

Ezekiel's Vision of the Temple.

BY THE REV. G. C. M. DOUGLAS, D.D., LATE PRINCIPAL OF THE UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

II.

THERE are two kindred subjects, though they are less closely connected with the temple, of which Ezekiel has a good deal to say in his vision. These subjects are the *prince* and the *land*.

First, The *prince*, chiefly in chaps. 45 and 46, yet also in 44 and 48. Ezekiel restricts himself to the word prince, in Hebrew *nasi*, in this vision, though he combines it with the word for king in 7²⁷. The Hebrew word is often used of a subordinate prince; but Ezekiel uses it so that we cannot distinguish its meaning from that of king, when he speaks of Zedekiah, the heir to David's throne (12¹⁰. 12 21⁸⁰ (English, v.²⁵)). Moreover, it is the title given to the king in the prophecies introductory to the vision of the temple, 'my servant David' (chaps. 34²⁴ 37²⁵), along with 'king' in 37^{22,24}, where he is also called 'shepherd.'¹

¹ Why this change from the simple name 'king' was made need not be determined in this paper. Living under the jealous king of Babylon, Ezekiel seems to have been spared the trying duty of prophesying against him: and it is possible that for this reason also he was not required to give the royal name to the future head of the commonwealth of Israel. There may, however, have been important ends to be served by the use of various titles to describe the expected Deliverer. In Jer 30²¹ we find *moshel*, 'ruler,' and *addir*, a term difficult to translate; and in Dn 9²⁶ 11²², *nagid*, which in the Books of Samuel is repeatedly applied to Saul and David. It is also to be observed, that in the glorious prophecy (Zec 6^{12,13}) we read of the priest who shall sit upon his throne, but neither the noun 'king' nor the cognate verb 'reign' occurs; and the like is to be said of the fundamental passage, Ps 110. There are various points of resemblance between the description of the coming glory in Ezekiel's closing vision and that in Zec 14, where at v.⁹ it is Jehovah Himself who is to be king over all the earth. This corresponds with the teaching in the opening vision of Ezekiel (chap. 1²⁶) that there was 'the likeness of a throne,' and upon the throne 'a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above.' So also, 20³³, after great judgments 'will I be king over you.' Shall we say that in the time when the kingdom of David is to be restored in the person of a worthy successor, concerning whom Ezekiel has not so many definite messages to deliver as some of his fellow-prophets, it is to be made clear that Jehovah Himself is the true king of Israel, since the name of the city is to be 'The Lord (Jehovah) is there' (chap. 48³⁵)? The son and heir of David is at that time to be distinguished from Jehovah

The allotments of land, to which attention must afterwards be given, include a portion for the prince (chaps. 45⁷⁻⁹ 48^{21,22}). In this account there are three things to be observed. (1) The prince's portion lay between the portion of Judah and that of Benjamin, that is, in the very position of Jerusalem the royal city in the reigns of David and Solomon; only the two tribes had inverted their relative positions.—(2) The portion of the prince being made as sure to him as possible, he had abundant legitimate means of providing for his sons and for his servants; and he was therefore solemnly charged (45^{8,9} 46¹⁶⁻¹⁸) to avoid oppressing his subjects by taking their possessions from them, as had no doubt been often done even by kings less daringly wicked than Ahab. (3) It would seem from 45¹³⁻¹⁷, especially from v.¹⁷, that an oblation of wheat and barley, and oil, and lambs, according to a fixed rate, was brought to the prince, in return for which the obligation was laid upon him to provide all the sacrifices and offerings required of Israel in the law. Possibly the daily sacrifice was an exception, certainly it is not named with the others. The particulars of his Sabbath sacrifice are recorded at 46⁴. As a matter of course, we understand that this rule did not interfere with the private sacrifices which individuals brought. But its application to matters of public worship agrees well with the regulations giving prominence to the prince, and assigning honour to him when he went to the sanctuary to worship. The east gate, by which the glory of the God of Israel had re-entered, and which on this account remained closed to ordinary worshippers, was to be opened for the prince to enter and to go out again by it (43¹⁻⁴ 44¹⁻³ 46¹⁻⁸. 10. 12).

The readers of Ezekiel's vision have sometimes expressed surprise that so little prominence should

the king by receiving no higher title than 'prince.' At least the name of 'king' is not to be in common use until the great puzzle comes to be made plain in the light of the New Testament, when we learn that Jesus is Jehovah, and understand how David's son is also David's Lord.

be given to the prince in civil matters. Nothing whatever is said of his rights and duties in state affairs, there are only these simple church duties and privileges. But the surprise is a mistaken feeling, arising from an oversight. The reason why Ezekiel is silent in reference to the civil position of the prince is that this lay beyond the field of view; his vision concerned the new temple and its worshippers. That first mistake has led on to a second, namely, the attempt to cut out work for the prince in superintending the uniformity of weights and measures (45¹⁰⁻¹²). Ezekiel says not a word of the prince having to do with the rules laid down in these verses, which are intended no doubt to secure the just and proper service of the sanctuary; compare 'the shekel of the sanctuary' in Ex 30^{13, 24} 38^{24, 25} Lv 5¹⁵ 27^{3, 25}, Nu 3⁴⁷, etc. Still less happy is the attempt to reconcile the comparatively very little that is said here about the prince with the noble position assigned to him, as virtually 'my servant David,' in chaps. 34 and 37, by suggesting that the prophet had changed his mind. The revelations in chaps. 34-39 make known God's providential preparation of the new Israel for the new temple. Israel is miraculously raised from death, which is the wages of sin, and receives the gift which invariably accompanies pardon and reviving grace, the gift of a new heart and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Next comes the reunion of the house of Judah and the house of Israel under the royal house of David, by a process as amazing as would be the union of two sticks into one living tree. Then follows the destruction of all the enemies that come against them, mustered under a prince more formidable than anyone whom they had encountered in the course of their past history; a deliverance this for the new worshippers of Jehovah that far transcended the promise in Ex 34²⁴. A city is named in connexion with the destruction of those enemies; it bears the name Hamonah, 'the tumultuous multitude' (39¹⁶). But the name of Israel's city is Jehovah-shammah, 'Jehovah is there.' This is the glory of the city; though undoubtedly it also is full of a joyous tumultuous population, according to the descriptions of other prophets (Is 22², Jer 31³⁸⁻⁴⁰, Zech 2¹⁻⁵). Ezekiel may perhaps not have had this additional fact within his field of vision at the moment, but his language at other times suggests that he knew of it. And such knowledge

also agrees with his including in his vision the new allotment of the land, of which it might be alleged that it did not stand in any close connexion with his vision of the new temple.

Secondly, The *land* and the renewed occupation of it by the twelve tribes (see chaps. 6, 25, 35, and indeed the whole of chaps. 34-37) is the remaining subject on which Ezekiel touches.

1. We are struck by reading that the land was to be divided among the twelve tribes in regular portions, stretching east and west, and lying parallel. There is considerable uncertainty about the boundaries of some of the tribes, when the land was allotted by Joshua. The portions varied greatly in size; and their shape probably to a large extent depended upon natural features of the country, its mountains and valleys, its streams, its coasts, etc. Here any such physical causes of irregular contour are unknown or disregarded. Everything looks as simple and mathematically straight as the boundary lines on the maps of newly settled countries at the present day. We may well question whether Ezekiel's arrangement ever could be carried out in actual life until that day when Jehovah was to return in glory, when every valley was to be exalted, and every mountain and hill was to be brought low; see Is 40³⁻⁵, Zec 14¹⁰.

2. Was the land to be anew divided by lot, as Moses had commanded (Nu 26⁵³⁻⁵⁶), and as Joshua and Eleazar had carried out (Jos 14² 18⁶⁻¹⁰)? This would seem to be Ezekiel's meaning, as we observe his repeated use of the verb *naphal*, both in *Qal* and in *Hiphil* (45¹ 47^{14, 22} 48²⁰). The passage in Numbers, however, distinctly recognizes that the size of the portions is to be proportionate to the numbers of the tribes. Now Ezekiel appears to make the length of the portions always the same: did they vary then in breadth? Or in the new Israel were all the tribes to be equally numerous, as is the case in the list in Rev 7? Or were the positions of the tribes, as Ezekiel gives them, first determined by lot? In that case, not as in Joshua's allotment, it was to take place beforehand secretly; and the prophet announced what God had done. However we may answer such questions as these, it is to be observed that Ezekiel makes the land be divided among the whole of the tribes alike. But Joshua cast lots for only nine and a half tribes, since Moses at an earlier time had settled two and a half on the east of Jordan.

3. Practically the boundaries of the land in Ez 47^{15, 20} may be said to be the same as in the time of Joshua, who had received his instructions on this point very precisely from Moses. They are the same, that is, with the preliminary explanation, that in two ways there was a difference in the principles on which the boundary was drawn. For there had been held out before the eyes of Israel the possibility of a wider boundary line, embracing a vast territory from the brook of Egypt and the Red Sea to the Euphrates (Gn 15¹⁸, Ex 23³¹, Dt 1⁷, Jos 1⁴). Ezekiel is absolutely silent in reference to such extension of territory; those limits would have cut into the heart of the empire of Babylon. And there was also another difference of perhaps greater practical importance. There had been two and a half tribes settled by Moses on the eastern side of Jordan, in the land taken from the kings Sihon and Og. Nevertheless, these tribes had the option of returning within Canaan proper, if they found that this new territory was an unclean land (Jos 22¹⁹); and from the first Moses had warned them that they were to forfeit it, and to take their possession with their brethren on the western side of Jordan if they failed to take their fair share in the wars for the conquest of Canaan (Nu 32⁸⁰). Whatever may have been the reason, in the vision of Ezekiel there are no tribes settled on the eastern side.

4. In the details of the settlement of the tribes there is little divergence from the arrangements under Joshua. Joseph has still two portions (47¹³). Yet, since there are no eastern tribes, the entire tribe of Manasseh lies in one territory on the western side of Jordan. Dan has no longer two portions; the one position assigned to him is at the extreme north, where he had won a place for himself by his sword, after he had found the territory allotted to him insufficient. In Joshua's division of the land Simeon had been crushed into a portion subtracted from the too large possession which Judah had obtained in the first instance: there is no longer any trace of inferiority in Simeon's position. Moreover the tribes which seem to have been specially intimate, and were placed together at the first, remain with little or no change in their relations. Thus Dan, Asher, and Naphtali stand together in the north. So do Manasseh and Ephraim, near the centre. So do Issachar and Zebulun; only they now occupy a position towards the south analogous to their

former position towards the north. On the other hand, Reuben and Gad had been together beyond Jordan; that territory no longer belonged to the tribes of Israel, and these two became completely separated. Judah and Benjamin are the two tribes on either side of the city, as of old Jerusalem lay between them, and perhaps in some sense belonged to both: only their positions are inverted, Judah being now on the north of Benjamin.

5. The Levites still have no portion in the equal division of the land, the twelve tribes being made up without them. 'I am their inheritance, and ye shall give them no possession in Israel' (44²⁸); much as had been said in Nu 18²⁰. Apparently in two respects a much poorer provision was made for them in Ezekiel's vision. In the Mosaic legislation, according to one view, they received the tithe of all that the land produced in compensation for the want of landed possessions, and also a share in the second tithe, which was to be spent in sacrificial feasts, etc. According to another view, this so-called second tithe was all their income. But Ezekiel makes no mention of tithes, either of one kind or another. Again, Joshua had given to the Levites forty-eight cities, distributed over the several tribes, according to the commandment of Moses; thirteen of these forty-eight being for the priests. Ezekiel says nothing of cities for them; but there is a holy portion, an oblation, adjoining the temple, divided into equal parts, the one for the priests, the other for the Levites (45¹⁻⁵ 48⁸⁻¹⁴). This oblation of the land might not be sold, nor exchanged, nor have its fruits alienated; in so far compare Lv 25³⁴. The portion of the priests is called 'an oblation from the oblation of the land' (48¹²), so far reminding us of the tithe paid to the priests by the Levites out of the tithes which they had received from the people (Nu 18²⁶⁻³⁰). In Ezekiel's vision the priests and Levites seem to receive their oblation and the twelve tribes their portions simultaneously. In Joshua's allotment the priests and Levites received their cities later, perhaps much later (Jos 21¹⁻³); and it is doubtful whether they ever received the whole of the cities to which they were entitled; see how defective the list in 1 Chr 6 appears compared with that in Jos 21.

6. The strangers and sojourners in Israel were to have an equal share with the born Israelites in the land, and the Israelites were to have no

advantage over the strangers (47^{22, 23}). This is a provision such as the most liberal of modern states have had hesitation in conceding; and it is the more worthy of notice in Ezekiel, who has little to say of bright prospects for the heathen. It is on the principle enunciated in Nu 15^{15, 16}, but it goes far beyond it in application. And the liberality of the provision is the more noticeable, because the amount of land to be divided had become much less by the withdrawal of the territory beyond Jordan to the east.

7. There are some peculiarities which ought not to be passed over in the account given of the city, the metropolis of the tribes, the new Jerusalem, as we might call it. (1) It belongs to the whole of the tribes in common; as does also the 'possession of the city,' which is half the size of the priests' portion, or the Levites' portion. Along with these two it makes up a great square (45⁶ 48¹⁵⁻²⁰). (2) There is legitimate difference of opinion as to the relative positions of these three portions of the oblation. At present there is a predominant inclination to place the Levites to the north of the priests, though it might be the other way; then the city and its land are on the south of both the priests and the Levites. On either view the curious result is reached, that the temple stands

wholly apart, one might almost say widely separated, from the city. There is a way of avoiding this conclusion, if we place the city and its land between the portion for the priests and that for the Levites; in which case the words in 48¹⁰, 'and the sanctuary of Jehovah shall be in the midst thereof,' are to be understood as telling that it was in the midst of the priests' portion from east to west, but not from north to south. See the statement in v.⁸ (3) But more singular, on any of these interpretations, it still remains difficult to see how the new Jerusalem and the new temple could stand where they stood in the time of David and Solomon. That original Jerusalem had only the tribe of Judah (including Simeon) to the south of it, all the rest of the tribes lay to the north of it. Quite differently, Ezekiel sees five tribes to the south of the city, whose situation, it has been said, would therefore more nearly correspond to that of Bethel or Shiloh. How far is this shifting of the city northward to be brought into connexion with what the prophet had taught of the reunion of the stick of Ephraim with that of Judah (37¹⁵⁻²²), and with what he had also taught of the restoration of Samaria and Sodom with Jerusalem (16⁶⁰⁻⁶³)? Or is it connected with physical changes in the land of Judah, such as are hinted in Zech 14^{4, 8, 10}?

Explorations in Bible Lands during the Nineteenth Century.

By REV. J. A. SELBIE, D.D., MARÝCULTER.

THE editor, the authors, and the publishers of the great work whose title stands at the head of this notice, are all to be congratulated on its appearance. Professor Hilprecht's laborious and successful work, both in excavating and in deciphering Babylonian monuments, are too well known to need any detailed reference to them. Universally recognized as one of the most eminent archæologists of the day, he fittingly edits the whole of the work before us. The account of explorations in Assyria and Babylonia, from Dr. Hilprecht's own pen, occupies more than two-thirds of the book, which runs to about 800 pages. This proportion is not an undue one in view

either of the materials that have been obtained from these explorations or the importance of their bearing upon the study of the Old Testament. At first sight some might be disposed to think that the account of researches in Palestine (only 43 pages) by Professor Benzinger, and those in Egypt (67 pages) by Professor Steindorff, are inadequate and meagre, especially as compared with that of the work in Professor Hilprecht's own special field. But the truth is that in the case of Palestine there have not been till quite recently any great amount of scientifically assured results. An enormous amount of site identification by men like Conder was done far too hastily, and has been