as had devoted themselves, or those belonging to them, by vow to Yahweh, which was a variable sum dependent on age, sex, and property (^{<1202>}Leviticus 27:2-8); and thirdly, the money offered in the way of free-will offerings.

2 Kings 12:5. The collection was not to be made in Jerusalem only, but in all “the cities of Judah” (^{<1205>}2 Chronicles 24:5); the various priests and Levites being collectors in their own neighborhoods.

Breaches The word in the original includes every kind and degree of ruin or dilapidation.

2 Kings 12:6. No money had for some time been brought in (marginal reference “g”). Perhaps it was difficult for the priests and Levites to know exactly what proportion of the money paid to them was fairly applicable to the temple service and to their own support; and what, consequently, was the balance which they ought to apply to the repairs.

2 Kings 12:9. *The priests that kept the door* The north door into the priests’ court (^{<3418>}Ezekiel 40:35-43) seems to be intended, not the door of the temple building. The chest must have been placed a little to the right of this north door, between it and the altar of burnt-offering, so that the people could see it from the doorway. The people were not ordinarily allowed to go within the doorway into this court, which belonged to the priests and Levites only.

2 Kings 12:10. *The king’s scribe* Or “secretary” (^{<1018>}1 Kings 4:3 note). Such persons are often seen in the Assyrian sculptures, with a roll, apparently of parchment, in one hand and a pen in the other, taking account for the king of the spoil brought in from foreign expeditions.

2 Kings 12:13. Comparing this verse with the marginal reference, it will be seen that the author of Kings desires to point out, that the repairs were not delayed by any deductions from the money that flowed in. The writer of Chronicles describes what became of the surplus in the chest after the last repairs were completed.

The need of supplying fresh bowls, snuffers, etc., arose from the pollution of those previously used in the temple service by their application to the Baal worship during the reigns of Ahaziah and Athaliah (see ^{<1217>}2 Chronicles 24:7).

2 Kings 12:16. *The trespass money and the sin money* In all cases of injury done to another, a man was bound by the Law to make compensation, to the sufferer, if possible; if not, to his nearest kinsman. If the man was dead and had left no kinsman, then the compensation was to be made to the priest (^{<0418>}Numbers 5:8). This would form a part of the trespass and sin money. The remainder would accrue from the voluntary gifts made to the priests by those who came to make atonement for sins or trespasses (^{<0410>}Numbers 5:10). On the difference between “sins” and “trespasses,” see ^{<1514>}Leviticus 5:14 note.

~~<1217>~~ **2 Kings 12:17,18.** There was probably a considerable interval between the conclusion of the arrangement for the repairs and the Syrian expedition related in these verses. For the events which had happened, see ~~<1215>~~ 2 Chronicles 24:15-22.

~~<1217>~~ **2 Kings 12:17.** This is the first and last time that we hear of the Damascene Syrians undertaking so distant an expedition. Gath (see ~~<1213>~~ Joshua 13:3 note) could only be reached from Syria through Israel or Judah. It was not more than 25 or 30 miles from Jerusalem. It is uncertain whether the city belonged at this time to Judah or to the Philistines.

Hazael set his face ... This is a phrase for determination generally, but especially for determination to proceed somewhere (compare ~~<1215>~~ Jeremiah 42:15; ~~<1215>~~ Luke 9:51). Jerusalem can scarcely have been the primary object of this expedition, or it would have been attacked by a less circuitous route. Perhaps the Syrians were induced to make a sudden march against the Jewish capital, by learning, while at Gath, that a revolution had occurred there (compare ~~<1218>~~ 2 Chronicles 24:18-23).

~~<1218>~~ **2 Kings 12:18.** Jehoash did not submit without a struggle. See the details in Chronicles. It was not until his army was defeated that he followed the example of his ancestor, Asa, and bought the friendship of the Syrians with the temple treasures (~~<1215>~~ 1 Kings 15:18. Compare the conduct of Hezekiah, ~~<1215>~~ 2 Kings 18:15,16).

Jehoram and Ahaziah Though these two monarchs had been worshippers of Baal, yet they had combined with that idolatrous cult a certain amount of decent respect for the old religion. It is evident from this passage that they had made costly offerings to the temple.

~~<1220>~~ **2 Kings 12:20.** *A conspiracy* Compare the marginal reference Joash, either from a suspicion of intended treason, or from some other unknown cause, took up his abode in the fortress of Millo (~~<1220>~~ 1 Kings 9:24). This conspiracy was connected with religion. Soon after the death of Jehoiaada, Joash had apostatised; had renewed the worship of Baal; and, despite of many prophetic warnings, had persisted in his evil courses, even commanding Zechariah to be slain when he rebuked them (~~<1218>~~ 2 Chronicles 24:18-27). The conspirators, who wished to avenge Zechariah, no doubt wished also to put down the Baal worship. In this it appears that they succeeded. For, though Amaziah punished the actual murderers after a

while (~~1246~~ 2 Kings 14:5), yet he appears not to have been a Baal-worshipper. The only idolatries laid to his charge are the maintenance of the high places (~~1244~~ 2 Kings 14:4), and a worship of the gods of Edom (~~1254~~ 2 Chronicles 25:14-20).

Silla This place is quite unknown.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 13

2 Kings 13:1. In this chapter the history of the kingdom of Israel is traced through the two reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoash. In 2 Kings 14 the history of Judah is resumed.

In the three and twentieth year Rather, the “one and twentieth year.” See **2 Kings 13:10.**

2 Kings 13:3. *All their days* literally, “all the days.” Not “all the days” of the two Syrian kings, for Ben-hadad lost to Joash all the cities which he had gained from Jehoahaz (**2 Kings 13:25**); but either “all the days of Jehoahaz” (**2 Kings 13:22**), or “all the days of Hazael” — both while he led his own armies, and while they were led by his son.

2 Kings 13:5. *The LORD gave Israel a saviour* Not immediately on the repentance of Jehoahaz but after his death (see **2 Kings 13:25**).

They went out from under the hand of the Syrians i.e. they ceased to be oppressed by the Syrians; they shook off their yoke, and became once more perfectly independent.

tents See **1 Kings 8:66** note.

2 Kings 13:6. *But walked therein* Rather, “he walked therein,” meaning Joash, the “saviour” of the preceding verse.

There remained the grove also in Samaria It seems strange that Jehu had not destroyed this when he put down the worship of Baal (**2 Kings 10:26-28**). Perhaps the “grove” or “Asherah” worship was too closely connected with the old worship in high places to be set aside with the same ease as the rites newly introduced from Phoenicia.

2 Kings 13:7. The meaning is that “he, the king of Syria” (**2 Kings 13:4** Hazael) limited the standing army of Jehoahaz.

Like the dust by threshing An expression not only employed metaphorically, and importing defeat, conquest, and grinding oppression (**Jeremiah 51:33**; **Micah 4:12**), but implying also the literal use of threshing-instruments in the execution of prisoners of war (marginal reference, and compare **2 Samuel 12:31**).

2 Kings 13:12,13. According to ordinary laws of historical composition, these verses should form the closing paragraph of the present chapter.

2 Kings 13:14. The closing scene of Elisha's life. It was now at least sixty-three years since his call, so that he was at this time very possibly above ninety. He seems to have lived in almost complete retirement from the time he sent the young prophet to anoint Jehu king (**2 Kings 9:1**). And now it was not he who sought the king, but the king who sought him. Apparently, the special function of the two great Israelite prophets (Elijah and Elisha) was to counteract the noxious influence of the Baalistic rites; and, when these ceased, their extraordinary ministry came to an end.

The chariot of Israel ... See the marginal reference. Joash must have known the circumstances of Elijah's removal, which were perhaps already entered in the "book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel;" and he must have intended to apply to Elisha his own words on that solemn occasion; "Thou too art about to leave us, and to follow Elijah — thou who hast been since his departure, that which he was while he remained on earth, the true defense of Israel."

2 Kings 13:16. *Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands* A symbolic act, indicating that the successes, which the shooting typified, were to come, not from human skill, or strength, or daring, but from the presence and the power of God.

2 Kings 13:17. *Eastward* Syria of Damascus lay partly east, but still more north, of the holy land. The arrow was to be shot, eastward, not so much against Syria itself as against the scene of the recent Syrian successes, Gilead (**2 Kings 10:33**), which was also to be the scene of Joash's victories over them. Aphek is almost due east from Shunem, where it is not unlikely that Elisha now was.

The arrow ... literally, "An arrow of deliverance from the Lord, and an arrow of deliverance against Syria; and thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, even to consuming."

2 Kings 13:18. *Smite upon the ground* Some prefer to render — "Shoot to the ground;" i.e. "Shoot arrows from the window into the ground outside, as if thou wert shooting against an enemy."

2 Kings 13:19. The unfaithfulness of man limits the goodness of God. Though Joash did the prophet's bidding, it was without any zeal or fervour; and probably without any earnest belief in the efficacy of what he was doing. Compare ^{<4065>}Mark 6:5,6. God had been willing to give the Israelites complete victory over Syria (^{<1237>}2 Kings 13:17); but Joash by his non-acceptance of the divine promise in its fulness had checked the outflow of mercy; and the result was that the original promise could not be fulfilled.

2 Kings 13:20. *The bands of the Moabites invaded the land* The Moabites had been increasing in strength ever since their revolt from Ahaziah (^{<1000>}2 Kings 1:1). The defeat which they suffered at the hands of Jehoram and Jehoshaphat (^{<1201>}2 Kings 3:24) did not affect their subjugation. They spread themselves into the country north of the Arnon (^{<2362>}Isaiah 16:2), and thence proceeded to make plundering expeditious year by year into Samaria, in Spring. This was the natural season for incursions, as then in Palestine the crops began to be ripe.

2 Kings 13:21. *They cast the man* Rather, "they thrust the man." The graves of the Jews were not pits dug in the ground, like ours, but caves or cells excavated in the side of a rock, the mouth of the cave being ordinarily shut by a heavy stone.

Stood up on his feet Coffins were not used by the Jews. The body was simply wrapped or swathed in grave-clothes (compare ^{<4075>}Luke 7:15; ^{<3144>}John 11:44).

This miracle of Elisha's after his death is more surprising than any of those which he performed during his lifetime. The Jews regarded it as his highest glory (compare Ecclesiasticus 48:13,14). It may be said to belong to a class of Scriptural miracles, cases, i.e. where the miracle was not performed through the agency of a living miracle-worker, but by a material object in which, by God's will, "virtue" for the time resided (compare ^{<4492>}Acts 19:12). The primary effect of the miracle was, no doubt, greatly to increase the reverence of the Israelites for the memory of Elisha, to lend force to his teaching, and especially to add weight to his unfulfilled prophecies, as to that concerning the coming triumphs of Israel over Syria. In the extreme state of depression to which the Israelites were now reduced, a very signal miracle may have been needed to encourage and reassure them.

~~12133~~ **2 Kings 13:23.** The writer regards the captivity of Israel as God's "casting them out of His sight" (see ~~12178~~ 2 Kings 17:18,20); and notes that this extreme punishment, though deserved, was by God's mercy not allowed to fall on them as yet.

~~12134~~ **2 Kings 13:24.** *So Hazael ... died* literally, "And Hazael died," a fact not mentioned before.

~~12135~~ **2 Kings 13:25.** *The cities which ...* Probably cities west of the Jordan, since the tract east of that river was conquered, mainly if not wholly, in the reign of Jehu (~~12183~~ 2 Kings 10:33).

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 14

2 Kings 14:1. The history of Judah is resumed (^{<1240>}2 Kings 14:1-22), followed by a brief account of the contemporary history of Israel under Jeroboam II (^{<1243>}2 Kings 14:23-29). The earlier narrative runs parallel with 2 Chronicles 25.

2 Kings 14:2. Joash of Judah reigned forty years (^{<1210>}2 Kings 12:1), and Joash of Israel ascended the throne in his namesake's thirty-seventh year (^{<1230>}2 Kings 13:10); hence, we should have expected to hear that Amaziah succeeded his father in the fourth rather than in the second year of Joash (of Israel). The usual explanation of the discrepancy is to suppose a double accession of the Israelite Joash — as co-partner with his father in the thirty-seventh year of his namesake, as sole king two years afterward.

2 Kings 14:3. *He did ... as Joash* There is a curious parity between the lives of Joash and Amaziah. Both were zealous for Yahweh in the earlier portion of their reigns, but in the latter part fell away; both disregarded the rebukes of prophets; and both, having forsaken God, were in the end conspired against and slain (compare ^{<1225>}2 Chronicles 24:25; 25:27).

2 Kings 14:5. The phrase, "confirmed in his hand" (^{<1259>}2 Kings 15:19), usually expresses the authorisation of a new reign by an imperial superior (see ^{<1259>}2 Kings 15:19 note); but here it describes the result when the troubles consequent upon the murder of Joash had passed away. The new king's authority was generally recognized by his subjects.

2 Kings 14:6. *The children of the murderers he slew not* This seems to be noted as a rare instance of clemency (compare ^{<1026>}2 Kings 9:26 note). It is strange at first sight, that, when the Law contained so very plain a prohibition (marginal references), the contrary practice should have established itself. But we must remember, first, that the custom was that of the East generally (see ^{<2162>}Daniel 6:24); and secondly, that it had the sanction of one who might be thought to have known thoroughly the mind of the legislator, namely, Joshua (see ^{<1072>}Joshua 7:24,25).

2 Kings 14:7. Amaziah's Idumaeon war is treated at length by the writer of Chronicles (marginal reference).

The “Valley of Salt” is usually identified with the broad open plain called the Sabkah, at the southern end of the Dead Sea — the continuation of the Ghor or Jordan gorge. At the north-western corner of this plain stands a mountain of rock-salt, and the tract between this mountain and the sea is a salt-marsh. Salt springs also abound in the plain itself, so that the name would be fully accounted for. It is doubted, however, whether the original of the word “valley,” commonly used of clefts and ravines, can be applied to such a sunk plain as the Sabkah; and it is certainly most unlikely that 10,000 prisoners would have been conveyed upward of eighty miles (the distance of the Sabkah from Petra), through a rough and difficult country, only in order to be massacred. On the whole, it is perhaps most probable that the “Valley of Salt” yet remains to be discovered, and that its true position was near Selah or Petra (see ^{<0013>}Judges 1:36 note). Amaziah gave to Petra the name Joktheel, “subdued by God,” in a religious spirit as an acknowledgment of the divine aid by which his victory was gained. The name failed to take permanent hold on the place, because the Edomites, on not long afterward recovering their city, restored the old appellation (^{<1487>}2 Chronicles 28:17; compare ^{<2361>}Isaiah 16:1, and ^{<3001>}Amos 1:11).

Unto this day The writer of Kings evidently gives the exact words of his document, composed not later than the reign of Ahaz, before whose death the Edomites had recovered Petra.

^{<2418>}**2 Kings 14:8.** Amaziah’s success against Edom had so elated him that he thought himself more than a match for his northern neighbor. The grounds of the quarrel between them were furnished by the conduct of the hired, but dismissed, Israelite soldiers (see the marginal reference).

Let us look one another in the face i.e. “let us meet face to face in arms, and try each other’s strength” (^{<2441>}2 Kings 14:11,12).

^{<2419>}**2 Kings 14:9.** The Oriental use of apologues on the most solemn and serious occasions is well known to all, and scarcely needs illustration (compare marginal reference). It is a common feature of such apologues that they are not exact parallels to the case whereto they are applied, but only general or partial resemblances. Hence, there is need of caution in applying the several points of the illustration.

^{<2440>}**2 Kings 14:10.** *Glory of this ...* literally, “Be honored;” i.e. “Enjoy thy honor ... be content with it.” “Why wilt thou meddle with misfortune?”

~~2411~~ **2 Kings 14:11.** Jehoash did not wait to be attacked. Invading Judaea from the west, and so ascending out of the low coast tract, he met the army of Amaziah at Beth-shemesh (see ~~6921~~ Joshua 19:21 note), about 15 miles from Jerusalem.

~~2412~~ **2 Kings 14:12.** The author of Chronicles notes that Amaziah's obstinacy, and his consequent defeat and captivity, were judgments upon him for an idolatry into which he had fallen after his conquest of Edom (~~4254~~ 2 Chronicles 25:14,20).

~~2413~~ **2 Kings 14:13.** The object of breaking down the wall was to leave Jerusalem at the mercy of her rival; and it must have been among the conditions of the peace that the breach thus made should not be repaired.

Gates in Oriental cities are named from the places to which they lead. The gate of Ephraim must therefore have been a north gate: perhaps also known, later on, by the name of the "gate of Benjamin" (~~24713~~ Jeremiah 37:13; ~~3840~~ Zechariah 14:10). The corner gate was probably a gate at the northwest angle of the city, where the north wall approached the Valley of Hinnom. The entire breach was thus in the north wall, on the side where Jerusalem was naturally the weakest. Josephus says that Joash drove his chariot through the breach into the town, a practice not unusual with conquerors.

~~2414~~ **2 Kings 14:14.** This is the only distinct mention of "hostages" in the Old Testament. It would seem that the Oriental conquerors generally regarded the terror of their arms as sufficient to secure the performance of the engagements contracted toward them.

~~2415~~ **2 Kings 14:15,16.** These two verses (repeated from ~~21312~~ 2 Kings 13:12,13) are out of place here, where they interrupt the history of Amaziah's reign.

~~2416~~ **2 Kings 14:20.** *They brought him on horses* i.e. they conveyed his body back to Jerusalem in the royal chariot. The combination of relentless animosity against the living prince with the deepest respect for his dead remains is very characteristic of an Oriental people.

~~2417~~ **2 Kings 14:21.** *All the people of Judah* The words imply that the conspiracy was one in which the general mass of the people did not participate. There was no confusion and trouble as on the occasion of the

murder of Joash. Azariah (“the strength of Yahweh”), and Uzziah (“whom Yahweh assists”), were mere variants of one name.

^{<1242>}**2 Kings 14:22.** Elath, or Eloth (marginal reference ^{<1026>}1 Kings 9:26), was near Ezion-Geber, in the Gulf of Akabah. It had been lost to the Jews on the revolt of Edom from Joram (^{<1182>}2 Kings 8:22). Uzziah’s re-establishment of the place, rendered possible by his father’s successes (^{<1247>}2 Kings 14:7), was one of his first acts, and seems to imply a desire to renew the commercial projects which Solomon had successfully carried out, and which Jehoshaphat had vainly attempted (^{<1128>}1 Kings 22:48).

^{<1243>}**2 Kings 14:23.** *Jeroboam* This is the only instance, in the history of either kingdom, of a recurrent royal appellation. We can scarcely doubt that Jeroboam II was named after the great founder of the Israelite kingdom by a father who trusted that he might prove a sort of second founder. Perhaps the prophecy of Jonah (see ^{<1245>}2 Kings 14:25) had been already given, and it was known that a great deliverance was approaching.

^{<1245>}**2 Kings 14:25.** *He restored the coast of Israel* Jeroboam, in the course of his long reign, recovered the old boundaries of the holy land to the north, the east, and the southeast. The “entering in of Hamath” is spoken of as the northern boundary; the “sea of the plain,” or the Dead Sea, is the southern boundary (see the marginal references): here Israel adjoined on Moab. The entire tract east of Jordan had been lost to Israel in the reign of Jehu and that of Jehoahaz (^{<1203>}2 Kings 10:33; 13:3,25). All this was now recovered: and not only so, but Moab was reduced (^{<1064>}Amos 6:14), and the Syrians were in their turn forced to submit to the Jews (^{<1248>}2 Kings 14:28). The northern conquests were perhaps little less important than the eastern (^{<1248>}2 Kings 14:28).

The word of the LORD ... which he spake Some have found the prophecy of Jonah here alluded to, or a portion of it, in Isaiah 15; 16 (see ^{<1263>}2 Kings 16:13); but without sufficient grounds.

This passage tends to fix Jonah’s date to some period not very late in the reign of Jeroboam II, i.e. (according to the ordinary chronology) from 823 B.C. to 782 B.C. On Gath-hepher, see the marginal reference and note.

^{<1246>}**2 Kings 14:26.** *The affliction of Israel* That which the Israelites had suffered for two reigns at the hands of the Syrians (^{<1202>}2 Kings 10:32,33; 13:3,7,22).

There was not any shut up, nor any left A phrase implying complete depopulation (see the marginal reference note; ^{<1140>}1 Kings 14:10), but here meaning no more than extreme depression and weakness.

^{<1247>}**2 Kings 14:27.** *And the LORD said not* Though the Israelites were brought thus low, yet the fiat did not as yet go forth for their destruction. God did not send a prophet to say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; but on the contrary sent two to announce that they should be delivered from their present enemies, and obtain triumphs over them (see ^{<1245>}2 Kings 14:25; 13:17-19).

That he would blot out ... This is a Mosaic phrase, found only here and in Deuteronomy (^{<1294>}2 Kings 9:14; 29:20).

^{<1248>}**2 Kings 14:28.** *He recovered Damascus* Jeroboam probably gained certain advantages over Benhadad, which induced the latter to make his submission and consent to such terms as those extorted by Ahab (^{<1274>}1 Kings 20:34).

Hamath was probably among the actual conquests of Jeroboam. It was brought so low in his reign, as to have become almost a by-word for calamity (compare ^{<1082>}Amos 6:2).

Which belonged to Judah, for Israel i.e. these cities were recovered to Judah, i.e. to the people of God generally, through or by means of being added to Israel, i.e. to the northern kingdom.

A few further facts in the history of Jeroboam II are recorded by the prophet Amos (compare ^{<1070>}Amos 7:10, etc.).

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 15

^{<2156>}**2 Kings 15:5.** *The LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper* The circumstances under which this terrible affliction befel one of the greatest of the Jewish kings, are given at some length by the author of Chronicles (marginal reference), who supplies us with a tolerably full account of this important reign, which the writer of Kings dismisses in half-a-dozen verses.

A several house "A house of liberation," or, freedom. On the necessity, under which the Law placed lepers, of living apart from other men, see marginal reference Jotham became regent in his father's room, and exercised the functions of judge (^{<1103>}1 Kings 3:9 note), from the time that his father became a leper.

^{<2158>}**2 Kings 15:8.** *In the thirty and eighth year* Rather, according to the previous numbers (^{<2143>}2 Kings 14:23; 15:2), the 27th year of Azariah. Some suppose an interregnum between Jeroboam and Zachariah, which, however, is very improbable.

^{<2150>}**2 Kings 15:10.** *Before the people* i.e. openly and publicly. The Septuagint turns the original of the above words into a proper name, Keblaam, and makes him the actual assassin, but without much ground.

^{<2154>}**2 Kings 15:14.** Tirzah, the old capital, once more appears as a place of importance, giving birth to the pretender, who alone of all these later kings died a natural death, and left the crown to his son (^{<2152>}2 Kings 15:22). It would seem from the present passage to have been on lower ground than Samaria.

^{<2156>}**2 Kings 15:16.** With respect to the supposed inability of Menahem to lead an expedition to Tiphshah (Thapsacus, see the marginal reference) on the Euphrates, we may note in the first place that such an expedition was a natural sequel to Jeroboam's occupation of Hamath (^{<2148>}2 Kings 14:28); and further, that it would have been greatly facilitated by the weakness of Assyria at this time, that empire having fallen into a state of depression about 780 B.C.

^{<2159>}**2 Kings 15:19.** This is the first distinct mention which we find in Scripture of Assyria as an aggressive power. From the native monuments

we learn that she had been for above a century pushing her conquests beyond the Euphrates, and seeking to reduce under her dominion the entire tract between that river and Egypt. Jehu had paid tribute. Some — arguing from the use of the phrase “confirmed the kingdom” (here, and in ^{<1246>}2 Kings 14:5) — think that Jehoahaz had acknowledged Assyrian suzerainty, and consented that her monarchs should receive their investiture from the hands of the Ninevite king. But hitherto there had been no hostile invasion of Jewish or Israelite soil by an Assyrian army. Now, however, the Assyrians are at last formally introduced into the history. A series of aggressions is related in this and the four following chapters, culminating, on the one hand, in the destruction of the northern kingdom, on the other, in the complete failure of Sennacherib’s attempt upon Judaea and Egypt.

With respect to the present expedition, there are certain difficulties. The name of Pul does not appear among the Assyrian monumental kings, and it is absent from the copies of the Assyrian Canon, containing the entire list of monarchs from about 910 B.C. to 670 B.C. Assyria Proper, moreover, appears to have been in a state of depression for some 40 years before the accession of Tiglath-Pileser (^{<1259>}2 Kings 15:29). It is probable that, during the depression of the Ninevite line, Pul, a Chaldaean and not an Assyrian king, established a second monarchy upon the Euphrates, which claimed to be the true Assyria, and was recognized as such by the nations of Syria and Palestine. His invasion was probably provoked by Menahem’s conquest of Thapsacus, which he would view as a wanton aggression upon his territory.

A thousand talents of silver Compared with the tribute of Hezekiah soon afterward (^{<1284>}2 Kings 18:14), this seems a large sum; but it is not beyond the resources of such a State as Samaria at the period. The tie which had bound Samaria to Assyria from the reign of Jehu to that of Jeroboam II, had ceased to exist during the period of Assyrian depression. Menahem now renewed it, undertaking the duties of a tributary, and expecting the support which Assyria was accustomed to lend to her dependencies in their struggles with their neighbors. Hence, the reproaches of Hosea (marginal reference “n”).

^{<1250>}**2 Kings 15:20.** *Menahem exacted the money* The kings of Israel had no such ready resource in difficulties as that possessed by the kings of Judah in the temple treasury (^{<1218>}2 Kings 12:18; 16:8). Hence, the forced

contribution from the people, the odium of which was diminished by confining the levy to the comparatively rich.

Each man fifty shekels As the silver talent contained 3,000 shekels, the levy of fifty shekels a head must have extended to 60,000 persons.

^{<12152>}**2 Kings 15:21.** Assyrian inscriptions show that Menahem was subsequently redfaced to subjection by Tiglath-Pileser (^{<12159>}2 Kings 15:29).

^{<12155>}**2 Kings 15:25.** *A captain of his* A mere “captain,” a person, therefore, of very moderate rank. The low birth of Pekah is probably glanced at in Isaiah’s favorite designation of him as “Remaliah’s son” (^{<23004>}Isaiah 7:4,5,9; 8:6).

From the fact that Pekah employed Gileadites to carry out his designs, it has been conjectured that he himself belonged to the trans-Jordanic region.

In the palace of the king’s house Rather, “In the tower of the king’s palace;” or possibly “in the harem of the king’s palace” (^{<11618>}1 Kings 16:18 note).

^{<12159>}**2 Kings 15:29.** Tiglath-Pileser is the first among the Assyrian monarchs of Scripture whom we can certainly identify with a king mentioned in the monuments. According to the Assyrian Dr. he reigned from 745 B.C. to 727 B.C.; and the monuments show us this energetic and powerful prince (though, probably, an usurper), building and repairing palaces, levying armies, and carrying on successful wars against Merodach-Baladan in Babylonia, Rezin at Damascus, Hiram at Tyre, the Medes, the Armenians, the natives of Northern Mesopotamia, and the Arabs who bordered upon Egypt. His Assyrian name, Tiglat-pal-zira, is composed of the elements tiglath, “adoration,” pal, “son,” and zira, a word of uncertain meaning.

Ijon and Abel-beth-maachah On the position of some of the towns mentioned in this verse see the marginal reference and ^{<16185>}Joshua 19:36. Janoah is not the Janohah of ^{<16165>}Joshua 16:6 (modern Yanun, southeast of Nablous), but a city (Hunin?) near the Sea of Merom. Gilead is, probably, to be limited here to a small district of Peraea, lying to the east of Lake Merom, and in later times known as Gaulanitis (the reading of Septuagint here). If so, we must suppose two expeditions of Tiglath-Pileser against Pekah, the first mentioned here, and the second recorded in Chronicles and Isaiah (see the marginal reference “q;” ^{<12169>}2 Kings 16:9 note).

^{<1253>}**2 Kings 15:30.** *Hoshea, the son of Elah* One of Pekah's friends, according to Josephus.

The twentieth year of Jotham According to ^{<1253>}2 Kings 15:33 and ^{<1270>}2 Chronicles 27:1, Jotham reigned only 16 years. See also the suggestion in the margin. Strangely enough, this first year of Hoshea is also called, not the fourth, but the twelfth of Ahaz (^{<1270>}2 Kings 17:1). The chronological confusion of the history, as it stands, is striking.

Uzziah i.e. Azariah. See ^{<1250>}2 Kings 15:1-4.

^{<1253>}**2 Kings 15:31.** *The rest of the acts of Pekah* On these, see ^{<1245>}2 Kings 16:5 note.

^{<1252>}**2 Kings 15:32.** The writer here resumes the history of Judah from ^{<1252>}2 Kings 15:7, to resume and conclude the history of Israel in 2 Kings 17.

^{<1253>}**2 Kings 15:34.** Jotham imitated his father in all respects, excepting in his impious usurpation of the priestly functions (^{<1215>}2 Kings 15:5 note; ^{<1272>}2 Chronicles 27:2).

^{<1253>}**2 Kings 15:35.** *He built the higher gate* Jotham followed the example of his father in military, no less than in religious, matters (compare the marginal reference with ^{<1249>}2 Chronicles 26:9). The "higher" or "upper gate" of the temple is thought to have been that toward the north; and its fortification would seem to indicate fear of an attack from that quarter.

^{<1252>}**2 Kings 15:37.** The recent invasions of Pul and Tiglath-Pileser had effectually alarmed Pekah and Rezin, and had induced them to put aside the traditional jealousies which naturally kept them apart, and to make a league offensive and defensive. Into this league they were anxious that Judaea should enter; but they distrusted the house of David, which had been so long hostile both to Damascus and to Samaria. They consequently formed the design of transferring the Jewish crown to a certain Ben-Tabael (^{<1270>}Isaiah 7:6), probably a Jewish noble, perhaps a refugee at one of their courts, whom they could trust to join heartily in their schemes (^{<1245>}2 Kings 16:5 note).

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 16

2 Kings 16:3. Ahaz was the worst of all the kings of Judah. He imitated the worst of the Israelite kings — Ahab and Ahaziah — by a re-introduction of the Baal worship, which had been rooted out of Israel by Jehu and out of Judah by Jehoiada.

And made Iris son to pass through the fire i.e. Ahaz adopted the Moloch worship of the Ammonites and Moabites (^{<1101>}2 Kings 3:27; ^{<307>}Micah 6:7), and sacrificed at least one son, probably his firstborn, according to the horrid rites of those nations, and the Canaanite tribes (^{<5123>}Deuteronomy 12:31; ^{<1967>}Psalms 106:37,38). Hereto, apparently, the Jews had been guiltless of this abomination. They had been warned against it by Moses (marginal reference; ^{<5180>}Deuteronomy 18:10); and if (as some think) they had practiced it in the wilderness (^{<2115>}Ezekiel 20:26; ^{<1135>}Amos 5:26), the sin must have been rare and exceptional; from the date of their entrance into the promised land they had wholly put it away. Now, however, it became so frequent (compare ^{<1177>}2 Kings 17:17; 21:6) as to meet with the strongest protest from Jeremiah and Ezekiel (^{<2171>}Jeremiah 7:31,32; 19:2-6; 32:35; ^{<3161>}Ezekiel 16:20; 20:26; 23:37, etc.).

2 Kings 16:4. *He sacrificed ...* Other kings of Judah had allowed their people to do so. Ahaz was the first, so far as we know, to countenance the practice by his own example.

2 Kings 16:5. Rezin and Pekah, who had already begun their attacks upon Judaea in the reign of Jotham (^{<1157>}2 Kings 15:37), regarded the accession of a boy-king, only 16 years of age, as especially favorable to their projects, and proceeded without loss of time to carry them out. The earlier scenes of the war, omitted by the writer of Kings, are given at some length in ^{<1435>}2 Chronicles 28:5-15.

2 Kings 16:6. Either during the siege, or on breaking up from before Jerusalem, Rezin made an expedition to the Red Sea coast, and became master of the city which had belonged to Judaea about 70 years (marginal reference). Most moderns render this verse, "Rezin recovered (or restored) Elath to Edom ... and the Edomites came to Elath." On the resemblance of the words Aram and Edom in the original, see ^{<1082>}2 Samuel 8:12 note.

2 Kings 16:7. Ahaz was threatened on all sides, on the north by Rezin and Pekah; on the southeast by Edom (^{<4287>}2 Chronicles 28:17); and on the southwest by the Philistines (^{<4288>}2 Chronicles 28:18). To these external dangers was added the still greater peril of disaffection at home. A large party in Judah was “weary” of the house of David (^{<2373>}Isaiah 7:13), ready to join the confederacy (^{<2386>}Isaiah 8:6,12), and to accept for king “the son of Tabeal.” Ahaz saw no hope of safety unless he could obtain a powerful protector; and, Egypt being particularly weak at this time, he turned to Assyria.

2 Kings 16:8. Compare the marginal reference and ^{<1158>}1 Kings 15:18. Political necessity was always held to justify the devotion of the temple treasure to secular purposes.

2 Kings 16:9. The submission of Judah, which Ahaz proffered, would be of the utmost importance in connection with any projects that might be entertained of Egyptian conquests. Naturally, Damascus was the first object of attack. It was the head of the confederacy, and it lay nearest to an army descending upon Lower Syria, as all Asiatic armies would descend, from the north. It appears from an inscription of Tiglath-pileser’s, that Rezin met him in the field, was defeated, and slain. An attack upon Pekah followed. Now probably it was that the entire trans-Jordanic region was overrun: and that the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, were carried into captivity (^{<1385>}1 Chronicles 5:26). Megiddo and Dor appear also to have been occupied, and the Arabs of the south chastised. Tiglathpileser then returned to Damascus, where a son of Rezin had assumed the crown; he besieged and took the city, and punished Rezin’s son with death. Tiglath-pileser appears by one of his inscriptions to have held a court at Damascus, to which it is probable that the tributary kings of the neighborhood were summoned to pay their tributes and do homage for their kingdoms. Among the tributes brought to him at this time, those of Judaea, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Gaza, Ascalon, and Tyre, are mentioned.

Kir Kir is mentioned by Amos (^{<3107>}Amos 9:7) as the country from which the Syrians came. It is joined by Isaiah (^{<2216>}Isaiah 22:6) with Elam or Elymais. Its position can only be conjectured. Perhaps the word designates a region adjoining Elymais, in the extreme southeastern limits of Assyria.

~~2160~~ **2 Kings 16:10.** *And saw an altar* Rather, “The altar,” i.e. an Assyrian altar, and connected with that formal recognition of the Assyrian deities which the Ninevite monarchs appear to have required of all the nations whom they received into their empire.

The fashion of the altar Assyrian altars were not very elaborate, but they were very different from the Jewish. They were comparatively small, and scarcely suited for “whole burnt-offerings.” One type was square, about half the height of a man, and ornamented round the top with a sort of battlement. Another had a triangular base and a circular top consisting of a single flat stone. A third was a sort of portable stand, narrow, and about the height of a man. This last was of the kind which the kings took with them in their expeditions.

~~2164~~ **2 Kings 16:14.** Hereto the “Brasen altar” (marginal reference) had, it would seem, occupied a position directly in front of the temple porch, which it exactly equalled in width. Now Ahaz removed it from this place, and gave the honorable position to his new altar, which he designed to supersede the old for all ordinary purposes (~~2165~~ 2 Kings 16:15).

From between the altar ... Urijah, having received no official directions, had placed the new altar in front of the old, between it and the eastern gate of the court. Ahaz consequently on his arrival found the brasen altar “between the (new) altar and the house of the Lord.”

~~2165~~ **2 Kings 16:15.** *The brasen altar shall be for me to inquire by* The bulk of modern commentators translate — “As for the Brasen altar, it will be for me to inquire (or consider) what I shall do with it.”

~~2166~~ **2 Kings 16:16.** The writer condemns the obsequiousness of Urijah, whose conduct was the more inexcusable after the noble example of his predecessor Azariah (~~4857~~ 2 Chronicles 26:17-20).

~~2167~~ **2 Kings 16:17.** See the marginal references. The acts recorded here, were probably not mere wanton acts of mutilation, but steps in the conversion of these sacred objects to other uses, as to the ornamentation of a palace or of an idol temple. The bases, the oxen, and the sea were not destroyed — they remained at Jerusalem until its final capture (~~2857~~ Jeremiah 52:17,20). Probably they were restored to their original uses by Hezekiah (~~4299~~ 2 Chronicles 29:19).

A pavement of stones Probably a pavement made expressly, for the stones of the court seem to have been covered with a planking of cedar (^{<1076>}1 Kings 6:36; 7:12).

^{<2168>}**2 Kings 16:18.** *The covert ... in the house* A canopied seat in the temple for the king and his family when they attended public worship on the sabbath. It stood no doubt in the inner court of the temple.

The king's entry without This would seem to have been a private passage by which the king crossed the outer court to the east gate of the inner court when he visited the temple (^{<2540>}Ezekiel 46:1,2).

Turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria This passage is very obscure. Some translate — “altered he in the house of the Lord, because of the king of Assyria,” supposing the “covert” and the “passage” to have been of rich materials, and Ahaz to have taken them to eke out his “presents to the king of Assyria.” Others render, “removed he into the house of the Lord from fear of the king of Assyria.”

^{<2169>}**2 Kings 16:19.** *The rest of the acts of Ahaz* Such as are described in ^{<2370>}Isaiah 7:10-13; ^{<4823>}2 Chronicles 28:23-25; 29:3,7.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 17

~~<270>~~ **2 Kings 17:1.** *In the twelfth year* Compare ~~<250>~~ 2 Kings 15:30 note. The history of the kingdom of Israel is in this chapter brought to a close.

~~<270>~~ **2 Kings 17:2.** *Not as the kings of Israel that were before him* The repentance of a nation like that of an individual, may be “too late.” God is long-suffering; but after national sins have reached a certain height, after admonitions and warnings have been repeatedly rejected, after lesser punishments have failed — judgment begins to fall. Forces have been set in motion, which nothing but a miracle could stop; and God does not see fit to work a miracle in such a case. Compare Butler, ‘Analogy,’ Pt. I ch. 2 end.

~~<270>~~ **2 Kings 17:3.** Of Shalmaneser, the successor of Tiglath-pileser in the Assyrian Canon, we know little from Assyrian sources, since his records have been mutilated by his successors, the Sargonids, who were of a wholly different family. The archives of Tyre mention him as contemporary with, and warring against, a Tyrian king named Elulæus. The expedition, referred to here, was probably in the first year of Shalmaneser (727 B.C.). Its main object was the reduction of Phoenicia, which had re-asserted its independence, but (except Tyre) was once more completely reduced. Shalmaneser probably passed on from Phoenicia into Galilee, where he attacked and took Beth-arbel (Arbela of Josephus, now Irbid), treating it with great severity (~~<300>~~ Hosea 10:14), in order to alarm Hoshea, who immediately submitted, and became tributary (see the marginal rendering and ~~<100>~~ 1 Kings 4:21 note). Shalmaneser then returned into Assyria.

~~<270>~~ **2 Kings 17:4.** So, king of Egypt, is generally identified with Shebek (730 B.C.), the Sabaco of Herodotus. Hoshea’s application to him was a return to a policy which had been successful in the reign of Jeroboam I (~~<110>~~ 1 Kings 12:20 note), but had not been resorted to by any other Israelite monarch. Egypt had for many years been weak, but Sabaco was a conqueror, who at the head of the swarthy hordes of Ethiopia had invaded Egypt and made himself master of the country. In the inscriptions of Shebek he boasts to have received tribute from “the king of Shara” (Syria), which is probably his mode of noticing Hoshea’s application. References to the Egyptian proclivities of Hoshea are frequent in the prophet Hosea

(~~2Kings~~ Hosea 7:11; 11:1,5; 12:4). King Hoshea, simultaneously with his reception as a vassal by Sabaco, ceased to pay tribute to Shalmaneser, thus openly rebelling, and provoking the chastisement which followed.

~~2Kings~~ **2 Kings 17:5.** *All the land* The second invasion of Shalmaneser (723 B.C., his fifth year), is here contrasted with the first, as extending to the whole country, whereas the first had afflicted only a part.

Three years From the fourth to the sixth of Hezekiah, and from the seventh to the ninth of Hoshea; two years, therefore, according to our reckoning, but three, according to that of the Hebrews. This was a long time for so small a place to resist the Assyrians but Samaria was favorably situated on a steep hill; probably Sabaco made some attempts to relieve his vassal; the war with Tyre must have distracted Shalmaneser; and there is reason to believe that before the capture was effected a revolt had broken out at Nineveh which must have claimed Shalmaneser's chief attention, though it did not induce him to abandon his enterprise.

~~2Kings~~ **2 Kings 17:6.** *The king of Assyria took Samaria* i.e., from the Assyrian inscriptions, not Shalmaneser but Sargon, who claims to have captured the city in the first year of his reign (721 B.C.). At first Sargon carried off from Samaria no more than 27,280 prisoners and was so far from depopulating the country that he assessed the tribute on the remaining inhabitants at the same rate as before the conquest. But later in his reign he effected the wholesale deportation here mentioned.

Tlalah and in Habor by the river of Gozan Rather, "on the Habor, the river of Gozan." Halah is the tract which Ptolemy calls Chalcitis, on the borders of Gauzanitis (Gozan) in the vicinity of the Chaboras, or Khabour (Habor, the great affluent of the Euphrates). In this region is a remarkable mound called Gla, which probably marks the site, and represents the name, of the city of Chalach, from where the district Chalcitis was so called.

In the cities of the Medes Sargon relates that he overran Media, seized and "annexed to Assyria" a number of the towns, and also established in the country a set of fortified posts or colonies.

~~2Kings~~ **2 Kings 17:7.** The reasons for which God suffered the Israelites to be deprived of their land and carried into captivity were:

1. their idolatries;

2. their rejection of the Law;
3. their disregard of the warning voices of prophets and seers.

2 Kings 17:8. Idolatry was worse in the Israelites than in other nations, since it argued not merely folly and a gross carnal spirit, but also black ingratitude (^{<1270>}Exodus 20:2,3). The writer subdivides the idolatries of the Israelites into two classes, pagan and native — those which they adopted from the nations whom they drove out, and those which their own kings imposed on them. Under the former head would come the great mass of the idolatrous usages described in ^{<1270>}2 Kings 17:9,10,11,17; “the high places” (^{<1270>}2 Kings 17:9,11); the “images” and “groves” (^{<1270>}2 Kings 17:10); the causing of their children to “pass through the fire” (^{<1270>}2 Kings 17:17); and the “worship of the host of heaven” (^{<1270>}2 Kings 17:16): under the latter would fall the principal points in ^{<1270>}2 Kings 17:12,16,21.

Which they had made “Which” refers to “statutes.” The Israelites had “walked in the statutes of the pagan, and in those of the kings of Israel, which (statutes) they (the kings) had made.”

2 Kings 17:9. Literally, the words run thus — “And the children of Israel concealed (or ‘dissembled’) words which were not so concerning the Lord their God;” the true meaning of which probably is, the Israelites cloaked or covered their idolatry with the pretence that it was a worship of Yahweh: they glossed it over and dissembled toward God, instead of openly acknowledging their apostasy.

From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city This phrase was probably a proverbial expression for universality, meaning strictly; “alike in the most populous and in the most desolate regions.” “Towers of watchmen” were built for the protection of the flocks and herds which were pastured in waste and desert places (^{<1400>}2 Chronicles 26:10; 27:4).

2 Kings 17:11. The burning of incense was a common religious practice among the Egyptians and the Babylonians; and from the present passage we gather that the Canaanite nations practiced it as one of their ordinary sacred rites. The Israelites are frequently reproached with it (^{<3013>}Hosea 2:13; 4:13; ^{<3513>}Isaiah 65:3).

2 Kings 17:13. God raised up a succession of prophets and seers, who repeated and enforced the warnings of the Law, and breathed into the

old words a new life. Among this succession were, in Israel, Ahijah the Shilonite (^{<1142>}1 Kings 14:2), Jehu the son of Hanani (^{<1161>}1 Kings 16:1), Elijah, Micaiah the son of Imlah (^{<1218>}1 Kings 22:8), Elisha, Jonah the son of Amittai (^{<1245>}2 Kings 14:25), Oded (^{<489>}2 Chronicles 28:9), Amos, and Hosea; in Judah, up to this time, Shemaiah (^{<4412>}2 Chronicles 11:2; 12:5), Iddo (^{<4425>}2 Chronicles 12:15; 13:22), Azariah the son of Oded (^{<4450>}2 Chronicles 15:1), Hanani (^{<4467>}2 Chronicles 16:7), Jehu his son (^{<4492>}2 Chronicles 19:2), Jahaziel the son of Zechariah (^{<4414>}2 Chronicles 20:14), Eliezer the son of Dodavah (do. ^{<1275>}2 Kings 17:37), Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (^{<1241>}2 Kings 24:20), another Zechariah (2 Kings 26:5), Joel, Micah, and Isaiah, besides several whose names are not known. Some of these persons are called “prophets,” others “seers.” Occasionally, the same person has both titles (as Iddo and Jehu the son of Hanani), which seems to show that there was no very important distinction between them.

Probably the conjecture is right that “prophet” (*nabi* ^{<1503>}) in strictness designates the official members of the prophetic order only, while “seer” (*chozeh* ^{<12374>}) is applicable to all, whether members of the order or not, who receive a prophetic revelation.

^{<1274>}**2 Kings 17:14.** To “harden” or “stiffen the neck” is a common Hebrew expression significative of unbending obstinacy and determined self-will. See the marginal references.

^{<1275>}**2 Kings 17:15.** As idols are “vanity” and “nothingness,” mere weakness and impotence, so idolators are “vain” and impotent. Their energies have been wasted, their time misspent; they have missed the real object of their existence; their whole life has been a mistake; and the result is utter powerlessness. Literally, the word rendered “vanity” seems to mean “breath” or “vapor” — a familiar image for nonentity. It occurs frequently in the prophets, and especially in Jeremiah (e.g. ^{<1415>}Jeremiah 2:5; 8:19; 14:22, etc.).

^{<1276>}**2 Kings 17:16.** In ^{<1270>}2 Kings 17:10 there is a reference to the old high-place worship, which was professedly a worship of Yahweh, but with unauthorized rites and emblems; here the reference is to Ahab’s setting up a grove to Baal in the city of Samaria (marginal reference).

And worshipped all the host of heaven Astral worship has not hitherto been mentioned as practiced by the Israelites. Moses had warned against it (^{<1049>}Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3), so that it no doubt existed in his day, either

among the Canaanite nations or among the Arabians (^{<1812>}Job 31:26-28). Perhaps it was involved to some extent in the Baal worship of the Phoenicians, for Baal and Astarte were probably associated in the minds of their worshippers with the Sun and moon. Later in the history we shall find a very decided and well-developed astral worship prevalent among the Jews, which is probably Assyro-Babylonian (^{<1218>}2 Kings 21:3 note).

^{<2177>}**2 Kings 17:17.** Compare ^{<2143>}2 Kings 16:3 note, and see ^{<1810>}Leviticus 20:2-5 note.

^{<2179>}**2 Kings 17:19.** This verse and the next are parenthetical. Here again, as in ^{<2173>}2 Kings 17:13, the writer is led on from his account of the sins and punishment of the Israelites to glance at the similar sins and similar punishment of the Jews.

It was the worst reproach which could be urged against any Jewish king, that he “walked in the way of the kings of Israel” (^{<1288>}2 Kings 8:18; 16:3; ^{<4216>}2 Chronicles 21:6; 28:2). The Baal worship is generally the special sin at which the phrase is leveled; but the meaning here seems to be wider. Compare ^{<3166>}Micah 6:16.

^{<2173>}**2 Kings 17:20.** *All the seed of Israel* The Jews, i.e. as well as the Israelites. God’s dealings with both kingdoms were alike. “Spoilers” were sent against each, time after time, before the final ruin came on them — against Israel, Pul and Tiglath-pileser (^{<1259>}2 Kings 15:19,29; ^{<1363>}1 Chronicles 5:26); against Judah, Sennacherib (^{<1283>}2 Kings 18:13-16), Esarhaddon (^{<4311>}2 Chronicles 33:11), and Nebuchadnezzar thrice.

^{<2172>}**2 Kings 17:21.** The strong expression “drave Israel” is an allusion to the violent measures whereto Jeroboam had recourse in order to stop the efflux into Judea of the more religious portion of his subjects (^{<4411>}2 Chronicles 11:13-16), the calling in of Shishak, and the permanent assumption of a hostile attitude toward the southern kingdom.

^{<2172>}**2 Kings 17:23.** *As he had said by all his servants the prophets* The writer refers not only to the extant prophecies of Moses (^{<1833>}Leviticus 26:33; ^{<1843>}Deuteronomy 4:26,27; 28:36, etc.), Ahijah the Shilohite (marginal reference), Hosea (^{<3018>}Hosea 9:3,17), and Amos (^{<3077>}Amos 7:17), but also to the entire series of warnings and predictions which prophet after prophet in a long unbroken succession had addressed to the

disobedient Israelites (^{<12173>}2 Kings 17:13) on their apostasy, and so leaving them wholly “without excuse” (see the ^{<12173>}2 Kings 17:13 note).

Unto this day The words, taken in combination with the rest of the chapter, distinctly show that the Israelites had not returned to their land by the time of the composition of the Books of Kings. They show nothing as to their ultimate fate. But, on the whole, it would seem probable:

(1) that the ten tribes never formed a community in their exile, but were scattered from the first; and

(2) that their descendants either blended with the pagan and were absorbed, or returned to Palestine with Zerubbabel and Ezra, or became inseparable united with the dispersed Jews in Mesopotamia and the adjacent countries.

No discovery, therefore, of the ten tribes is to be expected, nor can works written to prove their identity with any existing race or body of persons be regarded as anything more than ingenious exertions.

^{<12174>}**2 Kings 17:24.** Sargon is probably the king of Assyria intended, not (as generally supposed) either Shalmaneser or Esar-haddon.

The ruins of Cutha have been discovered about 15 miles northeast of Babylon, at a place which is called Ibrahim, because it is the traditional site of a contest between Abraham and Nimrod. The name of Cuilia is found on the bricks of this place, which are mostly of the era of Nebuchadnezzar. The Assyrian inscriptions show that the special god of Cutha was Nergal (see the ^{<12173>}2 Kings 17:30 note).

Ava or Ivah or Ahava (^{<15185>}Ezra 8:15) was on the Euphrates; perhaps the city in ancient times called Ihi or Aia, between Sippara (Sepharvaim) and Hena (Anah).

On Hamath, see ^{<1085>}1 Kings 8:65 note.

Sepharvaim or Sippara is frequently mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions under the name of Tsipar (^{<12173>}2 Kings 17:31 note). The dual form of the Hebrew name is explained by the fact that the town lay on both sides of the river. Its position is marked by the modern village of Mosaib, about 20 miles from the ruins of Babylon up the course of the stream.

The towns mentioned in this verse were, excepting Hamath, conquered by Sargon in his twelfth year, 709 B.C.; and it cannot have been until this time, or a little later, that the transplantation here recorded took place. Hamath had revolted, and been conquered by Sargon in his first year, shortly after the conquest of Samaria.

Instead of the children of Israel This does not mean that the whole population of Samaria was carried off (compare ^{<4819>}2 Chronicles 34:9). The writer here, by expressly confining the new-comers to the “cities of Samaria,” seems to imply that the country districts were in other hands.

^{<1725>}**2 Kings 17:25.** The depopulation of the country, insufficiently remedied by the influx of foreigners, had the natural consequence of multiplying the wild beasts and making them bolder. Probably a certain number had always lurked in the jungle along the course of the Jordan (^{<3419>}Jeremiah 49:19; 50:44); and these now ventured into the hill country, and perhaps even into the cities. The colonists regarded their sufferings from the lions as a judgment upon them from “the god of the land” (^{<1726>}2 Kings 17:26; compare ^{<1123>}1 Kings 20:23 note).

^{<1727>}**2 Kings 17:27.** *Carry one of the priests ...; let them go and dwell there, and let him teach* The double change of number is curious; but rise text needs no emendation. The priest would require to be accompanied by assistants, who would “go and dwell,” but would not be qualified to “teach.” The arcana of the worship would be known to none excepting the priests who had ministered at the two national sanctuaries of Dan and Bethel.

^{<1728>}**2 Kings 17:28.** The priest sent to the colonists was not a true Yahweh-priest, but one of those who had been attached to the calf-worship, probably at Bethel. Hence, he would be willing to tolerate the mixed religion, which a true Yahweh-priest would have unsparingly condemned.

^{<1729>}**2 Kings 17:29.** The “Samaritans” here are the Israelites. The temples built by them at the high places (^{<11231>}1 Kings 12:31; 13:32) had remained standing at the time of their departure. They were now occupied by the new-comers, who set up their own worship in the old sanctuaries.

~~1273~~ **2 Kings 17:30.** Succoth-benoth probably represents a Babylonian goddess called Zir-banit, the wife of Merodach. She and her husband were, next to Bel and Beltis, the favorite divinities of the Babylonians.

Nergal, etymologically “the great man,” or “the great hero,” was the Babylonian god of war and hunting. His name forms an element in the Babylonian royal appellation, Nergal-shar-ezar or Neriglissar. The Assyrian inscriptions connect Nergal in a very special way with Cutha, of which he was evidently the tutelary deity.

Ashima is ingeniously conjectured to be the same as Esmun, the AEsculapius of the Cabiri or “great gods” of the Phoenicians.

~~1273~~ **2 Kings 17:31.** Nibhaz and Tartak are either gods of whom no other notice has come down to us, or intentional corruptions of the Babylonian names Nebo and Tir, the great god of Borsippa, who was the tutelary deity of so many Babylonian kings. The Jews, in their scorn and contempt of polytheism, occasionally and purposely altered, by way of derision, the names of the pagan deities. Anammelech is possibly an instance of the same contemptuous play upon words.

Adrammelech, “the glorious king,” signifies the sun. The Assyrian inscriptions commonly designate Tsipar, or Sepharvaim (~~1273~~ 2 Kings 17:24), “Sippara of the Sun.” The title “Adrammelech” has not yet been found in the inscriptions hitherto; but it would plainly be a fitting epithet of the great luminary.

The sun-god of the Babylonians, Shamas, was united at Sippara and elsewhere with a sun-goddess, Anunit, whose name may be represented in the Anammelech of the text. The Hebrews, taking enough of this name to show what they meant, assimilated the termination to that of the male deity, thus producing a ridiculous effect, regarded as insulting to the gods in question.

~~1273~~ **2 Kings 17:32.** *Of the lowest of them* Rather, “from all ranks.” See marginal reference note.

~~1273~~ **2 Kings 17:33.** Understand the passage thus: “They (the colonists) served their own gods after the manner of the nations from which they (the government) removed them,” i.e., after the manner of their own countrymen at home.

~~<1734>~~ **2 Kings 17:34.** *They fear not the LORD* The new-comers in one sense feared Yahweh (~~<1733>~~ 2 Kings 17:33,41). They acknowledged His name, admitted Him among their gods, and kept up His worship at the high place at Bethel according to the rites instituted by Jeroboam (~~<1728>~~ 2 Kings 17:28). But in another sense they did not fear Him. To acknowledge Yahweh together with other gods is not really to acknowledge Him at all.

~~<1735>~~ **2 Kings 17:37.** *Which he wrote for you* It is worth observing here, first, that the author regards the whole Law as given to the Israelites in a written form; and secondly, that he looks on the real writer as God.

~~<1741>~~ **2 Kings 17:41.** *Their graven images* The Babylonians appear to have made a very sparing use of animal forms among their religious emblems. They represented the male Sun, Shamas, by a circle, plain or crossed; the female Sun, Anunit, by a six-rayed or eight-rayed star; Nebo by a single wedge or arrow-head, the fundamental element of their writing; the god of the atmosphere by a double or triple thunderbolt. The gods generally were represented under human forms. A few of them had, in addition, animal emblems — the lion, the bull, the eagle, or the serpent; but these seem never to have been set up for worship in temples. There was nothing intentionally grotesque in the Babylonian religion, as there was in the Egyptian and Phoenician.

So do they unto this day The mixed worship, the union of professed reverence for Yahweh with the grossest idolatry, continued to the time of the composition of this book, which must have been as late as 561 B.C., or, at any rate, as late as 580 B.C. (~~<1257>~~ 2 Kings 25:27). It did not, however, continue much longer. When the Samaritans wished to join the Jews in rebuilding the temple (about 537 B.C.), they showed that inclination to draw nearer to the Jewish cult which henceforth marked their religious progress. Long before the erection of a temple to Yahweh on Mount Gerizim (409 B.C.) they had laid aside all their idolatrous rites, and, admitting the binding authority of the Pentateuch, had taken upon them the observance of the entire Law.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 18

2 Kings 18:1. The sacred writer, having now completed the history of the joint kingdom, and having cast his glance forward over the religious history of the mixed race which replaced the Israelites in Samaria, proceeds to apply himself uninterruptedly to the remaining history of the Jewish kingdom.

2 Kings 18:1. *In the third year* If Hoshea ascended the throne toward the close of the 12th year of Ahaz (^{<1270>}2 Kings 17:1), and if Ahaz reigned not much more than 15 years (^{<1262>}2 Kings 16:2), the first of Hezekiah might synchronise in part with Hoshea's third year.

Hezekiah The name given by our translators follows the Greek form, **Εζεκίας** ^{<1478>}, rather than the Hebrew, which is Hizkiah. Its meaning is "strength of Yahweh."

2 Kings 18:2. *Twenty and five years old was he* This statement, combined with that of ^{<1262>}2 Kings 16:2, would make it necessary that his father Ahaz should have married at the age of 10, and have had a child born to him when he was 11 years of age. This is not impossible; but its improbability is so great, that most commentators suggest a corruption in some of the numbers.

The Zachariah here mentioned was perhaps one of the "faithful witnesses" of Isaiah (^{<2382>}Isaiah 8:2).

2 Kings 18:3. *He did that which was right ...* This is said without qualification of only three kings of Judah, Asa (^{<1151>}1 Kings 15:11), Hezekiah, and Josiah (^{<1222>}2 Kings 22:2). See some details of Hezekiah's acts at the commencement of his reign in 2 Chronicles 29, etc. It is thought that his reformation was preceded, and perhaps caused, by the prophecy of Micah recorded in ^{<2438>}Jeremiah 26:18; ^{<3822>}Micah 3:12.

2 Kings 18:4. *He removed the high places* This religious reformation was effected in a violent and tumultuous manner (marginal reference). The "high places," though forbidden in the Law (^{<6122>}Deuteronomy 12:2-4, 11-14; compare ^{<1351>}Leviticus 26:30), had practically received the sanction of Samuel (^{<1070>}1 Samuel 7:10; 9:12-14), David (^{<1052>}2 Samuel 15:32),

Solomon (^{<1K01>}1 Kings 3:4), and others, and had long been the favorite resorts of the mass of the people (see ^{<1K02>}1 Kings 3:2 note). They were the rural centers for the worship of Yahweh, standing in the place of the later synagogue; and had hitherto been winked at, or rather regarded as legitimate, even by the best kings. Hezekiah's desecration of these time-honored sanctuaries must have been a rude shock to the feelings of numbers; and indications of the popular discontent may be traced in the appeal of Rab-shakeh (^{<2K02>}2 Kings 18:22), and in the strength of the reaction under Manasseh (^{<2K02>}2 Kings 21:2-9; ^{<4C03>}2 Chronicles 33:3-17).

The brasen serpent See the marginal reference. Its history from the time when it was set up to the date of Hezekiah's reformation is a blank. The present passage favors the supposition that it had been brought by Solomon from Gibeon and placed in the temple, for it implies a long continued worship of the serpent by the Israelites generally, and not a mere recent worship of it by the Jews.

And he called it Nehushtan Rather, "And it was called Nehushtan." The people called it, not "the serpent" (*nachash*)^{<H5175>}, but "the brass," or "the brass thing" (*Nechushtan*)^{<H5180>}. Probably they did not like to call it "the serpent," on account of the dark associations which were attached to that reptile (^{<0101>}Genesis 3:1-15; ^{<3201>}Isaiah 27:1; ^{<P9113>}Psalms 91:13; etc.).

^{<2K05>}**2 Kings 18:5.** *After him was none like him* The same is said of Josiah (marginal reference). The phrase was probably proverbial, and was not taken to mean more than we mean when we say that such and such a king was one of singular piety.

^{<2K06>}**2 Kings 18:6.** Other good kings, as Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Joash, and Amaziah, had fallen away in their later years. Hezekiah remained firm to the last. The phrase "cleaving to God" is frequent in Deuteronomy, but rare elsewhere.

^{<2K07>}**2 Kings 18:7.** *The LORD was with him* This had been said of no king since David (marginal reference). The phrase is very emphatic. The general prosperity of Hezekiah is set forth at some length by the author of Chronicles (^{<4C23>}2 Chronicles 32:23,27-29). His great influence among the nations bordering on the northern kingdom, was the cause of the first expedition of Sennacherib against him, the Ekronites having expelled an Assyrian viceroy from their city, and delivered him to Hezekiah for safe

keeping: an expedition which did not very long precede that of ^{<2183>}2 Kings 18:13, which fell toward the close of Hezekiah's long reign.

^{<218>}**2 Kings 18:8.** Sargon had established the complete dominion of Assyria over the Philistines. Hence, the object of Hezekiah's Philistine campaign was not so much conquest as opposition to the Assyrian power. How successful it was is indicated in the Assyrian records by the number of towns in this quarter which Sennacherib recovered before he proceeded against Jerusalem.

^{<219>}**2 Kings 18:9-12.** These verses repeat the account given in the marginal reference. The extreme importance of the event may account for the double insertion.

^{<2183>}**2 Kings 18:13.** *In the fourteenth year* This note of time, which places the invasion of Sennacherib eight years only after the capture of Samaria, is hopelessly at variance with the Assyrian dates for the two events, the first of which falls into the first of Sargon, and the second into the fourth of Sennacherib, twenty-one years later. We have therefore to choose between an entire rejection of the Assyrian chronological data, and an emendation of the present passage. Of the emendations proposed the simplest is to remove the note of time altogether, regarding it as having crept in from the margin.

Sennacherib This is the Greek form of the Sinakhirib of the inscriptions, the son of Sargon, and his immediate successor in the monarchy. The death of Sargon (705 B.C.) had been followed by a number of revolts. Hezekiah also rebelled, invaded Philistia, and helped the national party in that country to throw off the Assyrian yoke.

From Sennacherib's inscriptions we learn that, having reduced Phoenicia, recovered Ascalon, and defeated an army of Egyptians and Ethiopians at Ekron, he marched against Jerusalem.

The fenced cities Sennacherib reckons the number taken by him at "forty-six." He seems to have captured on his way to the holy city a vast number of small towns and villages, whose inhabitants he carried off to the number of 200,000. Compare ^{<2341>}Isaiah 24:1-12. The ground occupied by his main host outside the modern Damascus gate was thenceforth known to the Jews as "the camp of the Assyrians." Details connected with the siege may be gathered from Isaiah 22 and Chronicles (marginal reference "s"). After a

while Hezekiah resolved on submission. Sennacherib (^{<121814>}2 Kings 18:14) had left his army to continue the siege, and gone in person to Lachish. The Jewish monarch sent his embassy to that town.

^{<121814>}**2 Kings 18:14.** *Return from me* Or “retire from me,” i.e., “withdraw thy troops.”

Three hundred talents ... According to Sennacherib’s own account, the terms of peace were as follows:

- (1) A money payment to the amount of 800 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold.
- (2) The surrender of the Ekronite king.
- (3) A cession of territory toward the west and the southwest, which was apportioned between the kings of Ekron, Ashdod, and Gaza.

^{<121618>}**2 Kings 18:16.** Ahaz had already exhausted the treasuries (^{<121618>}2 Kings 16:8); Hezekiah was therefore compelled to undo his own work.

^{<121817>}**2 Kings 18:17.** An interval of time must be placed between this verse and the last. Sennacherib, content with his successes, had returned to Nineveh with his spoil and his numerous captives. Hezekiah, left to himself, repented of his submission, and commenced negotiations with Egypt (^{<121821>}2 Kings 18:21,24; ^{<23112>}Isaiah 30:2-6; 31:1), which implied treason against his Assyrian suzerain. It was under these circumstances that Sennacherib appears to have made his second expedition into Palestine very soon after the first. Following the usual coast route he passed through Philistia on his way to Egypt, leaving Jerusalem on one side, despising so irony a state, and knowing that the submission of Egypt would involve that of her hangers-on. While, however, he was besieging Lachish on his way to encounter his main enemy, he determined to try the temper of the Jews by means of an embassy, which he accordingly sent.

Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-shakeh None of these are proper names. “Tartan” was the ordinary title of an Assyrian general; “Rab-saris” is “chief eunuch,” always a high officer of the Assyrian court; Rab-shakeh is probably “chief cup-bearer.”

By the conduit of the upper pool Possibly a conduit on the north side of the city near the “camp of the Assyrians.” The spot was the same as that on which Isaiah had met Ahaz (^{<2108>}Isaiah 7:3).

^{<2188>}**2 Kings 18:18.** *When they had called to the king* The ambassadors summoned Hezekiah, as if their rank were equal to his. Careful of his dignity, he responds by sending officers of his court.

Eliakim ... which was over the household Eliakim had been promoted to fill the place of Shebna (^{<2221>}Isaiah 22:20-22). He was a man of very high character. The comptroller of the household, whose position (^{<1046>}1 Kings 4:6) must have been a subordinate one in the time of Solomon, appears to have now become the chief minister of the crown. On the “scribe” or secretary, and the “recorder,” see the ^{<1048>}1 Kings 4:3 note.

^{<2189>}**2 Kings 18:19.** The Rab-shakeh, the third in rank of the three Assyrian ambassadors, probably took the prominent part in the conference because he could speak Hebrew (^{<2183>}2 Kings 18:26), whereas the Tartan and the Rabsaris could not do so.

The great king This title of the monarchs of Assyria is found in use as early as 1120 B.C. Like the title, “king of kings,” the distinctive epithet “great” served to mark emphatically the vast difference between the numerous vassal monarchs and the suzerain of whom they held their crowns.

^{<2190>}**2 Kings 18:20.** Hezekiah no doubt believed that in the “counsel” of Eliakim and Isaiah, and in the “strength” promised him by Egypt, he had resources which justified him in provoking a war.

vain words literally, as in margin, i.e., a mere word, to which the facts do not correspond.

^{<2191>}**2 Kings 18:21.** *This bruised reed* The “tall reed of the Nile bulrush” fitly symbolized the land where it grew. Apparently strong and firm, it was quite unworthy of trust. Let a man lean upon it, and the rotten support instantly gave way, wounding the hand that stayed itself so insecurely. So it was with Egypt throughout the whole period of Jewish history (compare ^{<2174>}2 Kings 17:4-6). Her actual practice was to pretend friendship, to hold out hopes of support, and then to fail in time of need.

^{<2192>}**2 Kings 18:22.** The destruction of numerous shrines and altars where Yahweh had been worshipped (^{<2194>}2 Kings 18:4) seemed to the Rab-

shakeh conduct calculated not to secure the favor, but to call forth the anger, of the god. At any rate, it was conduct which he knew had been distasteful to many of Hezekiah's subjects.

~~2K23~~ **2 Kings 18:23.** The phrase translated “give pledges,” or “hostages” (margin) may perhaps be best understood as meaning “make an agreement.” If you will “bind yourself to find the riders” (i.e., trained horsemen), we will “bind ourselves to furnish the horses.” The suggestion implied that in all Judaea there were not 2000 men accustomed to serve as cavalry.

~~2K25~~ **2 Kings 18:25.** The Rab-shakeh probably tries the effect of a bold assertion, which had no basis of fact to rest upon.

~~2K26~~ **2 Kings 18:26.** *The Syrian language* i.e., Aramaic; probably the dialect of Damascus, a Semitic language nearly akin to their own, but sufficiently different to be unintelligible to ordinary Jews

The people that are on the wall The conference must have been held immediately outside the wall for the words of the speakers to have been audible.

~~2K27~~ **2 Kings 18:27.** *That they may eat ...* “My master hath sent me,” the Rab-shakeh seems to say, “to these men, whom I see stationed on the wall to defend the place and bear the last extremities of a prolonged siege — these men on whom its worst evils will fall, and who have therefore the greatest interest in avoiding it by a timely surrender.” He expresses the evils by a strong coarse phrase, suited to the rude soldiery, and well calculated to rouse their feelings. The author of Chronicles has softened down the words (~~4Ch11~~ 2 Chronicles 32:11).

~~2K29~~ **2 Kings 18:29,30.** There were two grounds, and two only, on which Hezekiah could rest his refusal to surrender,

- (1) ability to resist by his own natural military strength and that of his allies; and
- (2) expectation based upon the language of Isaiah (~~2Isa31~~ Isaiah 30:31; 31:4-9), of supernatural assistance from Yahweh.

The Rab-shakeh argues that both grounds of confidence are equally fallacious.

<1283> 2 Kings 18:31. *Make an agreement ...* Rather, “Make peace with me.” The word, which primarily means “blessing,” and secondarily “a gift,” has also the meaning, though more rarely, of “peace.” Probably it acquired this meaning from the fact that a peace was commonly purchased by presents.

eat ... drink A picture of a time of quiet and prosperity, a time when each man might enjoy the fruits of his land, without any fear of the spoiler’s violence. The words are in contrast with the latter part of **<1287> 2 Kings 18:27.**

Cistern Rather, “well” (**<1811> Deuteronomy 6:11**). Each cultivator in Palestine has a “well” dug in some part of his ground, from which he draws water for his own use. “Cisterns,” or reservoirs for rain-water, are comparatively rare.

<1283> 2 Kings 18:33. The boast is natural. The Assyrians had had an uninterrupted career of success, and might well believe that their gods were more powerful than those of the nations with whom they had warred. It is not surprising that they did not understand that their successes hitherto had been allowed by the very God, Yahweh, against whom they were now boasting themselves.

<1284> 2 Kings 18:34. Arpad was situated somewhere in southern Syria; but it is impossible to fix its exact position. Sargon mentions it in an inscription as joining with Hamath in an act of rebellion, which he chastised. It was probably the capture and destruction of these two cities on this occasion which caused them to be mentioned together here (and in **<1293> 2 Kings 19:13**, and again in **<2309> Isaiah 10:9**). Sennacherib adduces late examples of the inability of the nations’ gods to protect their cities. On the other cities mentioned in this verse, see **<1274> 2 Kings 17:24** notes.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 19

~~290~~ **2 Kings 19:1.** Hezekiah, like his officers, probably rent his clothes on account of Rab-shakeh's blasphemies: and he put on sackcloth in self-humiliation and in grief. The only hope left was in Yahweh, for Egypt could not be trusted to effect anything of importance. Rab-shakeh's boldness had told upon Hezekiah. He was dispirited and dejected. He perhaps began to doubt whether he had done right in yielding to the bolder counsels of Eliakim and Isaiah. He had not lost his faith in God; but his faith was being severely tried. He wisely went and strove by prayer to strengthen it.

~~292~~ **2 Kings 19:2.** Isaiah is here for the first time introduced into the history. His own writings show us how active a part he had taken in it for many years previously. This was the fourth reign since he began his prophesying; and during two reigns at least, those of Ahaz and Hezekiah, he had been a familiar counselor of the monarch. He had probably counseled the revolt from Assyria, and had encouraged the king and people to persevere in their resistance. The exact date of prophecies can seldom be fixed with any certainty; but we can scarcely be mistaken in regarding 2 Kings 10; 30; 31 as written about the time of Hezekiah's second revolt.

~~293~~ **2 Kings 19:3.** The "trouble" consisted in rebuke" (rather, "chastisement,") for sins at the hand of God, and "blasphemy" (rather, "reproach,") at the hands of man.

The children ... i.e., "we are in a fearful extremity — at the last gasp — and lack the strength that might carry us through the danger."

~~294~~ **2 Kings 19:4.** *Will hear* i.e., "will show that he has heard — will notice and punish."

The living God See ~~0172~~ 1 Samuel 17:26 note.

And will reprove the words Rather, "will reprove him for the words."

The remnant i.e., for the kingdom of Judah, the only remnant of God's people that was now left, after Galilee and Gilead and Samaria had all been carried away captive.

2 Kings 19:7. *Will send a blast upon him* Rather, “I will put a spirit in him” — i.e., “I will take from him his present pride and will put in him a new spirit, a spirit of craven fear.” Men shall tell him of the destruction that has come upon his host (**2 Kings 19:35**), and he shall straightway return, etc.

2 Kings 19:8. On Lachish and Libnah, see **Joshua 10:3,29** notes. The phrase, “he was departed from Lachish” is suggestive of successful resistance.

2 Kings 19:9. *Tirhakah king of Ethiopia* The Tehrak or Teharka of the hieroglyphics. He was the last king of the 25th or Ethiopian dynasty, which commenced with Shebek or Sabaco, and he reigned upward of 26 years. The Assyrian inscriptions show that he still ruled in Egypt as late as 667 B.C., when Esarhaddon (**2 Kings 19:37**) died, and his son Assurbanipal succeeded him. He probably ascended the Egyptian throne about 692 B.C., having previously ruled over Ethiopia before he became king of Egypt (compare **Isaiah 37:9**). Thus he was probably reigning in Ethiopia at the time of Sennacherib’s expedition, while Sethos and perhaps other secondary monarchs bore rule over Egypt. His movements caused Sennacherib to send a second embassy, instead of marching in person against the Jewish king.

2 Kings 19:11. *All lands* This boast is in strict accordance with the general tenor of the Assyrian inscriptions. Hyperbole is the general language of the East; but in this instance it was not so extreme as in some others. The Assyrians under Sargon and Sennacherib had enjoyed an uninterrupted series of military successes: they had succeeded in establishing their pre-eminence from the Median desert to the banks of the Nile, and from the shores of Lake Van to those of the Persian Gulf.

2 Kings 19:12. *Haran* Harran, the Carrhae of the Greeks and Romans (**Genesis 11:31**), was among the earliest conquests of the Assyrians; being subject to them from the 12th century. Its conquest would have naturally followed that of Gozan (Gauzanitis, **2 Kings 17:6**), which lay between it and Assyria proper.

Rezepth Probably the Rozappa of the Assyrian inscriptions, a city in the neighborhood of Haran.

The children of Eden Or, “the Beni-Eden,” who appear from the Assyrian inscriptions to have inhabited the country on the east bank of the Euphrates, about the modern Balis. Here they had a city called Beth-Adina, taken by the Assyrians about 880 B.C. This is probably the “Eden” of marginal reference.

Thelasar Or Telassar. Probably a city on the Euphrates, near Beth-Adina, called after the name of the god Asshur. The name would signify “the Hill of Asshur.”

^{<21913>} **2 Kings 19:13.** Compare the marginal reference ^{<21724>} 2 Kings 17:24.

^{<21912>} 2 Kings 19:12 refers to former Assyrian successes, ^{<21913>} 2 Kings 19:13 to comparatively recent ones.

^{<21914>} **2 Kings 19:14.** *Hezekiah received the letter* The inscriptions show that scribes accompanied the Assyrian armies, with the materials of their craft, so that such a dispatch might be easily drawn up. As Hezekiah himself “read” it, we may presume that it was in the Hebrew tongue.

^{<21915>} **2 Kings 19:15.** *Which dwellest between the cherubims* The reference is to the shechinah, or miraculous glory, which from time to time appeared above the mercy-seat from between the two cherubims, whose wings overshadowed the ark of the covenant (^{<11623>} 1 Kings 6:23-27; compare ^{<12522>} Exodus 25:22; ^{<11612>} Leviticus 16:2, etc.).

Thou art the God, even thou alone This is the protest of the pure theist against the intense polytheism of Sennacherib’s letter, which assumes that gods are only gods of particular nations, and that Hezekiah’s God is but one out of an indefinite number, no stronger or more formidable than the rest.

^{<21918>} **2 Kings 19:18.** *Have cast their gods into the fire* In general the Assyrians carried off the images of the gods from the temples of the conquered nations, and deposited them in their own shrines, as at once trophies of victory and proof of the superiority of the Assyrian deities over those of their enemies. But sometimes the gods are said to have been “destroyed” or “burnt with fire;” which was probably done when the idols were of rude workmanship or coarse material; and when it was inconvenient to encumber an army with spoils so weighty and difficult, of transport.

2 Kings 19:19. If the mighty army of the great Assyrian king were successfully defied by a petty monarch like Hezekiah, it would force the surrounding nations to confess that the escape was owing to the protecting hand of Yahweh. They would thus be taught, in spite of themselves, that He, and He alone, was the true God.

2 Kings 19:21. *Concerning him* i.e., “concerning Sennacherib.” **2 Kings 19:21-28** are addressed to the great Assyrian monarch himself, and are God’s reply to his proud boastings.

The virgin, the daughter of Zion, Rather, holy eastern city, is here distinguished from Jerusalem, the western one, and is given the remarkable epithet “virgin,” which is not applied to her sister; probably because the true Zion, the city of David, had remained inviolable from David’s time, having never been entered by an enemy. Jerusalem, on the other hand, had been taken, both by Shishak (**1 Kings 14:26**) and by Jehoshaphat (**2 Kings 14:13**). The personification of cities as females is a common figure (compare marginal references).

Hath shaken her head at thee This was a gesture of scorn with the Hebrews (compare the marginal references; **Matthew 27:39**).

2 Kings 19:22. *The Holy One of Israel* This is a favorite phrase with Isaiah, in whose prophecies it is found 27 times, while it occurs five times only in the rest of Scripture (**Psalm 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Jeremiah 50:29; 51:5**). Its occurrence here is a strong proof — one among many — of the genuineness of the present passage, which is not the composition of the writer of Kings, but an actual prophecy delivered at this time by Isaiah.

2 Kings 19:23. *And hast said* Isaiah clothes in words the thoughts of Sennacherib’s heart — thoughts of the most extreme self-confidence. Compare **Isaiah 10:7-14**, where, probably at an earlier date, the same overweening pride is ascribed to this king.

With the multitude of my chariots There are two readings here, which give, however, nearly the same sense. The more difficult and more poetical of the two is to be preferred. Literally, translated it runs — “With chariots upon chariots am I come up, etc.”

To the sides of Lebanon, “Lebanon,” with its “cedars” and its “fir-trees,” is to be understood here both literally and figuratively. Literally, the hewing

of timber in Lebanon was an ordinary feature of an Assyrian expedition into Syria. Figuratively, the mountain represents all the more inaccessible parts of Palestine, and the destruction of its firs and cedars denotes the complete devastation of the entire country from one end to the other.

The lodgings of his borders literally, “the lodge of its (Lebanon’s) end;” either an actual habitation situated on the highest point of the mountain-range, or a poetical periphrasis for the highest point itself.

The forest of his Carmel Or, “the forest of its garden” — i.e., “its forest which is like a garden,” etc.

^{<2124>}**2 Kings 19:24.** *Have digged and drunk ... and dried up* The meaning seems to be — “Mountains do not stop me — I cross them even in my chariots. Deserts do not stop me — I dig wells there, and drink the water. Rivers do not stop me — I pass them as easily as if they were dry land.”

The rivers of besieged places Rather, “the rivers of Egypt.” The singular form, Mazor (compare the modern Misr and the Assyrian Muzr), is here used instead of the ordinary dual form, Mizraim, perhaps because “Lower Egypt” only is intended. This was so cut up with canals and branches of the Nile, natural and artificial, that it was regarded as impassable for chariots and horses. Sennacherib, however, thought that these many streams would prove no impediments to him; he would advance as fast as if they were “dried up.”

^{<2125>}**2 Kings 19:25.** *Hast thou not heard long ago ...* Rather, “Hast thou not heard, that from long ago I did this, from ancient times I fashioned it? etc.” The former part of the verse refers to the secret divine decrees, whereby the affairs of this world are determined and ordered from the very beginning of things. Sennacherib’s boasting, however, proved that he did not know this, that he did not recognize himself simply as God’s instrument — “the rod of His anger” (^{<23015>}Isaiah 10:5) — but regarded his victories as gained by his own “strength and wisdom” (^{<23013>}Isaiah 10:13).

^{<2126>}**2 Kings 19:26.** The weakness of the nations exposed to the Assyrian attacks was as much owing to the divine decrees as was the strength of the Assyrians themselves.

The grass on the house tops Compare the marginal reference. The vegetation on the flat roofs of Oriental houses is the first to spring up and the first to fade away.

2 Kings 19:27. See **1 Kings 3:7** note.

2 Kings 19:28. *Thy tumult* Rather, “thy arrogance.”

I will put my hook in nose Rather, “my ring.” The sculptures show that the kings of Babylon and Assyria were in the habit of actually passing a ring through the flesh of their more distinguished prisoners, of attaching a thong or a rope to it, and of thus leading them about as with a “bridle.” In Assyria the ring was, at least ordinarily, passed through the lower lip; while in Babylonia it appears to have been inserted into the membrane of the nose. Thus Sennacherib would be here threatened with a punishment which he was perhaps in the habit of inflicting.

2 Kings 19:29. The prophet now once more addresses Hezekiah, and gives him a “sign,” or token, whereby he and his may be assured that Sennacherib is indeed bridled, and will not trouble Judaea anymore. It was a sign of the continued freedom of the land from attack during the whole of the remainder of Sennacherib’s reign — a space of 17 years.

2 Kings 19:30. *The remnant that is escaped* Terrible ravages seem to have been committed in the first attack (**2 Kings 18:13** note). And though the second invasion was comparatively harmless, yet it probably fell heavily on the cities of the west and the southwest. Thus the “escaped” were but “a remnant.”

Bear fruit upward The flourishing time of Josiah is the special fulfillment of this prophecy (**2 Kings 23:15-20**).

2 Kings 19:32. *Nor come before it with shield* The “shields” of the Assyrians are very conspicuous in the sculptures, and were of great importance in a siege, since the assailing archers were in most instances defended, as they shot their weapons, by a comrade, who held before himself and his friend a shield of an enormous size. It was made of a framework of wood, filled in with wattling, and perhaps lined with skin; it was rested upon the ground, and it generally curved backward toward the top; ordinarily it somewhat exceeded the height of a man. From the safe covert afforded by these large defenses the archers were able to take deliberate aim, and deliver their volleys with effect.

Nor cast a bank against it “Mounds” or “banks” were among the most common of the means used by the Assyrians against a besieged town. They

were thrown up against the walls, and consisted of loose earth, trees, brushwood, stones, and rubbish. Sometimes the surface of the mound was regularly paved with several layers of stone or brick, which formed a solid road or causeway capable of bearing a great weight. The intention was not so much to bring the mounds to a level with the top of the walls, as to carry them to such a height as should enable the battering-ram to work effectively. Walls were made very solid toward their base, for the purpose of resisting the ram; halfway up their structure was comparatively weak and slight. The engines of the assailants, rams and catapults, were therefore far more serviceable if they could attack the upper and weaker portion of the defenses; and it was to enable them to reach these portions that the “mounds” were raised.

^{<D193>} **2 Kings 19:33.** *By the way that he came* i.e., through the low country of the Shephelah, thus avoiding not only Jerusalem, but even Judaea.

^{<D194>} **2 Kings 19:34.** *For mine own sake* God’s honor was concerned to defend His own city against one who denied His power in direct terms, as did Sennacherib (^{<D185>} 2 Kings 18:35; 19:10-12). His faithfulness was also concerned to keep the promise made to David (^{<D122>} Psalm 132:12-18).

^{<D195>} **2 Kings 19:35.** *The camp of the Assyrians* Which was now moved to Pelusium, if we may trust Herodotus; or which, at any rate, was at some considerable distance from Jerusalem.

When they arose early in the morning, behold ... These words form the only trustworthy data that we possess for determining to any extent the manner of the destruction now worked. They imply that there was no disturbance during the night, no alarm, no knowledge on the part of the living that their comrades were dying all around them by thousands. All mere natural causes must be rejected, and God must be regarded as having slain the men in their sleep without causing disturbance, either by pestilence or by that “visitation” of which English law speaks. The most nearly parallel case is the destruction of the first-born (^{<D129>} Exodus 12:29).

The Egyptian version of this event recorded in Herodotus is that, during the night, silently and secretly, an innumerable multitude of field-mice spread themselves through the Assyrian host, and gnawed their quivers, bows, and shield-straps, so as to render them useless. When morning

broke, the Assyrians fled hastily, and the Egyptians pursuing put a vast number to the sword.

2 Kings 19:36. *Dwelt at Nineveh* The meaning is not that Sennacherib made no more expeditions at all, which would be untrue, for his annals show us that he warred in Armenia, Babylonia, Susiana, and Cilicia, during his later years; but that he confined himself to his own part of Asia, and did not invade Palestine or threaten Jerusalem anymore. Nineveh, marked by some ruins opposite Mosul, appears here unmistakably as the Assyrian capital, which it became toward the close of the 9th century B.C. It has previously been mentioned only in Genesis (marginal reference). Sennacherib was the first king who made it his permanent residence. Its great size and large population are marked in the description of Jonah (**Jonah 3:2,3; 4:11**), whose visit probably fell about 760 B.C.

2 Kings 19:37. The death of Sennacherib, which took place many years afterward (680 B.C.), is related here, as, from the divine point of view, the sequel to his Syrian expeditions.

Nisroch his god Nisroch has not been as yet identified with any known Assyrian deity. The word may not be the name of a god at all but the name of the temple, as Josephus understood it. Assyrian temples were almost all distinguished by special names. If this be the true solution, the translation should run — “As he was worshipping his god in the house Nisroch.”

They escaped into the land of Armenia literally, “the land of Ararat,” or the northeastern portion of Armenia, where it adjoined Media. The Assyrian inscriptions show that Armenia was at this time independent of Assyria, and might thus afford a safe refuge to the rebels.

Esar-haddon (or Esar-chaddon), is beyond a doubt the Asshur-akh-iddin of the inscriptions, who calls himself the son, and appears to be the successor of Sin-akh-irib. He commenced his reign by a struggle with his brother Adrammelech, and occupied the throne for only thirteen years, when he was succeeded by his son, Sardanapalus or Asshur-bani-pal. He warred with Phoenicia, Syria, Arabia, Egypt, and Media, and built three palaces, one at Nineveh, and the others at Calah and Babylon.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 20

2 Kings 20:1. *In those days* Hezekiah seems to have died 697 B.C.; and his illness must belong to 713 or 714 B.C. (compare **2 Kings 20:6**), a date which falls early in the reign of Sargon. The true chronological place of this narrative is therefore prior to all the other facts related of Hezekiah except his religious reforms.

The prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz This full description of Isaiah (compare **2 Kings 19:2**), by the addition of his father's name and of his office, marks the original independence of this narrative. The writer of Kings may have found it altogether separate from the other records of Hezekiah, and added it in the state in which he found it.

This history (compare **Jonah 3:4-10**) shows that the prophetic denunciations were often not absolute predictions of what was certainly about to happen, but designed primarily to prove, or to lead to repentance, those against whom they were uttered, and only obtaining accomplishment if this primary design failed.

2 Kings 20:2. *He turned his face to the wall* Contrast **1 Kings 21:4**. Ahab turned in sullenness, because he was too angry to converse; Hezekiah in devotion, because he wished to pray undisturbed.

2 Kings 20:3. *Remember now* The old covenant promised temporal prosperity, including length of days, to the righteous. Hezekiah, conscious of his faithfulness and integrity (**2 Kings 18:3-6**), ventures to expostulate (compare also **2 Kings 21:1** note). According to the highest standard of morality revealed up to this time, there was nothing unseemly in the self vindication of the monarch, which has many parallels in the Psalms of David (**Psalm 7:3-10; 18:19-26; 26:1-8**, etc.).

2 Kings 20:4. *The middle court* i.e., of the royal palace. This is preferable to the marginal reading.

2 Kings 20:5. *The captain of my people* This phrase (which does not occur elsewhere in Kings) is remarkable, and speaks for the authenticity of this full report of the actual words of the prophet's message (abbreviated in **Isaiah 38:1**, etc.). The title, "Captain (*negid*) of God's people,"

commonly used of David, is applied to Hezekiah, as David's true follower (~~2Kings~~ 2 Kings 18:3).

~~2Kings~~ **2 Kings 20:6.** The king of Assyria in 714 and 713 B.C. was Sargon (B.C. 721-705). If then the Biblical and Assyrian chronologies which agree exactly in the year of the taking of Samaria (721 B.C.), are to be depended on, the king of Assyria here must have been Sargon. It may be conjectured that he had taken offence at something in the conduct of Hezekiah, and have threatened Jerusalem about this time (compare ~~2Kings~~ Isaiah 20:6). There is, however, no evidence of actual hostilities between Judaea and Assyria in Sargon's reign.

~~2Kings~~ **2 Kings 20:7.** *A lump of figs* The usual remedy in the East, even at the present day, for ordinary boils. But such a remedy would not naturally cure the dangerous tumor or carbuncle from which Hezekiah suffered. Thus the means used in this miracle were means having a tendency toward the result performed by them, but insufficient of themselves to produce that result (compare ~~2Kings~~ 2 Kings 4:34 note).

~~2Kings~~ **2 Kings 20:8.** *And Hezekiah said* Previous to the actual recovery, Hezekiah, who at first may have felt himself no better, asked for a "sign" that he would indeed be restored to health.

Asking for a sign is a pious or a wicked act according to the spirit in which it is done. No blame is attached to the requests of Gideon (~~Judges~~ Judges 6:17,37,39), or to this of Hezekiah, because they were real wishes of the heart expressed humbly. The "evil generation" that "sought for a sign" in our Lord's days did not really want one, but made the demand captiously, neither expecting nor wishing that it should be granted.

~~2Kings~~ **2 Kings 20:9.** *Ten degrees* literally, "ten steps." It is not, perhaps, altogether certain whether the "dial of Ahaz" (~~2Kings~~ 2 Kings 20:11) was really a dial with a gnomon in the center, and "degrees" marked round it, or a construction for marking time by means of "steps." Sundials proper had been invented by the Babylonians before the time of Herodotus; but the instrument here was probably an instrument consisting of a set of steps, or stairs, with an obelisk at the top, the shadow of which descended or ascended the steps according as the sun rose higher in the heavens or declined.

The question as to the mode whereby the return of the shadow was produced is one on which many opinions have been held. Recently, it has been urged that the true cause of the phenomenon was a solar eclipse, in which the moon obscured the entire upper limb of the sun; and it has been clearly shown that if such an occurrence took place a little before mid-day, it would have had the effect described as having taken place — i.e., during the obscuration of the sun's upper limb shadows would be sensibly lengthened, and that of the obelisk would descend the stairs; as the obscuration passed off the reverse would take place, shadows would shorten, and that of the obelisk would once more retire up the steps. If this be the true account, the miracle would consist in Isaiah's supernatural foreknowledge of an event which the astronomy of the age was quite incapable of predicting, and in the providential guidance of Hezekiah's will, so that he chose the "sign" which in the natural course of things was about to be manifested.

^{<2210>}**2 Kings 20:10.** *It is a light thing* It seemed to Hezekiah comparatively easy that the shadow, which had already begun to lengthen, should merely make a sudden jump in the same direction; but, wholly contrary to all experience that it should change its direction, advancing up the steps again when it had once begun to descend them.

^{<2212>}**2 Kings 20:12.** *Berodach-baladan* The correct form of this name, Merodach-baladan, is given in Isaiah (^{<2310>}Isaiah 39:1). It is a name composed of three elements, Merodach, the well-known Babylonian god (^{<2410>}Jeremiah 50:2), but (=pal) "a son;" and iddin, or iddina, "has given;" or Baladan may be a form of Beliddin. This king of Babylon is mentioned frequently in the Assyrian inscriptions, and he was not unknown to the Greeks. He had two reigns in Babylon. First of all, he seized the throne in the same year in which Sargon became king of Assyria, 721 B.C., and held it for 12 years, from 721 B.C. to 709 B.C., when Sargon defeated him, and took him prisoner. Secondly, on the death of Sargon and the accession of Sennacherib, when troubles once more arose in Babylonia, he returned there, and had another reign, which lasted six months, during a part of the year 703 B.C. As the embassy of Merodach-Baladan followed closely on the illness of Hezekiah, it would probably be in 713 B.C.

The son of Baladan In the inscriptions Merodach-Baladan is repeatedly called the son of Yakin or Yagin. This, however, is a discrepancy which admits of easy explanation. The Assyrians are not accurate in their

accounts of the parentage of foreign kings. With them Jehu is “the son of Omri.” Yakin was a prince of some repute, to whose dominions Merodach-baladan had succeeded. The Assyrians would call him Yakin’s son, though he might have been his son-in-law, or his grandson.

The embassy was not merely one of congratulation. Its chief object was to inquire with respect to the going back of the shadow, an astronomical marvel in which the Chaldaeans of Babylon would feel a keen interest (^{<483>}2 Chronicles 32:31). A political purpose is moreover implied in the next verse. Merodach-baladan was probably desirous of strengthening himself against Assyria by an alliance with Judaea and with Egypt.

^{<2213>}**2 Kings 20:13.** *Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them*

The Jewish king lent a favorable ear to the proposals of the ambassadors, and exhibited to them the resources which he possessed, in order to induce them to report well of him to their master.

All the house of his precious things literally, the “spice-house;” the phrase had acquired the more generic sense of “treasure-house” from the fact that the gold, the silver, and the spices were all stored together.

^{<2214>}**2 Kings 20:14.** Hezekiah did not answer Isaiah’s first question, “What said these men?” but only his second. Probably he knew that Isaiah would oppose reliance on an “arm of flesh.”

Babylon now for the first time became revealed to the Jews as an actual power in the world, which might effect them politically. As yet even the prophets had spoken but little of the great southern city; up to this time she had been little more to them than Tyre, or Tarshish, or any other rich and powerful idolatrous city. Henceforth, all this was wholly changed. The prophetic utterance of Isaiah on this occasion (^{<2216>}2 Kings 20:16-18) never was, never could be, forgotten. He followed it up with a burst of prophecy (Isaiah 40—66), in which Babylon usurps altogether the place of Assyria as Israel’s enemy, and the captivity being assumed as a matter of certainty, the hopes of the people are directed onward beyond it to the Return. Other prophets took up the strain and repeated it (^{<3106>}Habakkuk 1:6-11; 2:5-8; ^{<3310>}Micah 4:10). Babylon thus became henceforth, in lieu of Assyria, the great object of the nation’s fear and hatred.

^{<2218>}**2 Kings 20:18.** This prophecy had two fulfillments, each complementary to the other. Manasseh, Hezekiah’s actual son, was

“carried to Babylon” (~~431E~~2 Chronicles 33:11), but did not become a eunuch in the palace. Daniel and others, not his actual sons, but of the royal seed (~~200B~~Daniel 1:3), and therefore Hezekiah’s descendants, are thought by some to have literally fulfilled the latter part of the prophecy, being eunuchs in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar.

~~1209~~**2 Kings 20:19.** *Good is the word ...* The language is, according to some, that of a true spirit of resignation and humility; according to others, that of a feeling of relief and satisfaction that the evil was not to come in his day. Such a feeling would be but natural, and though not according to the standard of Christian perfectness, would imply no very great defect of character in one who lived under the old Dispensation.

Peace and truth Rather, “peace and continuance.” The evils threatened were war and the dissolution of the kingdom.

~~1211~~**2 Kings 20:20,21.** Consult the marginal references.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 21

2 Kings 21:1. *Manasseh was twelve years old* Manasseh, therefore, was not born at the time of Hezekiah's dangerous illness; and it is probable that Hezekiah had at that time no son to succeed him. According to Josephus, this was the principal cause of his grief.

Hephzibah Jewish tradition makes Hephzibah, Hezekiah's wife, the daughter of Isaiah; but this is scarcely probable. She was, however, no doubt, known to the prophet, and it may well have been in special compliment to her that Isaiah introduced her name (~~2314~~ Isaiah 62:4) as one that Jerusalem would bear after her restoration to God's favor. The name means, "My delight (is) in her."

2 Kings 21:2. Manasseh during his minority naturally fell under the influence of the chief Jewish nobles, with whom the pure religion of Yahweh was always unpopular (compare ~~4247~~ 2 Chronicles 24:17,18; ~~2418~~ Jeremiah 8:1,2). They seem to have persuaded him, not only to undo Hezekiah's work, but to proceed to lengths in polytheism, magic, and idolatry, unknown before. The sins of Manasseh's reign appear to have been those which filled up the measure of Judah's iniquity, and brought down the final sentence of doom on the last remnant of the chosen people (~~4235~~ 2 Kings 23:26; compare ~~2450~~ Jeremiah 15:4).

2 Kings 21:3. The first step in the re-establishment of idolatry seems to have been the restoration of the high places where Yahweh was professedly worshipped (~~4282~~ 2 Kings 18:22), but with idolatrous rites (~~4143~~ 1 Kings 14:23). The next was to re-introduce the favorite idolatry of Israel, Baal-worship, which had formerly flourished in Judaea under Athaliah (~~42118~~ 2 Kings 11:18), and Ahaz (~~42812~~ 2 Chronicles 28:2). After this, Manasseh seems to have especially affected Sabaism, which had been previously unknown in Judaea (compare ~~42716~~ 2 Kings 17:16 and note).

Worshipped all the host of heaven Sabaism, or pure star-worship, without images, and without astrological superstitions, included a reverence for the sun, the moon, the chief stars, and the twelve signs of the Zodiac (~~42315~~ 2 Kings 23:5 note). The main worship was by altars, on which incense was burned (~~24913~~ Jeremiah 19:13). These altars were placed either upon the ground (~~42215~~ 2 Kings 21:5), or upon the house-tops (~~42312~~ 2 Kings 23:12;

^{<3105>}Zephaniah 1:5). The sun was worshipped with the face toward the east (^{<3186>}Ezekiel 8:16); chariots and horses were dedicated to him (^{<1231>}2 Kings 23:11). The star-worship of the Jews has far more the character of an Arabian than an Assyrian or Chaldaean cult. It obtained its hold at a time when Assyria and Babylonia had but little communication with Judaea — i.e., during the reign of Manasseh. It crept in probably from the same quarter as the Molech worship, with which it is here (and in ^{<433>}2 Chronicles 33:3-6) conjoined.

^{<1204>}**2 Kings 21:4.** The “altars” of this verse seem to be the same with those of ^{<1205>}2 Kings 21:5, and consequently were not in the temple building, but in the outer and inner courts.

^{<1206>}**2 Kings 21:6.** On the meaning of the phrase “passing through the fire,” see ^{<1263>}2 Kings 16:3, and ^{<0312>}Leviticus 20:2-5.

To “observe times” was forbidden in the Law (marginal references), and was no doubt among the modes of divination practiced by the Canaanite nations. It has been explained as,

- (1) Predicting from the state of the clouds and atmosphere;
- (2) Fascination with the eye;
- (3) Watching and catching at chance words as ominous.

Dealt with familiar spirits This practice was forbidden by Moses (^{<0393>}Leviticus 19:31) under the penalty of death (^{<0327>}Leviticus 20:27). Its nature is best learned from Saul’s visit to the witch of Endor (^{<0207>}1 Samuel 28:7, etc.).

Wizards “Wizards” — literally, “wise men” — are always joined with those who have familiar spirits. Probably they were a sort of necromancers.

^{<1207>}**2 Kings 21:7.** *A graven image of the grove* Rather, “the carved work of the Asherah.” This Asherah which Manasseh placed in the very temple itself, from where it was afterward taken by Josiah to be destroyed (^{<1236>}2 Kings 23:6). Such a profanation was beyond anything that had been done either by Athaliah (^{<1218>}2 Kings 11:18), or by Ahaz (^{<1264>}2 Kings 16:14-18; ^{<435>}2 Chronicles 29:5-7).

^{<1209>}**2 Kings 21:9.** During the long reign of Manasseh idolatry in all manner of varied forms took a hold upon the Jewish people such as had

never been known before. Compare ^{<2407B>}Jeremiah 7:18,31; ^{<35257>}Ezekiel 23:37; ^{<3401E>}Zephaniah 1:5. The corruption of morals kept pace with the degradation of religion. Compare ^{<12217>}2 Kings 23:7; ^{<3410B>}Zephaniah 3:1-3; ^{<3411B>}Jeremiah 2:8; 5:1.

^{<12110>}**2 Kings 21:10.** *The prophets* None of the prophets of this reign are certainly known. One may possibly have been Hosai or Hozai (^{<14339>}2 Chronicles 33:19, margin), who perhaps wrote a life of Manasseh.

^{<12113>}**2 Kings 21:13.** The general meaning is plain, but the exact force of the metaphor used is not so clear. If the “line” and the “plummet” be “symbols of rule” or law, the meaning will be — “I will apply exactly the same measure and rule to Jerusalem as to Samaria — I will treat both alike with strict and even justice.”

^{<12116>}**2 Kings 21:16.** Compare ^{<34123>}Jeremiah 2:30; ^{<58157>}Hebrews 11:37; ^{<2501>}Isaiah 57:1-4. According to tradition, Isaiah was among the first to perish. More than a century afterward, the final judgment upon Jerusalem was felt to be in an special way the punishment of Manasseh’s bloody persecution of God’s people (marginal reference).

^{<12117>}**2 Kings 21:17.** The writer of Kings relates in eighteen verses the history of 55 years, and consequently omits numerous facts of great importance in the life of Manasseh. Among the most remarkable of the facts omitted are the capture of Manasseh by the king of Assyria, his removal to Babylon, his repentance there, his restoration to his kingdom, and his religious reforms upon his return to it. These are recorded only in Chronicles (marginal reference, see the note). The writer of Kings probably considered the repentance of Manasseh but a half-repentance, followed by a half-reformation, which left untouched the root of the evil.

^{<12118>}**2 Kings 21:18.** *Was buried* The catacomb of David was probably full, and the later kings, from Ahaz downward, had to find sepulture elsewhere. Ahaz was buried in Jerusalem, but not in the sepulchres of the kings (^{<14287>}2 Chronicles 28:27). Hezekiah found a resting place on the way that led up to David’s catacomb (^{<14233>}2 Chronicles 32:33). Manasseh and Amon were interred in “the garden of Uzza,” a portion (apparently) of the royal palace-garden; perhaps so called after the name of the previous owner. Josiah was buried in “his own sepulchre” (^{<12310>}2 Kings 23:30).

Amon his son This name, which occurs only at this time and in the reign of the idolatrous Ahab (^{<1225>}1 Kings 22:26), is identical in form with the Hebrew representative of the great Egyptian god, Amen or Amun (^{<3188>}Nahum 3:8 margin); and it is therefore probable that Manasseh selected it and gave it to his son in compliment to the Egyptians.

^{<1221>}**2 Kings 21:21.** At Manasseh's death, the idolatrous party, held in some check during his later years (^{<4835>}2 Chronicles 33:15-17), recovered the entire direction of affairs, and obtained authority from Amon to make once more all the changes which Manasseh had made in the early part of his reign. Hence, we find the state of things at Josiah's accession (^{<1224>}2 Kings 23:4-14; ^{<3104>}Zephaniah 1:4-12; 3:1-7), the exact counterpart of that which had existed under Manasseh.

^{<1223>}**2 Kings 21:23.** This conspiracy may have been due to the popular reaction against the extreme idolatry which the young king had established.

^{<1224>}**2 Kings 21:24.** The intention of the conspirators had perhaps been to declare a forfeiture of the crown by the existing line, and to place a new dynasty on the throne. This the people would not suffer. They arrested them and put them to death; and insisted on investing with the royal authority the true heir of David, the eldest son of Amon, though he was a boy only 8 years old.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 22

2 Kings 22:8. *In the eighteenth year* This is the date of the finding of the Book of the Law and of the Passover (marginal reference, and ^{22:23}2 Kings 23:23), but is not meant to apply to all the various reforms of Josiah as related in ^{22:4}2 Kings 23:4-20. The true chronology of Josiah's reign is to be learned from ^{44:8}2 Chronicles 34:3-8; 35:1. From these places it appear that at least the greater part of his reforms preceded the finding of the Book of the Law. He began them in the 12th year of his reign, at the age of 20, and had accomplished all, or the greater part, by his 18th year, when the Book of the Law was found.

Shaphan is mentioned frequently by Jeremiah. He was the father of Ahikam, Jeremiah's friend and protector at the court of Jehoiakim (^{38:1}Jeremiah 26:24), and the grandfather of Gedaliah, who was made governor of Judaea by the Babylonians after the destruction of Jerusalem (^{25:22}2 Kings 25:22). Several others of his sons and grandsons were in favor with the later Jewish kings (^{29:3}Jeremiah 29:3; 36:10-12,25; ^{8:11}Ezekiel 8:11). Shaphan's office was one of great importance, involving very confidential relations with the king (^{14:3}1 Kings 4:3).

2 Kings 22:4. *Hilkiah* Hilkiah was the father (or grandfather) of Seraiah (compare ^{13:14}1 Chronicles 6:13,14, with ^{11:11}Nehemiah 11:11), high priest at the time of the captivity (^{25:18}2 Kings 25:18). and ancestor of Ezra the scribe (^{7:1}Ezra 7:1).

It is evident from the expressions of this verse that a collection for the repairs of the temple, similar to that established in the reign of Joash (^{22:9,10}2 Kings 12:9,10), had been for some considerable time in progress (compare ^{34:3}2 Chronicles 34:3), and the king now sent to know the result.

2 Kings 22:5. See the marginal reference. The "doers" of the first part of the verse are the contractors, or overseers, who undertook the general superintendence; they are to be distinguished from a lower class of "doers," the actual laborers, carpenters, and masons of the latter portion of the verse.

Which is in the house of the LORD Rather, "who are," etc.; i.e., the persons who were actually employed in the temple.

2 Kings 22:7. *They dealt faithfully* Compare the marginal reference. The names of these honest overseers are given in Chronicles (^{<1412>}2 Chronicles 34:12).

2 Kings 22:8. Some have concluded from this discovery, either that no “book of the law” had ever existed before, the work now said to have been “found” having been forged for the occasion by Hilkiah; or that all knowledge of the old “book” had been lost, and that a work of unknown date and authorship having been at this time found was accepted as the Law of Moses on account of its contents, and has thus come down to us under his name. But this is to see in the narrative far more than it naturally implies. If Hilkiah had been bold enough and wicked enough to forge, or if he had been foolish enough to accept hastily as the real “book of the law” a composition of which he really knew nothing, there were four means of detecting his error or his fraud:

- (1) The Jewish Liturgies, which embodied large portions of the Law;
- (2) The memory of living men, which in many instances may have extended to the entire five books, as it does now with the modern Samaritans;
- (3) Other copies, entire or fragmentary, existing among the more learned Jews, or in the Schools of the prophets; and
- (4) Quotations from the Law in other works, especially in the Psalmists and prophets, who refer to it on almost every page.

The copy of the Book of the Law found by Hilkiah was no doubt that deposited, in accordance with the command of God, by Moses, by the side of the ark of the covenant, and kept ordinarily in the holy of holies (marginal reference). It had been lost, or secreted, during the desecration of the temple by Manasseh, but had not been removed out of the temple building.

2 Kings 22:9. *Have gathered* Rather, “have poured out” or “emptied out.” The allusion probably is to the emptying of the chest in which all the money collected had been placed (^{<1219>}2 Kings 12:9).

2 Kings 22:11. *He rent his clothes* Partly grief and horror, like Reuben (^{<1372>}Genesis 37:29) and Job (^{<1011>}Job 1:20), partly in repentance, like Ahab (^{<1217>}1 Kings 21:27).

2 Kings 22:13. *Enquire of the LORD* As inquiry by Urim and Thummim had ceased — apparently because superseded by prophecy — this order was equivalent to an injunction to seek the presence of a prophet (compare ^{<1181>}2 Kings 3:11; ^{<1215>}1 Kings 22:5).

Because our fathers have not hearkened Josiah, it will be observed, assumes that preceding generations had had full opportunity of hearing and knowing the Law. He thus regards the loss as comparatively recent (compare ^{<1218>}2 Kings 22:8 note).

2 Kings 22:14. *Went unto Huldah* It might have been expected that the royal commissioners would have gone to Jeremiah, on whom the prophetic spirit had descended in Josiah's 13th year (^{<3012>}Jeremiah 1:2), or five years previous to the finding of the Law. Perhaps he was at some distance from Jerusalem at the time; or his office may not yet have been fully recognized.

The prophetess Compare the cases of Miriam (^{<12151>}Exodus 15:20; ^{<11121>}Numbers 12:2) and Deborah (^{<1004>}Judges 4:4).

Keeper of the wardrobe literally, “of the robes.” Shallum had the superintendence, either of the vestments of the priests who served in the temple, or of the royal robe-room in which dresses of honor were stored, in case of their being needed for presents (see ^{<1185>}2 Kings 5:5 note).

In the college The marginal translation “in the second part” is preferable; and probably refers to the new or outer city — that which had been enclosed by the wall of Manasseh, to the north of the old city (^{<14314>}2 Chronicles 33:14).

2 Kings 22:16. *All the words of the book* The “words” here intended are no doubt the threatenings of the Law, particularly those of ^{<13316>}Leviticus 26:16-39 and ^{<13215>}Deuteronomy 28:15-68. Josiah had probably only heard a portion of the Book of the Law; but that portion had contained those awful denunciations of coming woe. Hence, Josiah's rending of his clothes (^{<12211>}2 Kings 22:11), and his hurried message to Huldah.

2 Kings 22:17. *Have burned incense* In the marginal reference the corresponding phrase is: “have served other gods, and worshipped them.” Its alteration to “have burned incense” points to the fact that the favorite

existing idolatry was burning incense on the housetops to Baal (~~34913~~ Jeremiah 19:13; 32:29) and to the host of heaven (~~42208~~ 2 Kings 21:3).

~~12229~~ **2 Kings 22:19.** See the marginal references.

~~12221~~ **2 Kings 22:20.** *In peace* The death of Josiah in battle (~~12239~~ 2 Kings 23:29) is in verbal contradiction to this prophecy, but not in real opposition to its spirit, which is simply that the pious prince who has sent to inquire of the Lord, shall be gathered to his fathers before the troubles come upon the land which are to result in her utter desolation. Now those troubles were to come, not from Egypt, but from Babylon; and their commencement was not the invasion of Necho in 608 B.C., but that of Nebuchadnezzar three years later. Thus was Josiah “taken away from the evil to come,” and died “in peace” before his city had suffered attack from the really formidable enemy.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 23

~~1223B~~ **2 Kings 23:2.** *The prophets* The suggestion to regard this word an error of the pen for “Levites,” which occurs in Chronicles (marginal reference), is unnecessary. For though Zephaniah, Urijah, and Jeremiah are all that we can name as belonging to the order at the time, there is no reason to doubt that Judaea contained others whom we cannot name. “Schools of the prophets” were as common in Judah as in Israel.

He read The present passage is strong evidence that the Jewish kings could read. The solemn reading of the Law — a practice commanded in the Law itself once in seven years (~~1231D~~ Deuteronomy 31:10-13) — had been intermitted, at least for the last 75 years, from the date of the accession of Manasseh.

~~1223B~~ **2 Kings 23:3.** *By a pillar* Rather, “upon the pillar” (see ~~12114~~ 2 Kings 11:14, note).

Made a covenant “The covenant.” Josiah renewed the old covenant made between God and His people in Horeb (~~1231D~~ Deuteronomy 5:2), so far at least as such renewal was possible by the mere act of an individual. He bound himself by a solemn promise to the faithful performance of the entire Law.

With all their heart “Their” rather than “his,” because the king was considered as pledging the whole nation to obedience with himself. He and they “stood to it,” i.e., “accepted it, came into the covenant.”

~~12234~~ **2 Kings 23:4-20.** A parenthesis giving the earlier reforms of Josiah.

~~12234~~ **2 Kings 23:4.** *The priests of the second order* This is a new expression; and probably refers to the ordinary priests, called here “priests of the second order,” in contrast with the high priest, whose dignity was reviving (~~1211E~~ 2 Kings 12:2 note).

The vessels This would include the whole apparatus of worship, altars, images, dresses, utensils, etc., for Baal, etc. (~~1220B~~ 2 Kings 21:3-5 notes).

The ashes of the idolatrous objects burned in the first instance in the “fields of Kidron” (i.e., in the part of the valley which lies northeast of the city, a

part much broader than that between the Temple Hill and the Mount of Olives) were actually taken to Bethel, as to an accursed place, and one just beyond the borders of Judah; while those of other objects burned afterward were not carried so far, the trouble being great and the need not absolute, but were thrown into the Kidron (^{<12212>}2 Kings 23:12), when there happened to be water to carry them away, or scattered on graves which were already unclean (^{<12216>}2 Kings 23:6). Compare ^{<11513>}1 Kings 15:13.

^{<12216>}**2 Kings 23:5.** *He put down ...* or, “He caused to cease the idolatrous priests” (margin); i.e., he stopped them. The word translated “idolatrous priests” (see the margin) is a rare one, occurring only here and in marginal references. Here and in Zephaniah it is contrasted with *cohanim* ^{<13548>}, another class of high-place priests. The *cohanim* were probably “Levitical,” the *Chemarim* “non-Levitical priests of the highplaces.” *Chemarim* appears to have been a foreign term, perhaps derived from the Syriac *cumro*, which means a priest of any kind.

whom the kings of Judah had ordained The consecration of non-Levitical priests by the kings of Judah (compare ^{<11231>}1 Kings 12:31) had not been previously mentioned; but it is quite in accordance with the other proceedings of Manasseh and Amon.

The planets See the marginal note, i.e., the “signs of the Zodiac.” Compare ^{<18832>}Job 38:32 margin. The word in the original probably means primarily “houses” or “stations,” which was the name applied by the Babylonians to their divisions of the Zodiac.

^{<12216>}**2 Kings 23:6.** The ashes, being polluted and polluting, were thrown upon graves, because there no one could come into contact with them, since graves were avoided as unclean places.

^{<12216>}**2 Kings 23:7.** *By the house of the LORD* This did not arise from intentional desecration, but from the fact that the practices in question were a part of the idolatrous ceremonial, being regarded as pleasing to the gods, and, indeed, as positive acts of worship (compare the marginal reference).

The “women” were probably the priestesses attached to the worship of Astarte, which was intimately connected with that of the Asherah or “grove.” Among their occupations one was the weaving of coverings

(literally “houses” margin) for the Asherah, which seem to have been of various colors (marginal reference).

2 Kings 23:8. Josiah removed the Levitical priests, who had officiated at the various high-places, from the scenes of their idolatries, and brought them to Jerusalem, where their conduct might be watched.

From Geba to Beer-sheba i.e., from the extreme north to the extreme south of the kingdom of Judah. On Geba see the marginal reference note. The high-place of Beer-sheba had obtained an evil celebrity (^{<318B>}Amos 5:5, 8:14).

The high places of the gates ... Render, “He brake down the high-places of the gates, both that which was at the entering in of the gate of Joshua, the governor of the city (^{<1226>}1 Kings 22:26 note), and also that which was on a man’s left hand at the gate of the city.” According to this, there were only two “high-places of the gates” (or idolatrous shrines erected in the city at gate-towers) at Jerusalem. The “gate of Joshua is conjectured to have been a gate in the inner wall; and the “gate of the city,” the Valley-gate (modern “Jaffa-gate”).

2 Kings 23:9. *Nevertheless* Connect this verse with the first clause of ^{<2218>}2 Kings 23:8. The priests were treated as if they had been disqualified from serving at the altar by a bodily blemish (^{<1821>}Leviticus 21:21-23). They were not secularised, but remained in the priestly order and received a maintenance from the ecclesiastical revenues. Contrast with this treatment Josiah’s severity toward the priests of the high-places in Samaria, who were sacrificed upon their own altars (^{<1231>}2 Kings 23:20). Probably the high-place worship in Judaea had continued in the main a worship of Yahweh with idolatrous rites, while in Samaria it had degenerated into an actual worship of other gods.

2 Kings 23:10. The word Topheth, or Tophher — variously derived from toph, “a drum” or “tabour,” because the cries of the sacrificed children were drowned by the noise of such instruments; or, from a root taph or toph, meaning “to burn” — was a spot in the valley of Hinnom (marginal reference note). The later Jewish kings, Manasseh and Amon (or, perhaps, Ahaz, ^{<1438>}2 Chronicles 28:3), had given it over to the Moloch priests for their worship; and here, ever since, the Moloch service had maintained its ground and flourished (marginal references).

2 Kings 23:11. The custom of dedicating a chariot and horses to the Sun is a Persian practice. There are no traces of it in Assyria; and it is extremely curious to find that it was known to the Jews as early as the reign of Manasseh. The idea of regarding the Sun as a charioteer who drove his horses daily across the sky, so familiar to the Greeks and Romans, may not improbably have been imported from Asia, and may have been at the root of the custom in question. The chariot, or chariots, of the Sun appear to have been used, chiefly if not solely, for sacred processions. They were white, and were drawn probably by white horses. The kings of Judah who gave them were Manasseh and Amon certainly; perhaps Ahaz; perhaps even earlier monarchs, as Joash and Amaziah.

In the suburbs The expression used here (*Parwarim*)^{<1650>} is of unknown derivation and occurs nowhere else. A somewhat similar word occurs in ^{<1338>}1 Chronicles 26:18, namely, *parbar*, which seems to have been a place just outside the western wall of the temple, and therefore a sort of “purlieu” or “suburb.” The *Parwarim* of this passage may mean the same place or it may signify some other “suburb” of the temple.

2 Kings 23:12. *The upper chamber of Ahaz* Conjectured to be a chamber erected on the flat roof of one of the gateways which led into the temple court. It was probably built in order that its roof might be used for the worship of the host of heaven, for which house-tops were considered especially appropriate (compare the marginal references).

Brake them down from thence Rather as in the margin, i.e., he “hasted and cast the dust into Kidron.”

2 Kings 23:13. On the position of these high-places see ^{<1117>}1 Kings 11:7 note. As they were allowed to remain under such kings as Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah, they were probably among the old high-places where Yahweh had been worshipped blamelessly, or at least without any consciousness of guilt (see ^{<1117>}1 Kings 3:2 note). Manasseh or Amon had however restored them to the condition which they had held in the reign of Solomon, and therefore Josiah would condemn them to a special defilement.

The mount of corruption See the margin. It is suspected that the original name was Har ham-mishcah, “mount of anointing,” and that this was changed afterward, by way of contempt, into Har ham-mashchith, “mount of corruption.”

2 Kings 23:14. The Law attached uncleanness to the “bones of men,” no less than to actual corpses (^{<04916>}Numbers 19:16). We may gather from this and other passages (^{<12310>}2 Kings 23:20; ^{<11310>}1 Kings 13:2), that the Jews who rejected the Law were as firm believers in the defilement as those who adhered to the Law.

2 Kings 23:15. *And burned the high place* This “high place” is to be distinguished from the altar and the grove (*Asherah*) ^{<1842>}. It may have been a shrine or tabernacle, either standing by itself or else covering the “grove” (^{<12317>}2 Kings 23:7 note; ^{<11423>}1 Kings 14:23 note). As it was “stamped small to powder,” it must have been made either of metal or stone.

2 Kings 23:16. To burn human bones was contrary to all the ordinary Jewish feelings with respect to the sanctity of the sepulchre, and had even been denounced as a sin of a heinous character when committed by a king of Moab (^{<3111>}Amos 2:1). Joshua did it, because justified by the divine command (marginal reference).

2 Kings 23:17. *What title is that?* Rather, “What pillar is that?” The word in the original indicates a short stone pillar, which was set up either as a way-mark (^{<2412>}Jeremiah 31:21), or as a sepulchral monument (^{<03510>}Genesis 35:20; ^{<25915>}Ezekiel 39:15).

2 Kings 23:19. *The cities of Samaria* The reformation which Josiah effected in Samaria, is narrated in Chronicles. It implies sovereignty to the furthest northern limits of Galilee, and is explained by the general political history of the East during his reign. Between 632-626 B.C. the Scythians ravaged the more northern countries of Armenia, Media, and Cappadocia, and found their way across Mesopotamia to Syria, and thence, made an attempt to invade Egypt. As they were neither the fated enemy of Judah, nor had any hand in bringing that enemy into the country, no mention is made of them in the Historical Books of Scripture. It is only in the prophets that we catch glimpses of the fearful sufferings of the time (^{<3111>}Zephaniah 2:4-6; ^{<24113>}Jeremiah 1:13-15; 6:2-5; Ezekiel 38; 39). The invasion had scarcely gone by, and matters settled into their former position, when the astounding intelligence must have reached Jerusalem that the Assyrian monarchy had fallen; that Nineveh was destroyed, and that her place was to be taken, so far as Syria and Palestine were concerned, by Babylon. This event is fixed about 625 B.C., which seems to be exactly the time during which Josiah was occupied in carrying out his

reformation in Samaria. The confusion arising in these provinces from the Scythian invasion and the troubles in Assyria was taken advantage of by Josiah to enlarge his own sovereignty. There is every indication that Josiah did, in fact, unite under his rule all the old “land of Israel” except the trans-Jordanic region, and regarded himself as subject to Nabopolassar of Babylon.

2 Kings 23:20. Here, as in **2 Kings 23:16**, Josiah may have regarded himself as bound to act as he did (marginal reference “b”). Excepting on account of the prophecy, he would scarcely have slain the priests upon the altars.

2 Kings 23:21. See **2 Kings 23:4** note. With this verse the author returns to the narrative of what was done in Josiah’s 18th year. The need of the injunction, “as it was written in the book of this covenant,” was owing to the fact — not that Josiah had as yet held no Passover — but that the reading of the book had shown him differences between the existing practice and the letter of the Law — differences consequent upon negligence, or upon the fact that tradition had been allowed in various points to override the Law.

2 Kings 23:22. The details of the Passover are given by the author of Chronicles (the marginal reference). Its superiority to other Passovers seems to have consisted:

- (1) in the multitudes that attended it; and
- (2) in the completeness with which all the directions of the Law were observed in the celebration. Compare **Nehemiah 8:17**.

2 Kings 23:24. *Perform* Rather, establish. Josiah saw that it was necessary, not only to put down open idolatry, but also to root out the secret practices of a similar character which were sometimes combined with the worship of Yahweh, notwithstanding that the Law forbade them (marginal references), and which probably formed, with many, practically almost the whole of their religion.

2 Kings 23:25. *And like unto him ...* See **2 Kings 18:5** note. We must not press the letter of either passage, but regard both kings as placed among the very best of the kings of Judah.

^{<1236>}**2 Kings 23:26.** See the marginal references. True repentance might have averted God's anger. But the people had sunk into a condition in which a true repentance was no longer possible. Individuals, like Josiah, were sincere, but the mass of the nation, despite their formal renewal of the covenant (^{<1238>}2 Kings 23:3), and their outward perseverance in Yahweh-worship (^{<4843>}2 Chronicles 34:33), had feigned rather than felt repentance. The earlier chapters of Jeremiah are full at once of reproaches which he directs against the people for their insincerity, and of promises if they would repent in earnest.

^{<1237>}**2 Kings 23:27.** It added to the guilt of Judah that she had had the warning of her sister Israel's example, and had failed to profit by it.

^{<1238>}**2 Kings 23:28.** Josiah lived for 13 years after the celebration of his great Passover. Of this period we know absolutely nothing, except that in the course of it he seems to have submitted himself to Nabopolassar; who, after the fall of Nineveh, was accepted as the legitimate successor of the Assyrian monarchs by all the nations of the western coast. Josiah, after perhaps a little hesitation (see ^{<2428>}Jeremiah 2:18,36), followed the example of his neighbors, and frankly accepted the position of an Assyro-Babylonian tributary. In this state matters remained until 608 B.C., when the great events happened which are narrated in ^{<1239>}2 Kings 23:29.

^{<1239>}**2 Kings 23:29.** *Pharaoh-Nechoh* This king is well known to us both from profane historians, and from the Egyptian monuments. He succeeded his father Psammetichus (Psamatik) in the year 610 B.C., and was king of Egypt for 16 years. He was an enlightened and enterprising monarch. The great expedition here mentioned was an attempt to detach from the newly-formed Babylonian empire the important tract of country extending from Egypt to the Euphrates at Carchemish. Calculating probably on the friendship or neutrality of most of the native powers, the Egyptian monarch, having made preparations for the space of two years, set out on his march, probably following the (usual) coast route through Philistia and Sharon, from thence intending to cross by Megiddo into the Jezreel (Esdraelon) plain.

The king of Assyria This expression does not imply that Nineveh had not yet fallen. The Jews, accustomed to Assyrian monarchs, who held their courts alternately at Nineveh and Babylon (^{<1236>}2 Kings 19:36; ^{<4831>}2 Chronicles 33:11), at first regarded the change as merely dynastic, and

transferred to the new king, Nabopolassar, the title which they had been accustomed to give to their former suzerains. When, later on, Nebuchadnezzar invaded their country they found that he did not call himself “King of Assyria,” but “King of Babylon,” and thenceforth that title came into use; but the annalist who wrote the life of Josiah immediately upon his death, and whom the author of Kings copied, used, not unnaturally, the more familiar, though less correct, designation.

Josiah went against him Josiah probably regarded himself as in duty bound to oppose the march of a hostile force through his territory to attack his suzerain. For further details see the account in Chronicles (marginal reference). On Megiddo, see ^{<16121>}Joshua 12:21 note.

^{<12331>}**2 Kings 23:30.** *Dead* It appears from a comparison of this passage with 2 Chronicles (marginal reference) that Josiah was not actually killed in the battle.

Jehoahaz Or Shallum (the marginal note). He may have taken the name of Jehoahaz (=“the Lord possesses”) on his accession. He was not the eldest son of Josiah (see ^{<12336>}2 Kings 23:36 note). The mention of “anointing” here favors the view that there was some irregularity in the succession (see ^{<10134>}1 Kings 1:34 note).

^{<12333>}**2 Kings 23:33.** Pharaoh-Nechoh, after bringing Phoenicia and Syria under his rule, and penetrating as far as Carchemish, returned to Southern Syria, and learned what had occurred at Jerusalem in his absence. He sent orders to Jehoahaz to attend the court which he was holding at Riblah, and Jehoahaz fell into the trap (^{<3304>}Ezekiel 19:4).

Riblah still retains its name. It is situated on the Orontes, in the Coele-Syrian valley, near the point where the valley opens into a wide and fertile plain. Neco seems to have been the first to perceive its importance. Afterward Nebuchadnezzar made it his headquarters during his sieges of Jerusalem and Tyre (^{<12521>}2 Kings 25:21; ^{<24915>}Jeremiah 39:5; 52:9,10,26).

^{<12334>}**2 Kings 23:34.** *In the room of Josiah his father* Not “in the room of Jehoahaz his brother;” the phrase is intended to mark the fact, that Neco did not acknowledge that Jehoahaz had ever been king.

Turned his name to Jehoiakim Compare ^{<12331>}2 Kings 23:30 and ^{<12317>}2 Kings 24:17. It seems likely, from their purely Jewish character, that the new names of the Jewish kings, though formally imposed by the suzerain, were

selected by the individuals themselves. The change now made consisted merely in the substitution of Jehovah ^{<13068>} for *El* ^{<1410>} (“God, Yahweh, will set up”). Both names alike refer to the promise which God made to David (^{<1072>}2 Samuel 7:12) and imply a hope that, notwithstanding the threats of the prophets, the seed of David would still be allowed to remain upon the throne.

^{<2336>} **2 Kings 23:36.** *Twenty and five years old* Jehoiakim was therefore two years older than his half-brother, Jehoahaz (^{<2231>}2 Kings 23:31). See his character in ^{<2237>}2 Kings 23:37; ^{<1818>}2 Chronicles 36:8; ^{<3915>}Ezekiel 19:5-7; ^{<2013>}Jeremiah 22:13-17; 26:20-23,36:

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 24

2 Kings 24:1. *In his days* i.e., 605 B.C., which was the third completed (^{2700B}Daniel 1:1), and fourth commencing (^{2820B}Jeremiah 25:1), year of Jehoiakim.

Nebuchadnezzar or Nebuchadrezzar, which is closer to the original, Nabukudurri-uzur. This name, like most Babylonian names, is made up of three elements, Nebo, the well-known god (^{2340B}Isaiah 46:1), kudur, of doubtful signification (perhaps “crown” perhaps “landmark”), and uzur “protects.” Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, and second monarch of the Babylonian empire, ascended the throne, 604 B.C., and reigned 43 years, dying 561 B.C. He married Amuhia (or Amyitis), daughter of Cyaxares, king of the Medes, and was the most celebrated of all the Babylonian sovereigns. No other pagan king occupies so much space in Scripture. He was not actual king at this time, but only Crown Prince and leader of the army under his father. As he would be surrounded with all the state and magnificence of a monarch, the Jews would naturally look upon him as actual king.

Came up Nebuchadnezzar began his campaign by attacking and defeating Neco’s Egyptians at Carchemish (^{2440B}Jeremiah 46:2). He then pressed forward toward the south, overran Syria, Phoenicia, and Judaea, took Jerusalem, and carried off a portion of the inhabitants as prisoners (^{2700B}Daniel 1:1-4): after which he proceeded southward, and had reached the borders of Egypt when he was suddenly recalled to Babylon by the death of his father.

Three years Probably from 605 B.C. to 602 B.C. Jehoiakim rebelled because he knew Nebuchadnezzar to be engaged in important wars in some other part of Asia.

2 Kings 24:2. See the marginal references. Instead of coming up in person Nebuchadnezzar sent against Jehoiakim his own troops and those of the neighboring nations.

The ravages of the Moabites and the Ammonites are especially alluded to in the following passages: ^{2480B}Jeremiah 48:26,27; 49:1; ^{2620B}Ezekiel 25:3-6; ^{3400B}Zephaniah 2:8.

2 Kings 24:5. Comparing ^{<24216>}Jeremiah 22:19; 36:6,30; and ^{<26918>}Ezekiel 19:8,9, it would seem that Nebuchadnezzar must in the fifth or sixth year after Jehoiakim's revolt have determined to go in person to Riblah, to direct operations, first against Tyre and then against Jerusalem. Jehoiakim was taken prisoner, and brought in chains to Nebuchadnezzar, who at first designed to convey him to Babylon, but afterward had him taken to Jerusalem, where he was executed. Afterward, when the Babylonians had withdrawn, the remains were collected and interred in the burying-place of Manasseh, so that the king ultimately "slept with his fathers" (^{<12116>}2 Kings 24:6).

2 Kings 24:6. *Jehoiachin* Also called Jeconiah and Coniah. Jehoiachin and Jeconiah both mean "Yahweh will establish," Coniah, "Yahweh establishes." Probably his original name was Jehoiachin. When he ascended the throne, and was required to take a new name, anxious not to lose the good men contained in his old one, he simply transposed the two elements. Jeremiah shortened this new name from Jeconiah to Coniah, thus cutting off from it the notion of futurity, to imply that that would not be which the name declared would be. In other words, "Yahweh establishes," but this prince he will not establish.

2 Kings 24:7. Neco, from the year of the battle of Carchemish, confined himself to his own country and made no efforts to recover Syria or Judaea.

2 Kings 24:8. *His mother's name* On the position of the "queen mother" see ^{<11510>}1 Kings 15:10 note. Nehushta's rank and dignity are strongly marked by the distinct and express mention which is made of her in almost every place where her son's history is touched (^{<12142>}2 Kings 24:12; compare ^{<24226>}Jeremiah 22:26; 29:2).

2 Kings 24:10. *Came up against Jerusalem* The cause and circumstances of this siege are equally obscure. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar detected Jehoiachin in some attempt to open communications with Egypt.

2 Kings 24:12. *The eighth year* Jeremiah calls it the seventh year (^{<24528>}Jeremiah 52:28), a statement which implies only a different manner of counting regnal years.

2 Kings 24:13. On the first capture of the city in the fourth (third) year of Jehoiakim (^{<2000>}Daniel 1:2; ^{<4807>}2 Chronicles 36:7), the vessels carried off consisted of smaller and lighter articles; while now the heavier articles, as the table of showbread, the altar of incense, the ark of the covenant were stripped of their gold, which was carried away by the conquerors. Little remained more precious than brass at the time of the final capture in the reign of Zedekiah (^{<12513>}2 Kings 25:13-17).

2 Kings 24:14. The entire number of the captives was not more than 11,000. They consisted of three classes:

- (1) the “princes” or “mighty of the land,” i.e., courtiers, priests, elders, and all who had any position or dignity — in number 3,000 (compare ^{<1244>}2 Kings 24:14,16).
- (2) The “mighty men of valor” or “men of might,” i.e., the soldier class, who were 7,000. And
- (3) craftsmen or artisans, who numbered 1,000. The word here translated “craftsmen” denotes artisans in stone, wood, or metal, and thus includes our “masons, carpenters, and smiths.” The word translated “smiths” means strictly “lock-smiths.”

The object of carrying off these persons was twofold:

- (1) it deprived the conquered city of those artisans who were of most service in war; and
- (2) it gave the conqueror a number of valuable assistants in the construction of his buildings and other great works.

The Assyrian monarchs frequently record their removal of the skilled artisans from a conquered country. The population of the ancient city has been calculated, from its area, at 15,000. The remnant left was therefore about 5000 or 6,000.

2 Kings 24:15. *The mighty of the land* Or “the great,” “the powerful.” The word used is quite distinct from that in ^{<1244>}2 Kings 24:14,16. It refers, not to bodily strength or fitness for war, hut to civil rank or dignity. The term would include all civil and all ecclesiastical functionaries — the nobles, courtiers, and elders of the city on the one

hand, the priests, prophets (among them, Ezekiel), and Levites on the other.

2 Kings 24:17. Mattaniah, son of Josiah and brother of Jehoahaz, but thirteen years his junior, adopted a name significant of the blessings promised by Jeremiah to the reign of a king whose name should be “Yahweh, our righteousness” (²⁴¹⁶Jeremiah 23:5-8).

2 Kings 24:19. *He did that which was evil* The character of Zedekiah seems to have been weak rather than wicked. Consult Jeremiah 34; 37: His chief recorded sins were:

- (1) his refusal to be guided in his political conduct by Jeremiah’s counsels, while nevertheless he admitted him to be a true Yahweh-prophet; and
- (2) his infraction of the allegiance which he had sworn to Nebuchadnezzar.

2 Kings 24:20. *It came to pass* Some prefer “came this to pass:” in the sense. “Through the anger of the Lord was it that another had king ruled in Jerusalem and in Judah:” concluding the chapter with the word “presence;” and beginning the next chapter with the words, “And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.”

Rebelle The Book of Jeremiah explains the causes of rebellion. In Zedekiah’s early years there was an impression, both at Jerusalem (²⁴¹⁸Jeremiah 28:1-11) and at Babylon (²⁴¹⁶Jeremiah 29:5-28), that Nebuchadnezzar was inclined to relent. By embassy to Babylon (²⁴¹⁸Jeremiah 29:3), and a personal visit (²⁴¹⁹Jeremiah 51:59), Zedekiah strove hard to obtain the restoration of the captives and the holy vessels. But he found Nebuchadnezzar obdurate. Zedekiah returned to his own country greatly angered against his suzerain, and immediately proceeded to plot a rebellion. He sought the alliance of the kings of Tyre, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and Edom (²⁴²⁰Jeremiah 27:3), and made overtures to Hophra, in Egypt, which were favorably received (²⁴²¹Ezekiel 17:15), whereupon he openly revolted, apparently in his ninth year, 588 B.C. Tyre, it must be remembered, was all this time defying the power of Nebuchadnezzar, and thus setting an example of successful revolt very encouraging to the neighboring states. Nebuchadnezzar, while constantly maintaining an army in Syria, and continuing year after year his attempts to reduce Tyre (compare ²⁴²²Ezekiel 29:18) was, it would seem, too much occupied with other matters, such, probably, as the reduction of Susiana (²⁴²³Jeremiah

49:34-38), to devote more than a small share of his attention to his extreme western frontier. In that same year, however (588 B.C.), the new attitude taken by Egypt induced him to direct to that quarter the main force of the Empire, and to take the field in person.

NOTES ON 2 KINGS 25

2 Kings 25:1. *In the ninth year ...* As the final catastrophe approaches, the historian becomes more close and exact in his dates, marking not only the year, but the month and the day, on which the siege began, no less than those on which it closed (**2 Kings 25:3**). From **Ezekiel 24:1** we find that on the very day when the host of Nebuchadnezzar made its appearance before Jerusalem the fact was revealed to Ezekiel in Babylonia, and the fate of the city announced to him (**Ezekiel 24:6-14**). The army seems to have at first spread itself over all Judaea. It fought, not only against Jerusalem, but especially against Lachish and Azekah (**Jeremiah 34:7**), two cities of the south (**2 Chronicles 11:9**), which had probably been strongly garrisoned in order to maintain the communication with Egypt. This division of the Babylonian forces encouraged Hophra to put his troops in motion and advance to the relief of his Jewish allies (**Jeremiah 37:5**). On hearing this, Nebuchadnezzar broke up from before Jerusalem and marched probably to Azekah and Lachish. The Egyptians shrank back, returned into their own country (**Jeremiah 37:7**; **Ezekiel 17:17**), and took no further part in the war. Nebuchadnezzar then led back his army, and once more invested the city. (It is uncertain whether the date at the beginning of this verse refers to the first or to the second investment.)

Fortes Probably moveable towers, sometimes provided with battering-rams, which the besiegers advanced against the walls, thus bringing their fighting men on a level with their antagonists. Such towers are seen in the Assyrian sculptures.

2 Kings 25:2. The siege lasted almost exactly a year and a half. Its calamities — famine, pestilence, and intense suffering — are best understood from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, written probably almost immediately after the capture.

2 Kings 25:4. *The city was broken up* Rather, “broken into,” i.e., A breach was made about midnight in the northern wall (**Ezekiel 9:2**), and an entry effected into the second or lower city (see the **2 Kings 22:14** note), which was protected by the wall of Manasseh (**2 Chronicles 33:14**).

Precipitate flight followed on the advance of the Babylonians to the “middle gate,” or gate of communication between the upper and the lower cities. This position was only a little north of the royal palace, which the king therefore quitted. He escaped by the royal garden at the junction of the Hinnom and Kidron valleys, passing between the two walls which skirted on either side the valley of the Tyropoeon.

Toward the plain “The Arabah” or the great depression which bounds Palestine Proper on the east (^{<02104>}Numbers 21:4 note). The “way toward the Arabah” is here the road leading eastward over Olivet to Bethany and Jericho.

^{<12716>}**2 Kings 25:5.** Jeremiah (^{<24833>}Jeremiah 38:23) and Ezekiel (^{<36213>}Ezekiel 12:13) had prophesied this capture; and the latter had also prophesied the dispersion of the troops (^{<12514>}2 Kings 25:14).

^{<12716>}**2 Kings 25:6.** *To Riblah* See ^{<12733>}2 Kings 23:33 note. A position from where Nebuchadnezzar could most conveniently superintend the operations against Tyre and Jerusalem. In the absence of the monarch, the siege of Jerusalem was conducted by a number of his officers, the chief of whom were Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the guard, and Nergal-shar-ezer (Neriglissar), the Rab-mag (^{<24918>}Jeremiah 39:3,13).

^{<12717>}**2 Kings 25:7.** *Before his eyes* This refinement of cruelty seems to have especially shocked the Jews, whose manners were less barbarous than those of most Orientals. It is noted by Jeremiah in two places (^{<24916>}Jeremiah 39:6; 52:10).

And put out the eyes of Zedekiah Blinding has always been among the most common of secondary punishments in the East (compare ^{<07161>}Judges 16:21). The blinding of Zedekiah reconciled in a very remarkable way prophecies, apparently contradictory, which had been made concerning him. Jeremiah had prophesied distinctly that he would be carried to Babylon (^{<24916>}Jeremiah 32:5; 34:3). Ezekiel had said that he should not “see Babylon” (^{<36213>}Ezekiel 12:13). His deprivation of sight before he was carried to the conqueror’s capital fulfilled the predictions of both prophets.

With fetters of brass literally, (see ^{<24917>}Jeremiah 39:7 margin), “with two chains of brass.” The Assyrians’ captives are usually represented as bound hand and foot — the two hands secured by one chain, the two feet by another. According to Jewish tradition Zedekiah was, like other slaves,

forced to work in a mill at Babylon. Jeremiah tells us that he was kept in prison until he died (^{<2621>}Jeremiah 52:11).

^{<1258>}**2 Kings 25:8.** *The nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar* 586 B.C., if we count from the real date of his accession (604 B.C.); but 587 B.C., if, with the Jews, we regard him as beginning to reign when he was sent by his father to recover Syria and gained the battle of Carchemish (in 605 B.C.).

Captain of the guard literally, “the chief of the executioners” (^{<1373>}Genesis 37:36).

^{<1259>}**2 Kings 25:9.** *He burnt the house of the LORD* Compare the prophecies of Jeremiah (^{<2910>}Jeremiah 21:10; 34:2; 38:18,23). Psalm 79 is thought to have been written soon after this destruction of the temple.

^{<1251>}**2 Kings 25:11.** *The fugitives ...* It was from a fear of the treatment which he would receive at the hands of these deserters that Zedekiah persisted in defending the city to the last (^{<2689>}Jeremiah 38:19).

^{<1252>}**2 Kings 25:12.** There was probably an intention of seating colonists into the country from some other part of the Empire, as the Assyrians had done in Samaria (^{<1724>}2 Kings 17:24).

^{<1253>}**2 Kings 25:13.** *The pillars of brass ...* All the more precious treasures had been already removed from the temple (^{<1243>}2 Kings 24:13). But there still remained many things, the list of which is given in ^{<2627>}Jeremiah 52:17-23 much more fully than in this place. Objects in brass, or rather bronze, were frequently carried off by the Assyrians from the conquered nations. Bronze was highly valued, being the chief material both for arms and implements. The breaking up of the pillars, bases, etc., shows that it was for the material, and not for the workmanship, that they were valued. On the various articles consult the marginal references.

^{<1256>}**2 Kings 25:16.** *Without weight* The Babylonians did not take the trouble to weigh the brass as they did the gold and silver. In the Assyrian monuments there are representations of the weighing of captured articles in gold and silver in the presence of the royal scribes.

2 Kings 25:17. Compare with this description the accounts in marginal references. The height of the capital (“three cubits”) must be corrected, in accordance with those passages, to “five cubits.”

2 Kings 25:18. It devolved on Nebuzaradan to select for exemplary punishment the persons whom he regarded as most guilty, either in respect of the original rebellion or of the protracted resistance. Instead of taking indiscriminately the first comers, he first selected those who by their offices would be likely to have had most authority — the high priest; the second priest (^{<1230>}2 Kings 23:4 note); three of the temple Levites; the commandant of the city; five members of the king’s Privy Council (or seven, see ^{<1259>}2 Kings 25:19 note); and the secretary (or adjutant) of the captain of the host. To these he added sixty others, who were accounted “princes.” Compared with the many occasions on which Assyrian and Persian conquerers put to death hundreds or thousands after taking a revolted town, Nebuzaradan (and Nebuchadnezzar) must be regarded as moderate, or even merciful, in their vengeance. Compare ^{<341D>}Jeremiah 40:2-5.

The three keepers of the door Rather, “three keepers.” The Hebrew has no article. The temple “door-keepers” in the time of Solomon numbered twenty-four (^{<1337>}1 Chronicles 26:17,18), who were probably under six chiefs. After the captivity the chiefs are either six (^{<151D>}Ezra 2:42; ^{<1675>}Nehemiah 7:45) or four (^{<1397>}1 Chronicles 9:17).

2 Kings 25:19. *Out of the city* This clause shows that the five persons mentioned in ^{<12518>}2 Kings 25:18 were taken out of the temple.

Five men Or, “seven men,” according to ^{<3525>}Jeremiah 52:25. It is impossible to say which of the two numbers is correct.

Of them that were in the king’s presence See the margin. A mode of speech arising from the custom of Eastern rulers to withdraw themselves as much as possible from the view of their subjects.

2 Kings 25:21. *So Judah was carried away* The kingdom of the two tribes was at an end; and the task of the historian might seem to be accomplished. He still, however, desires to notice two things:

(1) the fate of the remnant (^{<12522>}2 Kings 25:22-26) left in the land by Nebuzaradan; and

(2) the fate of Jehoiachin, who, of all those led into captivity, was the least to blame (^{<1257>}2 Kings 25:27-30).

^{<1252>}**2 Kings 25:22.** We may be allowed to conjecture that Jeremiah, in gratitude for Ahikam's service to himself (^{<2453>}Jeremiah 26:24), recommended his son Gedaliah to Nebuzaradan, and through him to Nebuchadnezzar, for the office of governor.

^{<1253>}**2 Kings 25:23.** *The captains of the armies* i.e., the officers of the troops who had fled from Jerusalem with Zedekiah (^{<1254>}2 Kings 25:4), and had then dispersed and gone into hiding (^{<1255>}2 Kings 25:5).

For Mizpah, see ^{<1683>}Joshua 18:26 note.

the *Netophathite* Netophah, the city of Ephai (compare ^{<2418>}Jeremiah 40:8), appears to have been in the neighborhood of Bethlehem (^{<1676>}Nehemiah 7:26; ^{<1512>}Ezra 2:21,22). The name is perhaps continued in the modern Antubeh, about 2 1/2 miles S.S.E. of Jerusalem.

A Maachathite Maachah lay in the stony country east of the upper Jordan, bordering upon Bashan (^{<1634>}Deuteronomy 3:14).

^{<1254>}**2 Kings 25:24.** As rebels against the Babylonian king, their lives were forfeit. Gedaliah pledged himself to them by oath, that, if they gave no further cause of complaint, their past offences should be forgiven.

^{<1255>}**2 Kings 25:25,26.** Jeremiah gives this history with much fullness of detail (Jeremiah 41—43).

^{<1257>}**2 Kings 25:27.** The captivity of Jehoiachin commenced in the year 597 B.C. — the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar. It terminated 561 B.C. — the first year of Evil-merodach, the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. He reigned only two years, being murdered by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, or Nergal-shar-ezer. He is said to have provoked his fate by lawless government and intemperance.

^{<1258>}**2 Kings 25:28.** *The kings that were with him* Probably captive kings, like Jehoiachin himself. Compare ^{<1700>}Judges 1:7.

^{<1259>}**2 Kings 25:29.** Evil-merodach gave him garments befitting his rank. To dress a man suitably to his position was the first thought of an Oriental (^{<1442>}Genesis 41:42; ^{<1785>}Esther 8:15; ^{<2769>}Daniel 5:29; ^{<2152>}Luke 15:22). So

again, Oriental kings regarded it as a part of their greatness to feed daily a vast multitude of persons at their courts (see ^{<1042>}1 Kings 4:22,23). Of these, as here, a certain number had the special privilege of sitting actually at the royal board, while the others ate separately, generally at a lower level. See ^{<0007>}Judges 1:7; ^{<0093>}2 Samuel 9:13; ^{<1007>}1 Kings 2:7; ^{<0449>}Psalms 41:9.

^{<2530>}**2 Kings 25:30.** *Allowance* From the treasury, in order to enable him to maintain the state proper to his rank, and in addition to his food at the royal table. Jehoiachin, to the day of his death, lived in peace and comfort at the court of Babylon (compare ^{<2524>}Jeremiah 52:34).