

Notes in the Text of the Old Testament.

THE notes thus designated are in all copies of the Old Testament whether in Hebrew or in translations. They do not include various readings of the Hebrew ; or accessory words necessitated by difference of language such as we mark by the use of italics in our English Bible ; nor do they include such modifications of the sense of the original as may be found from time to time in the LXX (Septuagint), the Targums, or Josephus. As instances of the three works here referred to, see Exodus xxiv. 10, where the LXX shrinks from the bold utterance of the text, " They saw the God of Israel," and rendered, " They saw the place where the God of Israel stood " ; also Genesis xxii. 13, where the Palestinian Targum says, " Behold a certain ram which had been created between the evenings of the foundation of the world was caught in a thicket by its horns " ; also Josephus' note on the land of Moriah as " the mountain on which King David afterwards built the Temple " (Ant. I. xiii. 2). The notes which remain for us to study are first *topographical*, where a later name is added to explain an earlier ; secondly, *archæological*, where a custom or tradition is referred to ; thirdly, *chronological*, where the names of months are explained, or where a date is given for the purpose of identification ; fourthly, *genealogical*, where a genealogy is carried beyond the date of the original writer ; also there are occasional *reflections* on the course of the events recorded, and summaries or *résumés* of God's dealing with the nation. Some of these may have been part of the original document, even though they mark a pause or interruption in the narrative. It will be found on examination that most of the notes are in the historical portions of the Old Testament, and mainly in the earlier parts of it. They are not inserted in brackets or written at the foot of the page, for the original form of the sacred writings would not admit of such a thing, but it is probable that they found their way into the text at the time when one or other of the great transliterations took place, *i.e.* either when the style of writing current in the age of Hammurabi gave way to the cuneiform which may be seen in the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, or when that was superseded by the Phœnician script in which the Moabite stone inscription was written, or when that gave place to the square Hebrew. The

translitterators at these periods were doubtless under authority, and they had the opportunity of adding the notes which we possess. They evidently exercised great restraint and barely touched the sacred documents which lay before them. The wonder is not that we have so many notes, but that we have so few, and that the main perplexities which puzzle all or most scholars remain unexplained, and that glaring inconsistencies which even a child could detect stand as they originally did; see for example 1 Samuel xv. 29, 35, on the matter of God's repentance.

I. TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

The first *topographical* notes in the Bible are those which describe the position of the Pison, the Gihon, and the Hiddekel or Tigris—three of the four water-sheds from Eden. The fourth river, the Euphrates, was evidently so well known to those for whom the book was written that it needed no description. The whole was probably part of the original documents (see Gen. ii. 11-14).

In the 10th of Genesis the notes on Nimrod, Calneh, Resen and the Canaanites may have been part of the original document, and so in the case of the divisions of the land in the days of Peleg.

In Genesis xiii. 18 Mamre is said to be in Hebron, and in chapter xiv. Bela is said to be Zoar, Siddim to be the Salt Sea, El-paran to be by the wilderness, En-mishpat to be Kadesh, Hobah to be on the left of Damascus, Shaveh to be the King's Dale. This is a remarkable cluster of notes, and they presuppose a more ancient original document. In chapter xvi. 14 the position of Beer-lahai-roi is explained; so is the name Zoar in xix. 22, and Beer-sheba in xxi. 31 and xxvii. 33. In chapter xxiii. 2 Kirjath-arba is identified in Hebron, which is also called Mamre (ver. 19); see also xxxv. 27. Bethel was called Luz at first (xxviii. 19; xxxv. 6). The heap of witness (xxx. 47) had two names to mark difference of dialect, but not of date. Shalem is said to be a city of Shechem which is in the land of Canaan (xxxiii. 18), Ephrath is Beth-lehem (xxxv. 19; xlviii. 7), and the pillar was still standing at a later stage (ver. 20). Esau is Edom (xxxvi. 1, 8), and Atad is beyond Jordan (l. 10, 11).

There are no notes in Exodus or Leviticus, but in Numbers we have the origin of the name Eshcol (xiii. 24), the locality of the Amalekites (xiv. 25), and a comment on the meaning of Meribah

(xx. 13), which seems to be distinct from the Meribah of Exodus xvii. 7, as there were two distinct Hormahs (xiv. 45 ; xxi. 3). In Deuteronomy the variation between Sirion and Shenir as titles for Hebron is dialectal. The note on Jair in iii. 14 is a late addition. In verse 17 the Salt Sea is identified as the sea of the plain. The scarcity of topographical notes in these four Books is owing to the nature of their contents.

In Joshua more might be expected. The note on the overflow of Jordan in harvest is hardly topographical, but there is a note on Gilgal (v. 9), and on Achor (vii. 26). We pass on to the 15th chapter and find six alternative names given, of which the most important is Jerusalem (ver. 8), which had already been mentioned in the 10th chapter, where it occurs for the first time in the Bible. See also Judges xix. 10, and 1 Chronicles xi. 4.

In the Book of Judges we have the origin of the name Ramath-lehi (xv. 17), En-hakkore (xv. 19), Mahaneh-dan (xviii. 12), and the substitution of Dan for Laish (ver. 29). Attention may be called in passing to the important changes of text in verse 30 (Manasseh for Moses and perhaps the "land" for the "ark"), which, however, do not come into the present inquiry. There is also a note on Shiloh (Judges xxi. 12), and its exact position is given in verse 19. Few other notes of a topographical character exist in the old Testament except 1 Kings 2, where the city of David is called Zion, the note on Baalah (1 Chron. xiii. 6) is reproduced from Joshua, and that on Perez-uzza (ver. 11) from 2 Samuel vi. 8, also there is a note on En-gedi (2 Chron. xx. 2). It is curious that in 1 Samuel xv. 7 the position of Shur is explained, and in chapter xxvii. 8, but in Genesis xvi. 7 it is mentioned without explanation. See also 2 Samuel xiii. 23 for note on Baal-hazor. The names Hadassah and Esther (myrtle and star) point to two distinct languages in Esther ii. 7, but not to different dates.

II. ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES.

The notes which are more of an *ethnographical* or *archæological* kind are the current saying concerning Nimrod (Gen. x. 9), the origin of the name Babel or Babylon (xi. 9), the various references to the original inhabitants of Canaan (xii. 6 ; xiii. 7 ; etc.), the reference to the Plain of Jordan (xiii. 10), to Abram's confederates (xiv. 13), to Ishmael (xvi. 11), to Moab and Ammon (xix. 37, 38), when the

expression "unto this day" begins to be used. In chapter xxii. 14 we have the current saying about provision in the mount, then there is the custom concerning the sinew in xxxii. 32, and the pillar at Rachel's grave in xxxv. 20, the "mules" (xxxvi. 24), the shepherds (xlvi. 34), and Egypt's land-law (xlvii. 26). The number of these notes is considerable and their interest great, as they show the extent to which the ancient records could be illustrated by comparatively late customs.

Exodus xvi. 35 gives a summary referring to the use of manna for forty years, and the standard measurement of the omer or handful is given in verse 36. Compare the summary as to the movements of the cloud through the journeyings (Num. ix. 16-23). The explanation of the name Gershom and Eliezer is found in Exodus xviii. 3, 4 (see also ii. 22).

In Numbers xi. 3 we have the origin of the name Taberah, and in xiii. 16 the significant change of Oshea to Jehoshua (Jesus); in xviii. 16 the shekel of the sanctuary is estimated at twenty gerahs, and in xxxii. 38 we have the important statement that the Israelite cities were given new names. The itinerary of chapter xxxiii. shows some additions to the other records and is to some extent an independent document, and there are ethnographical notes in Deuteronomy ii. and iii.

We are thus brought to the Book of Joshua and find the note referring to Rahab's family in vi. 25, to Ai in viii. 28, 29, to the Gibeonites (ix. 27), to the Book of Joshua (x. 13), and to Hebron (xiv. 15). Mention should also be made of the poetical extracts from the Book of Wars and proverbial utterances in Numbers xxi., some of which reappear in Jeremiah. The notes in Deuteronomy ii. 10, 20 on the Emim and Anakim must also be considered. Reference may be made to the Ishmaelite earrings (Judges viii. 24), to the custom concerning Jephtha's daughter (xi. 40), to the custom noted in Ruth iv. 7, to the names Prophet and Seer in 1 Samuel ix. 9, and to the saying concerning Saul (x. 12). There is also the custom concerning "the stuff" (xviii. 25), the lame and the blind (2 Sam. v. 8), and the prohibition about sackcloth (Esth. iv. 2).

III. CHRONOLOGICAL NOTES.

Chronological notes are few and far between. The distinctions between days, weeks, months and years gradually come into use;

also we find reference (not very early) to sunrise, sunset, to midday and midnight, and to seasons of the year. Notes of time which run through the patriarchal history seem to be part of the original record, and though independent of one another will be found consistent. A summary of the sojourning of Israel in Egypt is given in Exodus xii. 40, and in Numbers xiii. 22 we find the building of Hebron seven years before Zoar in Egypt. In Deuteronomy i. 3 the addresses of Moses are given as in the 40th year, the 11th month, the 1st day, and there is prefixed a note to the effect that the journey from Horeb by way of Seir to Kadesh Barnea might be done in eleven days. The chronological references in Joshua and in Judges form part of the original text, and the same is the case in 1 Kings vi. 1. Here months begin to be named as well as numbered, Zif being the second month and (ver. 38) Bul the eighth, also (viii. 2) Ethanim the seventh. See also Zechariah i. 7; vii. 1; Esther ii. 16; iii. 7, 13; viii. 9; ix. 1, 12. Nisan also takes the place of the original Egyptian name of Abib for the first month (Neh. ii. 2). The arranging of the parallel dates of the Israelite and Judean kings, (e.g. 2 Kings ix. 29) may be part of the original historical document, so also in the case of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings, e.g. 2 Kings xviii. 13; xxv. 8, 27. See in addition the important comparative dates in Jeremiah xxv. 1, where the fourth year of Jehoiakim is called the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, who had besieged Jerusalem the year before (Dan. i. 1).

IV. GENEALOGICAL NOTES.

The Bible abounds in *genealogies* which are of high value and demand special study as their method of expression is not so vague as some of the old oriental lists, Egyptian or Chaldean, nor so detailed as some of our English registers. The question frequently rises as to the date of their completion. Cain's descendants are reckoned to the sixth or seventh generation (Gen. iv. 17-24). The genealogy in Genesis v. is the line of Noah's ancestors. Genesis xi. 10-32 gives us the line from Shem to Abraham; the twenty-fifth supplies the descendants of Abraham through Keturah and Ishmael; and the thirty-sixth, which interrupts the patriarchal records, gives the descendants of Esau, including "kings that reigned in Edom before there were any kings over the children of Israel (vers. 31-43 which are reintroduced in 1 Chron. i. 35-54). They must have been

introduced into the original document at the time of an early transliteration.

The ancestry of Moses is given in Exodus vi. 14-27 as an introduction to the history of the Exodus, though we should naturally have expected it earlier in the Book. The latest genealogical list is in Nehemiah xii., and includes some names which take us as far as Jaddua (ver. 10); see also verse 22. There does not seem to be anything so far down as the Maccabean era and very little after the date of Nehemiah.

On examining these notes we see that they combine reverence with intelligence, but it is hard to assign a definite date to them. Perhaps the best key to the date may be found in the expression "to this day," of which there are about forty instances running from Genesis xix. 37, 38 to the Chronicles. It has to do with localities, nationalities, and customs. The reference to Ziklag (1 Sam. xxvii. 6) must have been added before the captivity of Judah. The same is the case with the reference to the staves in the Holy Place (2 Chron. v. 9). It may be that where the chronicler simply copies *verbatim* from Samuel or Kings the note was copied without reference to the chronicler's own time. Compare *e.g.* 2 Chronicles v. 9 with 1 Kings viii. 8, or 1 Chronicles xiii. 11 with 2 Samuel vi. 8.

Speaking generally it may be said that the existence and nature of the notes in the early books presuppose a much more ancient original text which conserves original names of places and gives the origin of customs and names which were in danger of passing into oblivion.

We look in vain for any notes in the text in the poetical books (Job—Canticles). When we turn to the prophets we desiderate explanatory comments rather than anything more strictly archaeological, but we find none in Isaiah or the minor prophets. Later editors seem to have left their works severely alone. In Jeremiah there is only the one note about the pit which has been dug as far back as the days of Asa (xli. 9). In Ezekiel chapters xlvii. and xlviii. the borders of the tribes are carefully designated, but there are no late notes.

V. NOTES ON THE SUBJECT-MATTER.

Reflections and comments on events recorded are not so frequent

as might be expected. Sometimes they are simply historical, as in Genesis xxvi. 1, which tells us that the famine referred to was distinct from that already recorded. Others illustrate the character and faithfulness of God, *e.g.*, His remembrance of His promise to Abraham (xix. 29), and His merciful dealing with Lot (ver. 16), and with the midwives (Exod. i. 20, 21), also His regard for Israel in their bondage (Exod. ii. 23-25). Others are more purely human, as the reason given for the disgraceful conduct of the sons of Jacob (xxxiv. 13, 27). Note also the account of the character of Moses (Numb. xii. 7).

The comment on the punishment of Abimelech (Judges ix. 24) shows the hand of a teacher. The same is the case with regard to the conduct of Samson (xiv. 4), the secret aims of Saul (1 Sam. xviii. 25), and the dismissal of Abiathar (1 Kings ii. 27). Similarly with reference to the unwise conduct of Rehoboam we are told that "the cause was of God" (xii. 15), and the invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar is recognized as by divine order and in accordance with the words of the prophets (xxiv. 2, 3).

The Book of Chronicles has more of practical comment than Samuel or Kings. Thus we have the reason for Saul's death in connection with the inquiry after the familiar spirit (1 Chron. x. 13, 14), the appointment of David according to the word of the Lord (xi. 10; xii. 23), God's displeasure about the numeration of Israel (xxi. 7), the special help given to Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xviii. 31), the folly of Amaziah which was "of God" (xxv. 20), the ruin of Judah because of Ahaz (xxviii. 19, 23), and the hearing of prayer (xxx. 27).

The ejaculatory prayers in Nehemiah, *e.g.* iv. 4, must be regarded as part of that writer's original memoir. The same is the case in his historical note in v. 14.

We thus get if not the Philosophy of Israel's history, yet its Theology. God is regarded as at the back of all the terrible things recounted. Where they were not ruled they were overruled. History then—as now—was God's lesson-book.

R. B. GIRDLESTONE.

