

MANASSEH'S JERUSALEM.

c. 690-640 B.C.

IN 701—and perhaps again, as we have seen,¹ about 690—Jerusalem experienced a sudden and wonderful deliverance from the arms of Assyria. So impressive an attestation of Divine favour was not without its preparations, political, religious and moral. Under Uzziah (c. 783-740) the City had greatly increased in size, in wealth and in strength. In 721 Samaria, her only political rival in Israel, was destroyed. For more than a century the influence of her Temple had steadily, though slowly, grown at the inevitable expense of other shrines in Judah. And we have been able to follow the traces of a gradual elevation in the moral sense of her community.² The meaning of these events and tendencies was first fully articulated by Isaiah.³ Jerusalem was not “everything to Isaiah”; but he was sent to read to her people her previous discipline, to display her as the hinge of God’s present providence with the world, and, under conditions, as the capital of His abiding Kingdom. While scourging the vices of her population under Uzziah and Jotham, Isaiah declared that God had trained Jerusalem to be *The City of Righteousness*. The Temple was the vestibule of His Palace and Presence. Sion was His hearth: a refuge which He had founded for the remnant of His people. To all this history and its prophetic interpretation the Deliverance of Jerusalem came as God’s own signature. We are too prone to consider the great event by itself, and to trace to it alone the subsequent prestige of the City. Apart from that previous history and prophecy the Deliverance would have been as a seal without a document to it.

¹ EXPOSITOR, September, 1905.

² Id., April and May, 1905.

³ Id., July, 1905.

In estimating the effect of all three upon the destiny of Jerusalem, we must distinguish the various qualities of imagination and conscience, which they roused, among her mixed and fickle people. Of such qualities there were at least three; the conscience of the executive statesmen, the popular imagination, and the more spiritual convictions of the prophets themselves.

As to the first, we find explicit statements in the Second Book of Kings. The Deuteronomic editor of that book attributes to King Hezekiah a number of religious reforms, some of which are sympathetic with, while others were actually required by, the earlier teaching of the great prophet.¹ Hezekiah (we are told) *brake in pieces the bronze serpent, which Moses had made, for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it, and it was called Nehushtan.* There can be no doubt about the fact of this particular reform, and we may safely assume that it implies the removal, or at least the attempt to remove, all the idolatries against which Isaiah had inveighed. Isaiah's indictment of the idols and the sacred trees had been so absolute, that it is hard to believe that Hezekiah postponed their abolition to so late a date in his reign as after 701. But the acceptance which has been granted to the record of this reform has been denied to the clause which precedes it—*he removed the high places and brake the pillars and cut down the Ashērôth*²—on the grounds, that the grammatical form of the clause is late, that there is no evidence of Isaiah's hostility to the three objects which it mentions and that they were still in use at the beginning of Josiah's reign. The question is difficult, and an answer perhaps not now attainable. But, because the Book of Deuteronomy, which contains explicit laws against the high places, the pillars and the Asherôth, is certainly compiled from earlier sources,

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 4.

² Plural, after the LXX.

and because such written laws were (as we have seen in other cases) probably the result of specific acts of reform, it is quite possible that Hezekiah instituted measures for the abolition of all three institutions of the earlier religion of Israel. That his reforms were of a drastic character,¹ is proved by the violence of the reaction against them under Manasseh. Nor is it a conclusive objection to the introduction of these particulars in the list of Hezekiah's reforms, that Isaiah does not enforce them by name. In such a movement there are always some details achieved, which its spiritual leaders have not actually defined in their statement of its principles. We have seen the faint beginnings of a tendency towards the centralization of the worship of Judah nearly a century before Isaiah.² And, indeed, so pure a faith as he urged upon his people involved such a centralization as one of its most practical consequences. To us it may seem paradoxical that the doctrine of the One God should carry as its corollary the doctrine of the One Sanctuary; *neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father: the hour now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.* But in the religious circumstances of that time there was indeed no greater safeguard for monotheism than by confining the national worship to the Temple. The rural shrines of Jahweh had previously been shrines of local gods, and in their ritual, as in their worshippers' conceptions of the godhead, must have perpetuated the influences of the ancient polytheism. In name belonging to Jahweh, in reality they were devoted to the Baalim—*according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.*³ The worship

¹ "Die erste Durchführung der Forderungen des Jahvismus"; "eine völlige Durchführung des Jahvismus in seiner streng monotheistischen Bedeutung mit teilweiser Beseitigung anderer Kulte." Winckler, *KAT*, 3rd ed., p. 271; cf. Guthe, *Gesch.* p. 223.

² *EXPOSITOR*, April, 1905.

³ Jer. xi. 13.

of *one Jahweh*, spiritual and non-idolatrous, was possible only in the Temple. Again, the rural sanctuaries had all been violated by the Assyrian invasion of 701; and further, the smallness of the Israelite territory since the collapse of the Northern Kingdom in 721 and the exile of its people, rendered practicable the periodical assembly at Jerusalem of all the worshippers of Jahweh. Even, therefore, if Hezekiah did not actually succeed in centralizing the national cult in the capital, there is no reason to doubt that he inaugurated such a policy. The political and religious motives to it were all present before the end of his reign. It need not have been started at the same time as the measures for removing the idols. Centralization may have first suggested itself when the latter movement was found to be impossible so long as the rural sanctuaries remained; and it was, no doubt, greatly facilitated by the overthrow of these sanctuaries in 701, and by the vindication of the unique inviolableness of Jerusalem. The *removal of the high places* by Hezekiah is therefore more probable after than before that date.

Of the effect of the Deliverance of Jerusalem on the popular imagination we can have no doubt. For a century Assyria had been the fear of the peoples of Palestine. The citizens of Jerusalem had heard Isaiah himself describe, in periods which marched like their subject, the progress of the monstrous hosts of the North: their unbroken ranks, their pitiless and irresistible advance. Further and further south this had pressed, overwhelming Northern Israel, spreading around Judah, and rising over the land to the very walls of Jerusalem. From these her citizens at last saw with their own eyes the predicted and long-imagined forms of their terror, knowing that behind them lay exile and destruction for the people of God. Then suddenly the Assyrian army vanished and Jerusalem was left the one unviolated fortress on the long, ruin-strewn path of the

conqueror. We need not wait for answers to the difficult questions of the date and value of the Scriptures which celebrate the Deliverance. The bare facts, about which there is no doubt, attest their own effects in the temper of the Jewish people. Upon minds too coarse to appreciate Isaiah's reading of the moral vocation and destiny of their City, her signal relief (or reliefs) from so invincible a foe, must have made a profound impression. The Jews had seen the rest of the sacred territory violated, and a great proportion of its population carried into exile. Here alone the foe had been kept back. Alone the Temple remained secure. From this time, therefore, rose the belief, which we find seventy years later hardened into a dogma, that Jerusalem was inviolable. No article of religion could have been more popular. Among the mass of the citizens, undoubtedly increased by the devastation of the rest of the country, it must have spread with rapidity; and the measures for centralizing the national worship in the Temple, in so far as they were successful, can only have assisted its propagation.

But we must not suppose that such a belief was wholly accepted by the more spiritual of the prophets. Micah had predicted that *Sion should be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the House as the high places of a jungle.*¹ And although Isaiah had foretold the Deliverance, and almost unaided had sustained the courage of Jerusalem till it came, he did not, we may be sure, believe in the survival of the City apart from those moral conditions which the popular faith in her inviolableness was certain to ignore, but upon which it had been the constant energy of his long career to insist. We may not even assert that Isaiah was devoted to the centralization of the national worship. No share in this is imputed to him by the records. His practical genius may have felt that it

¹ iii, 12.

was necessary in the interests of the purification of the religion, but its tendency towards formality and superstition would be surely as obvious to him in his old age as they were seventy years later to Jeremiah.

Whatever was the extent of the religious reforms of the time, their stability became endangered by the disappearance of the two personalities, on whom they had depended, soon after the (probable) second Deliverance of the City about 690. Hezekiah died not later than 685, perhaps even a few years earlier,¹ and with him or soon after him Isaiah, whose ministry had already lasted more than fifty years. The new king Manasseh was a boy. Ahaz, who had favoured the religious fashions of the Canaanites and Assyrians, was his grandfather. All the conditions, therefore, made a reaction against the reforms an easy possibility. But to understand its extent as well as its character we must look at the political history of the period.

¹ 2 Kings xxi. 1 assigns 55 years to the reign of Manasseh. If we take 641 as the year of his death, this would fix the death of Hezekiah in 696 or 695; if we take 638, then Hezekiah in the Biblical datum lived till 692 (Rost) or 698 (cf. Guthe, *Gesch.* 253). The accession of Tirhakah was in 691, and the probable second Deliverance of Jerusalem, as we have seen between 691 and 689. Winckler (*KAT*, 3rd ed. 274) suggests that Manasseh and not Hezekiah was king of Judah at this time, but there are not sufficient grounds for such a hypothesis. Accepting the Biblical statement that the king of Judah was still Hezekiah after Tirhakah's accession in 691, two hypotheses become possible: that the second Deliverance took place in 690, that Hezekiah died immediately after it, and that Manasseh reigned till at least 637, which is not probable; or that there is a mistake of ten years in the datum of 2 Kings xxi. 1, and that we should read 45 instead of 55 as the years of Manasseh's reign. This would give us 683 as the year of Hezekiah's death, reckoning back from 638 or 639, or 685 reckoning back from 641. According to the Biblical data Hezekiah reigned 29 years (2 Kings xviii. 2), his sixth year was 722-1, that of the fall of Samaria (Ibid. 10), and his fourteenth 701, that of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (Ibid. 13)! To which of these latter contradictory statements are we to adhere? Each has its supporters. Or are we to say both are wrong, and with Winckler and others place Hezekiah's accession in 720 and his death in 692? This, of course, is only possible on the hypothesis, that not Hezekiah but Manasseh was king when Tirhakah advanced on Sennacherib's army in Palestine—a hypothesis for which, as we have seen, there are no grounds.

There is no period of Jewish history more full of darkness and vague sound. The record in the Book of Kings of Manasseh's long reign is brief and late; but it reverberates with the echoes both of great movements external to the Jewish state, for the exact course of which the Assyrian annals supply considerable evidence; and of convulsions within Jerusalem, the precipitates from which lie heavy on the later memory of the Jewish nation and deeply imbue the substance of their religion.

The record of Manasseh's reign¹ is not even in part an extract from the annals of the kings of Judah, but merely a summary of the king's evil deeds, judged from the Deuteronomic standpoint. Though thus subordinate to a distinct ethical intention, the passage is not a unity. It contains repetitions, and apparently gradual accretions from more than one hand.² It presupposes the Exile.³ On the other hand many of the details which it attributes to Manasseh are accredited from other sources: from Deuteronomy, the revival of Canaanite forms of worship, Baal-altars and Asherôth; from Deuteronomy and the prophets, the introduction of the worship of the host of heaven⁴; from Jeremiah, the drenching of Jerusalem with innocent blood.⁵

The lateness of this record is in nothing more manifest than in its silence with regard to the Palestine campaigns of Asarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, and the close traffic of Judah with Assyria which took place during Manasseh's

¹ 2 Kings xxi. 1-18.

² The passage has been variously divided between the two Deuteronomic redactions of the Books of Kings. To one of these Skinner assigns verses 1-6, 16-18, to the other 7-15. To the former Marti assigns only 1, 2a and 16.

³ Verse 8. Verse 5, because it speaks of *two* courts to the Temple, is also generally taken as post-exilic; but in addition to the forecourt proper of Solomon's Temple there was an outer court within the boundary wall of the whole complex of his buildings; cf. 1 Kings vi. 36 with vii. 12. This against Benzinger on 2 Kings xxi. 5.

⁴ Deut. iv. 19, xvi. 3; Zeph. i. 5; Jer. viii. 2, xix. 13, xliv. 17 ff.

⁵ Jer. xix. 4.

reign. Of all this the record contains only one clear echo, the statement of the introduction of *the worship of the host of heaven*. That cult was Babylonian, and its adoption at this time by Jerusalem was due to the political and social subjection of Judah to Assyria. In spite of the great Deliverance from Sennacherib the Jewish state remained, or early in Manasseh's reign again became, Assyria's vassal. "Manasseh of Judah" appears twice as an Assyrian tributary: once in 677-6, when as one of twenty-two kings he paid homage to Asarhaddon as "king of the city of Judah,"¹ and again as one of the same group who furnished "men and ships in addition to the customary tribute" on Ashurbanipal's first campaign against Egypt in 668.²

In 678 the king of Sidon, in alliance with a Cilician prince, revolted from Assyria. Asarhaddon's vengeance was immediate and complete. He destroyed the ancient city on an island and built on the mainland a new town, named after himself, in which he established an Assyrian administration and the worship of the Assyrian pantheon.³ In 676 the arms of Assyria for the first time crossed the border of Egypt, only however to suffer defeat.⁴ But in 671-670 a second Egyptian campaign was successful, and Egypt became an Assyrian province. When Tirhakah, from the south, recovered it in the following year, Asarhaddon prepared a third expedition, continued, upon his death (668 or 667) by Ashurbanipal, who within two years had twice to drive back the restless Tirhakah

¹ C. H. W. Johns in *Enc. Bibl.* col. 1332; cf. H. F. Talbot, *Records of the Past*, 1st series, iii. 107 (Kouyunjik Inscr. of Asarhaddon, now in British Museum); and Winckler, *KAT*, 3rd. ed., 87. Col. v. of the 2nd, Nebi Yunus, Inscription of Asarhaddon (lines 11 to 26) records a review of the twenty-two kings apparently at Nineveh, to which they brought with them materials for the adornment of the palace there (Talbot, *op. cit.* 120).

² L. W. King, *Enc. Bibl.* col. 372 f: cf. Winckler, *KAT*, 3rd ed. 87, and G. Smith, *Rec. of the Past*, 1st series, i. 62.

Hexagonal Prism, col. 1.

⁴ *Babyl. Chron.* iv. 10, 16; see Winckler, *KAT*, 3rd ed. 88.

into Ethiopia, suppress an Egyptian revolt, and then capture Thebes from Tirhakah's successor. The fall of Thebes resounded through Western Asia,¹ but failed to place a permanent stamp on the Assyrian power in Egypt, for about 660 or perhaps a few years later² Psametik I. asserted his independence. Tyre had submitted to Ashurbanipal in 668, and in spite of the Egyptian revolt all Palestine remained quiet for the next decade. Then the revolt of Babylon (652-648) roused the tribes of Northern Arabia, Edom, Moab and Hauran, and even the Phœnicians in Usu and Acco, and must have excited Judah and his immediate neighbours, who, however, did not actively rebel. It has been supposed that the historical fact underlying the Jewish Chronicler's account of Manasseh's captivity in Babylon is that, in order to clear himself of the suspicion of complicity in the revolt of 652 onwards, Manasseh paid homage in person to Ashurbanipal, when the latter had at last conquered and was residing in Babylon.³ But it is equally possible to suppose that, as the Chronicler says, Manasseh's temporary residence in Babylon was an enforced one, and this may have taken place earlier. Asarhaddon's annals seem to imply that the twenty-two kings of Syria and the Levant, of whom Manasseh was one, appeared before him at Nineveh.⁴

Such, so far as Palestine is concerned, is the history of the Assyrian Empire during the long reign of Manasseh. Under Asarhaddon and Ashurbanipal that Empire reached its widest bounds, and, though its final collapse was near, the summit of its culture and of its ability to impress this

¹ Cf. Nahum iii. 8.

² "C. 660," W. Max Müller in the *Enc. Bibl.*, col. 1245. Guthe, *Gesch.* 233, puts the date as late as "about 645."

³ So Winckler in *A. T. Untersuchungen*, 122, followed by Benzinger on 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11-13, and Guthe, *Gesch.* 227. Winckler has altered his opinion and placed Manasseh's visit to Babylon under Asarhaddon: *KAT*, Brd ed. 274 f.

⁴ See above n.

upon its subject peoples. Intellectually and religiously the Assyrian culture was Babylonian. Never, since the time of the Tell el-Amarna correspondence, had the civilization of Mesopotamia so permeated the life of Palestine. We have seen how Asarhaddon established his officials and his gods at Sidon,¹ how he and Ashurbanipal organized an Assyrian administration in Egypt, and how Jewish soldiers were brought in to the Assyrian armies. Both monarchs appear to have added to the number of Mesopotamian colonists in Samaria,² who introduced the worship of their own gods, and whose influence upon the native customs of the province may be easily imagined by those who have seen the changes effected in social life East of the Jordan at the present day by the Circassian colonists introduced by the Turkish Government. Nor are we without contemporary records of Assyrian administration and influence in Palestine during the period. Mr. Macalister has just discovered at Gezer two cuneiform tablets, deeds of sale of land, which there is no reason to suppose are not "genuine products of the ancient dwellers at Gezer."³ The dates of these documents are 651 and 649, and they prove that under Ashurbanipal fields at Gezer, one of which belonged to a man with a Jewish name, Nathaniah, were sold, and the sales were registered according to Assyrian formulas, in the Assyrian language, and in the one case by a notary with so unmistakable an Assyrian name as Nergal-shar-usur.⁴

¹ As early as 711 Sargon had introduced some measure of Assyrian administration into Ashdod.

² 2 Kings xvii. 24 ff.—which appears to assign this settlement wholly to Sargon after 721, but evidently contains later elements—compared with the Book of Ezra in which the Samaritans assert their descent from colonists settled by Asarhaddon (iv. 2), and this is also traced to those of Osnapper, or Ashurbanipal (iv. 10).

³ Rev. C. H. W. Johns, *Pal. Expl. Fund Quarterly*, 1905, 206.

⁴ Cf. Nergal-sharezer, one of the princes of the king of Babylon mentioned by Baruch, Jer. xxxix. 3. 13.

It will be observed that while most of these instances of the enforcement of the Assyrian discipline are from the neighbourhood of Judah—Gezer is only twenty miles distant from Jerusalem—two of them are from Judah itself: the visit of Manasseh to Babylon and the employment of Jewish auxiliaries in the Assyrian army. Moreover, the inclusion of Western Asia as well as Egypt within one great Empire, which, besides, contained the still fertile and active centre of ancient civilization, must have meant an extraordinary increase of commerce and mental intercourse all the way from the Tigris to the upper Nile, from the influences of which it was impossible that Judah, a tributary of the Empire, could stand aloof. Hence the establishment at Jerusalem of the Babylonish worship of *the host of heaven*—a worship so elaborate and offered to so many deities that its altars may well have spread, as the Biblical historian affirms, over both of the open courts before the Temple.¹

The host of heaven were the sun, moon and stars, and at this time probably added to the significance of one of the most sacred names of the God of Israel: *Jahweh of Hosts*.² But as belief in them as separate beings had not 'died out of Israel—compare the language of even so genuine a monotheist as the author of Deuteronomy iv. 19—it was the more easy to introduce their worship into Jerusalem. The first motive to this was doubtless political. The altars and their rites were among the official expressions of the subjection of the Jewish state to the great Empire, among whose most popular deities was Ishtar, the planet Venus, "the queen of heaven." But that the mass of the population of Jerusalem succumbed to the attractions of a worship which was openly performed on arenas they were accustomed

¹ See above note, p. 309. ² Deut. iv. 19, xvii. 8.

³ Originally this had meant God of the armies of Israel.

to throng, and with which so many of their native instincts and conceptions of the universe were in sympathy, is proved by the evidence alike of the prophets, the legislators and the annalists of Judah. The Book of Deuteronomy twice specially distinguishes the host of heaven as objects which Israel must not let themselves be drawn away to adore. The site of Jerusalem, high and open to heaven—within view, too, of the long edge of the Moabite plateau over which the moon and the planets rise with impressive majesty—was particularly suitable for a worship conducted in the open air, without idols, by direct adoration of its heavenly objects, and by offerings so simple as to be within reach of the poorest worshippers. Accordingly Jeremiah and Zephaniah both record the spread of the cult of the host of heaven from the courts of the Temple to the house-tops in Jerusalem¹; and the former describes the domestic preparations, in which the whole family, children, fathers and mothers engaged, of *cakes* to the Queen of Heaven,² and the cakes are called by a name borrowed from the Assyrian. In recounting Josiah's reforms the annalist says,³ *he put down . . . them that offered unto the sun, the moon, the mazzâlôth and all the host of heaven . . . and he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had set up for the sun at the entrance of the house of Jahweh, by the*

¹ Jer. xix. 13; Zeph. i. 5.

² Jer. vii. 18, cf. xliv. 15 ff. Stade's contentions (*ZATW*, 1886, 123 ff., 286 ff.), following the hint of the Massoretic vocalization of מְלִכָּת הַשָּׁמַיִם, that מְלִכָּת is an abstract noun signifying *dominion* or *governing powers* of heaven; or an abbreviation for מְלִכָּת מַלְאָכִים *work*, and in either case an equivalent of the name *host of heaven*, has been generally rejected by Assyrian and Hebrew scholars (e.g. Schrader, *Zeitschr. f. Assyriologie*, iii. 353, ff.; iv. 74 ff.; Kuenen, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* (Budde's tr. 136 ff.); G. F. Moore, *Enc. Bibl.* 3992 f.; Zimmern, *KAT*, 3rd ed. 441). Ishtar is the "queen of heaven," *sharrat shamê* in Assyrian; the Hebrew name for the cakes offered to this deity in Jerusalem מַצֹּת is the same word as that for those offered to Ishtar in Babylonia, *kamānu* (Zimmern, *loc. cit.*).

³ 2 Kings xxiii. 5, 11, 12.

chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the precincts, and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire, and the altars which were on the roofs,¹ and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of Jahweh. *Mazzalōth* is the same word as the Babylonian *manzaltu*. They were either the twelve signs of the zodiac or the divine "stations" in the heavens.² The horses and chariot of the sun were also borrowed from Babylonia.³ In this case also there had been an ancient worship near Jerusalem, the instincts of which had probably not died out of her mixed population and would now spring to welcome its Babylonian analogy. In the fourteenth century Abd. Khiba's letters from Jerusalem mention, as within the territory of the City, a place called Bit Ninib, "house of Ninib," a Babylonian deity regarded as solar.⁴

To the same Assyrian influences we may assign the change which appears soon after this in the Jewish system of dating the year. In earlier times the Israelite year had been the agricultural; it began, as appears from the oldest stratum of the legislation, with the end of autumn and the fall of the early rains.⁵ But in the latest legislation and other post-exilic literature we find a system of reckoning

¹ The following phrase, *the upper chamber of Ahaz*, is from its ungrammatical connection with what precedes obviously a gloss. *The roof* is usually taken to be that of the Temple, but it may well be a collective for the *roofs* from which the domestic worship of the host of heaven took place. In that case the next clause *which the Kings of Judah had made* would be part of the gloss. In itself the plural *kings* raises doubts.

² Zimmern, *KAT*, 3rd ed. 628.

³ *Id.* 368 ff.

⁴ *Id.* 411. Cf. Budde on Judg. i. 34 f., Mount Heres (הַר הַרְמֵזִים or עִיר הַרְמֵזִים, Moore, *Enc. Bibl.* 2019), where he proposes to identify Bit Ninib with Beth-Shemesh; while Moore suggests that Heres is a "Hebraised form of Uraš, a synonym of the Ass. god Ninib, who is primarily the fierce morning sun (see Jensen, *Kosmol.* 458)"; and connects Heres with "the gate Harsith," Jer. xix. 2.

⁵ The autumn feast, the last of the annual series of festivals, is dated at the *outgoing of the year* (Ex. xxiii. 16) or at the *year's circuit or revolution* (Ex. xxxiv. 22).

the year, as in the Babylonian calendar, from the spring month. The date of this change is usually assigned to the Exile: "in the Exile," says Professor Marti, "comes in the custom of placing the first month in spring."¹ Yet this custom was already employed by the scribe Baruch. In the narrative of Jeremiah's dictation of the roll of his prophecies, Baruch says he read this in the Temple in the ninth month, of the fourth year of Jekoiakim, which was a winter month.² There is no reason for supposing that these data of the narrative are due to an exilic editor.³ Taking them as Baruch's own, we see that the influence of the Assyrian administration during Manasseh's reign extended so far as to impose upon Jewish scribes the Babylonian system of dating the year.⁴

Jerusalem, then, was permeated during Manasseh's reign by the astral worship of Babylonia, which did not merely obtain, for political reasons, a station in the royal sanctuary, but found an eager welcome from many ancient and popular instincts, still unsubdued by the progress of monotheism, and which became domesticated in shapes that long outlived the drastic reforms of Josiah.

But Manasseh also encouraged the revival of the Canaanite idolatries, which Hezekiah had removed: the worship of the Baalim and the graven image of the Asherah, with the use of the pillars and the Asheroth, and the practice of sacrificing children by fire. When we wonder that such a recrudescence of idolatry could happen so speedily after Hezekiah's reforms, we must recall the congenital heathenism of Jerusalem on which Ezekiel insists; the prevalence of these forms of idolatry all round Judah, and especially in Samaria; and also the probable additions to

¹ *Enc. Bibl.*, col. 5366.

² Jer. xxxi. 9 and 22; cf. xli. 1.

³ So Marti would dispose of them: *loc. cit.*

⁴ Another effect of the Assyrian administration may perhaps be found in the registry of the sale of land recorded in Jer. xxxii.

the city's population both from the Judæan towns devastated by Sennacherib in which Canaanite forms of worship still survived, from the Philistine and Phœnician cities that had suffered by the campaigns of Asarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, and from the great increase of trade under the Assyrian lordship of all Western Asia.

From all sides, then, the monotheism proclaimed by Isaiah and established by Hezekiah was, within a few years from their deaths, assailed by forms of polytheism which enjoyed the support both of the supreme political power and of the most ancient popular instincts. We see clearly that the historians and prophets¹ have not exaggerated the extreme perils of Manasseh's reign to the higher religion of Israel, upon the only stage upon which it was now possible for that religion to persist. Between them, the Assyrian devastation of Judah and the reforms of Hezekiah had tended to confine the worship of Jahweh to Sion. And now, without having any longer behind it that rural population which we have seen rally to its support in previous crises of its betrayal by its royal patrons, we find the higher faith of Israel exposed within its own courts and sanctuary to the invasion of rival forms of worship enforced by the policy of a great Empire and welcomed by the ancient instincts of more than half of the population about it.

Its adherents did not yield without a struggle; but Manasseh met them with the sword. *He shed*, says the historian, *innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from mouth to mouth* of her savage appetite, and Jeremiah testifies that her population was with him; *because they have forsaken me . . . and filled this place with the blood of innocents.*² It is a strange thing that there is no echo of this in the Book of Deuteronomy, the writers of which are nowhere troubled by the problems of the suffer-

¹ Cf. Jer. xv. 4, etc.

² Jer. xix. 4.

ings of the righteous. But the problem had come to stay. By its statement in lines of blood upon her streets Jerusalem was matriculating in a profounder school of religion than that through which Isaiah had brought her, and by her sufferings at the hands of her own sons was learning a lesson more useful for her mission to humanity than even that which her great deliverance from the foreign oppressor had stamped upon her mind. For through all these savage cruelties the remnant of the true people of God remained loyal, and was purified. The times forbade the appearance of public prophets. Persecution drove their faith to anonymous methods of expression,¹ to the secret treasuring of earlier prophecies, perhaps also to the codifying of the social and religious teaching of these, the results of which were hidden away in the Temple against the recurrence of happier times,² and certainly to more spiritual and personal communion with their God. While the majority of her people gave way to the heathen customs and rites which Manasseh had introduced, and delivered to the next generation a number of men and women with heathen names, there were still many families in Jerusalem who feared the Lord, and, as we see from the genealogies of the prophets in Isaiah's reign, dedicated their children to His Name. Nor did they fail to learn from their oppressors and from the systems of belief which threatened to destroy their own. The Babylonian religion had nothing ethical to teach to the disciples of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. But, if we may judge from the subsequent use of Babylonian literature in the cosmogonies and psalms of Israel, there entered her religion at this time from that foreign source new impressions of the order and processes of the universe and new reminiscences of the beginnings of history and civilisation, all of which the Spirit of her God enabled her

¹ E.g. "Micah," vi. 6-8.

² 2 Kings xxii. 8 ff.

to use for His glory and to interpret in the light of those purposes of grace and righteousness which He had long revealed to her. So that the Assyrian dominance of Jerusalem during Manasseh's reign was not altogether for loss to the higher religion, against which it provoked so cruel a reaction. While it purified faith by the sufferings it imposed, it fertilised the intellect of the people, trained them in observation of the universe, and may even have developed their habits of writing and recording.

We have already touched on a number of probable reasons for a considerable increase in the population of the city since 701: the devastation of the rest of the land in that year,¹ Hezekiah's attempt to centralise the national worship, the peace of Jerusalem during the long reign of Manasseh, while neighbouring lands were harried by Assyrian armies, the introduction of the Babylonian cults, and the increase of trade across Western Asia.

For the large share, which Jerusalem took in the trade of Palestine during the seventh century, we have three independent testimonies. First, there is the number of commercial regulations in the Book of Deuteronomy, as contrasted with their absence from the earlier legislation.² Second, there is the epithet, *gate of the peoples*, applied to Jerusalem, by Ezekiel³ in his description of Tyrian commerce. And third, there is the reason, which the king of Persia gave, when he forbade the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in the time of Zerubbabel: *there have been mighty kings over Jerusalem . . . and tribute, custom and toll was paid unto them.*⁴ Not only, therefore, had Judah developed in the eighth century a considerable commerce among her own people and between them and their neigh-

¹ Compare the parallel case during Nebuchadnezzar's invasion, Jer. xxxv. 11.

² For details see § 54 of "Trade and Commerce" by the present writer in the *Encycl. Biblica*, column 5175.

³ xxxvi. 2.

⁴ Ezra iv. 20.

bours ; but she commanded as well a transit trade, probably between Phœnicia and Edom and Arabia. The political rank of Jerusalem secured to her the chief market of the former along with the tolls and custom-duties of the latter, and thus in spite of the commercial disadvantages of her site she must have become an important and wealthy emporium.

From all these causes the City must have grown ; probably the incomers were largely accommodated in the new quarters of which we first hear from Zephaniah. But the circuit of the walls was not widened. No achievement of this kind is attributed to Manasseh. The Chronicler, drawing upon a source which there is no reason to doubt, tells us that he built an outer wall to the City of David on the steep slope *to the west of Gihon in the valley of the Kidron*, and that it extended *to the entrance of the Fish Gate* which lay on the north. *He compassed about Ophel and raised it up a very great height.*¹ The only other topographical notice is that of Manasseh's burial. Hezekiah is the last king said to have been buried in the sepulchres of the kings. They laid Manasseh *in the garden of his own house, the garden of Uzza or Uzziiah*. Here also his son Amon was buried after a reign of little over one year in the same spirit as his father. These and perhaps Josiah's are the graves of the kings which Ezekiel describes as too near the sacred precincts of the Temple.² Was the new site for the royal burials due to some of the novel religious ideas introduced by Manasseh ?

From 701 Jerusalem began to assume that excessive predominance in Judah which gradually rendered the rest of the country but its fringe. We shall see this in several of Jeremiah's allusions. Meantime it is perhaps worth noting that Manasseh is described by Asarhaddon as king not of the land, but "of the City, of Judah."

GEORGE ADAM SMITH.

¹ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14.

² Ezekiel xiii. 7-9.