

# THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

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## I.

### AUTHORITY IN RELIGION.

AT the very beginning of the discussion of the question of Authority in Religion, it is necessary to observe with some care that there is really no essential difference between religious knowledge and any other kind of knowledge. The conditions of knowledge, the laws of cognition, are not contingent upon the nature of the truth apprehended or upon the region of thought involved. The variable elements in the problem pertain rather to the accessibility or inaccessibility of the truth in contemplation, the mediateness or immediateness with which it presents itself to the mind, the readiness or inability of the perceiving faculty to respond, and the rational consequences that follow the perceiving act.

At the bottom of our inquiry lies the question whether we can properly be said to believe more than we know. To the question, thus put, no unqualified answer can be given. Everything must wait upon our definition of terms. And we no sooner attempt to define these well-worn words than we find that we are assuming certain whole systems of philosophy to be true and rejecting certain others as false. This being so, we must content ourselves with what we find to be the best prevailing usage and with adhering as far as possible to that. Augustine says, "Credere nihil aliud est quam cum assensione cogitare." It will be noted that this conception is entirely general, and not merely theological. Kant makes belief to occupy a sort of middle ground between guessing, on the one side, in which we are conscious that the evidence is not convincing either to ourselves or to others, and

### III.

## THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF EZRA.

VIEWED as a literary product, the Book of Ezra presents two striking phenomena, shared by only one other book of the Bible. These are, the use of two languages side by side, and the alternation of the first with the third person. Besides these peculiarities which lie on the surface, there are others whose explanation is not less perplexing to the thoughtful reader. As a rule, criticism of this book has blended the historical with the literary evidence in such a manner that the latter, instead of being used as a handmaid to the former, has been degraded into a mere tool, whose nice edge has suffered severely from the violent uses to which it has been put. It rather behoves the scientific student to settle first its literary problems by the usual literary considerations, before he attempts to apply his results in this sphere to the solution of those passionately debated historical problems which centre in the Book of Ezra.

The literary study of any book that presents a composite of various elements, takes the form of a two-fold inquiry, corresponding to the two senses of the word "composition." As a product, the book itself lies before us for examination. The first duty, therefore, is a search for its sources. But there is also the act or process of composition, and this, with its date, author and attendant circumstances, demands the presentation of the most reasonable hypothesis suggested by the conclusions already reached. In advance, however, of all such inquiry, there must be a careful analysis of the several components of the book as it lies before us, which may serve as a working basis for the investigation. The following division of the subject, therefore, presents itself as the most natural one: I. Analysis of the Book. II. Sources of the Book. III. Authorship of the Book.

#### I. ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK.

There are three distinct types of literary product in the Book of Ezra. There is, first, the personal narrative of Ezra himself, to which is generally given, for the sake of brevity, the title "memoirs." Next, there are a number of incorporated docu-

ments, not worked over into the narrative, but embodied in their documentary form. Lastly, there is the ordinary historical narrative in the third person, such as constitutes the bulk of any historical work. Of these, the first alone proceeds uninterrupted by the insertion of portions belonging to the other two. These latter groups so interpenetrate, throughout the book, that they require a further subdivision. For convenience' sake, therefore, the book may best be separated into the following eight divisions:

1. The "I"-sections—vii. 27–ix.
2. The Aramaic correspondence in Darius' reign—v. 6–vi. 12.
3. The Aramaic correspondence in Artaxerxes' reign—iv. 6–23.
4. The Aramaic letter of Artaxerxes to Ezra—vii. 11–26.
5. The list of those who first returned—ii.
6. The Aramaic narrative-sections—iv. 24–v. 5 ; vi. 13–18.
7. The Hebrew narrative-sections of the first half—i ; iii. 1–iv. 5 ; vi. 19–22.
8. The Hebrew narrative-sections of the second half—vii. 1–10 ; x.\*

1. The "I"-Sections—vii. 27–ix.

These fall naturally into three parts of unequal length: *A.* A benediction of Jehovah, and a proleptic statement of what is to follow—vii. 27f. *B.* A list of those who returned from Babylon with Ezra, giving the name of the head, and the number of the private members, of each "father's house"—viii. 1–14. *C.* The narrative of Ezra's return, and of the first intimation given him of the foreign marriages, closing with his prayer concerning them—viii. 15–ix.

2. The Aramaic Correspondence in Darius' Reign—v. 6–vi. 12.

The earliest of the Aramaic official documents in the Book of Ezra is the letter of Tattenai, governor of the Persian province of Abar-naharah, to Darius Hystaspis, about the year 519, concerning the Jews' activity in building their temple. It purports to be a copy of the original letter. With this are associated the reply of Darius, and a fragment of the decree of Cyrus concerning the building of the temple. The transition to the reply is effected not by a formal reproduction of the opening formula of the king's letter, but by a very brief narrative of the intervening events which made the reply possible. In this way, also, the transition from the incorporated fragment of Cyrus' decree to the

\* The order in which these sections have been numbered has been determined partly by chronological considerations, partly on linguistic grounds. Nos. 2–5 belong to the second, and Nos. 6–8 to the third, of the three types referred to above. To save space, the sections will be referred to by their corresponding numbers.

words of Darius' letter is rendered sudden and informal. This section may therefore be subdivided as follows: *A.* The letter of Tattenai—v. 6-17. *B.* Transitional narrative—vi. 1f. *C.* Copy of the memorandum preserved in the archives, of the decree of Cyrus concerning the temple at Jerusalem—vi. 3-5. *D.* The answer of Darius to Tattenai's letter—vi. 6-12.

3. The Aramaic Correspondence in Artaxerxes' Reign—iv. 6-23.

These eighteen verses\* have been the object of more contention and the basis for more misunderstanding than any other part of the Book of Ezra. Proceeding from the unwarranted assumption that chronological sequence is the only proper principle of classification of historical material, which an historian has to organize into a work that shall be a true history and not a mere chronicle, critics of quite opposite schools of thought have reached equally unjust conclusions respecting this section—conclusions which have generally affected in no small degree their judgment of the composition and value of the whole book. One class of critics, blinded by this false presupposition, have refused to see in the plain words of the passage before them the meaning which they were obviously intended to convey. They have not hesitated to rename the Persian kings, or to make "walls" mean "temple," rather than surrender their faith in this chronological principle. Another class of critics, justly insisting that the passage shall be interpreted to mean what it says, are led to a false view of its relation to its immediate context, and consequently to unfair deductions as to the reliability of the author of the book. Against both classes must be strenuously maintained the privilege of the historian, ancient or modern, to complete an episode upon whose narration he has entered—even though the end of it may reach far beyond the times of which he has been writing—provided it is his desire to bring out the *logical* oneness or continuity of the whole episode. With the first verses of the fourth chapter, the writer begins an account of the origin of that opposition to the reinstatement of the Jewish nation on the part of the Samaritans, which was destined to become a permanent heritage of hatred between the two nations down to late Roman times. The beginning of the narrative is chronologically suggested, and therefore introduced at that point. But having once begun it, the writer chooses to carry on the account of the Samaritan opposition through the reigns of successive Persian kings down to the point where the final solution was reached in the work of Nehemiah. At its conclusion, the writer returns to the point where

\* For justification of the inclusion of vers. 6 and 7 with vers. 8-23, see p. 271.



the chronological sequence may be resumed, now again under the former organizing idea, viz., the building of the temple.

Analysis of the section : *A.* A statement of the form that the Samaritan opposition took in the reign of Ahasuerus (*Gr.* Xerxes), the successor of the Darius mentioned in the preceding verse. This was a written accusation of the Jews at court, but its contents is not given—ver. 6. *B.* A brief notice of a communication from certain men, not named, to Artaxerxes, the successor of Xerxes. This communication must have concerned the Jewish undertakings, but is probably to be distinguished from the following letter—ver. 7. *C.* An exchange of Aramaic letters between officials of a portion of the province of Abar-naharah, and the king Artaxerxes—vers. 8-23. *a.* The letter from the officials to the king, urging him to forbid the continuance of the wall-building at Jerusalem—vers. 8-17. *b.* The king's answer, directing the issuance of a decree by the local authorities that the work cease until further word come from him—vers. 18-22. *c.* A statement of the forcible execution of the king's directions—ver. 23.

#### 4. The Aramaic Letter of Artaxerxes to Ezra—vii. 11-26.

This document is the longest of the Aramaic documents of the Book of Ezra, containing above 250 words. It purports to give an exact copy of the original firman which Ezra received from the royal chancellery, and on the basis of which he accomplished his mission. Besides the document itself, we have only the introductory statement in Hebrew of the significance of the accompanying letter.

#### 5. The "List of Those Who First Returned"—chap. ii.

The only Hebrew document that deserves to be sundered from the narrative in which it is embedded, and studied as an independent section, is the list contained in chap. ii of Ezra, which we find again, with some variations, in chap. vii of Nehemiah. And it is just because of this repetition of the list, and the literary problems which this raises, that the document must be considered by itself. Analysis of its contents : *A.* A statement of the significance of the succeeding list, viz., the names of those who returned from Babylon to Judah with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and their ten\* chief associates—ver. 1f. *B.* Names and numbers of those who returned—vers. 3-58. *C.* Those who were not properly registered—vers. 59-63. *D.* Summation of the caravan, including servants and beasts of burden—vers. 64-67. *E.* Gifts for the temple—ver. 68f. *F.* A concluding remark that all the

\* The Hebrew text of Ezra omits one of these, Nahamani, to be supplied from Neh. The LXX. text of Neh. gives fourteen names.

classes returning settled down in their new life in the repossessed land—ver. 70. To this should be added the first verse of chap. iii, which belongs, indeed, according to its contents, to that chapter, but may best be studied in connection with chap. ii, on account of its similarity to Neh. viii. 1.

6. The Aramaic Narrative-Sections—iv. 24–v. 5 ; vi. 13–18.

The bulk of the Aramaic portion of Ezra is occupied by the six letters or decrees (or portions of such) recorded therein. But it is one of the surprises which the book presents to its readers, that this language is not limited to the documentary sections, but is employed also to a certain extent in the historical narrative adjoining these. The two small sections marked by this peculiarity may be analyzed thus: *A.* From the stopping of work under Cyrus to the visit of Tattenai—iv. 24–v. 5. *a.* Statement of stopping of work on the temple—iv. 24. *b.* Beginning of work on the temple under Darius—v. 1f. *c.* Inquiry by Tattenai as to the Jews' authority to undertake the work—v. 3–5. *B.* Completion of the temple—vi. 13–18. *a.* Tattenai's execution of the orders of Darius—vi. 13. *b.* Completion of the temple, and date of the same—vi. 14f. *c.* Dedication of the temple—vi. 16–18.

7. The Hebrew Narrative-Sections of the First Half—i ; iii. 1–iv. 5 ; vi. 19–22.

While a portion of the narrative material in the first six chapters is, as has just been remarked, in Aramaic, yet the major portion of it, constituting in fact nearly one-third of this half of Ezra, is written in Hebrew. It therefore comes nearer to forming a framework into which the other parts may be conceived as being fitted, than does any other set of passages in this very composite book. Its writer has given us a homogeneous and straightforward narrative, in which even documentary material such as that in chap. i has been strictly subordinated. Analysis of this material: *A.* The return in the reign of Cyrus—chap. i. *a.* Jeremiah's prophecy is declared fulfilled in a decree of Cyrus—ver. 1. *b.* The decree of Cyrus—vers. 2–4. *c.* The outcome of the decree—vers. 5–11. *B.* From the erection of the altar to the reign of Darius—iii. 1–iv. 5. *a.* First assembly of the community, erection of the altar, resumption of regular and special offerings, and first preparations for the temple—iii. 1–7. *b.* Beginning of work on the temple, and ceremonies attending the laying of the foundation—iii. 8–13. *c.* Application of the Samaritans to share in the building and worship, rejection of their request, and their consequent opposition from Cyrus' reign till that of Darius—iv. 1–5. *C.* Celebration of the Passover in the sixth year of Darius, amidst general rejoicing over the completion of the temple—vi. 9–22.

8. The Narrative-Sections of the Second Half (excl. the "I"-sections)—vii. 1-10; x.

The only remaining portions of Ezra are those Narrative-Sections dealing with Ezra's activity, which are differentiated by the use of the third person concerning him. They may be analyzed thus: *A.* Introduction to the second half of Ezra—vii. 1-10. *a.* Ezra's lineage and personality—vers. 1-6. *b.* Summary statement of his return, giving dates—vers. 7-9. *c.* Ezra's motive—ver. 10. *B.* The action concerning the foreign marriages—chap. x. *a.* The plan—vers. 1-6. *b.* The assembly—vers. 7-15. *c.* The commission—vers. 16f. *d.* The offenders—vers. 18-44.

## II. SOURCES OF THE BOOK.

Having thus briefly analyzed the book as it lies before us, we are prepared to ascertain the literary history that lies back of it. This search for the sources may be most easily prosecuted by studying the *literary relation* of the eight divisions of the book. The following order therefore commends itself as the best means of reaching the result aimed at in this section:

1. First half: relation of the Aramaic documents (2, 3) to the Aramaic narrative (6).

2. First half: relation of the list (5) to the Hebrew narrative (7).

3. First half: relation of the Aramaic portion (2, 3, 6) to the Hebrew portion (5, 7.)

4. Second half: relation of Artaxerxes' letter (4) to the memoirs (1).

5. Second half: relation of the memoirs (1, incl. 4) to the narrative in the third person (8).

6. Relation of the two halves of the book.

1. Relation of the Aramaic Documents to the Aramaic Narrative.

In the search for sources, the only question that can arise in connection with the relation of one section to another is this—has or has not the one section been framed expressly to fit the other? And specifically in the case under examination, the question is, has the narrative been framed with a view to the documents, and have the documents been introduced at the points where the narrative required them? In answering this question, there are data to be observed in connection with both of the sections which have been numbered 2 and 3 in the foregoing analysis. First in order come those in connection with 2.

*A.* The data in connection with chaps. v and vi.

*i.* Vers. 1-5 of chap. v are designed to introduce vers. 6ff. For

vers. 1f. give the chief actors on the Jewish side, and the work in which they were engaged; cf. ver. 8. Ver. 3 gives the chief actors on the Persian side, and the reason for their concern in the work; cf. vers. 6-9. Ver. 4 gives the question, What are the builders' names? which is repeated in ver. 10, and answered (together with the answer to the previous question in ver. 3, ver. 9) in vers. 11-16. And ver. 5 directly introduces the documents which follow, by the words *נשתנא על-דנא* and *טעמא לדריוש*. Indeed, the connection between vers. 3-5 and the following document is so close as occasionally to become not only material, but also formal. The very words of vers. 3-5 especially echo the words of the letter. Thus, compare:

"Who gave you a decree to build this house, and to finish this wall?" (vers. 3, 9).

"The names of the men." (vers. 4, 10 [slight variation in original]).

"The elders" (vers. 5, 9); *על-דנא*, (vers. 5, 17); and, most striking of all, the mistake (for such it must be considered) which has crept into the Massoretic text, of *אמרנא* for *אמרו* or *אמרין*, whereby the narrator in ver. 4 is made to write from the point of view of the authors of the letter, cf. ver. 10.

ii. Chap. vi. 1f. bind together the documents v. 6-17 and vi. 3-12. For, in the first place, these two verses contain the sequel to the recommendation contained in vi. 17. The Syrian governor and his associates urge that "search be made in the king's treasure-house which is there at Babylon:" and the narrative in vi. 1 informs us that "search was made in the house where the treasures were laid up in Babylon." Here is sequence in both fact and form. And in the second place, these two verses contain the introduction to the document that follows. Achmetha or Ecbatana (ver. 2) was well known as the summer capital of Cyrus (ver. 3). And the words, "a roll, and therein was thus written," are obviously introductory to the letter which follows, headed by the apparently technical word *רכרונה*, "memorandum." Moreover, it will be found that, within the body of the document itself, at ver. 6, the abrupt transition from the words of Cyrus to those of Darius is unintelligible without the narrative in vers. 1f. We should be surprised to find Darius writing to Tattenai and his companions, if we had not previously been told that Darius acceded to the recommendations of the official (v. 17) and ordered the search made (vi. 1).

iii. Chap. vi. 13ff. is designed to complete vers. 3-12. "Then Tattenai," and "because that Darius the king had sent" (ver. 13), evidently point to the document just preceding. "Cyrus"



and "Darius" (ver. 14) both point back to the documents. And in the general substance of the passage, we have the description of the logical outcome in action of what in the documents is only on paper.

The conclusion from these data, therefore, is that as far as the correspondence under Darius is concerned, the documents and the narrative in which they are imbedded constitute a literary unity; for the latter was framed to fit and supplement the former.

*The Unity of v. 1-vi. 15.*—Before leaving this section and passing on to the data of the fourth chapter, it becomes necessary to notice the attempt which has been made by Dr. W. H. Koster\* to divide the narrative and documents of the fifth and sixth chapters into two independent parts. These parts he then assigns to two sources, A and B, whose authors wrote at different periods, and under different impressions as to the course of events in the reigns of Cyrus and Darius. To A he assigns v. 1-10 and vi. 6-15, and either ver. 1 or ver. 2 of chap. vi. To B he assigns all the rest, except certain phrases in v. 8, vi. 10 and 14b, which to him betray the redactor.

The reasons that he gives for this division are the following: (1) The contradictory representations (v. 1-5, cf. ver. 16 and vi. 3ff). (2) The broken connection (vi. 1, cf. ver. 6). (3) The occurrence of a "doublet" (vi. 1, cf. ver. 2).

Now the historical presuppositions and deductions in which this literary theory is imbedded in Koster's book do not at present concern us. Yet, upon examination, the impartial critic cannot help feeling that he has framed his literary theory as a "Nothbehelf" to his historical thesis. Not only are two of the arguments which he advances dependent even for their comprehension upon his peculiar views as to the origin of the Jewish community, and even so quite easily answered by a fair interpretation of the text, but the Leyden professor has not even attempted to meet the arguments for the unity of the passage as they obtrude themselves upon the notice of the most casual reader. Van Hoonacker† has answered the arguments of Koster and has advanced what seem to be incontrovertible proofs that the opposite position is correct. Without entering here, as he does, into any historical questions, the following arguments will be found to present substantially the same considerations:

(1) It is true that v. 16 says that Sheshbazzar "came and laid

\* In his book, *Het Herstel van Israel in het Perzische Tijdvak*, Leyden, 1893, pp. 26-29.

† In his *Nouvelles Etudes sur la Restauration Juive après l'Exil de Babylone*, pp. 20-27.

the foundations of the house," and ver. 2 *does* say that Zerubbabel and others "began to build the house." Yet these two statements are not contradictory. For, (a) the word "began" might fairly be used of a work interrupted fifteen or more years before. (So also Stade and Meyer.) If the question of the identity of Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar has any bearing at all here, those who deny that identity (as Kusters) should be the last to object to this verb. (b) The word "to build," instead of some such expression as "to work on," is clearly shown to be appropriate to the situation when it is considered, first, that a distinction is gratuitously made in ver. 16 between "the foundations" and "the house," of which the latter alone is referred to in ver. 2; and second, that in vi. 7 the very same expression is used of the same work, where no one will pretend that there is any question of a first beginning. (c) It is on the ground of the same decree of Cyrus by virtue of which Sheshbazzar laid the foundations (vers. 13-16), that the Jews defend themselves for this much later work of building the temple. Hence arises their representation of it all as one work. They did not claim, nor would they have either wished or dared to claim, that the work was one, in the sense of uninterrupted continuity, but in the sense of a single undertaking yet but partly finished. Thus from an official standpoint it was one work, from the second year of Cyrus to the sixth year of Darius; but from the practical, popular, Jewish standpoint, the undertaking in the second year of Darius was a new beginning. And this is the standpoint shared alike by ver. 2, and the books of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah therein mentioned.

(2) It is true that there is an abrupt transition at vi. 6. But this does not argue for a diversity of documents, whose awkward suture is here discernible. For in the first place, this may be due to a lacuna in our present text, which did not exist in the original. Kusters admits the possibility of this. And in the second place, even if original, it cannot be used to prove a diversity of documents, because it may be due to the original author quite as well as to a redactor of two separate documents. The question here is—be it well noted—of the junction of two separate documents in the first instance. In a very real sense the original author is a redactor of these two documents of Cyrus and Darius. Why may *he* have caused the abrupt transition, as well as a redactor of two later literary documents in which these two official documents were respectively contained? Kusters' conjecture falls of its own weight.

(3) It is true that the first two verses of chap. vi are very unex-

PLICIT and summary in their character. But the attempt to divide them between two sources, A and B, must fail. For, in the first place, this is to demand too much of the writer. It is beyond his purpose to indicate more than the bare facts, that search was made at Babylon as recommended, and that the object of the search was found not there, but at Ecbatana. And in the second place, we know that document A of Kesters, as well as document B, must have contained not only a letter from the governor to the king (v. 6), and a reply from the king (vi. 6ff.), but also some data as to a writ found by the king at Babylon or Ecbatana. Kesters admits this, but simply says: "What this document was, or what it contained, we do not know." In opposition to this, it can be shown that we can know what that document was, as the so-called A-passages permit us to reconstruct it. It must, as Van Hoonacker points out, have been concerned with the temple (v. 8, vi. 7), an official document of the Persian central government (vi. 1 *or* 2), of an earlier reign than that of Darius, (because search had to be made for it, yet this occurred at the beginning of Darius' reign), and by a king favorable to the Jews and their temple (for vi. 6-12 proves this conclusively), therefore necessarily by Cyrus. In short, it must have been just such a document as vi. 3-5; or, as it is now fair to reassert with entire confidence, none other than that document itself.

Further proof, of a more positive nature, that the so-called documents A and B never had an existence save in Kesters' mind, is not far to seek. Vers. 11-17 of chap. v are indissolubly bound to vers. 6-10, for the former answer the questions which the latter ask. To the question (ver. 9), "Who gave you a decree?" vers. 13-15 give the reply "Cyrus." To the question in ver. 10 (cf. ver. 4), "What are the names of the head-builders?" comes the answer in ver. 16, "Sheshbazzar." Still more striking is the collocation of words in ver. 11, compared with vers. 9 and 10. After two successive questions (שאלנא), comes the corresponding reply, ונכנא פהגמא התיכונא (the Heb. ה'שיב רבר), "And thus they returned answer." Furthermore, vers. 1 and 2 of chap. vi are firmly bound together and to their context. Ver. 2 evidently leads up to ver. 3; yet it just as evidently points back to ver. 1, for, as Van Hoonacker observes, a thing is scarcely said to be "found" (ver. 2), unless it has been the object of a "search" (ver. 1). And finally, ver. 1 is certainly the sequel of v. 17, yet vi. 3 is also intimately connected with v. 17. The attempt to divide this "doublet" can only issue in failure.

B. The data in connection with chap. iv.

The relation between the Aramaic narrative and the documents

embodied therein is thus seen to be one involving the unity of the two in an original Aramaic work. But this conclusion has been drawn thus far only from the data of chaps. v and vi. It remains to inquire whether this result will be confirmed or contradicted by the data of chap. iv.

i. It may have occasioned some surprise to find that in the analysis of the book, vers. 6 and 7 of chap. iv were included in the Aramaic section though they are not in that language but in Hebrew. The reason for this, however, will be clear upon a closer examination of the verses themselves. For it seems highly probable that these two verses, like their succeeding context, were originally in Aramaic, but that, in view of the immediately preceding context, they were translated into Hebrew. In proof of this may be urged the following considerations: *a.* The parallelism of vers. 6, 7 and 8. But ver. 8 is in Aramaic; hence the presumption that vers. 6 and 7 once were also. *b.* The expressions **קֶרֶה** (Qeré), which occurs only here in a Hebrew passage; and **נִשְׁתָּן**, which, though a Persian word, occurs elsewhere only in Aramaic sections (except in vii. 11, where also there was manifestly an Aramaic original). *c.* A comparison of the use of the preposition **עַל** in these verses, reveals the fact that in ver. 7 this preposition is used in its Aramaic sense, meaning "unto," (Heb. **אֵל**), not "against," as in Hebrew. It is most naturally explained here as a remnant of the Aramaic original. *d.* In ver. 7 it is expressly stated, and in ver. 6 we have every reason to suppose, that the letters of which they speak were written in Aramaic. But these verses are, as Meyer\* points out, practically copies of the headings or endorsements with which these documents, as state archives, were provided. It is urged then, that vers. 6-8 show such a progression of thought, logically and chronologically, that they must be regarded as the designed setting for the letters by which they are, or were originally, followed. Ver. 8 is the immediate narrative-introduction to vers 9-16; the word **נִמְנָה** proves this. But vers. 6 and 7 served also originally as the narrative-introductions to two similar Aramaic documents which have been omitted from the Book of Ezra. The present contention, however, is simply this: *if* vers. 6 and 7 are to be considered as translations from the Aramaic, and so a part of the Aramaic section, then they also evidence themselves as framed with a view to the documents, all uniting together in the unity of the original Aramaic source.

ii. Vers. 17 and 23 are narrative verses that so evidently connect or complete the Aramaic documents with which they are

\* In his book, *Die Entstehung des Judenthums*, p. 26.



bound up, that no one has ventured to assert they have not been framed to fit the documents.

iii. With ver. 24 a more serious problem is encountered. Great diversity of opinion has prevailed among critics as to the origin and connection of this verse. It is obvious that in subject-matter it is the sequel to ver. 5. But the following questions at once present themselves: (1) What is the connecting force of "then," with which this verse opens? (2) Why is this verse in Aramaic, while ver. 5 is in Hebrew? (3) What is the connection between this verse and v. 1, the verse which immediately follows it? The answers to these questions will have an important bearing upon the final result of the present inquiry, and at the same time will serve to introduce the later discussion of the third main problem of this division, viz., the relation between the Aramaic and Hebrew portions of the book.

Occasion has already been taken to reject as unfair treatment of the problem which this verse is largely responsible for raising, both the view that vers. 6-23 *must* refer to events before Darius' reign, and also the view that the author or editor of the book *must* have been mistaken in arranging his material in the present order. In opposition to both these views it was maintained that the Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes of these verses are the two great Persian monarchs elsewhere designated by these names; and that the author who thus arranged his facts did so not out of ignorance, but with the organizing idea of Samaritan opposition through the successive reigns from Cyrus to Artaxerxes. Now on this view of the much-discussed fourth chapter of Ezra, ver. 24 has been inserted where it stands, in order, first, to lead back the thought of the intelligent reader to the point where the purely chronological sequence was abandoned, viz., ver. 5; and thus, second, to prepare the way for the narrative which is immediately to follow.

The three questions above suggested may now be answered directly.

(1) בארין, a temporal adverb compounded of the preposition ב and ארין (בארין for בארין), strictly "at then" or "at that time," is used interchangeably in Ezra and Daniel with the simple ארין as a connective particle expressing sequence of time. In every case except one it is placed first in the clause, and everywhere except in that one case it seems to refer to the time of the action described in the verse immediately preceding. In Daniel vii. 11, however, it seems to be used in a somewhat looser manner, and to have reference more to ver. 8 than to ver. 9f. Moreover, the accuracy and preciseness of time-definition imputed to this particle, have by some writers been unwarrantably exaggerated. At

the same time, these points need not be pressed beyond the simple conclusion that **בְּאַרְיִן** may be fairly regarded as a somewhat loose connective, expressive of temporal sequence, combined perhaps in this case with a notion of inferential resumption, such as the English "then" or "so then" conveys—a usage to which **כֵּן** in vi. 6 may be regarded as analogous, "now" or "now therefore" (as in R. V.).

(2) Ver. 24 has been written in Aramaic, in view of the fact that it immediately follows a narrative verse in Aramaic, and is in turn followed by a narrative section in the same language. Its *position*, in other words, is sufficient to account for the tongue in which it is written, without necessarily referring it to the same source as ver. 23 or v. 1ff.

(3) It has been placed where it is *primarily* as an introduction to v. 1. For, first, v. 1 contains no statement of the date of the events which it narrates; this is supplied for it by iv. 24. And second, whatever may be thought of iv. 6-23, the beginning of v. 1 must be considered too abrupt to be embodied in an historical work, without some introduction to prepare the way for the new scene which it describes. And this preparation iv. 24 gives by the statement that the work on the temple ceased and remained in a state of cessation (**וְהָיָה כְּטָלָא**) until the second year of Darius—a year memorable in the history of Israel from the ministry of the noted prophets just about to be mentioned (in v. 1).

The conclusion of this examination of ver. 24, therefore, is the assignment of its *position* to the same hand as placed vers. 6-23 where they are. As to its original composition, judgment must be deferred until the origin of vers. 1-5 of this chapter has been investigated.

The *results* of this section of the inquiry may then be summed up thus: One of the sources of the Book of Ezra was an Aramaic account of independent events in the establishment of the Jewish community, extending at least from the second year of Darius to a point well on in the reign of Artaxerxes.\* It embodied the official documents concerned with the external opposition which the Jews encountered during that period; and documents and

\* Van Hoonacker, in his *Zorobabel et le Second Temple*, Chap. v, Sec. 4, attempts to prove that iv. 6-23 is from another source than v. 1-vi. 18. But until a stronger case can be made out than he there presents, it may be taken for granted, as most critics do, that both Aramaic sections are from the same source. Van Hoonacker himself, after enumerating a number of divergences, which in fact appear to be only fortuitous or else natural under the circumstances, admits "certain similarities," but says that these "prove nothing." Would it not be quite as rational to enumerate the similarities, and then, admitting that there are certain divergences, say that *these* prove nothing?

narrative were so fitted to one another, that the work, though professedly using written sources, yet exhibited true literary unity. Of the date and authorship of this historical composition this is not the place to speak.

## 2. Relation of the List (Chap. ii) to the Hebrew Narrative.

The question here is whether the narrative leads up to and follows naturally upon, the list. The data from which this question is to be answered are the following :

A. Chap. i. 5-11 prepares for the information contained in ii. 1ff. in such a way that the narrative, though brief and summary, is not incomplete. This view has been challenged by Bertheau-Ryssel,\* following Ewald.† These writers, taking the ground that “ we find no information in our present Book of Ezra, as to the departure from Babylon and the journey to Jerusalem,” have recourse to 1 Esdras v. 1-6 to supply this gap. But apart from the fact that those who take this ground find it necessary to reconstruct largely the text of these verses, the underlying presupposition must be pronounced false, because unnecessary and forced. Chap. i does not indeed say in any independent sentence with a finite verb, that “ Sheshbazzar brought up them of the captivity from Babylon to Jerusalem,” nor does it give any of the details of the journey such as Esdras contains.‡ But in so summary an account as chap. i obviously professes to be, and especially in regard to a fact that was so well known to every reader as to make the statement of it almost superfluous, no good reason appears for holding that there is a gap in the narrative at the end of chap. i. In vs. 5 and 11 of that chapter, all the elements of the statement are contained. And especially in the words **עֲסֵהְלוֹת הַגּוֹלָה מִכְּבַל לִירוּשָׁלַם**, which immediately precede the opening words of the second chapter, there stands the explicit statement sought for by these critics, though in the form of a subordinate clause.§

\* In the commentary by these writers (1st ed. Bertheau, 2d ed. Ryssel), in the series *Kurzgefasstes Exeg. Hdb. zum A. T.*, pp. 12 ff.

† In *Geschichte d. V. Isr.*, 2d ed., Vol. iv, p. 96, N. 2.

‡ Those details appear rather to be fanciful and utterly unhistorical. So far from its being the case that “ we are everywhere immediately reminded of the Chronicler’s manner of representation ” (Bert.-Rys.), in proof of which 1 Chron. xiii. 8 is compared, the “ manner of representation ” will be found to be much nearer that of the fanciful material in Esdras iii and iv (cf. especially iv. 47 and iii. 1f.). That 1 Chron. xiii. 8 is no more characteristic of “ the Chronicler ” than of any writer who would describe that memorable scene in Israel’s history, is seen by a comparison of it with 2 Sam. vi. 5.

§ Schrader (who surely cannot be accused of any partiality for the Hebrew text), in his famous monograph in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1867, refuses to see in these verses of Esdras either an account of the return in question, or in fact any evidence of their having come from the author of Ezra i.

*B.* There are passages in the document, ii. 1–iii. 1, which give evidence of having been intentionally changed from the form in which we find them in Neh. vii. 6–viii. 1*a*. And some of these alterations have been made in view of the narrative which is to follow in chap. iii.

As intimated above, in connection with the analysis of this chapter, the literary criticism of the list is rendered difficult, owing to the problems raised by comparison of the two forms in which it occurs in Ezra and Nehemiah. There are a large number of divergences between the two accounts, some obviously intentional, *e. g.*, those between Ezra ii. 68*f.* and Neh. vii. 70–72, and others certainly due to errors in transcription. The latter class is by far the more numerous, amounting altogether to a large sum. Moreover, the task of critical comparison of these two passages is rendered more difficult by this very phenomenon of a corrupted and conformed text; and the existence of a third, a fourth and a fifth form of the same section, in the LXX. Esdras A and Esdras B (*bis*), still further complicates the task. Now there are only three possible, and mutually exclusive, solutions of this problem. (1) The passage in Ezra may have been derived from that in Nehemiah, directly or indirectly. (2) The passage in Nehemiah may have been copied from that in Ezra. And (3), both passages may have been drawn from a common source, each independently of the other. The choice must lie with one of these three. And as already announced, the facts pronounce in favor of the first of the three.

An exhaustive comparison of the various forms in which this list occurs would require a separate treatise, and must be dispensed with. And there is justification for omitting so arduous a task, not because it would be long and tedious, but because it is unnecessary, provided the proposition advanced can be demonstrated without it. And this appears to be accomplished by the two following lines of argument, the first negative, the second positive :

*i.* The second of the three possible solutions is excluded, because Nehemiah's language in Neh. vii. 5 shows that he derived this document from the archives, and not from a book. It is inconceivable that Nehemiah should say that he "found" the list of those who first returned, and that he "found written therein" thus and so, if he simply copied this list from a well-known, public historical work on the Jewish Restoration.\* But again, neither can the third of the three solutions be adopted, because we have very clear indication that the two forms of the document are not

\* Cf. Ezr. 2, where "found" is used of a search in a house of archives.



independent of each other. This is evident from the remarkable manner in which the opening verses in the succeeding narratives in Ezra and Nehemiah correspond. The mind refuses to rest content in the hypothesis that this is mere chance. It seems clear that *the writer who copied the one list from the other* (making free alterations from his original, especially toward the end of the document), *found that the opening words of the succeeding narrative fitted so perfectly* (within certain limits, as will presently be shown) *the situation which he himself was about to describe, that he adopted the sentence bodily and literally*, up to the point where the events themselves differed and hence required different language. By the process of exclusion, therefore, the result is reached, that the first solution is the correct one; that the list as it is in Ezra is derived from the list as it is in Nehemiah.

ii. As already remarked, the intentional changes, that is, those which cannot be referred to errors of transmission, find their chief manifestation in vers. 68f, compared with Neh. vii. 70-72. The case may well be rested, in this positive side of the argument, upon the evidence which these two verses furnish. In the first place, the three classes of contributors to the work in Neh. vii. 70-72, viz., "the Tirshatha," "heads of fathers' houses," and "the rest of the people," have in Ezra been combined into one undivided class—"some of the heads of the fathers' houses."\* In the second place, the sums named separately in Nehemiah have evidently been added together to form the totals in Ezra. The numerous variations of the Hebrew text and of the LXX. (where often each codex gives a different reading) are in such a hopeless condition of divergence and contradiction, that with our present knowledge we are not justified in imputing to the writer of Ezra ii. any error in computation or any desire to exaggerate, though in two or three cases he seems to have preferred to give the "round number" nearest to the actual total.† And in the third place, the fund to which these contributions are made, is in Neh. "the work," "the treasury," and "the treasury of the work," while in Ezra it is designated—and that but once—"the treasury of the work." Again, the same conclusion is reached, that the first of the three solutions is the correct one. The soundness of this conclusion is, not indeed established, but certainly confirmed, by the fact that it is the result reached by almost all who have made a special study of these chapters.

\* That our author was justified in so terming the givers, in view of his evident desire for brevity, is plain from the fact that "the Tirshatha" is clearly regarded as himself one of "the heads of fathers' houses" (cf. Neh. vii. 70b with 70a), and that, with the gifts of this official included, the total contributed by the leaders constituted more than half of the entire sum.

† So apparently 100 for 97 and 5000 for 4700.

If, then, the list may be considered a free copy of Neh. vii, it becomes an easy task to show that certain changes made by the one who thus copied it, have been made by him in view of the situation about to be described in chap. iii. Three such changes will suffice to establish this point; they are all drawn from ver. 68. "When they came to the house of Jehovah which is in Jerusalem;" this clause is peculiar to the form in Ezra, and obviously has been introduced in view of the narrative to follow (cf. iii. 2, 6, 8). "They offered willingly for the house of God;" there is nothing in Nehemiah to answer to this phrase (but cf. Ezra iii. 7 and 9; iv. 3). "To set it up in its place;" this has most clear reference to the succeeding account (cf. iii. 8-10, etc.).

C. Chap. iii takes up the narrative at the point where the document (chap. ii) stops. The document itself appears to come to an end with ver. 70. The first verse of chap. iii belongs, as far as subject-matter is concerned, to the narrative of its own chapter. It is due only to the fact that the writer, who drew his list from Nehemiah, found the opening sentences of the following narration ready to hand for beginning what he himself was about to relate, that he adopted the very language of that verse as far as the words **כִּאִשׁ אַחֵר**. The few slight alterations in form up to that point seem to be in the direction of greater smoothness in the progress of the thought. Ver. 2 is plainly designed to continue the account of ver. 1. Thus the whole passage from ii. 68 to iii. 2 shows all the marks of continuity of thought and community of origin.

In brief, then, the *results* of this second section of this inquiry are as follows: One of the sources of the Book of Ezra is a Hebrew narrative, beginning with the edict of Cyrus, and extending at least to the second year of Darius' reign. This embodied official documents relating to that period, which the writer felt free to alter in form, with the end in view of bringing them into closer touch with the surrounding narrative. Whether or not this can be identified with the Aramaic source already found; whether more material will be discovered in the Book of Ezra to refer to this source, and whether it is itself (excepting the documents) without any literary antecedents—all these questions remain to be answered in the sequel.

3. Relation of the Aramaic Portion to the Hebrew Portion (in the First Half).

The tentative results which have been reached in regard to each of the two groups of sections thus far considered, must now be taken up and either confirmed or altered, in accordance with indi-

cations furnished by these sources themselves and their relation to each other.

As already remarked, one of the surprises of the Book of Ezra is its use of the two languages side by side, not merely in the embodiment of documents in one tongue, in a narrative in another, but in the alternation of the two tongues within the primary narrative of the book. Behind this strange phenomenon there must lie some literary history. Some have tried to answer the question which rises naturally in every mind, by pointing to the existence of the two languages side by side in the Jewish nation at that period, and to the undoubted familiarity of all literary men of the time with both these branches of the common Semitic stock. The inference is, that as a result of this, there was such utter indifference on the part of both writers and readers to the language used, that a writer might almost insensibly be led to continue the use of the language in which the official documents that he copied were written, until some trivial circumstance or change of subject reminded him of the language he was using, and caused him immediately to revert to the other. But this account seems unsatisfactory as an explanation of the facts of the case. To the question, Why is this section in this language and not in the other? it can only answer, Because the writer so wrote it. To rest content in this is to proclaim an effect without a cause; a position of complete critical agnosticism on the subject is surely preferable. But happily this is not the only alternative. There does, in fact, lie back of this a literary history which is discoverable at least in part to painstaking criticism.

In an earlier section it has been remarked that the conclusions reached as to ver. 24 of chap. iv would serve as an introduction to the main problem of the first half of Ezra—the relation between its Aramaic and its Hebrew sections. Those conclusions were three: first, that the verse is resumptive in its nature (*viz.*, resumptive of vers. 1–5, as the subject-matter shows); second, that it need not be referred to the Aramaic source in which it is imbedded, as an explanation of its being written in Aramaic; and, third, that it is primarily introductory to v. 1ff., and therefore located where it is. In view of these conclusions, there are two possible *origins* for the verse: first, it may have been separated from the narrative which ends with ver. 5; or, second, it may be of independent origin, yet framed with reference to ver. 5. In either case, however, it must owe its *position* to the hand that arranged the Aramaic portion of the book in its present form. These considerations lead squarely up to the problem itself.

Let A represent one literary undertaking and B another, A

being earlier in time than B.\* The problem is, whether the Aramaic portion owes its substance to A, and the Hebrew portion owes its substance, and the whole its form, to B; or, whether the whole owes its substance to A, and its form (that is, the Aramaic portion its arrangement and abbreviation, and the Hebrew portion its language) to B. Stated in another way, the question is, whether there existed first an Aramaic source, which was rearranged and abbreviated, and supplemented by the Hebrew narrative in i. 1-iv. 5; or, whether there was an Aramaic source embodying at least the material now in chaps. i-vi, which was later subjected to an operation consisting partly in rearrangement and abbreviation, resulting in iv. 8-vi. 18, and partly in translation, resulting in i. 1-iv. 7, vi. 19-22. Both of these views have been held by critics and are represented by the latest writers on Ezra. Meyer† may be taken as a representative of the former view, Van Hoonacker‡ of the latter.§ To decide between these two views the critic must pass judgment upon the following arguments:

*i.* The argument from the alleged Aramaisms in the Hebrew portions. After a careful study of this argument, the verdict must be a negative one. Those who hold that the Hebrew portion is a translation from an Aramaic original have *not* sufficient data to make out their case. The evidence which Van Hoonacker adduces in proof of his position may be classified as follows: *a.* Aramaic roots are retained or words used, which are found elsewhere only in Aramaic or Syriac. *b.* Aramaic spelling is retained. *c.* Aramaic grammatical usages are here and there in evidence.

Now apart from an independent examination of the passage, it seems that too much is expected from this line of argument. At the outset every one must grant the truth of these two significant facts: first, that Aramaic forms, roots and idioms had powerfully affected the Hebrew language by the time Ezra was written; and, second, that the writer to whom the present Hebrew text of Ezra i. 1-iv. 5 is due was thoroughly at home in the use of Aramaic. Besides these facts, the general principle must be remembered, that the nearer related two languages or dialects are, the more easily do they blend and borrow. In view of these considerations, it seems a hazardous attempt to claim an Aramaic original for

\* Recourse is had to this method of stating the problem, in order to avoid even the appearance of pronouncing upon the authorship at this stage.

† *Ent. d. Jud.*, pp. 12-16, 72-75.

‡ *Zorobabel*, pp. 104ff.

§ Each of these writers, however, has peculiar views of his own: Van Hoonacker, that iv. 6-23 is of separate, later origin; and Meyer, that portions of v and vi are of the same origin as i. 1-iv. 5.



these chapters, unless the evidence be very large in quantity and very convincing in character.\* But upon examination, the evidence actually brought forward proves to be just the opposite in both these respects. It is weighty in neither quantity nor quality. Apart from chap. ii, there are, in a passage of over 500 words, only three examples of the first sort—one of which is admittedly a Persian word—only two of the second sort, and only two of the third. Surely this is not an imposing array of proof that a Hebrew text of the Persian period is the translation of an earlier Aramaic text! Among the particular instances, the one upon which Van Hoonacker lays most stress is the word **באימה** in iii. 3. He believes that he has found the solution of this difficult passage by interpreting (**באימה** = **במה**)—"for an altar was upon them [the bases], (raised) by the people of the lands." The word for altar would then be a remnant of the primitive text, in which it was spelled after a very full manner of writing, analogous to a form in the Peshitto text of 1 Sam. x. 13. But besides the difficulties raised by the construction and sense thus obtained, there seems to be no adequate assignable cause for the translator of the supposed Aramaic original to have simply transliterated this one word, so common in Hebrew literature, while he translated all the context so thoroughly that even Van Hoonacker's microscopic search cannot detect so much as an Aramaic root nearer than ver. 7.

ii. The general argument from the present bilingual form of the book. This is an abstract literary argument which may appeal to different minds with different degrees of force. Yet if the facts of the case are presented to an unprejudiced mind, it is believed that the same decision will always be given—that it is easier to suppose that a Hebrew supplementary portion was added to pre-existing Aramaic material, than that an Aramaic document was partly translated and partly left untranslated. And if this argument be taken from the sphere of abstract judgment, and tested by the particular conditions of this book, it will be rather strengthened than otherwise. It is granted that there is good reason for the supposed translator not to have translated *all* his source. He might well, for example, have copied all the official documents in Aramaic; we have an analogy for such treatment in chap. vii. What is maintained is, that what on this theory he translated, and what he left untranslated, do not admit of any such simple explanation. As a matter of fact, no sufficient reason can be assigned for leaving v. 1-5, for example, in Aramaic, and translating iv. 1-5; and, more striking still, for copying the section vi.

\* As it has been found to be, *e. g.*, in the case of iv. 6f.

13-18, but translating vi. 19-22.\* And it cannot be said that this would prove too much, making it difficult to explain the translation of iv. 6f., which is required on either hypothesis. For a sufficient reason can be advanced for the translation of these two verses, provided the one who translated them was the author of iv. 1-5, and the rearranger of iv. 6-vi. 18. These were the first portions of the Aramaic source which he made use of, according to this hypothesis; they were treated unlike the verse (iv. 8) which now follows them, in that the documents which they introduced were omitted, whereas the document which it introduced was embodied; and finally, he took them, not from the beginning, but from the middle of his source. What was more natural then, than that the writer should seek to show more clearly than by the mere chronological succession of the kings named in them, the continuity of vers. 5, 6 and 7? This he accomplished by translating them into Hebrew. He began to transcribe the Aramaic source unchanged only when he first reached the point where he intended to copy the official documents referred to.

iii. Lastly, the argument from the manner in which the Hebrew and the Aramaic portions respectively embody the documents preserved in them. Here, also, the verdict falls in favor of a radical distinction between the two, such as is fatal to the translation-theory. Gathering up and comparing the results reached in the two previous sections of this inquiry, the strongest impression which they leave on the mind is found to be this very circumstance—the radical difference between the two sources in their mode of incorporating their sources of information. The Aramaic sections of the first half of Ezra belonged to a work whose author preserved his written sources in the same form in which they lay before him, down to the very endorsements, titles, introductions and conclusions. On the other hand, the Hebrew sections are parts of a work in which the writer proceeded in a more free and informal manner in the introduction of his written sources. He altered chap. ii to suit the succeeding context, for we have positive evidence of it by comparing Neh. vii; he embodied the decree of Cyrus and the list of vessels in chap. i, without formal introduction and conclusion; and, on the hypothesis adopted, he used the Aramaic source in the same manner, abridging and transposing at will. By this hypothesis, therefore, there is presented a *consistent* view of the nature of the historical work which it was the aim of

\* Van Hoonacker expressly refers vi. 19-22 to the Aramaic source; but in stating his theory of the composition of the chapters which end with this section, he passes it over in silence, though just here is undoubtedly the very weakest point in his attempt to explain the phenomena of Ezra on the translation-theory.

the author to produce—popular, episodic, pictorial—and of the way in which he used his sources in order to produce this effect. To this consistency and comprehensiveness in the explanation of the striking features of the book, Van Hoonacker's theory can lay no claim.

From these three convergent lines of argument, the verdict is necessarily pronounced in favor of the former of the two theories of the relation between the Aramaic and Hebrew portions of the first half of Ezra, viz., that there existed first an Aramaic source, which was later rearranged and abbreviated, and to which the Hebrew portion was added as a supplement. And from this conclusion, the alternatives regarding the origin of iv. 24 are no longer of equal probability, but the decision is necessarily in favor of its independent origin; it was not sundered from its connection by the insertion of the extraneous material in vers. 6–23, but it was written as it is and placed where it is, in order to furnish an introduction to the earliest portion of the Aramaic source, v. 1f., and at the same time to connect it with its true chronological antecedent, iv. 5.

Before leaving the literary criticism of the first half of the book, it may be well to append a brief summary of the *results* reached in regard to it:

A. A history of the Jewish Restoration, written in the Aramaic language, was composed not earlier than the reign of Artaxerxes I, giving the chief events connected with the outward fortunes of the Jewish State, from before the second year of Darius I, down to the earlier half of the reign of Artaxerxes. The author had access to, and largely drew upon, the collection of official documents pertaining to the time of which he wrote; and the embodiment of these State papers in his work gave it a somewhat formal and authoritative tone.

B. Later than the above composition, another historical work was composed, which embraced the same period, but extended beyond the limits of the earlier work *a parte ante*. In at least a part of the period covered in the Aramaic work, the writer's task consisted mainly in transcribing this authoritative source; though in the use of this, as apparently of all his written sources, he did not feel bound by his original, but transposed it where he saw reason to prefer a new grouping of facts; left out what was not important or interesting for the purpose he had ever in view; added a sentence where regrouping\* or later developments† made this desirable; translated where the situa-

\* So iv. 24.

† So perhaps in vi. 14 b, "Artaxerxes."

tion suggested it;\* and, in general, handled the material with the freedom of one who has a definite aim in writing, and who feels himself the master and not the servant of his literary tools. In such manner, it would appear, arose the first six chapters of Ezra.

#### 4. Relation of Artaxerxes' Letter to the "Memoirs" of Ezra.

The question in regard to this relation is a simple one—whether the letter was a part of the memoirs which begin immediately upon its close, or whether it is of independent origin. The data in this connection are not hard to interpret:

i. The first words of Ezra's memoirs, following the letter, are words of thanksgiving to God for granting him the very blessings of which that letter was at once the means of conveyance and the visible and tangible embodiment. The allusions contained in the words, "which hath put such a thing in the king's heart" (cf. especially כִּזְאֵת); "to beautify the house of Jehovah;" and "hath extended mercy unto me before the king"—all these point unmistakably to the preceding document.

ii. Whatever view is taken as to the character and extent of Ezra's memoirs, it is inconceivable that they should have omitted the document which authorized all the work that Ezra undertook, as therein narrated. This would be to leave out the keystone from the arch, the keynote from the musical composition.

The conclusion, of course, is in favor of the former of the alternatives, which connects this document with the personal narrative of Ezra, in such a sense as that the latter never existed without the former. All this proceeds, of course, on the assumption of the authenticity of the royal commission. And as a matter of fact, no one who grants that point will dispute the other. The battle has been fought over the historicity of the document, not over its embodiment in Ezra's memoirs.

#### 5. Relation of the Memoirs to the Narrative in the Third Person (in the Second Half).

Naturally it is at this point that the question of authorship encroaches most strongly upon the related, yet distinct question of literary history and origins. As a result of this close connection, no critical writer has treated the problem of the relation of these sources (as it is believed it should be treated) independently of previously formed judgments concerning the authorship of the respective sections. And the fact that two mutually exclusive conclusions as to the relation of these sources have been reached by competent and honest criticism, seems to be due mainly to this confusion of the two separate questions. These questions

\* So iv. 6f.



are: First, did the *same writer* who wrote the "I"-sections, also compose the introductory verses and chap. x? And, second, is the whole passage in its present form the continuous product of a *single literary operation*, or are the sections in the third person, as they now stand, the result of a later undertaking than that which produced the narrative in the first person? An attempt will be made to answer the former question in the third and last division of this paper; it is the latter question which now presses for solution. This solution may be reached, it is believed, by consideration of the following lines of argument:

i. A true view of the relation of these two sources cannot be attained, unless justice be done to the main argument of each of the opposing critical camps. One class of writers, on reaching the discussion of this problem, urge strenuously the undoubtedly sound and true literary axiom that an author may write of himself in the third person. Then, intrenched behind this strong rampart, they fancy that they have saved the day for the strict unity of the book and its authorship by Ezra. The other group of critics advances the equally just and undeniable proposition, that no consistent theory can be framed to explain the change of persons here, without recourse to a diversity of sources. Nevertheless, the conclusion which they draw from this argument is, in fact, no just conclusion, unless other arguments can be appealed to in support of it. From the utter failure, for example, of Keil\* to account satisfactorily for the change to the third person at chap. x, it is hasty and unthinking to draw the deduction, as some critics have done, that therefore the book of Ezra is an *olla podrida* of heterogeneous documents, and that the author of the "I"-sections cannot possibly be the author of the remainder. Each side justly protests against the conclusions of the other, yet each has a large element of truth. To arrive, therefore, at the truth of the matter, as already remarked, justice must be done to the valid arguments on both sides. (a) Justice must be done to the argument that the only sufficient explanation of the change in the use of persons is to be found in a plurality of sources. Therefore, positively, the conclusion must be drawn, that vii. 1-10, x, are later than and independent of the source from which vii. 11-ix has been copied. But (b) justice must also be done to the argument that the use of the third person does not preclude the character thus spoken of from being the author. Therefore, negatively, the conclusion must be drawn, that from this diversity

\* In his *Apologetischer Versuch . . . über die Integrität des Buches Esra*. No more can be said of Torrey's recent effort along the same line, but with exactly the opposite premises.

of sources nothing can be directly inferred as to the authorship of the later section.

*ii.* How, then, does the work of framing the present chapters vii-x stand related to these distinct sources? The answer to this question will at the same time furnish the second argument in favor of the conclusion just reached. The answer is, this work of giving chaps. vii-x their present form was the same work as that which produced the opening and closing portions of those chapters. It seems to have embraced at least three operations: the recasting of the material contained in most of the narrative now in the third person; the copying and abbreviation of the narrative preserved in the first person; the free composition of certain additional material. The proofs of the correctness of this answer are not far to seek. *a.* The alternative position is highly improbable. For the alternative position would involve the previous independent existence of the sections in the third person. This is not only entirely without evidence (and the burden of proof would surely rest upon any who maintained it), but it is in itself unlikely, in view of the shortness of these passages and their fragmentary character when taken by themselves. Moreover, it is plain that vii. 1-10 is written in view of what follows, and is stamped in every sentence with an introductory character; and chap. x is, by its opening verse, clearly marked as a continuation of the preceding narrative. *b.* The law of economy in explaining literary phenomena may be appealed to, as giving its verdict in favor of the identity of the various literary operations, which were rendered necessary in the reduction of the previous documentary material to the present form of the last four chapters. All the phenomena can be explained on the simpler hypothesis which has been adopted. It is therefore unnecessary, and hence uncritical, to refer to two separate occasions the composition of vii. 1-10, x, and the production of vii-x in its present form. The same literary impulse sufficiently accounts for both.

In conclusion, and before leaving the separate consideration of the second half of Ezra, it may be well to present a summary of the *results* of the inquiry, which will at the same time, it is hoped, by the consistency and naturalness of its representation further confirm the soundness of the positions already taken.

*A.* Ezra wrote a narrative in the first person, embracing the chief events in which he was an actor, extending at least from before his departure from Babylon in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, until the completion of the work of the special commission in the case of the mixed marriages in the eighth year. This account contained at least the following documents: the royal

writ, sanctioning and supporting his undertaking; copies of the official lists of the exiles who returned with him and of the treasures which they brought; and the report of the commission on the mixed marriages, giving the names of the offenders.

*B.* At a later time, a history of this period was composed, using this personal narrative as the main, if not the exclusive, written source. The author prefixed as an introduction the lineage, and in a few words the personality, of the chief actor and speaker in what was to follow, vii. 1-6*b*. He probably altered from his source the summary statements and chronological notices, vii. 6*c*-9, which, according to Hebrew usage, generally head an historical record. And he seems to have added as an independent contribution also the motive which actuated Ezra in all his work, vii. 10. He then altered from his source the preface to the Aramaic document, vii. 11, and followed it with a literal and complete copy of the letter itself. Having copied so much material verbally from his source, he continues simply to transcribe this source as it lay before him, through chaps. viii and ix, though apparently with these exceptions: an occasional abbreviation, *e. g.*, at viii. 20, where he indicates the omitted portions by the words, "all of them were expressed by name;" and an occasional independent addition, *e. g.*, viii. 36, which, like the brief sentence just quoted, may in all probability represent the substance of a more considerable and detailed narrative in his source. Finally, at the conclusion of the long prayer by Ezra, which had interrupted for some time the use of the first person singular, he resumes, with his source, the personal narrative, yet at the same time changes everywhere the first person to the third. By this literary undertaking the writer, whoever he is, has given to us a picture of Ezra's return and its immediate sequel, told in the living, graphic tones of an eye-witness and a chief actor; which, nevertheless, is not left hanging in the air, but by a few simple remarks is related to the knowledge presupposed in the reader, and to the strong national feeling which the memoirs of Ezra were adapted to call forth in every Jew; and at the same time it is given historical form, by enclosing this personal narrative between sections that speak of all the actors in the objectivizing manner of a true history, as opposed to an autobiography.

#### 6. Relation of the Two Halves of the Book.

At the end of the examination of each half of Ezra have been appended summaries of the tentative results reached, as far as, in each instance, the investigation could with profit be carried. The present task is to restate and compare these results, and to endeavor to gather up into a higher unity the various literary under-

takings presupposed by them. Briefly stated, these results were as follows :

*A.* An Aramaic history, documentary and formal, of the chief events of the Jewish Restoration, from before the second year of Darius down to a point in the first half of the reign of Artaxerxes I.

*B.* An historical composition, popular and national in spirit, which presented in episodical form the great outstanding events in the life of the Jews, as gathered from a great variety of sources (including *A*), from the first year of Cyrus to a point in the first half of Artaxerxes' reign.

*C.* A personal narrative of events important to the Jewish community, related by Ezra himself, the chief actor in them, and covering at least one year, the seventh to the eighth of Artaxerxes.

*D.* A history of Ezra's return and its immediate sequel, told in the most graphic form by allowing Ezra to speak for himself in the large portion copied *verbatim* from *C*, while only the beginning and the end are in the third person.

The possible combinations of these four sources are obviously limited to the following : First, *D*\* with *B* ; second, *C* with *A*. If it be asked why any attempt should be made to combine these results, the answer is twofold. In the first place, we are compelled to test its possibility by the law of economy already referred to in the preceding section. If one literary impulse suffices to explain all the phenomena in two sources, it is uncritical to retain the two as distinct products, unless there is external evidence requiring the distinction. And in the second place, the book of Ezra, though in two clearly marked halves, nevertheless comes down to us purporting to be a single book. Its two halves have either originated together, or been put together later ; and in the absence of any external evidence for the latter alternative, we are compelled to seek and weigh the internal evidence bearing for or against the former alternative. Accordingly, the inquiries will be, first, whether the same literary operation which produced the first half, gave also to the second half its present form ; and, second, whether there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the Aramaic narrative and the memoirs were combined in a single work *before* they were combined in the composition of the present Book of Ezra.

*i.* Can *D* be combined with *B* ? This question finds its answer in the following considerations :

*a.* There is nothing to prevent this combination. Thus no

\* For the sake of brevity these four letters will be used as symbols of the four sources.



period is duplicated in the two halves, but, on the contrary, the events related, though disconnected in the narrative, are mutually supplementary.\* So also there is no striking diversity between the two, such as the use of different languages. For, though the writer who composed the first half did not scruple to embody an Aramaic document in the course of his own Hebrew narrative, yet neither did the one who is responsible for the second half (cf. vii. 12-26). In both cases, Hebrew was the language of the undertaking, but Aramaic was not felt to be foreign enough to require translation.

*b.* But beyond this negative argument, there is the positive evidence furnished by the way in which the writer in each case has done his work. This evidence lies along several lines. In the first place, in both *B* and *D* the written sources were treated in the same way. In each case the writer had before him an extended history of the period under review, which he used in an independent manner, reducing it to the dimensions and form which suited his purpose, and in general handling the material with the freedom of one who is master, not slave, of his sources of information. Yet in each case, likewise, we have an instance of another trait, at first sight apparently the opposite of that revealed by the facts just mentioned, but in reality only another phase of the same literary boldness and freedom. What is referred to is, on the one hand, the retention of the Aramaic language in the first half, and, on the other hand, the retention of the use of the first person in the second half. Thus do *these two unusual phenomena*, which have with good reason furnished so much trouble to critics of Ezra, *combine*, when rightly interpreted, *to aid in forming a just conception* of the composition of the book. And in the second place, the present form of the entire book shows in both halves a oneness of plan and purpose which is compatible only with the view that the same literary undertaking achieved the composition of the whole. Wherein lay this oneness of plan and purpose?

The Book of Ezra exhibits throughout all its ten chapters a true unity of *plan*. This plan seems to have been to produce a popular and interesting history of the regeneration of the ancient Israelitish Church and State in the form of the postexilic Jewish theocracy, bringing out in special detail, by means of episodic grouping, the free use of contemporary documents, and the embodiment of vivid personal narrative, those great outstanding events in the century of the Restoration, the memory of which

\* Thus iv. 8-23 refers to a later time than chaps. vii-x, yet the latter account renders the former comprehensible (cf. especially iv. 12, "which are come up from thee").

was sure to stir every Jew with intense emotions of patriotism, and to arouse within him the greatest reverence for the wonderful dealings of his God with a remnant in a troublous time. To this plan, not indeed easy to express now in a few words, yet simple as it originally lay in the writer's consciousness—the product of what causes only historico-dogmatic inquiry is free to discuss—to this plan, all the material at hand and all the ground to be covered were alike made subservient. To its existence and to its conscious and continuous influence are due the varied and peculiar phenomena of the book; repression, addition, incorporation, omission, decades of silence and years full of events, transposition, alteration and obscure notices—all these find their only solution in our recognition of the steady adherence by the writer to his *plan*, whose consistent development forms the bond of true unity in an otherwise disjointed composition.

Side by side with this unity of plan - and in its essence only the other side of the same truth—we find manifested in Ezra an unmistakable unity of *purpose*. To feel this, one must endeavor to enter into the thoughts and beliefs not only of the writer, but also of his contemporary readers. The purpose of the writer of Ezra may be thus envisaged: it was his purpose to place before the Jewish community, Jehovah's covenant people, such a review of the great events of the Restoration, that the mind of every devout and patriotic Jew, however humble, might be enlightened upon the origin of that political and religious *separateness* from all other peoples, even those nearest them, which distinguished the Jews from every other nation on earth; and at the same time, that his heart might be stirred to wonder and gratitude, in view of the gracious acts of the faithful and covenant-keeping Jehovah, whose word is surely fulfilled though world-rulers have to be made the instruments of that fulfillment, and though princes and peoples rise up to defeat his plans. The impression which the reading of this book would have, and was designed to have, upon the public for whom it was primarily intended, would be voiced in a devout "What hath God wrought!" And herein lies its significance for the Church in all ages, which has always recognized its organic continuity with the "congregation" of Israel, and has seen in the graphic history of this marvelous restoration, an account of its safe passage through one of the greatest crises in its divinely shaped career. The motive of the Book of Ezra is throughout to glorify the God of universal providence and of special grace.

ii. Is there sufficient evidence to support the view that *C* may have been united with *A* prior to their embodiment in the present

book? An examination of the evidence leads to a negative answer to this question. For, though there is nothing inherently improbable in such a combination—not even the diversity of language—yet there is an utter absence of positive evidence in support of this view. It may be objected that in the absence of any considerations directly preventing this combination of sources, the law of economy to which appeal has twice been made, would here also favor a combination. But it is, in fact, this very law which, in this instance, prevents us from adopting the view that a document *AC* ever existed. For, be it observed, the question here is not of a simultaneous composition of *A* and *C* under the same literary impulse. This is quite impossible in view of the utter diversity of language, style, aim and plan. But the question is of a combination of these two sources, once independent, before their meeting in the present work. Thus, instead of reducing, we should be multiplying sources, and the hypothesis is accordingly to be rejected as unproved.

There remain, then, as the net result of this inquiry into the composition of the Book of Ezra as a literary product, only three independent sources, *A*, *C* and *BD*, the first two being mediated to us by the third, and requiring to be studied through it. This is the ultimate stage of inductive investigation concerning the composition of the work, in the former of the two senses of that word as indicated at the outset. Only with this stage is the point reached where criticism may safely form an hypothesis of the acts or processes which brought these products into existence.

### III. AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK.

As just intimated, the most that can be attained or even expected from this last division of the literary study of Ezra is an *hypothesis*. Ezra is an anonymous work. Certain things are settled regarding the authorship of this or that part of the book, but for the rest we are left to more or less probable hypotheses. The present task is therefore to frame an hypothesis which shall conform most nearly with the facts already ascertained. The natural order is that of increasing difficulty; and this presents first the problems of the "memoirs," next those of the Aramaic history, and, last of all, those connected with the book as a whole.

#### 1. The Memoirs.

In their case the author is known, and the only problems are those of their date and their length.

The significance of this composition seems hardly to be adequately conveyed by the term "memoirs." That expression has been adopted rather for the sake of convenience than because of

its exactness or suitability. It was not so much the idea of the recollection of personal experiences that was foremost in Ezra's mind when he wrote these chapters, as it was the idea of recording a certain period in the national career, in which he was permitted to be the chief actor. In other words, although his narrative is intensely personal, it is nevertheless autobiographical only as the history of the time centres in the career of the writer. It is not the contemplative, reminiscential "memoir;" it is rather the graphic journal of contemporary events, in which the author is able to write history in the terms of autobiography. On this view of the section in question, which it is believed will commend itself to the careful student of Ezra's style, it is evident that the commitment of the facts to writing was not long in following the occurrence of the facts themselves. Probably, therefore, the date to be assigned to the composition of this record of the events of the year 458-7, is in or shortly after the year 457. Indeed, much of the material embodied in it must have been committed to writing at the same time with the occurrence of the events therein recorded, in such manner that one is strongly tempted to believe the whole to have been a journal or diary, contemporary with the facts related. Thus, for example, not only the lists given in viii. 1-14, and alluded to in viii. 20, but also such expressions as vii. 27f., and the entire record of Ezra's eloquent prayer in chap. ix, seem to indicate a daily record of those events and the emotions which they aroused.

It is not easy to determine whether this record may originally have been continued beyond the point where it now stops—assuming that the material in chap. x was a part of it and that its wording has later been altered to the third person. This chapter has some appearance of ending abruptly, an appearance which is made more noticeable from the uncertain state of the text in the closing verse. Yet it is undeniable that the episode of the mixed marriages is quite finished; only those who have tried to infer from this very fact of a sudden conclusion a desire on the part of the author to conceal the real sequel to the episode, have claimed that the narrative is unfinished. But this is reasoning in a circle, and is of no significance for the discussion of the possible length of the original memoirs. It seems quite probable, however, that with the completion of this unhappy episode, in which the power of Ezra's royal commission was taxed to the utmost, the administration of the affairs of Church and State settled down for a time into a condition of regularity that required no record, either personal or official. That there was material in the memoirs of Ezra *before* the point where the royal firman was introduced, may be



taken as certain. At least the dates, and probably also the purpose of the following events, must have stood first in Ezra's own language, very much, perhaps, as the material in the third person now heads the story of his career. However, that the journal began *much* before the time of the return, is rendered highly improbable by the backward glance purposely given in viii. 22.

## 2. The Aramaic History.

Before its authorship, in the strict sense of that word, may be considered, it is necessary to discuss its probable length and date. Chronologically, the earliest portion of this Aramaic history is that which begins at v. 1 with the resumption of work on the temple in the second year of Darius. But it is evident that the original composition did not begin here: first, because the date and whole chronological setting had to be supplied by the later hand in the preceding verse, iv. 24 (which in our text is assigned to chap. iv, though in fact most intimately connected with v. 1); and, second, because it is improbable that the author would have begun his narrative just at that complicated stage in the history of the community, instead of going back a little further and explaining how the Jews came to be situated as they were. The latest portion of this source is the narrative of events in the reign of Artaxerxes, iv. 8-23. Whether ver. 23 was originally the end of the history or not, is only to be decided from the consideration of the purpose of that history. The Aramaic source, which as source *A* has already been described in the preceding section as to its general characteristics, may best be understood if it is viewed as an apology of the Jewish nation.\* Its sphere was the presentation of the Jewish Restoration in its relation to the external history of the times. As such, it was composed in the *lingua franca* of the Persian world, and it embodied all those official documents concerned with the case, which were likely to convince the foreign reader that legal right had sanctioned the Jews' undertakings at every stage of their advance. At the same time, therefore, as it apologized for the Jews, it served as a polemic against the widely published aspersions of the Samaritans. It is probable, then, that it was composed at a time when such a work would be most useful, that is, at some dark hour in the nation's varying fortunes. And there was no darker or more hopeless moment for the Jewish community of the fifth century than just the point where this Aramaic source breaks off. It need not be

\* In Judges xi. 15-27 there has been preserved what may be fairly described as Jephthah's "apology for Israel." Though brief, it covers a period of several centuries (ver. 26), and shows that the "apology" was not an unknown thing in Hebrew literature. Acknowledgment is due to Dr. J. D. Davis for this suggestive comparison.

maintained that it never had any more formal conclusion than that which it now shows at iv. 23; there may have been some more or less rhetorical application or appeal, in view of the strong case which the author has succeeded in making out with the help of his documents. This, however, is not the main question. The work as an exponent of history seems to have stopped where it now stops.

From the same considerations a theory of the date of its composition is easily reached. The *terminus a quo* is, of course, that point in the years between 458 and 445, where the historical critic of the book thinks that he can see most clearly the situation called for by these documents of chap. iv. If the round number, 450, be adopted, it will surely be not far out of the way. And the *terminus ad quem* is obviously the arrival of Nehemiah, whose career changed the whole aspect of the situation, bringing with it increased prosperity, imperial favor, a strongly fortified capital, and in general a superiority to their enemies that rendered an apology a work of supererogation. Hence this work may safely be dated some time between 450 and 445, after the destruction of the walls (as told in iv. 23, and alluded to in Neh. i. 3), and before the arrival of Nehemiah.

It is possible that in its original form this work was not anonymous, but as it now stands its authorship is only a matter of conjecture. The only prominent figure in Jewish life at the middle of the fifth century is Ezra. We know that he had the historical spirit, that he had also the apologetical spirit to a marked degree, that he had access to the official documents, and that the Samaritan interference struck him, hitherto the royal plenipotentiary, more disastrously than it struck any other individual in the Jewish Church and State. It is by no means unreasonable, therefore, to ascribe to the greatest literary figure of the time this history which defended his own position before the world. Nor may there be urged against this view the diversity of style, diction and language, which distinguishes this composition from the memoirs certainly by that writer. For apart from this work, if indeed it be his, we possess no specimen of Ezra's Aramaic style and diction; while to argue from the language employed would be to beg the whole question and to overlook the writer's purpose and audience. All that can be said, however, is that there is nothing to prevent Ezra from being regarded as the author, and that though only conjecture is possible, it seems not unlikely that he may have written it.

### 3. The Book of Ezra.

The question of the authorship of Ezra has generally in critical

discussion been associated with that of the authorship of Nehemiah and Chronicles. And since there are data in those two books which are the subject of much debate and difference of opinion, while in Ezra there is little material for dispute, the criteria of this book have hardly received the attention that they deserve, but the conclusion reached on the basis of a discussion foreign to Ezra has been applied to its dating and authorship. All this has proceeded on the assumption that the three books, or at least two of them, are essentially one book. Nor is it unfair to call this an assumption. For it cannot be seriously maintained that their community of origin has ever been *proved*. The utmost that can be *proved* from the usual argument of similarity of style and diction in certain of their parts is that they arose in the same school of late writers. The common possession by Ezra and Chronicles of some six lines that end the latter and begin the former, may be and have been explained quite as satisfactorily on other grounds as on the theory of original union and subsequent abscission. So also the inclusion of Nehemiah with Ezra under the common general title of "Ezra" in ancient canonical lists and versions proves absolutely nothing as to their authorship—not even what was anciently believed as to their authorship. Under these conditions, therefore, it is not at all necessary to *affirm* the separate authorship of these books, but only to judge each book upon its own merits, without drawing into the discussion another problem, which by long critical disagreement has been shown to be incapable of a positive solution. Confining, then, to the Book of Ezra the scope of this inquiry, the questions arise, what were its time and place of origin, its original length and its probable authorship?

The *terminus a quo* will be settled in accordance with the view taken of the mention of Jehohanan-ben-Eliashib in x. 6. We are there told that after the people had taken the oath to put away the foreign wives, Ezra "rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber" of the one who bore this name. Now Eliashib was undoubtedly the high priest contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah, the grandson of Jeshua the contemporary of Zerubbabel. A comparison of the list of high priests in Neh. xii. 10f. (which, whatever may be thought of its position and relevancy, is undoubtedly correct), reveals the fact that while the son and successor of Eliashib bore the name of Joiada, *his* son was called Jonathan, a name interchanged (in Neh. xii. 22) with Jehohanan or Johanan. The presumption at once arises, that the Jehohanan of Ezra x. 6 was in fact the *grandson* of Eliashib who bore that name or the similar name of Jonathan. This view has had many

supporters, though it is obvious that it is not the only view, and is attended perhaps by more difficulties than some other views. If, however, it be assumed for the time that it is the correct view, what bearing does this have upon the date of the final composition of Ezra? There are two possibilities: either the chamber to which Ezra repaired was actually at that time the chamber in which this grandson of the high priest, himself heir to the high-priestly dignity, resided or exercised some part of his priestly functions; or else the chamber was one which in the time when Ezra was written was universally known as "the chamber of Jehohanan-ben-Eliashib," that is, of the then high priest. It makes little difference which view is adopted. There is every reason to believe that Eliashib continued to fill the high-priestly office up to an advanced age. At about 432 he had a grandson (and that, too, not his oldest grandson), who was already a married man.\* It is therefore probable that the period of his son and successor was cut short, and there would be no occasion for surprise to find his grandson in the high priestly office by the year 425. This allows an average of about thirty years to the high-priesthood of the first four incumbents of that office after the exile, the predecessors of Johanan. On any of the simpler explanations of the reference in Ezra x. 6 the date indicated would be even earlier. So there is nothing to point to a time later than the first years of Darius II (425-404) as the date of Ezra.† There is no *terminus ad quem* to narrow the period of the possible composition of the book; such a limit, if such there be, must be fixed by arguments belonging to another field than that of special introduction.

There is nothing to indicate that the work was ever more lengthy or comprehensive than it is now. It just fills up the history of the earlier period of the Restoration, leaving to the Book of Nehemiah the narrative of the later stages in the development of the Jewish State. By transposing the account of the latest misfortune that fell within the compass of his narrative (iv. 8-23), to an earlier position than a chronological arrangement would have demanded, the author has given to his work a hopeful ending, and therefore one more in keeping with the fortunes of the nation at the time when he wrote. Hence it is unlikely that he ever carried his narrative on into the succeeding years of dark-

\* Cf. Neh. xiii. 28.

† Those who have urged the use of the expression "King of Persia" as an indication of a date subsequent to the fall of the Persian domination, have not done justice to the clear cases of contemporary usage, both in the Bible (cf. Ezra ix. 9) and outside of it (cf., for example, Thucydides, Herodotus, Darius' Behistun inscription).



ness, which intervened between Ezra's reform and Nehemiah's coming.

What, then, is the most satisfactory theory of the authorship of Ezra? And the first question that rises in every mind in connection with this is, can the book as a whole be connected as to its authorship with the one whose name it bears? What is to be thought of the traditional ascription of the work to Ezra?

In the first place, the date is not unfavorable. If Ezra was a man of about thirty-five years of age in 458, he would be about seventy in the early years of Darius' reign. Again, the language is not unfavorable. Indeed, the similarity of style and diction in the memoirs and in the Hebrew narrative is so striking, that one critic\* has argued at length that the memoirs must be from the same source as the rest of the Hebrew portions of the book. The very same arguments as are used by him to prove that the memoirs are not authentic, might with equal propriety be used to prove Ezra's authorship of the whole. Nothing is more precarious than this argument from the language of a writer; it is often instructive in its place, but too frequently it is made to base a wider inference than is justified by the facts observed. In the present instance, the utmost that may be positively inferred, appears to be that both the memoirs and the finished Book of Ezra issued from the same school of writers, and at about the same time in the development of Jewish thought and Jewish historiography. Finally, tradition is favorable to Ezra's authorship of the whole. How much weight is to be assigned to this voice of tradition in the present instance is open to some difference of opinion. It certainly cannot be given a deciding voice.†

This, then, is as far as criticism can go in favor of Ezra's authorship; the date and language are not unfavorable, and tradition is distinctly favorable. Is there anything in the book itself

\* Torrey, *Composition and Historical Value of Ezra and Neh.*

† Tradition concerning the authorship of Ezra is scarce, late and uncertain, to a degree probably unequalled in the case of any other book of the Old Testament. Unlike most of these, it is not even quoted in the New Testament, much less is there any testimony as to its authorship. Not until we reach the obscure statement in the Talmud (Baba Bathra, 14<sub>1</sub>), that "Ezra wrote his book," do we find any declaration on the subject. But even here, apart from the ambiguity of the word "wrote" in this passage, the well-known fact that Ezra and Nehemiah were classed together as "Ezra" in the canon of the Jews (so also Josephus and some Church fathers), renders the interpretation of this testimony of the Talmud very doubtful. If it cannot be extended to cover *all* of Ezra-Nehemiah, can it even be proved to include *all* of the ten chapters in our Book of Ezra? The early debates on the authorship of Ezra did not touch the real question at issue; (cf., for example, Carpzov, *Intr.*, pp. 310ff). From the point of view of canonicity, there is nothing at stake one way or the other, in the question of authorship pure and simple; (cf. Green, *Intr.-The Canon*, p. 52).

to oppose this theory? Of course, there is nothing of a positive nature; if there were, the opinion could not have persisted that Ezra wrote the book that bears his name. The considerations are subjective in their nature, and will inevitably appeal to some more than to others. It has appeared to some writers, that two such considerations should have weight in deciding the question *against* the older view. One of these is the use, yet alteration of the memoirs of Ezra; it might seem more natural to attribute such a literary operation to another hand than that which wrote the earlier work.\* And the other is the language used regarding Ezra himself in Ezra vii. 6 and 10. While it is true that he may have used such terms to describe his own mental and moral fitness for his high mission, yet it is urged, it is more indulgent to his modesty to hold the opinion that an ardent admirer of these preëminent qualities, recorded their presence in the great leader, than to hold that he himself put them down so baldly in a work for general circulation.

In case Ezra is not to be regarded as the author of the book in its present form, who is to be regarded as its true author? Naturally, the answer must lie in the field of conjecture, yet conjecture is not out of place where only a theory is aimed at. The author would then be a member of the priestly circle, in close touch with the great priest-scribe, and an ardent admirer of his principles and career, who thought that the labors of his leader for the nation could best be preserved, by embodying in popular form, for general use among the Jews, the personal memoirs and the chief apologetic work of Ezra, within a new framework that should make clear the historical setting of the whole period covered in those two treatises. But whether Ezra himself, or this unknown writer, be considered the author of the book, according to the weight accorded to this or that particular argument, in either case equally the date of Ezra and its right to a place in the sacred volume are clear, and the way lies open for the vindication of its historicity.

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\*To take this view is not to do violence to the conclusion drawn in the preceding section on p. 284. That only prohibited an inference from a diversity of sources to a diversity of authorship. This is an inference from the *way* in which the earlier source has been incorporated.