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THE BOOK

OF

NEHEMIAH.

CRITICALLY AND THEOLOGICALLY EXPOUNDED.

INCLUDING THE HOMILETICAL SECTIONS OF DR. SCHULTZ,

BY

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THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. THE BOOK AND ITS CONTENTS.

THE Book of Nehemiah holds a conspicuous place in the sacred canon as the last historic composition of the ante-christian period. With the exception of the prophecy of Malachi, it gives us the last clear look at the Jewish state before it reappears in the bright light of the gospels. We see the returned people—a small remnant of the children of Jacob—continuing the national line in the ancestral land toward the Messiah, with holy vitality enough (as it were) for this one purpose, but with a general mortification existing throughout the nation. The ark of the covenant was gone, the Shechinah no longer illuminated the holy of holies, the Urim and Thummim had long ceased, the bulk of the people were lost in captivity from Armenia to Elam, and Israel, instead of being an independent commonwealth, with a mighty and magnificent capital, had become a petty province of Persia, while Jerusalem was but a half-rebuilt ruin. Yet, with all this, prophets were still vouchsafed to the Abrahamic line. Haggai and Zechariah had by the use of their prophetic power certified the special presence of Jehovah at the building of the second temple, and Malachi, more than a century later, urged the people to renewed spirituality in the name of the Lord. From Neh. vi. 10, 12, 14, we are led to believe that between Haggai and Malachi many prophets appeared before returned Israel, although some of them prostituted their divine gift to low and false ends.

This twilight age of Jewry is lighted up by the writings of Ezra and Nehemiah as the evening is often re-illuminated by the absent sun's reflection upon a cloud high in the zenith. They give us an inlook into the style of life assumed by the nation in its lingering decadence. We enter the holy city—we see and hear the men—we note their tendencies, and mark the old, strange mingling of patriotism and devotion with a *philoxeny* that was destructive of both. The narratives bring us into close contact with the people. Nehemiah's words are simple, betraying not the least effort of the rhetorician, but their very homeliness makes the scenes described most life-like. We see throughout the writing of an honest, earnest man,—and through him the history closes with a sublime dignity.

The book of Nehemiah was included by the old Jews with the book of Ezra, and the latter name was given to the two. In the Vulgate the book of Ezra appears as the first book of Esdras, and the book of Nehemiah as the second book of Esdras. The Geneva Bible introduced our present nomenclature, and thus made the Apocryphal third and fourth books of Esdras to be numbered as the first and second.

The language is a pure Hebrew, with here and there such an Aramaism as חָכַל in the sense of "deal corruptly" (chap. i. 7), כִּרְהָה in the sense of "tribute" (chap. v. 4), and שָׁלַח in the sense of "consult." This book, Ezra and the Chronicles offer to us the same general linguistic appearance. Such *ἀπᾶς λέγουμενα* as יָבִיב (chap. vii. 3) and תִּהְיֶה לְבַת (chap. xii. 31) are the peculiarities of the individual writer, and no marks of a different period.

The main subject of the book is the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, which, in the largest sense, if we include the dedication of the walls and the events occurring during the building, occupies nearly ten chapters of the thirteen which compose the book, namely, chap. iii.—chap. xii. 43. Previous to the wall-building we have the account of Nehemiah's concern for the holy city, his earnest prayer for the divine guidance, his request of the king of Persia, his journey (by royal permission and order) to Jerusalem as its governor, his careful examination of the ruined walls, his encouragement of the people to rebuild them and their consent, and his bold front against the neighboring enemies of the Jews. This preliminary narrative occupies the first two chapters. We may divide the next ten chapters regarding the wall-building and the dedication into—(1) The apportionment of the work, chap. iii.; (2) The opposition from enemies without, chap. iv.; (3) The hindrance from domestic dissensions, chap. v.; (4) The opposition by combination between the outer enemies and their Jewish allies. The wall finished, chap. vi.; (5) The ordering of the city. To this end the genealogies are examined, chap. vii. (6) Religious services follow, to wit: the public reading of the law by Ezra and his assistants. Preparation for and keeping the feast of tabernacles, chap. viii.; (7) Extraordinary fast with confession, chap. ix.; (8) A covenant sealed touching obedience to the law, separation from foreigners, observation of the Sabbath days and years, and support of the temple service, chap. x.; (9) The settlement of the families in the holy city and the other towns, chap. xi.; (10) A preliminary list of priests and Levites. The dedication of the wall, chap. xii. 1-43.

The remainder of the book, *viz.*, chap. xii. 44—chap. xiii., contains an account of the apportionment of officers over the treasures, and the ordering of the singers and porters, the thorough separation of Israel from the strangers, according to the law, and lastly (from chap. xiii. 4), an account of Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem, and his stern dealing with Eliashib's family for their alliances with Sanballat and Tobiah, together with his other resolute measures of reform. (See the scheme following.)

§ 2. THE AUTHOR AND HIS TIME.

That Nehemiah is the author of the book, all agree. Much of it is written in the first person, and claims thus to be the writing of Nehemiah himself. But while it is agreed that Nehemiah is the author of the book, yet some learned commentators, such as Archdeacon HERVEY, pronounce a large part of the book to have been inserted by other (though authorized) hands. From chap. vii. 6 to xii. 26 inclusive the matter is supposed to be inserted, as also the passage chap. xii. 44-47. KEIL, on the other hand, stoutly argues for Nehemiah's authorship throughout. The truth is probably between these extremes. The genealogy in chap. vii. 6-73 (virtually the same as that in Ezra ii. 1-70) is undoubtedly an inserted public document, and yet in this we can see Nehemiah's hand making the addition of ver. 65 and ver. 70 *b* regarding his own (the Tirshatha's) action in reference to matters alluded to in the older document.* So the record in chap. xii. 1-26 is evidently an insertion, giving lists of priests and Levites from Zerubbabel's day to the time of Alexander the Great (Jaddua—vers. 11, 22), a century after Nehemiah. KEIL's attempt to explain away this latter is labored and unsatisfactory. The rest of the supposed inserted portion we take to be Nehemiah's own. The fact that Nehemiah does not there speak in the first person only parallels his book with that of Daniel, where the first person and the third person are interchangeably used. Ezra's prominence in this part of the narrative is simply caused by Ezra's priestly duties requiring him to be the prominent figure,† and only exhibits Nehemiah's modesty in the record. The resemblance to Ezra's style and the different construction of the prayer in chap. ix. from that in chap. i. are arguments of a very frail character. The general likeness of chap. xi. 3-36 and 1 Chron. ix. 2-34 makes nothing against Nehemiah's authorship of that portion. There is no good reason for denying a regular chronological sequence in this part

* This document, so amended by Nehemiah, has been incorporated in Ezra.

† The Rev. Mr. Haigh has urged a very bold and ingenious theory, but one that will not bear examination.—that Ezra and Nehemiah went to Jerusalem together. (See *Transact. of the Soc. of Bib. Arch.*, Vol. II.)

of the book in perfect consonance with the rest, and we cannot but consider the attempts to throw doubt here on Nehemiah's authorship as an effort of the destructive criticism that is so headlong and heedless in its efforts. Nehemiah* (Heb. נְחֵמְיָהּ, *Nehemiah*, "compassion of Jehovah") was of the tribe of Judah, and probably of the royal stock. The expressions in chap. i. 6 and ii. 5, together with his special activity in the matter of re-establishing Jerusalem, and his acceptability by his countrymen, and also his high position at the Persian court, all seem to suggest this fact of Nehemiah's birth. His father was Hachaliah, of whom we know nothing. The name Nehemiah was probably a common one. Many have supposed that Nehemiah was a priest, but there is no more satisfactory ground for such a notion than the occurrence of his name, as Tirshatha, before the names of the priests in chap. x. 1. He was cup-bearer to Artaxerxes (Heb. אֲרַתַּחְשַׁתָּא, *Artahshasta*), king of Persia. This position was a very high one at court, and brought him into close and intimate relations with the monarch, whence came his ability (when his soul was stirred for Jerusalem) to carry out his measures of aid and reform for his beloved ancestral country. His character appears to us as faultless. Patriotism, piety, prudence, perseverance, probity and courage equally marked his administration of affairs. He renounced the luxuries of the Persian court for the hardships of what might almost be called a primitive and frontier life, in order to save his country from physical and moral ruin; in all his varied trials he looked up to the guidance and protection of his God; he used methods with careful discrimination, he pursued his determined course unflinchingly, he set an example of self-abnegation and liberal dealing, and met the enemies without and within the nation with equal firmness and success. The time in which Nehemiah flourished was clearly that of Artaxerxes I. (*Longimanus*). This king's 32d year is mentioned in chap. xiii. 6. Only three kings of Persia had a 32d year in their reigns—Darius I. (*Hystaspis*), Artaxerxes I. (*Longimanus*), and Artaxerxes II. (Mnemon). Now this Artaxerxes could not be Darius, for in Ezra vi. 14 the two names are contrasted, as of different monarchs. Whoever the Artaxerxes may be there, his name in that connection shows that Darius was not known as Artaxerxes. The date of Artaxerxes II. is far too late for the chronological position of Eliashib, as high priest. We are therefore shut up to Artaxerxes I. as the monarch mentioned by Nehemiah. Josephus calls the king Xerxes, but the chronology of Joseph is so wretchedly corrupt in the matter of Nehemiah, Ezra, Sanballat, etc., that it is waste time to give him attention.†

In Artaxerxes I.'s time Persia was in its zenith of splendor and power, although the elements of decay were already beginning to work in the empire. Artaxerxes had come to the throne through the assassination of his father, Xerxes, by the chief of the guard, Artabanus. At the instigation of Artabanus, he put his brother Darius to death as the murderer of his father, but on discovering the designs of Artabanus against himself, he slew the double traitor. He subdued a revolt headed by his brother Hystaspes, reduced rebellious Egypt, and terminated the long hostilities with Greece by the peace of Callias. The empire then enjoyed a period of quiet, which may be regarded as the culminating point of its glory, during which the events of Nehemiah's history occurred.

The name *Artaxerxes* is the Greek and *Artahshasta* is the Hebrew for the old Persian *Artakhshatra* from *Arta* (very) and *Khshatra* (powerful). Herodotus translates it μέγα ἄρσιος. *Khshatra* is allied to the *Khshatram* (empire) of the Behistun inscription (Col. i. Par. 9, 11, 12, 13, 14) and to *Khshayathiya* (king). The second element of the name is not identical with the name Xerxes, which is in old Persian *Khshayarsha*.

* The name Nehemiah occurs twice in the book as referring to others than the author—to Nehemiah, son of Azbuk, in chap. iii. 16, and to Nehemiah, a companion of Zerubbabel in chap. vii. 7.

† Josephus puts both Ezra and Nehemiah in the reign of Xerxes, son of Darius, and speaks of Xerxes' twenty-eighth year! He also makes Nehemiah to be two years and four months building the walls. He puts the story of Esther in the time of Artaxerxes, and makes Sanballat to be appointed satrap at Samaria by Darius Codomannus.

§ 3. SCHEME OF THE BOOK.

I. Before the wall-building (chaps. i., ii.).

1. Nehemiah's sadness (chap. i.).
2. Nehemiah's request of the king (chap. ii. 1-8).
3. Nehemiah's journey (chap. ii. 9-11).
4. Nehemiah's inspection and counsel (chap. ii. 12-20).

II. The wall-building (chap. iii.—xii. 43).

1. The stations (chap. iii.).
2. The opposition from without (chap. iv.).
3. The opposition from within (chap. v.).
4. The craft used by the enemies (chap. vi.).
5. The ordering of the city (chap. vii. 1-4).
6. The genealogy (chap. vii. 5-73).
7. The law-reading on the first of Tisri (chap. viii. 1-12).
8. The preparations for the feast of tabernacles (chap. viii. 13-16)
9. The feast of tabernacles (chap. viii. 17, 18).
10. The extraordinary fast (chaps. ix., x.).
11. The distribution of inhabitants (chap. xi.).
12. The Levitical Genealogy (chap. xii. 1-26).
13. The dedication of the walls (chap. xii. 27-43).

III. After the wall building.

1. Levitical apportionments (chap. xii. 44-47).
2. The separation of the *Erev* (mixed multitude—chap. xiii. 1-3).
* * * * *
3. Nehemiah's reforms twelve years later (chap. xiii. 4-31).

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

CHAPTER I. 1-11.

1 THE words [history] of Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass
in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year [of Artaxerxes], as I was in Shu-ban
2 the palace [the citadel of Susa], that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and
certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped
[the Jews, the delivered ones], which were left [over] of the captivity, and con-
3 cerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant [the left-over ones]
that are left [over] of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and
reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also *is* broken down, and the gates thereof *are*
4 burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down
and wept, and mourned *certain* days, and fasted,¹ and prayed before the God of hea-
5 ven, and said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God that
keepeth covenant and mercy [*i. e.* the merciful covenant] for them that love him
6 and observe his commandments: Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes
open, that thou mayst hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee
now [to-day], day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess
the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and
7 my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly² against thee, and
have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou
8 commandedst thy servant Moses. Remember, I beseech thee the word that thou
commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, *If* ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad
9 among the nations: but *if* ye turn unto me and keep my commandments, and do
them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet
will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have
10 chosen to set my name there. Now these *are* thy servants and thy people, whom
11 thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. O Lord, I
beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to
the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee,
thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man [*i. e.* Artaxer-
xes]. For I was the king's cup-bearer.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

¹ Ver. 4. וָאֵהִי צָם. Here and in 2 Sam. xii. 23 the participle. Here the auxiliary verb expressed. After יָקִים supply רָבִים, as in Dan. x. 14.

² Ver. 7. חָבַל חַבְלָיִךְ לִךְ. Aben Ezra and most of the Jewish commentators count this a Chaldaism as in Dan. vi. 23, '4 (22, 23). In Gen. vi. 12 פִּי-הַשָּׁחִית כָּל-בְּשָׂר is translated by Onkelos כָּל בְּשָׂרָא אֲרִי חַבְלֵי כָּל בְּשָׂרָא. The meaning of "act corruptly" is, however, found in Job xxxiv. 31. It may be an early Aramaic signification.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

The Tidings from Jerusalem.

Ver. 1. The title of the book is contained in its first four (Hebrew) words, *Divre Nehemyah Ben 'Hachalyah,* i. e., The words of Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah.*—Even the prophets sometimes begin their books in this way (see Jer. i. 1, and Amos i. 1), although with them the *Devar Yehovah* (the Word of the Lord) finds its place soon after. The absence of the *Devar Yehovah* here is nothing against the inspired character of the book. Its presence in the prophets is simply a token of their prophetic character, as they speak to the people directly in God's name with a special message. In the historical books, even in the Pentateuch, the sacred foundation of them all, this phrase very naturally is not found. Here, as in 1 Chron. xxix. 29, and elsewhere, "the words of" are really "the words about," or "the history of." In Jer. i. 1, Amos. i. 1, etc., they have the literal meaning. (Duthe rightly "historia Nehemiah"). (For the name and history of Nehemiah, see the Introduction).

The starting-point of Nehemiah's words (or history) is in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, in Shushan the palace.—Chisleu was the ninth month, Abib or Nisan (in which the passover fell) being the first. Chisleu would thus answer to parts of November and December. Josephus makes it (*Χασλεύς*) the same as the Macedonian Apellæus (Ant. xii. 7, 6), which was the second month of the Macedonian year, whose first month Dios began at the autumnal equinox. Apellæus would thus be from the latter part of October to the latter part of November. Josephus was probably satisfied in identifying the two months of Chisleu and Apellæus, to find some portion of time belonging equally to both. They certainly did not coincide throughout.

Chisleu is not likely to be a Persian month-name, as has been conjectured. The Behistun inscription gives us eight Persian month-names, to wit, Bagayadish, Viyakhna, Garmapada, Atiyatiya, Anamaka, Thuravahara, Thagarchish and Adukanish. It is true that in all but the first of these battles are recorded as occurring, so that they are not probably winter months. Yet the style of the names would scarcely warrant us in supposing that Chisleu would be in such a list. As Chisleu appears on a Palmyrene inscription (*Cheslul*), it may be of Syrian origin. This month-name occurs in the Hebrew only after the captivity, to wit, in this place and in Zech. vii. 1. Fuerst suggests *Chesil* (Orion-Mars) as the base of the name, the name being brought from Babylonia by the exiles; but the name is found in the Assyrian, as are the other (so-supposed) Persian month-names of the Jews, which is strong presumptive evidence of their Shemitic origin.

The "twentieth year" is, as in chap. ii. 1, the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (Heb. *Artaxshasta*), who reigned from B. C. 465 to 425. The year

designated is therefore parts of B. C. 446 and 445, when the "age of Pericles" was beginning in Athens, and when Rome was yet unknown to the world. (For Artaxerxes, see Introduction). "Shushan the palace" (Heb. *Shushan Habbirah*) was the royal portion of the "city Shushan" (Esther iii. 15). Shushan or Susa (now *Sus*) lay between the Eulæus (Ulai) and Shapur rivers, in a well-watered district, and was the capital of Susiana or Cissia, the Scriptural *Elam* (Isa. xi. 11) the country lying between the southern Zagros mountains and the Tigris. It early furnished a dynasty to Babylonia (Gen. xiv. 1), was conquered by Asshur-bani-pal about B. C. 660, and shortly afterward fell to the lot of the later Babylonian Empire. When the Persians had conquered this Empire, Susa was made a royal residence by Darius Hystaspes, who built the great palace, whose ruins now attract the attention of archaeologists. Artaxerxes (the king of Nehemiah's time) repaired the palace, whose principal features resembled those of the chief edifice at Persepolis, the older capital of the Persian Empire. The present ruins of Susa cover a space about a mile square, the portion of which near the river Shapur is probably "Shushan the palace."

Athenæus (xii. 8) says, *Κληθήνα τὰ Σοῦσά φησιν Ἀριστόβουλος καὶ Χέρης διὰ τὴν θραιώτητα τοῦ τόπου· αὐτοῦ γὰρ εἶναι τὴν Ἑλλήνων (? Ἑλευμαίων) φωνὴ τὸ κρίνον.* So Steph. Byzant, *Σοῦσα, ἀπὸ τῶν κρίνων, ἃ πολλὰ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ περικύει ἐκεῖνη.* If this be true we must accord it a Shemitic origin, which is against other evidence. Shushan may be a Turanian or an Aryan word, whose likeness to "Shushan" (Shemit. for *lily*) has deceived the old writers. Susa was the court's principal residence, Ecbatana or Persepolis being visited for the summer only, and Babylon being sometimes occupied in the depth of winter.

Ver. 2. Nehemiah is informed of the sad condition of Jerusalem and the colony of Jews in Judea by Hanani and others. His words are **Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah, etc.** Hanani was literally brother to Nehemiah, as we see from chap. vii. 1. He afterward was appointed one of the assistant governors of Jerusalem by Nehemiah (ch. vii. 2). He is not to be confounded with Hanani, a priest, mentioned in chap. xii. 36, and (perhaps the same) in Ezra x. 20. *Of Judah* may be read *from Judah* as denoting place rather than tribal distinction. The words would thus refer to the verb "came," and naturally introduce Nehemiah's question. That the colony was asked "Judah," see chap. ii. 7.

Nehemiah asked them concerning the **Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.** Heb. *happelêlah asher nisharu min hashshévi* (lit. "the deliverance which were left over from the captivity"). The abstract is used as a concrete collective noun. Although the greater part of the Jews preferred to live in the land to which their ancestors had been carried captive, yet to the pious heart those who returned to the old country were recognized as the "deliverance," or the "delivered ones," "escaped ones." The journey from Jerusalem to Susa by Tadmor or by Tiphshah is over a thousand miles long, and

* The Hebrew is transliterated for the benefit of the English reader.

the usual rate of Oriental travelling would take at least 45 days. With the natural causes to retard so long a journey, we may safely call it a two months' travel. Ezra, with his caravan, was four months on his journey from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra vii. 9).

Ver. 3. Nehemiah's informers tell him that the remnant (*han-nisharim*, "the left-over ones") in the province are in great affliction (the general word for adversity) and reproach (the word explaining the cause of the adversity). They were the objects of scorn and contemptuous treatment from the neighboring peoples. The wall of Jerusalem they also represent as broken down and its gates burned. Nebuchadnezzar had broken down the walls a hundred and forty-two years before (2 Kings xxv. 10) and the attempt to rebuild them had been stopped by the Pseudo-Smerdis (the Artaxerxes of Ezra iv. 7) seventy-six years before this embassy to Nehemiah. After that, in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, the temple had been finished, but the walls seem not to have been touched. The burnt gates were also, doubtless, the old wreck from Nebuchadnezzar's time. There is no reason for supposing that the walls had been rebuilt, and again destroyed. Hanani and the men of Judah add to their statement of the affliction and reproach of the province that the walls still remain in their old ruined condition.

Ver. 4. *Nehemiah's prayer.* The tidings brought by Hanani and the others deeply moved Nehemiah, and led him to a special season of humiliation and prayer. His grief was doubtless increased at the thought that all this evil existed in spite of Ezra's work, for Ezra had gone to Jerusalem thirteen years before. He sat down and wept and mourned certain days and fasted and prayed.—That is, he withdrew from his court duties, and spent a period of retirement (comp. Ps. cxxvii. 1 for the phrase "sat down and wept") in most sincere sorrow, which compelled his fasting and prayer, as its godly manifestations. The phrase **God of heaven** (*Elohe hash-shamayim*) is supposed by some to be only found with the writers of the Babylonish or post-Babylonish period, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the author of the 136th Psalm, but we find it in Gen. xxiv. 3, 7, and in Jonah i. 9. The style is repeated in Rev. xi, 13 and xvi, 11 (*ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ*). It was a natural epithet to distinguish Jehovah from the gods of earth, formed of earthly substances. The phrase cannot properly be called Persian, as the reference in Jonah proves. Moreover, it does not occur in the long Behistun inscription. If it was used by the later Persians, it is as likely to have been taken from the Jews as *vice versa*.

Ver. 5. **Terrible** is *awe-inspiring*, נָרָה, the Niphal participle of נָרָה (to tremble). **That keepeth covenant and mercy.**—Lit. *That keepeth the covenant and mercy*, by hendiadys for "the covenant of mercy," or "the merciful covenant" established in the world's Messiah, but centrally and typically in the Israelitish system. **Observe his commandments**—or *keep his commandments*; the same verb as before. God keeps the covenant for them who keep His commandments. This is not a doctrine of meritorious

works, but of adhering faith. See its explanation in John vi. 28, 29, where the work of God is a sincere faith. The essence of faith is love, whose definition is given in 2 John 6. "The great and terrible God" is a phrase borrowed from Deut. vii. 21, and "that keepeth—observe his commandments" is from the 9th verse of the same chapter. The Pentateuch was furnished with the religious phraseology of the nation in all ages. (Comp. Dan. ix. 4.)

Ver. 6. After this address to Jehovah as the awe-inspiring and yet covenant-keeping God, he asks God to hear him as the representative of his nation. The phrase, **let thine ear be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear**, is peculiar. It is derived from Solomon's prayer (1 Kings viii. 29, 52), and has reference, doubtless, to the greater attention paid by the ear when the eyes are opened towards the source of the sound.

Now, day and night.—Lit. *to-day, day and night*. His prayer was oft repeated in the course of these days of separation and mourning at hours of the night, as well as at the usual hours of daily prayer. **Which we have sinned.**—Nehemiah has a clear sense of his identification with his people in sin as in misery. **Both I and my father's house have sinned.**—From this mention of his father's house we have a strong reason to believe that Nehemiah was of the royal house of Judah. It is hard to understand his special mention of his father's house, unless it had been a conspicuous family in the nation. (See the Introduction.)

Ver. 7. **The commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments**—Heb: *eth-hammiztoth weth-hahukkim weth-hammishpatim*. It is almost impossible to draw the distinction between the meanings of these three words. They were probably used in the fulness of the legal style. *Commandment, statute and judgment* are the nearest English equivalents, but here they are all subjected to the verb corresponding to the first noun ("command"), and we must thus loosely refer them to the various forms of the divine commandments. The 119th Psalm seems to use these words as synonymous. (See on ch. ix. 13, 14.)

Ver. 8. **Remember, I beseech thee, the word.**—After the confession of sin comes the plea of God's promise. See Dent. iv. 25-31, xxx. 1-10. Not the words, but the spirit of the promise, is given.

Ver. 11. **Who desire to fear thy name.**—The name of God is His expression in His word or work. The declaration of a *desire to fear God* is a modest assertion of a true fear of God, but with a consciousness of its imperfection. **This man**—King Artaxerxes.—Nearness to God enables Nehemiah to think of the "great king" as only a man. The "this" does not indicate that he was in the king's presence when he prayed, but that he was brought into close relations with the king. **For I was the king's cup-bearer.**—The position of cup-bearer to the king was an exalted one (comp. Gen. xl. 21). *Rab-shakeh* (the name given to one of Sennacherib's envoys to Hezekiah, 2 Kings xviii. 17) means "chief cup-bearer." The monuments of Egypt, Assyria, and Persia show the high rank of the cup-

bearer. Nehemiah's high position as cup-bearer is an additional argument for his relationship to the royal family of Judah, for the Oriental despots loved to have men of royal blood to wait upon them. (See Dan. i. 3.) This phrase, "for I was the king's cup-bearer," is added as explanatory of the allusion to the king.

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. The interest of Nehemiah in the forlorn condition of Jerusalem had a deep religious character. Patriotism and piety were closely related in a people whose land had been the scene of a theocracy, and in a man of Nehemiah's character the piety is conspicuous in every impulse of his patriotism. It is sad to reflect that when such opportunity for a return to the Holy Land had been given by Cyrus, that only 50,000 Jews availed themselves of it, out of, probably, an aggregate of millions. The manner in which the affairs of the Jewish province dragged from Cyrus' day to the time of Nehemiah, a period of nearly a hundred years, was not due only or chiefly to the opposition of local enemies, supported by the Persian government, but had its chief cause in the apathy and self-seeking of the Jewish people. Nehemiah's piety is thus no type of the religious condition of the Jews of his day, but is a conspicuous exception to the general state of his people.

2. Fasting, with the exception of that on the day of atonement, was with the Jews (before tradition supplanted God's word) left to the suggestion of the occasion. It grew out of a deep grief or an anxious foreboding. Nehemiah's fast, continuing for several days, must have been not a total abstinence from food, but a withdrawal from all pleasurable forms of eating, his sorrow rendering him averse to all indulgence in the pleasures of the palate.

3. The "day and night" prayer of Nehemiah was no "vain repetition," as his wounded spirit and his humble faith gave life to every utterance. He had two facts before him—the greatness of God and the sinfulness of God's chosen people. On these he would graft the return of the people and the mercy of God. Some, like himself, were looking Godward, and had not God promised mercy to such? The favor of the Persian monarch would be the expression of God's grace.

4. The rule of obedience ("if ye turn unto me and keep my commandments, and do them," etc.) is not the way of salvation, but of continued prosperity. The love of God is assumed in his children. Their happiness now depends on their obedience. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The Jews were in covenant with God. Keeping commandments had not brought them there, but keeping commandments would fill them with the blessings of the covenant.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Vers. 1-4. Genuine patriotism. 1) When and where it is roused: both at a distance and in those who, in their prosperity, could easily forget their country and the people to whom they belong. 2) Concerning what it asks: concerning the prosperity of those whom the Lord has

preserved or selected, that they should strive for a better future. 3) What it finds the hardest to bear: that its country and people are in distress, and even in reproach, and that they are wanting in power to protect the goods confided to them.

STARKE: In prosperity we should not forget our poor relations or acquaintances, but should ask after them, Gen. xliii. 27. We should make the necessities of the saints our own, and give account of them to others. Rom. xii. 12.

Our greatest and final wish: 1) Concerning what we ask; there remains to us, even in prosperity and high position, if indeed we are godly, still one question, that is, concerning the kingdom of God, and its approach, and indeed only this certainty can satisfy us, that it comes continually more to us, to our families and our people; without it nothing is of worth to us, for without it there is no stability. 2) Concerning what we mourn for; that thus far, always so much the opposite of that takes place which should take place in relation to the kingdom of God. 3) Before whom we bear it: before the Lord with mourning, fasting and prayer.

STARKE: If the saints of God had great love and yearning for their fatherland, the earthly Jerusalem (Ps. li. 20: cxxxvii. 5), how much greater love and yearning should we have for the heavenly Jerusalem! Heb. xii. 22; xiii. 14. Although a Christian is neither bound to the Jewish nor to the Romish fasts of the present day, still he should practice sobriety. 1 Pet. iv. 8. The judgments of God cannot better be averted than by true humiliation, fervent prayer and honest reformation. Gen. xviii. 23 sq.

Vers 5-11. The nature of the true petition (for Jerusalem, for the Church): 1) It proceeds from true love; is therefore persistent and fervent: Nehemiah prays (ver. 6) day and night for the children of Israel. 2) It rests upon the humble recognition of one's own worthlessness (although standing before God as priest, the petitioner includes himself nevertheless to the inmost with those for whom he prays). 3) It is full of faith, in spite of sin and punishment, on the ground of the divine promise.

The foundations for our faith in the time of oppression: 1) God's promise, after the chastisements which we have merited, to allow mercy again to rule. 2) God's former evident proofs of grace, particularly the greatest, that He has freed us by His great power (*shining deed*), and has made us His servants. 3) God's divine nature itself, which cannot be false to itself, and cannot leave unfinished that which it has begun.

STARKE: The knowledge of God through the law and through the gospel must be united, otherwise the latter makes confident epicurean and rough people; but the former, hesitating and timid doubters (vers. 4, 5). Neither must we excuse the sins and transgressions of our ancestors. Dan. ix. 16.—Whoever stands in the consciousness of the poverty of his spirit does not exclude himself from sinners, but still always humbles himself before God. Dan. ix. 7; 1 Tim. i. 15; 1 John i. 8. God knows our weakness beforehand, and knows that we will stumble in the future. Matt. xxvi. 31. God's choice

is unalterable, and He keeps faith forever. Ps. cxlvi. 6; Jer. iii. 12. We should grasp God's promises and favors by true faith, and base ourselves upon them in prayer. Ps. xxvii. 8; Mark xi. 24. We are God's property and servants, and have been dearly bought and freed.

1 Pet. ii. 9. If we wish to obtain anything from men, especially from those in power, we should first seek it in prayer from God, for their hearts also are in God's hand, and He can incline them as He will. Prov. xxi. 1; Esther iv. 16.

CHAPTER II. 1-20.

1 AND it came to pass in the month Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the King *that wine was before him*: and I took up the wine and gave *it* unto the
2 king. Now I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence. Wherefore [and] the king said unto me, *Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart.* Then I was very sore afraid, and said unto
3 the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are
4 consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please
5 the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my father's sepulchres, that I may build it. And
6 the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? And when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and
7 I set him a time. Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river [Euphrates], that they may convey
8 me over [*i. e.* from country to country] till I come into Judah; and a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which *appertained* to the house [*i. e.* temple], and for the wall of the city, and for the house [*i. e.* temple] that I shall enter into [to inspect]. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.
9 Then I came to the governors beyond the river [Euphrates], and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with
10 me. When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of *it*, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare
11 of the children of Israel. So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I *any* man
12 what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither *was there any* beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. And I went out by night by the gate
13 of the valley, even before the dragon-well and to the dung-port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed
14 with fire. Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool, but
15 *there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass.* Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the
16 gate of the valley, and *so* returned. And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told *it* to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that [afterwards] did the work.
17 Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that *we are in*, how Jerusalem *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come and let us build up the
18 wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise and build. So they strengthened their hauds
19 for this good work [*or rather, for good*]. But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian heard *it*, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What *is* this thing that ye do? Will ye

20 rebel against the king? Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore [and] we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial [*i. e.*, record of remembrance] in Jerusalem.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 6. שָׁגַל. Only here and in Ps. xlv. 10. See Exegetical Note.

2 Ver. 7. יַעַל-פַּחוֹת. This later use of יַעַל for אָל, found in Ezra and Esther, is also found in Job frequently. Compare Exeg. Note on ch. i. 7.

3 Ver. 8. לָקְרוֹת, infin. construct of the Piel קָרָה, as in ch. iii. 3, 6. So 2 Chron xxxiv. 11. See also Ps. civ. 3. בִּירָה. This late Hebrew word is applied to the temple in 1 Chron. xxi. 19, and to the royal portion of Susa in Neh. i. 1. (Comp. Ezra. vi. 2.) See Exeg. Note here, and on ch. vii. 2.

4 Ver. 12. יִכַּב עֲלֶיהָ לִכְבַּבָּהּ. Comp. Is. lxvi. 20.

5 Ver. 13. שָׁבַר. In LXX. ἤμεν συντριβόν. So also in ver. 15. Doubtless the correct reading is, with some MSS. and commentators, שָׁבַר, which, however, never elsewhere occurs in Kal. יָמָּה פְּרוּצִים. The open Mem. suggests הַמְּפָרְצִים as the proper reading. (Comp. ch. i. 3.)

6 Ver. 14. לְעֵבֶר תַּחְתִּי לְעֵבֶר תַּחְתִּי. A clumsy form for לְעֵבֶר תַּחְתִּי.

7 Ver. 16. עַד-בֵּן, not "as yet," but "until so," *i. e.* עַד אֲשֶׁר עֲשֵׂתָ בֵּן.

8 Ver. 17. לְחִרְפָּה for חִרְפָּה.

9 Ver. 18. נָקִים וְנִכְנְנָה for נָקִים וְנִכְנְנָה. So in ver. 20.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

The Interview with the King.

Ver. 1. **The month Nisan** (called "Abib" in the Pentateuch, Exod. xiii. 4)—the first month of the Hebrew national year. This name Nisan is found in the Assyrian, but its derivation is obscure. It corresponded to parts of our March and April. **The twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king.**—Artaxerxes' reign-years counted from some other month than Nisan, for the preceding Chisleu was in the 20th year. The unlikely supposition (as by Bp. PATRICK) that the "twentieth year" of chapter i. 1 refers to Nehemiah's life, is thus unnecessary. (See on chap. i. 1.) **Wine was before him.**—It is the custom among the modern Persians to drink before dinner, accompanying the wine-drinking with the eating of dried fruits. (See RAWLINSON'S *Herod.* I. 133, Sir H. C. R.'s note.) Compare the "banquet of wine" in Esther v. 6. **Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.**—Lit. *And I was not sad in his presence.* That is, it was not his wont to be sad in the king's presence. The exactions of Persian monarchs would not endure any independence of conduct in their presence. Everybody was expected to reflect the sunlight of the king's majesty.

Ver. 2. **Wherefore the king said.**—Lit. *And the king said.* The word translated "sad" in vers. 1, 2, 3, and the noun "sorrow" in ver. 2, are very general words for "bad" and "badness." But the bad countenance was the sad countenance (see Gen. xl. 7 for the same phrase).

Ver. 3. **Let the king live for ever.**—Heb. *hammelek 'olam yihyeh.* Compare 1 Kings i. 31; Dan. ii. 4; v. 10; vi. 6, 21. The mere formula of address to an Oriental king, so that even a

Daniel used it without compunction. **The city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres.**—Lit. *the city, house of graves of my fathers.* This emphasis of "the house of graves" not only seems to prove Nehemiah a Jerusalemite in descent, *i. e.*, of the tribe of Judah, but also of the royal house. An obscure person would scarcely have chosen such a way of designating the city before the king. (Comp. on chap. i. 6.)

Ver. 4. **For what dost thou make request?**—Lit. *On what account this thou art asking?* The king takes for granted that the look of sadness is an assumed preliminary to asking a favor. There is a true Oriental touch in this. **So I prayed to the God of heaven.**—A beautiful mark of Nehemiah's piety. He first addresses the King of kings, and then the earthly monarch. He knew in whose hands were kings' hearts. For the phrase "God of heaven," see on chap. i. 5.

Ver. 5. **That I may build it.**—This was Nehemiah's first great aim, to rebuild the city. Without walls and fortifications, it was but a large village, exposed to sudden ruin. Could the walls be rebuilt, its permanence would be secured, and the province of Judah have a strong centre. That Nehemiah saw that this was the true course to conserve the special interests of God's people, there can be no doubt. A man of his piety could not rest in the mere external view of things.

Ver. 6. **The queen also sitting by him.**—We have a good illustration of this scene in a sculpture from Asshur-bani-pal's palace (Koyunjik). The king reclines on one side of the table, and is in the act of drinking. The queen sits upright in a chair of state at the side of the table, near the king's feet, but facing him. She is also in the act of drinking. Attendants with large fans stand behind each. (See copy of this interesting scene in RAWLINSON'S *Ancient Monar-*

chies, Vol. I., p. 493). That the word ‘shegal’ refers to the principal wife of the king seems clear from its use in Ps. xlv. 10. The chief wife of Artaxerxes at one time was Damaspia, according to Ctesias.

Ver. 7. **The governors.**—Heb. *pahawoth*, from *pechah*, the modern *pacha*, the Oriental name for a viceroy used by Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians. **Beyond the river**, *i. e.*, the river Euphrates. The course to Judea would leave the Euphrates probably at Tiphsh, 700 miles from Susa or Shushan, whence there would be 400 miles of travel through the Syrian countries before reaching Jerusalem. They were letters to governors or pachas in this Syrian region that Nehemiah requested.

Ver. 8. **Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest**, may have been a Jew, as the name is Israelitish. It may, however, be a form of *Aspatha* (Esther ix. 7), from the Persian *Aspa* (horse). The word translated “forest” is *pardes*, which is our familiar *paradise*. It is an Aryan word (Zend, *pairidaeza*), and signifies a walled round place, a preserve of trees and animals. There was probably a royal park set off for the king in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, and Asaph was its keeper. The word *pardes* is found in the Scriptures only here and in Sol. S. iv. 13 and Eccl. ii. 5. As it is not an old Persian word, but found in the Sanscrit and Armenian, no argument for the late date of Solomon's Song and Ecclesiastes can be derived from it. In Solomon's day, with that king's extensive connections with distant countries, the word may readily have entered into his vocabulary from any Aryan source. **The palace which appertained to the house.**—It is supposed by some that this is the well-known *Birah* or *Baris* (afterward *Antonia*) at the north side of the temple-area. But that was probably constructed at a later date. Nehemiah sought simply to reconstruct the old buildings. Now the palace next to the house (*i. e.*, to the temple, the house, as the house of God) was Solomon's palace, inhabited by all the kings after him, which was situated at the south-east corner of the temple-area. (See 2 Chron. xxiii. 12-15). **The house that I shall enter into.**—Not Nehemiah's own house (he was too high-minded to think of that), but the house of God, spoken of before. He desired timber (1) for the palace gates, (2) for the walls, and (3) for the house of God. “That I shall enter into” means “which I shall visit and inspect.”

According to the good hand of my God upon me.—For this beautiful expression of piety, compare Ezra vii. 9 and viii. 18. In ver. 18 of this chapter we see it again, slightly varied in form.

The Journey to Jerusalem.

Ver. 9. **The king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.**—Nehemiah's high rank made this a matter of course. —Ver. 10. **Sanballat the Horonite.**—There were two Horons (“Beth-horons” in full) in Palestine, a few miles north of Jerusalem. There was also a Horonaim (lit. “the two Horons”) in Moab (Isa. xv. 5). Sanballat was probably from the latter, and was a Moabite, as

we find his associate is Tobiah, an Ammonite. He was probably satrap or pacha of Samaria under the Persians, and Tobiah was his vizier or chief adviser. The hatred of the Moabites and Ammonites toward Israel, and the equal hatred of the Israelites to Moab and Ammon appear to have grown stronger in the later ages of the Jewish state. In David's time, his family found refuge in Moab, as Elimelech's family had done long before, and Ruth a Moabitess was ancestress of the line of kings in Israel and Judah. After the attack upon Moab by Jehoshaphat and the terrible scene upon the wall of Mesha's capital (2 Kings iii. 27), there was probably nothing but intense bitterness between the children of Lot and the children of Israel. Sanballat and Tobiah represented the Moabitish and Ammonitish hatred.* The origin of the name Sanballat is uncertain. It seems akin to the Assyrian *Assur-uballat*, and may be, in its correct form, “Sinuballat,” Sin being the moon (comp. Sin-akhi-irib or Sennacherib), or it may be San-uballat, San being the sun.

Tobiah, the servant, the Ammonite.—Tobiah is a Jewish name (see Ezra ii. 60 and Zech. vi. 10). We could scarcely expect to find the element *Jah* in the name of an Ammonite. Tobiah was probably a renegade Jew, who had become a slave among the Ammonites, and, by his talents and cunning, had risen into prominence, and was now chief adviser of Sanballat. Hence the epithet, which probably his enemies had fastened on him: “Tobiah the slave.”—**It grieved them.**—Samaria had become the leading state west of the Jordan, and any restoration of Jerusalem would threaten this predominance.

Ver. 11. **And was there three days.**—Days, probably, of prayer and observation before any determinate action. (See Ezra viii. 32, for a precisely similar conduct on Ezra's part thirteen years before.)

The Inspection.

Ver. 12. **In the night—few men—neither told I any man.**—These facts and that of only one animal being used in the night-survey show the prudence of Nehemiah, who would avoid calling the attention of Sanballat to any survey of the walls until all was ready for building. Any formal survey made in the day-time would soon have reached Sanballat's ears, for he and Tobiah were both closely allied by marriage-alliances with the Jerusalem Jews (ch. vi. 18 and xiii. 28).

Ver. 13. **The gate of the valley, Sha'ar hag-gai** (2 Chron. xxvi. 9; Neh. iii. 13), was probably a gate overlooking the great valley of Hinnom, which is called in Jer. ii. 23 simply “the valley.” It was between the Tower of the Furnaces (*Migdal hat-tannurim*) and the Dung-gate. We may place it about twelve hundred feet south of the present Jaffa Gate.—**The dragon-well (Ain hattannin)** is perhaps the present great pool, Birket Sultan, along the

* The Sanballat of Josephus is evidently a very different person, living a century later. He may have been a descendant of this one, inheriting his office and his hostile tactics toward the Jews.

eastern side of which and above it would be Nehemiah's course southward from the Jaffa-gate. The strange name (*Fountain of the Sea-monster*) may have been given to it because some curious large water-snake or crocodile was kept in it in Nehemiah's time.—**The dung-port** (*Sha'ar ha-ashpoth*) is rather the *rubbish-gate*, and was probably the gate in the valley before which the rubbish of the city was cast and burned. It was the "east gate" (lit. *pottery-gate*) of Jer. xix. 2. So the Jewish authorities. We may suppose this gate was at the southern extremity of Zion. The false rendering of "dung-port" has given rise to the idea that it was near the temple; that through it the filth from the animals offered in sacrifice was carried. It is possible that this filth may have been carried over the bridge to Zion, and through this gate to the brink of Hinnom's deepest portion, and there dumped with the other rubbish. But the *rubbish-gate* or *dung-port* was only one thousand cubits from the valley gate (see ch. iii. 13), and no gate near the temple could have been thus near the valley-gate, if the valley-gate were anywhere on the west of the city. We should consider the *Rubbish-gate* as directly before that part of Hinnom known as Tophet (Jer. vii. 31, 32, and xix. 6, 11, 12, 13, 14). (But see Excursus.)

Ver. 14. **The gate of the fountain, *Sha'ar ha-ayin***, is certainly a gate in front of the pool of Siloam (see ch. iii. 15). It would be where the ancient wall turned northward beyond its south-eastern corner.—**The king's pool, *berchath hammelek***, must be the pool of Siloam. Comp. ch. iii. 15. The "virgin's fountain" of to-day is too far away. It probably received this name from its watering the king's garden (ch. iii. 15). See Joseph. *Ant.* 7, 14, 4. Also Jerom. *Com.* ou Jer. vii. 30.

There was no place for the beast that was under me to pass.—The ruin was so great, and the rubbish so accumulated, along Ophel, that Nehemiah could not pursue his course along the wall any further (ver. 15), but was obliged to go down into the valley of the Kidron (**the brook, *nachal***), up which he went and surveyed the wall, and then turned back and pursued the same route back again to the valley-gate. It is evident that this survey was confined to the southern and eastern walls, which were perhaps the most ruined and the most neglected, as being on the sides of greater natural defence.*

Ver. 16. **Neither had I as yet told it to the Jews.**—Rather: *Neither did I, until I had done thus, tell it to the Jews.*—**The rulers** (*seganim*, a Persian word) were the executive officers of the colony. Neither to the Jews in general nor to the rulers, priests or nobles specially had Nehemiah communicated the fact of his survey. He, however, now summons an assembly, and urges them to build the walls, showing them as arguments God's mercies to him and to the king's favor.—**The rest that did the work, *i. e.* the**

others engaged in the public service. Or (more probably) it may be proleptic for "those that afterward engaged in the wall-building."

Ver. 18. **So they strengthened their hands for this good work, or for good, *i. e.***, for a prosperous time.

Ver. 19. **Geshem or Gashmu** (vi. 6), who was third with Sanballat and Tobiah in hostility to the Jews, was perhaps chief of those Arabs whom Sargon had settled in Samaria (see Rawlinson's *Anc. Mon.*, Vol. II., p. 146).

Ver. 20. **Ye have no portion nor right nor memorial in Jerusalem.**—This was Nehemiah's firm protest against the slightest interference on the part of these heathen chiefs. He will not acknowledge their right even to complain, and refuses to answer their false charge implied in their question. With such enemies there should be a clear understanding from the first. One of the strong points of Nehemiah's character was his uncompromising and prompt method in all things.

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. Like Joseph and Daniel, Nehemiah carried into a high office near the throne of an Oriental despot the vigor of a holy life. It did not make him a recluse, nor yet a sad-faced servant of the king. His sad visage at this time was a thing remarkable. He had been an acceptable officer of the court, and the king's treatment of his request shows the high favor in which he stood. True religion does not incapacitate one from office, but furnishes the man with a power to please, while it preserves him from the temptations of rank.

2. No doubt there had been from the foundation of the Persian empire a sincere sympathy on the part of the Persians with the Jews. The monotheism of the Jews gained them favor with the Persian throne, and was, doubtless, the chief reason of Cyrus's edict concerning their return to Jerusalem. By the twentieth year of Artaxerxes this sympathy had probably diminished (as under Magian influences it had been previously hindered), and yet the king's readiness to send an escort with Nehemiah (chap. iv. 23), and to make his way easy, may be attributed in part to this traditional regard for the Jewish hostility to polytheism.

3. Nehemiah's secrecy was a part of his executive ability. Although he had the king's endorsement, he knew the value of keeping his own counsel, for there were jealous foes around the Jews ready to throw hindrances in his way. Moreover these had allies among the Jews themselves—men high in rank and position—and the distance was so great from the Persian capital that Nehemiah's errand needed great wisdom on his part to make it efficient.

4. The encouragement which Nehemiah held out to his countrymen to rebuild the walls was not simply the king's willingness, but the guiding hand of God. He saw behind the throne of Persia the power of Israel's Jehovah, and sought to strengthen his brethren by the same view. Piety teaches the heart to see second causes as only indicators of the Divine will and actioun, and law, whether it be from man's mouth or in the

* It is generally thought that Nehemiah made the full circuit of the walls; but, although the language might allow such an interpretation, the want of any hint of another way back (no mention of the Fish-gate or Old-gate or any other prominent land-mark on the north and west side) seems to force us to take *shuv* in the sense of going back in the way he went out.

forces of external nature, is rightly referred to an overruling Providence that guides and guards the people of God. It was this consideration that formed Nehemiah's answer to Sauballat, Tobiah, and Geshem.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Vers. 1-9. Love towards suffering Jerusalem: 1) Its sorrow (vers. 1, 2), in spite of personal prosperity, and even in the midst of the enjoyments of the royal banquet. 2) Its confession (vers. 2, 3); it is not ashamed of belonging to the congregation of the Lord; neither is it ashamed of its poor brethren, but declares itself candidly as love, and indeed in spite of the danger of displeasing in a very hazardous way. 3) Its petition (vers. 4, 5); it begs for help, first indeed of God the Lord, and then also of men, but particularly for the permission to give its own aid, and that too with self-denial. 4) Its joy (vers. 6, 9): its prayer is not only granted, but it receives almost more than it could hope for. BRENTIUS: *Hæc enim est vera amicitia, quæ in afflictionibus perdurat. Exemplum imitandum: si quid petendum est ab homine, primum a Deo petamus, qui hominis cor nobis amicum reddere potest.*

STARKE: To speak to princes of weighty matters demands great precaution. 2 Sam. xiv. 2. O Soul, if a heathen lord takes a servant's griefs so tenderly to heart, how should not the Father of mercy allow thy griefs to penetrate His heart! Jer. xxxi. 20, 25. The sighs of the godly are powerful petitions before God. Ps. xii. 6. One should not frighten timid supplicants still more, but speedily encourage their petition by generous bounty. Matt. v. 32; Rom. xii. 8. Princes and lords should willingly listen to the complaints of their subjects, and grant as much as possible. 2 Sam. iii. 16. God gives according to His great goodness more than we can hope or ask for. Eph. iii. 20; 1 Kings iii. 13.

The sorrow for suffering Jerusalem: 1) In spite of our own prosperity; 2) On account of the sad position of the congregation; 3) In presence of those who are able to help, and must be gained over.—The self-denial of a patriot: 1) He grieves in spite of his own prosperity, for the misery of his country; 2) He risks his position by a frank confession; 3) He wishes to relinquish his position, in order to aid his fatherland.

STARKE: It is a token of a godless spirit when one does not reverence his fatherland; but it is villainy when one desires to injure it. 2 Macc. v. 8.

Ver. 10. The conduct of the worldly-minded towards the congregation of the Lord: 1) Their latitudinarianism; Sauballat and Tobiah maintained friendship with the Jerusalemites. Chap. vi. 10, 17; xiii. 4-9, 28. 2) Their narrowness: they cannot endure that any one should seek to advance the welfare of the congregation of the Lord, as such.

VENERABLE BEDE: *Notanda animarum rerumque diversitas, quia supra quidem dicti sunt hi, qui remanserunt de captivitate in Juda, in afflictione magna et opprobrio fuisse; sed et Nehemiam loquuntur cum fletu et precibus duxisse jejuniis, eo quod muros*

Jerusalem dissipatos, et portæ illius essent igne combustæ, et nunc versa vice hostes ejusdem sanctæ civitatis contristati et in afflictione sunt magna constituti, eo quod edificia illius restauranda. Unde colligendum, etiam in hac vita severitiam domini posse compleri, qui cum dixisset: Amen, amen, dico vobis, quia plorabitis et flebitis vos, mundus autem gaudebit, vos autem contristabimini, continuo subjicit: sed tristitia vestra vertetur in gaudium.

Vers. 11-18. Bright zeal in the concern of God: 1) It foresees (vers. 11, 12) and hastens at times because dangers threaten; 2) It looks around (vers. 13-15) to fully estimate the difficulty of the work to be performed; 3) it looks, and points, on high (vers. 17, 18), to God's help, to the hand of God, which is extended in favor above it, and therefore succeeds with those whose help is necessary.

VENERABLE BEDE: *Diversa urbis destructæ loca lastrando pervagatur. . . . Sic et doctorum est spiritualium, sæpius nocte surgere ac solerte indagare statum sanctæ ecclesiæ quiescentibus ceteris inspicere, ut vigilanter inquirent, qualiter ea, quæ vitiorum bellis . . . dejecta sunt, castigando emendent et erigant.*

STARKE: When one has suitable means at hand for avoiding the danger, he must not despise them. Josh. ii. 15; 2 Cor. xi. 33. When something is granted to us by the authorities through favor, we must ascribe it to God. When one will perform anything great, he must keep it secret. 1 Sam. xiv. 1. When the Church sleeps, God awakens pious people, who work and watch for its welfare. There is a time for speaking and a time for silence. Well begun is half gained.

Vers. 19, 20. In our work for the kingdom of God what position must we take towards the objections of the world? 1) We must be prepared for scorn, contempt, and anxiety. The worldly-minded consider the aim which we truly have as foolish, as it is too elevated for them; they therefore attribute to us another aim, which is foreign to us; and in this way they give a most suspicious look to our activity. 2) We must not, however, lay any importance upon this; that which they consider foolish is our highest task, that we should keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and therefore concede to them, in so far as they are the world, no part or right in our intercourse.

Vers. 17-20. The admonition to build up the kingdom of God. 1) It complains: you see the distress, etc., for it always finds again the reason that it may pass beyond to the demand: come, let us build, resting upon the former proofs of the Lord, who also has known how to make the kings of the earth serviceable to His ends. 2) It excites the ridicule and the suspicions of the world, but overcomes them through reference to the God of heaven, who causes His people to succeed, but never allows the evil to prevail.—VENERABLE BEDE: *Doctores sancti, immo omnes, qui zelo Dei fervent, in afflictione sunt maxima, quamdiu Jerusalem, hoc est, visionem pacis, quam nobis Dominus reliquit et commendavit, per bella disensionum cernunt esse desertam, et portas virtutum, quæ juxta Esaiam laudatio occupare debuerat, prævalentibus inferorum portis dejectas atque opprobrio habitas contentant.*—STARKE: It is a

good sign when envious people combat a work; for one can conclude from that that it provokes the devil, and that makes us the more joyful. Gen. xxxvii. 4; 1 Sam. xvii. 28. The devil is never idle: therefore when he can undertake nothing actively against the people of God, he makes use of poisonous tongues; but whoever fears God has a secure fortress. Sir. xiv. 26, 31. One should be firm in his confidence in God, and allow nothing to be abstracted from it.

CHAP. III. 1-32.

- 1 THEN Eliashib, the high-priest, rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep-gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the
- 2 tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hauaneel. And next unto him [*lit.* at his hand] builded the men of Jericho. And next to them [*rather*, next
- 3 to him, *i. e.*, next to Eliashib] builded Zaccur the son of Imri. But [and] the fish-gate did the sons of Hassenaah [sons of Senaah] build, who *also* laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks [sockets] thereof, and the bars thereof.
- 4 And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz [Hakk-z], and next unto them repaired Meshullam, the son of Berechiah, the son
- 5 of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok, the son of Baana. And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the
- 6 work of their Lord. Moreover [and] the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks [sockets] thereof, and the bars thereof. And
- 7 next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah [the Mizpah which belonged] unto the
- 8 throne of the governor on this side the river. Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of *one* of the apothecaries [the son of Shelemiah of the apothecaries (?)], and
- 9 they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall. And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part [half the circuit] of Jerusalem.
- 10 And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his
- 11 house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabniah. Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahath-moah, repaired the other piece
- 12 [a second piece], and the tower of the furnaces. And next unto him repaired Shalum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part [half the circuit] of Jerusalem.
- 13 The valley-gate repaired Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks [sockets] thereof, and the bars thereof, and a
- 14 thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung-gate [rubbish gate]. But [and] the dung-gate [rubbish gate] repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part [the circuit] of Beth-haccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks
- 15 thereof and the bars thereof. But [and] the gate of the fountain repaired Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, the ruler of part [the circuit] of Mizpah; he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks [sockets] thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of Siloah [Shelah] by [that appertained to] the
- 16 king's garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David. After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk the ruler of the half part [half the circuit] of Beth-zur, unto the place over against the sepulchres of David, and to the
- 17 part that was made, and unto the house of the mighty. After him repaired the Levites, [under] Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah the
- 18 ruler of the half part [half the circuit] of Keilah in his part. After him repaired their brethren, [under] Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part [half
- 19 the circuit] of Keilah. And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece [a second piece] over against the going up to the armory

20 at the turning of the wall [armory of the corner]. After him Baruch the son of
 21 Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece [a second piece], from the turning of the
 wall [from the corner] unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high-priest. After
 him repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah the son of Koz [Hakkoz] another piece
 22 [a second piece] from the door of the house of Eliashib even to the end of the house
 23 of Eliashib. And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain. After
 him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house. After him repaired
 24 Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah by his house. After him repaired
 Binnui the son of Henadad another piece [a second piece] from the house of Aza-
 25 riah unto the turning of the wall [unto the corner], even unto the corner [and unto
 the turret]. Palal the son of Uzai [repaired] over against the turning of the wall
 over against the corner] and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house,
 that was by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh [re-
 26 paired.] Moreover [and] the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel unto the place over against
 27 the water-gate towards the east, and the tower that lieth out. After them [him]
 the Tekoites repaired another piece [a second piece], over against the great tower
 28 that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel. From above the horse-gate repaired
 the priests, over against his house. After them (him, *i. e.*, the last one of these
 29 priests) repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him re-
 30 paired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate. After him
 repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanan the sixth son of Zalaph, ano-
 31 ther piece [a second piece]. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah
 over against his chamber. After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto
 the place [house] of the Nethinim and of the merchants over against the gate
 32 Miphkad [gate of the visitation] and to the going up of the corner [turret]. And
 between the going up of the corner [turret] unto the sheep-gate repaired the gold-
 smiths and the merchants.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

9. כִּלְכֵךְ. In this sense of "circuit" the word is Chaldee. See Targum on Josh. xvii. 11. In Heb. it means "staff," or "distaff." See 2 Sam. iii. 29; Prov. xxxi. 19.

13. הַשְּׂפוֹת. The omission of the *ס* is to be noted as comp. with ver. 14. Gesenius considers the *ס* as prosthetic, and makes the root שִׁפַּת, but it is as likely to be שִׁפָּה.

30. שֶׁנִּי, a lapsus for שְׁנִית.

הַשְּׂפָה, here and in ch. xii. 44 and ch. xiii. 1, seems to be a varied form of לְשֶׁפָה.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

The Wall-Building.

Ver. 1. **Eliashib the high-priest.**—This man was afterwards closely allied to Jerusalem's enemies, one of his grandsons having married Sanballat's daughter (ch. xiii. 28). His alliance with Tobiah became so close that he prepared a room for Tobiah in the temple (ch. xiii. 4, 7). Eliashib may have excused this desecration on the ground that Tobiah was a Jew by birth. (See on ch. ii. 10.) Eliashib was grandson of Jeshua, who, with Zerubbabel, led the original return. Notwithstanding the unworthiness of this high-priest and his probable want of sympathy with Nehemiah's piety and patriotism, he could not refuse to take the lead in the wall-building. Public opinion was too strong under the appeals of Nehemiah.

The sheep-gate. *Sha'ar hatz-tzon*, must have been by the temple, or else the priests would not have been selected to build it. It is probably the προβατικὴ of John v. 2, translated in E. V. "sheep-market." It seems to have been at the north-eastern corner of the temple-area, in the neighborhood of the present St. Stephen's

gate. It might derive its name from the fact that through this gate the sheep and goats (for the word refers to all small cattle) destined for the sacrifices were driven. (See Excursus.)

They sanctified it and set up the doors of it.—This gate is the only one which is said to be sanctified (*kidshuhu*), and we cannot tell whether it was done at once, so soon as it was built by the priests, or afterwards when the doors were set up (ch. vi. 1). The other gates were purified (another verb, *taher*) after the completion of the wall (ch. xii. 30). This seems to indicate a special connection with the temple. It probably opened into the temple-area. The setting up of the doors was not done until afterwards, but is here anticipated.* (See ch. vi. 1.)

The tower of Meah, migdol ham-meah, . . . the tower of Hananeel, migdol hananeel.—These two towers were between the sheep-gate and the fish-gate. They may have occupied the

* This gate and the water-gate and horse-gate and gate Miphkad (vers. 26, 28, 31) all appear to have been within the temple-precinct or its neighborhood, and all appear to have been destitute of locks and bars; for these are spoken of with regard to all the other gates (vers. 3, 6, 13, 14), but not with regard to these. These gates may have been kept constantly open, but guarded by an armed force.

north-eastern corner of the temple-enclosure, and the corner west of that, where the city-wall from the north joined the wall of the temple-enclosure. Hence they would (like the sheep-gate) be both connected with the temple, and hence they were sanctified. (See Excursus.) (They sanctified it in the second occurrence seems to refer to the wall including the two towers.)—The tower of Meah may have been the place where the nobles and rulers collected their *hundredth* (ch. v. 11), Meah being the Heb. for the “hundredth:” but?

Ver. 2. **And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri.**—This should read literally: *And at his hand builded the men of Jericho, and at his hand builded Zaccur the son of Imri.*—Zaccur may have been leader of the men of Jericho. The English version misleads.

Ver. 3. **The fish-gate, Sha'ar had-dagim,** was east of the present Damascus-gate in the north wall. It is mentioned 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14 and Zeph. i. 10. (See Excursus.)

The sons of Hassenaah.—Rather: *the sons of Senaah.* (See Ezra ii. 35.) Senaah was a city, or more likely a large territory (if we are to judge from the large numbers in Ezra, *l. c.*), near Jericho. In the Onomasticon we find a Senna, seven miles north of Jericho.—**The locks thereof** were probably the sockets into which the bars fitted.

Ver. 4. **Meremoth, the son of Urijah,** is the same who is called in Ezra viii. 33 “Meremoth, the son of Uriah the priest.” (See ch. x. 5.) He was of the family of **Hakkoz**, written wrongly in E. V. in this place Koz. See 1 Chron. xxiv. 10.

Meshullam, the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel.—This Meshullam was allied to Tobiah, for Tobiah's son Johanan had married Meshullam's daughter (ch. vi. 18). Nehemiah made the Jews, allied to the enemies of Judah, to commit themselves to the welfare of the city, as against their chosen intimates of the heathen. The “Meshezabeel” may be the same mentioned in ch. x. 21 and xi. 24.—**Zadok, the son of Baana,** seems to be the same as the Zadok of ch. x. 21. Both Meshullam and Zadok were probably of the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 5. **The Tekoites.**—Tekoa (still bearing its old name) is nine miles due south of Jerusalem, and about two miles south-west of the conspicuous Frank Mountain.—**Their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord.**—Nehemiah's task was an immense one, to unite a people, in many of whom there was no sympathy with the cause, for a rapid and successful movement. The fashionable part of Jerusalem was in virtual league with the enemies of God. Some of these were constrained (as Eliashib) by circumstances to take part in the work of rebuilding the Holy City, but others (as these Tekoite nobles) resolutely kept aloof.

Ver. 6. **The old gate** must have been in the north wall, east of the present Damascus-gate. Keil reads: “gate of the old wall” with Arnold and Ilupfeld, as referring to the old wall in distinction from the “broad wall,” which was newer. If we are to read Jeshanah as a

genitive, it is possible that the gate was “the gate of Jeshanah” as leading to that town (2 Chron. xiii. 19). (See Excursus.)

Ver. 7. **Meronothite.**—Here and in 1 Chron. xxvii. 30 only. Meronoth may have been a dependent village of Mizpah.—**Unto the throne of the governor on this side the river.**—They did not repair unto (*i. e.* as far as) the throne, *etc.* Then the preposition would have been 'ad, but it is *l* (*i. e. el*). It connects the description with Mizpah, and describes this Mizpah as belonging to the throne (or sway) of the governor beyond the river (*i. e.* beyond the river from Susa and the empire's centre), or as our version has it “the governor on this side the river.” Perhaps this was to distinguish it from the Gilead Mizpah, which was under another governor (Judg. x. 17, *etc.*). In this case the “river” would be the Jordan. Some place Mizpah at Neby Samwil, some at Scopos.

Ver. 8. **The son of one of the apothecaries.**—Probably the name Shelemiah (ver. 30) has dropped out here. The goldsmiths and apothecaries (makers of spices, ointments and perfumes) worked under these leaders. These apothecaries are supposed by some to have been priests (1 Chron. ix. 30).

Fortified Jerusalem.—Here and at ch. iv. 2, the Heb. word 'azab is translated in E. V. “fortify.” Fürst derives it from an original meaning of “knot” or “bind;” hence “fasten” or “repair.” Ewald gives it the meaning of “shelter.” But in Ex. xxiii. 5 it seems to mean “help,” though Fürst there gives it the meaning of “loosen.” A common meaning of the word is “to forsake” as in Deut. xxxi. 16. This last meaning Fürst and Gesenius retain in ch. iv. 2 by translating: “will they (the governors) forsake the matter to them?” or “will they allow them?” May not this general notion be intended here: “they loosened (*i. e.* freed from exposure and peril) Jerusalem?” Keil retains the common meaning of *azab*, and reads: “they (the builders, or else the Chaldeans) left Jerusalem untouched as far as the broad wall.”

The broad wall, hahomah harehavah (ch. xii. 38) seems to have been a special fortification at the north-west corner of the city. Keil would identify it with the four hundred cubits destroyed by Joash, and afterward rebuilt by Uziah. (See Excursus.)

Ver. 9. **Ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.**—Compare vers. 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. *Pelek* means a circuit, and is a governmental term. Rephaiah was ruler of half the circuit of Jerusalem, and Shallum (ver. 12) was ruler of the other half. The circuits of Beth-zur and Keilah had each two rulers also (see vers. 16, 17, 18). These circuits were probably districts deriving their names from their chief towns.

Ver. 11. **The other piece, middah shenith,** “a second piece,” as in vers. 19, 21, 27, 30. The first piece (“first,” perhaps, because first assigned to them) which they repaired is mentioned in ver. 23, where Malchijah is called Benjamin. The Harim and the Pahath moab, who are mentioned as the fathers of Malchijah and Hashub, who repaired this second piece, were probably remote ancestors, Harim being the third of the twenty-four who in David's time

gave name to the priestly divisions or courses (1 Chron. xxiv. 8), and Pahath-moab being one of the chiefs of families who came back with Zerubbabel a century before (see ch. vii. 11). The name Pahath-moab (governor of Moab) is one of the evidences of a close connection with Moab on the part of some of the families of Israel. Elimelech's residence in Moab and David's use of Moab as a place of safety for his family are other evidences. (See also 1 Chron. iv. 22 for another allusion.)

The Tower of the Furnaces, Migdal hattannurim would naturally fall into the neighborhood of the Jaffa Gate, and may be represented by the north-eastern tower of the citadel, which Dr. Robinson identifies with Herod's tower of Hippicus. (See Excursus.)

Ver. 12. Shallum, the son of Halohesh. Halo'hesh, or Hallo'hesh, is another ancestral name, and not that of an immediate father. (See ch. x. 24.) **He and his daughters** not ruling, but building. The zeal of these women is emphasized.

Ver. 13. The valley-gate. See on ch. ii. 13. **Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah.**—Hanun is called in ver. 30, "the sixth son of Zalaph." Zanoah was about twelve miles west of Jerusalem.

The dung-gate. See on ch. ii. 13.

Ver. 14. The ruler of part of Beth-haccerem, or the ruler of the circuit of Beth-haccerem. Beth-haccerem was near Tekoa, and was a height where a beacon could be displayed (Jer. vi. 1). It is identified by modern travellers with Jebel Fureidis, or the Frank Mountain.

Ver. 15. Gate of the Fountain.—See ch. ii. 14. **Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, a Judahite** (ch. xi. 5). **The ruler of part of Mizpah, or the ruler of the circuit of Mizpah.** The circuit of Mizpah, and Mizpah itself, had different rulers. (See ver. 19.) **Covered it.** Probably equivalent to "laid the beams thereof" of vers. 3, 6. **The pool of Siloah, by the king's garden, Berchath hash Shelah, legan ham-melek.** It is *Shiloah* in Isaiah, and *Shelah* here. The pool is the present Birket Silwan, and probably includes the Birket el-Hamra. It was outside the city, near the Tyropæon valley, where it enters the valley of the Son of Hinnom. Just at this junction was the king's garden (see 2 Kings xxv. 4, and Joseph., *A. J.* 7, 11), watered by this pool. It receives its water through a subterranean canal under the lower end of Ophel (the ridge running south from the temple-area) from the Fountain of the Virgin, on the west side of the Kidron valley. The old wall probably embraced all Zion, running along its southern brow, and stretched over to Ophel, in the neighborhood of the pool of Siloam, the fountain-gate being near by.

The stairs that go down from the city of David would then be an access to the Tyropæon from Zion, ending in this neighborhood of the pool. (See Excursus.)

Ver. 16. The ruler of the half part of Beth-zur, or the ruler of half the circuit of Beth-zur. Beth-zur is about four miles north of Hebron. **Unto the place over against the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the**

mighty.—The sepulchres of David were probably the same as the sepulchres of the kings (2 Chron. xxviii. 27, *et al.*), and we may place them somewhere on Zion (1 Kings ii. 10). The part of the wall here designated would be that on Ophel, opposite that portion of Zion where the sepulchres were, the valley of the Tyropæon being between. The "pool that was made" may be the present fountain of the Virgin, which perhaps Hezekiah formed with its remarkable galleries (see Capt. Warren's account in "the Recovery of Jerusalem") for the supply of Ophel (see 2 Kings xx. 20). The "house of the mighty" (*beth-hag-geborim*) we have no clue to.

Ver. 17. The ruler of the half part of Keilah in his part, or the ruler of the half circuit of Keilah for his circuit. Those of the other half-circuit of Keilah are next mentioned.

Ver. 19. The ruler of Mizpah another piece.—The first piece is given in ver. 7. **Over against the going up to the armory at the turning of the wall.**—Rather, *from opposite the ascent of the armory of the corner.* The armory of the corner was perhaps at an angle in the eastern Ophel wall.

Ver. 20. Baruch the son of Zabbai is honorably mentioned for his distinguished zeal. He worked at a second piece from the corner mentioned above to the high-priest's house, which seems to have been on Ophel. Perhaps this Baruch's first piece of work has slipped from the text. Zabbai may be the same mentioned in Ezra x. 28. Baruch may be the priest of ch. x. 6.

Ver. 21. Meremoth, the son of Urijah, the son of Koz.—See on ver. 4. As a conspicuous priest, it was appropriate that he should be connected with the work on the wall in front of the high-priest's house.

Ver. 22. The men of the plain.—The word translated "plain" is *kikkar*, which is generally used for the Jordan valley, but in ch. xii. 28 it is used of the environs of Jerusalem. It literally signifies a *circuit*. As no qualifying word or phrase is found here, this *kikkar* is probably the Jordan valley.

Ver. 23. Benjamin (see on ver. 11) one of the descendants of Harim. (See Ezra x. 32.) **Hashub** was son (or descendant) of Pahath-moab. (See on ver. 11.) **Their house** may refer only to Benjamin, who was a priest (one of the Bene-Harim), Hashub, perhaps, being in some way allied to him.

Azariah may be the Levite mentioned in ch. viii. 7.

Vers. 24, 25. Binnui is the Levite mentioned in chs. x. 9 and xii. 8. **Unto the turning of the wall, even unto the corner.**—Or, *unto the corner of the wall and unto the turret.* By this seems to be intended the corner, where the "tower which lieth out" (ver. 25) formed a projection. Capt. Warren found about four hundred feet south-west of the south-east corner of the temple area the remains of an outlying tower to the wall, which he conjectures may be the "tower which lieth out." This tower is described in the next verse as **the tower which lieth out from the king's high house.**—Solomon's palace, doubtless, occupied the south-east corner of the present Haram. It probably had a high fortified position extending south to the Ophel

wall (see Capt. Warren's map). This part was perhaps built by Jotham (2 Chron. xxvii. 3), or Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 5), or Manasseh (2 Chron. xxxiii. 14). The *height* of Manasseh's building is especially mentioned.

The court of the prison is spoken of in Jer. xxxii. 2 as appertaining to the king's house.

Ver. 26. Moreover the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel. Some with the Syriac, insert the relative and read, "the Nethinim who dwelt in Ophel," and then supply the verb "repaired." This is not needed. We may count this an interjected statement, showing what an important site had been given to the Nethinim. See, moreover, the נְתִינִים of ver. 27, referring to Pedaiah. The water-gate was, perhaps, a gate opening into the subterranean water galleries, lately discovered by Capt. Warren. If so, then the Nethinim dwelt in all Ophel from a point a little north of the Fountain of the Virgin to this "tower which lieth without," that is, along a distance of about eight hundred feet. This position of the water-gate answers to the narrative in ch. xii. 37. (See Excursus.)

The Nethinim (*i. e.*, dedicated ones) were servants of the temple, who performed the menial duties of the precinct. In Josephus they are *ιεραδουλοι* (temple-servants). They were appointed by David (Ezra viii. 20), as another guild of service (Solomon's servants, or Andhé Suelomoh) was appointed by Solomon (Ezra ii. 58). The Levites, as compared with the priests, were called Nethinim (Num. viii. 19), a word of the same signification as Nethinim. (Comp. the K'tib of Ezra viii. 17.) Perhaps David's Nethinim were the Gibeonites (brewers of wood and drawers of water) restored to their service in a regular manner, after a dispersion of their number in Saul's time. (See 2 Sam. xxi. 2.)

Ver. 27. The Tekoites repaired their first piece near the old gate (ver. 5).

The great tower that lieth out is probably the same as "the tower that lieth out" of ver. 25.

The wall of Ophel would be the southern wall of the temple-area where it joined the district of Ophel.

Ver. 28. The horse-gate was where Athaliah was slain. It was between the temple and the palace. This would put it about 200 feet north of the present S. E. corner of the Haram. (See 2 Chron. xxiii. 15, and Jer. xxxi. 40). The part from the "wall of Ophel" to the horse-gate (Sha'ar Has-susim) was probably in good order, as it was the wall of the old royal palace, and had been occupied by the governors of the city. Hence it is not mentioned as rebuilt at this time, but the next builders to the Tekoites begin from above (*i. e.*, up the Kidron) the horse-gate. (See Excursus.)

Ver. 29. The keeper of the east gate.—This *Sha'ar ham-mizrah* is the *sha'ar hak-kadmoni* of Ezek. xi. 1, one of the inner temple-gates, not a city gate. If this Shemaiah, the son of Shechaniah, is the same as the one mentioned in 1 Chron. iii. 22, then he was a descendant of

the kings, and his title may have been one of honor only. He may, however, have been another and a Levite.

Ver. 30. Hananiah. See on ver. 8. Hanun another piece.—See on ver. 13. Meshullam the son of Berechiah. See on ver. 4.

Ver. 31. The place of the Nethinim and of the Merchants over against the gate Miphkad and to the going up of the corner. Lit. *The house of the Nethinim and the traders opposite the gate of the visitation even to the ascent of the projecting turret.* The "house" or the Nethinim and traders was not their dwelling-place, but, we suppose, the place where under the direction of the Nethinim the traders (see Matt. xxi. 12) brought their doves, *etc.*, for sale to worshippers. We may place it near the north-east angle of the Haram. For the gate Miphkad, see Excursus. The ascent of the turret would be the stairs at the north-east angle leading up to a corner-tower, not far from the sheep gate.

Ver. 32. The goldsmiths may have been also connected with these matters of the Nethinim and traders.

For a plan of the walls of the city, see Excursus.

From this outline it will be seen that only those gates whose bars and locks and doors are mentioned do we consider as belonging to the city wall, to wit:

1. Sheep-gate, ver. 1.
2. Fish-gate, ver. 3.
3. Old-gate, ver. 6.
4. Valley-gate, ver. 13.
5. Dung-gate, ver. 14.
6. Fountain-gate, ver. 15.

The other gates are not spoken of as now constructed, and we take them to be inner gates belonging to the inner temple and palace divisions, to wit:

1. Water-gate, ver. 26.
2. Horse-gate, ver. 28.
3. East-gate, ver. 29.
4. Gate Miphkad, ver. 31.

We also consider the wall along the southern brow of Zion to have continued across the Tyropœon to Ophel near the pool of Siloam.

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. Eliashib's connection with Sanballat and Tobiah (chap. xiii. 7, 25) must have taken place at a later date, when Nehemiah had returned to Susa, and was not expected to revisit Jerusalem. If the high-priest had already made those scandalous alliances, Nehemiah certainly would have taken him to task, and the record of such reprimand would have been here given. With a heart disaffected, Eliashib nevertheless takes his place in the rebuilding of the wall. His prominence in the work was doubtless a great help to Nehemiah.

2. It is an interesting feature of this wall-building that those whose local interests were far off, as at Jericho, Tekoah, and Beth-zur, took

such deep interest and such conspicuous part in the work. The old love for Zion and for the temple was still warm in the breasts of the returned Jews. They felt that the true life of the nation flowed from Jerusalem as the central heart. Their union in this work was a powerful means of renewing their patriotic affection and strengthening the interests of the commonwealth. Co-working for defence always brings souls together; and when the co-working is in defence of the citadel of religion and country, the strongest bond of union is formed. The wall-buildings formed a strong basis, on which Nehemiah could introduce his reforms.

3. However, there must have been many who refused the service, and were apathetic, if not hostile to the work. Otherwise we should not see some of them engaged doing a *second* piece of the wall, and perhaps a longer list of leaders in the service would be recorded. It is not to be believed that, if the high-priest himself was inclined to ally himself to Sanballat, there were not many others who had no hearty interest in the restoration of Jerusalem's glory. The nobles of Tekoah (ver. 5) were but samples of a large number.

4. And yet, again, the thirty-four leaders whose names are given us cannot be considered as the only chief men engaged in the wall-building. Other prominent men whose names occur later in the book may have held office under them, and hence are here unmentioned.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ver. 1. The importance of Zion's walls. 1) For uniting the congregation, the congregation must be able to shut itself off and secure itself to protect its peculiar goods. 2) For exclusion of the world,—the world must be kept at a distance, so long as it only strives to rob the goods of the congregation.

Vers. 1, 2. The precedence of the high-priest in making the city of God secure. 1) He himself is the first to build. 2) By this he consecrates the work of the others. 3) He is a pledge for the success of the work.—The duty of building the walls of Zion. 1) For those in authority (as Nehemiah), who have to incite and uphold the priests and people in their work. 2) For the priests who are not exalted above the common obligation.—3) For the people whose members must not forget in their household and inferior cares, those which are higher and more universal.—*BEDE: Qui portas et turres edificant, per quas vel cives ingrediantur vel arceantur inimici, ipsi sunt prophete, apostoli, evangeliste, per quos nobis forma et ordo fidei ac recte operationis, per quam unitatem ecclesie sancte intrare debeamus. ministrata est, quorumque verbis, qualiter adversarios veritatis redarguamus ac repellamus, discimus. Qui vero reliquis verbis extruunt, ipsi sunt pastores*

et doctores.—*STARKE:* The clergy should set to work first in building the city of God, and precede others by a good example. The memory of those who have rendered services to the church and to the commonwealth remains, justly, blessed. Prov. 10:7. The most powerful and richest people do, generally, the least in the temporal and spiritual edifice of the city of God. Happy he who willingly puts on the light and easy yoke of Christ at the building of the spiritual Jerusalem.

Ver. 31. The honor of the mechanics and artists. 1) They may be, and shall be at the same time priests of God. 2) Their products can and shall serve for God's honor. 3) Their doing has in itself worth and reward.

Vers. 33-35. Why the world so easily pretends that our work will have no result. 1) Because in truth of ourselves we are not capable of great efforts: only the sacrifice and the power of Christ can make us willing and endow us with perseverance. 2) Because in truth the work is indeed altogether too lofty and glorious,—only the Spirit of Christ can consecrate us to it. 3) Because the world only sees that which is before its eyes; there is, however, something higher.—*STARKE:* Fleshly-minded spirits consider the undertaking and the work of God's children as contemptible and small, and measure it according to their standard. Wisd. v. 3; 2 Kings xix. 10 There are different degrees among the godless, in regard to their wickedness. The worst are those who not only do wickedly themselves, but also cannot bear to see others doing good, and express their rage in poisonous jeers. John x. 32; Ps. cix. 4.

Vers. 36-38. Prayer is the most powerful weapon against the enemy. 1) It secures to us the best allies. 2) It makes us sure of the weakness of the enemy. If they are God's enemies at the same time, they have God's holiness opposed to them, before which nothing which is evil can endure. 3) It pledges the final victory to us. They can only escape by change of heart.—*STARKE:* When we are in the greatest straits, there God is our safety, our rock, our strength and refuge, and we must fly to Him in prayer. 2 Chr. xx. 12; Prov. xviii. 10; Nah. i. 3.

Ver. 38. The blessing of the oppression which the scorn of the world exercises upon us. 1) We work the more steadily under it, we do not indeed know how long the evening will permit us to work. 2) The joy in the work increases as surely as it is elevating to bear the disgrace of Christ. 3) The work advances so much the better. *STARKE:* In the work of the Lord we must confidently proceed, heedless of all opposition. 2 Tim. iv. 3-5. At pleasure's call all work seems small, therefore be not slothful in what you should do. Rom. xii. 11; Prov. vi. 6. If God has given us successful progress in our work, this should be an admonition to us that we should the more boldly persist in pursuing our calling.

CHAPTER IV. 1-23.

1 BUT [and] it came to pass that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall,
 2 he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake
 before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews?
 Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a
 day [by day, *i. e.*, openly]? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the
 3 rubbish which are burned? Now [and] Tobiah the Ammonite *was* by him, and
 he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their
 4 stone wall. Hear, O our God; for we are despised [a contempt]: and turn their
 reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity.
 5 And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee;
 for they have provoked *thee* to anger before [they have acted vexatiously against]
 6 the builders. So built we [and we built] the wall; and all the wall was joined
 together unto the half thereof: for [and] the people had a mind [heart] to work.
 7 But [and] it came to pass, *that* when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and
 the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made
 up [that a bandage was applied to the walls of Jerusalem], *and* that the breaches
 8 began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together
 to come *an'* to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it [to do wickedness to it].
 9 Nevertheless [and] we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them
 10 day and night, because of them. And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of
 burdens is decayed, and *there is* much rubbish; so that [and] we are not able to
 11 build the wall. And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we
 12 come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease. And
 it came to pass, when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten
 times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us *they will be upon you* [they
 said unto us ten times, *i. e.*, frequently, from all places, Ye shall return unto us].
 13 Therefore [and] I set in the lower places [lowest parts] behind the wall [at the
 place behind the wall], *and* in the higher places [in the exposed parts], I even set
 14 the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And
 I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest
 of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, *which is* great and
 terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives,
 15 and your houses. And it came to pass when our enemies heard that it was known
 unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to
 16 the wall, every one unto his work. And it came to pass from that time forth [from
 that day], *that* the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the *other* half of
 them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the
 17 rulers *were* behind all the house of Judah. They which builded on the wall and
 they that bare burdens, with those that laded, [while carrying] *every one* with one
 18 of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other *hand* held a weapon. For
 [and] the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and *so* builded.
 19 And he that sounded the trumpet was by me. And I said unto the nobles, and to
 the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work *is* great and large, and we are
 20 separated upon the wall, one far from another. In what place *therefore* ye hear
 21 the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us. So
 [and] we labored in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of
 22 the morning till the stars appeared. Likewise at the same time said I unto the
 people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that [and] in the

23 night they may be a guard to us, and labor on the day [by day]. So [and] neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, *saving that* every one put them off for washing.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

16. The ו seems to be misplaced. It should be with הַמְּנִים, and not with הַרְּכָחִים. Or the words may have changed places.

17. In וְנִקְּוִים the ו takes the place of כָּ.

22. Note the absence of ל with מְשַׁכֵּר and כְּלֹאֲכָה.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

The Hindrances (1) *From Sanballat and his allies.*

(N. B.—Vers. 1-6 are in the Heb. vers. 33-38 of ch. 3).

Ver. 1. **Mocked the Jews.**—Sanballat was evidently afraid to use violence directly on account of the favor shown by the Persian monarch to the Jews. His great rage could exhibit itself only in mockery.

Ver. 2. **Before his brethren, i. e., Tobiah and his brethren in council. The army of Samaria.**—It is likely that Sanballat had actually brought an armed force in sight of the city to intimidate the Jews. In a speech to his officers he uses the language of mockery here given, **Will they fortify themselves?—Perhaps, will they help themselves?** Keil, comparing Ps. x. 14, reads it "will they leave it to themselves?" which is harsh. (See on ch. iii. 8 for the use of this word *azab*). **Will they make an end in a day?** Rather, *will they make an end (i. e., accomplish it) by day (i. e., openly).* So *bayyam* in Gen. xxxi. 40; Prov. xii. 16; Judg. xiii. 10.

Ver. 3. **Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him.**—The style of phrase in this verse suggests what we have already supposed, that when Sanballat addressed his armed men he was in sight of Jerusalem, looking with Tobiah and others at the Jews' work.

Ver. 4. **Hear, O our God.**—Eight times in this book Nehemiah interjects a prayer. They are prayers while writing, not while acting. The grounds of this prayer are, (1) God's people are despised; (2) excited to fear by the enemy. As in the imprecatory psalms, there is a prophetic power in this prayer. The prayer anticipates God's justice.

Ver. 5. **They have provoked thee to anger before the builders.** Rather, *they have vexed (with alarm) the builders. So kaas in Ezek. xxxii. 9.* The *leneged* is that of hostility as in Dan. x. 13.

Ver. 6. **Unto the half thereof in height. The people had a mind to work.**—The disaffected (including probably the high-priest or at least many of his family) were a few, and they had to yield to the zeal of the great mass. Patriotism, piety and security made the wall-building a popular work. (The fourth chapter in the Heb. divisions begins here).

Ver. 7. **The Arabians.**—Those in Samaria. See on ch. ii. 19. **The Ammonites.**—Tobiah's influence had probably induced many Ammonites to take active part with Sanballat in op-

posing the Jews. If Sanballat was a Moabite (as we suppose), that fact would account for an Ammonitish alliance, as the two nations of Moab and Ammon were always closely united, especially against Israel. **The Ashdodites,** with the Philistine traditional hatred, remained hostile to the Jews until Jonathan, brother of Judas Maccabeus, three hundred years after this, destroyed Ashdod at the defeat of Apollonius.

That the walls of Jerusalem were made up.—Lit., *that a bondage was applied to the walls of Jerusalem.* So in 2 Chron. xxiv. 13.

Ver. 8. **To hinder it.**—Lit., *to do wickedness to it.* (So the word *to'ah* in Isa. xxxii. 6). The various nationalities might suppose that by acting in concert, they could show to the Persian king they were only acting in his behalf for the safety of the empire against an insurrectionary movement of the Jews. An attack of Sanballat alone might readily be understood at court as a matter of personal jealousy and aggrandizement. Hence the confederacy.

Vers. 10-12. **And Judah said . . . and our adversaries said . . . the Jews which dwelt by them said.** Here were three sources of discouragement: (1) The severity of the work. (2) The threat of destruction by the confederacy. (3) The recall of the country Jews from the work by their timid fellows.

They said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.—Rather, *They said unto us ten times (i. e., frequently), From all places ye shall return unto us.* The Jews from the outside towns that were near the enemy came to Jerusalem and endeavored to make their townsmen desist, through fear of injury from Sanballat. [The Heb. *Asher* as in Esther iii. 4.]

Ver. 13. **Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall and on the higher places I even set, etc.**—Rather, *Therefore set I in the lowest parts at the place behind the wall, in the exposed parts, I even set, etc.* Nehemiah placed detachments, properly armed, at such points of the wall as had attained the least height and were thus most exposed to attack. These detachments were formed of the families who had been working at the portions of the wall where these gaps were. There was a temporary cessation from the work. "The lowest parts" and "the exposed parts" are in apposition. "The higher places" (E. V.) is a mistaken rendering. The word *tsehihi* means "a dry or bare place" (comp. Ezek. xxvi. 4-14), and hence by a metaphorical use, an exposed part of the wall.

Ver. 14. **And I looked.**—Implying perhaps an observation of some fear on the part of the

different classes of the community. Or it may refer to a simple review of the defenders in their positions.

Ver. 15. **We returned all of us to the wall every one unto his work.**—This shows that there had been a cessation of the work at the first alarm.

Ver. 16. **My servants cannot be equal to "my subjects"** as some hold, for *naar* could not be so used by Nehemiah, nor would he consider the people of Judah in the light of subjects. Nehemiah had probably a special band of men attached to his person, either by order of the king of Persia, or by the will of the people at Jerusalem. To these we suspect reference is here made. There is a distinction made between these and the others. These divided themselves into two parts, the one working while the other kept guard; but the others held a weapon while they wrought (ver. 17). *Hubergeon*. Old English for "coat of mail." From *hals* (neck) and *bergen* (to protect).

Ver. 17. Read *The builders of the wall and the burden-bearers while carrying*. The builders and the burden-bearers each bore a javelin (*shelah*) in one hand, the builders (as distinct from the burden bearers) also wearing a sword, as we see in ver. 18.

Ver. 18. **For.**—Read "And." The signal trumpet was directly under Nehemiah's order, as commander of the defence.

Ver. 22. **Lodge within Jerusalem.**—That is, during the alarm, those that had their homes in the villages and distant towns should now continue night and day in the city.

Ver. 23. Only Nehemiah and his immediate family and attendants are here referred to as not putting off their clothes. It became them to be patters of watchfulness and diligence to the rest.—**Saving that every one put them off from washing.**—A puzzling sentence. It is literally "man his weapon the water." The rendering of the E. V. is in accordance with the old Jewish authorities who regard *shilho* as a verb of equivalent meaning with *pashat* (to put off). Probably some words are lost.

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. The wrath and great indignation of Sanballat prove the insincerity of his taunts. If the Jews were so feeble a folk in his estimation, he would not have sought an alliance (ver. 8) to fight against them. He had good reason to fear the sudden restoration of the Jewish power, and was merely exercising that which is praised as political wisdom when he used every energy to thwart Nehemiah's purpose. It is probable that in Galilee there existed a growing remnant of Israel (the men of Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath and Sepharvaim (2 Kings xvii. 24) having been settled by the King of Assyria in Central Palestine), who, of course, sympathized with the movement at Jerusalem. Sanballat, situated between these two fragments of Israel, was the more alert to see danger in Israel's growth. Hence his forwardness to move in the matter, for he was evidently the chief mover, although Arabians, Ammonites and Ashdodites were ready enough to take part.

2. The prayer of Nehemiah that the enemy's reproaches might be turned upon their own head, and that their sin might never be forgiven (comp. Ps. lxxix. 27, 28, and Jer. xviii. 23), can only be understood by the soul that is so allied to God as to see His judgments proceeding forth from His holiness. The final judgment by the saints as assessors with God (Ps. cxlix. 6-9 and Rev. iii. 21) has the same character. Where the natural mind can only imagine revenge, the spiritual mind sees faith and holiness.

3. Prayer did not slacken the energy of the Jews. They experienced the redoubled zeal and activity which all true prayer produces. They made their prayer to God, and set a watch against their foes day and night. All the natural means whether of mind or matter form channels through which God conveys His grace in answer to prayer. To stop these channels is to cancel prayer. Prayer was never intended to foster idleness or diminish responsibility.

4. The remembrance of the Lord is the sure safe-guard against our afflictions. David says: "I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Ps. xv. 8).

Remembering the Lord is an act of faith, a new grasp upon His divine help, and, at the same time, a purification of the heart. Forgetfulness of God is the unguardedness of the soul.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Vers. 1-17. Our abiding tasks. 1) From work to conflict. (Vers. 1-8.) a) On account of defying enemies from without and within. b) In spite of faint-hearted friends. c) With faith in the Lord. 2) From conflict to work. Vers. 9-17.) a) Work remains the principal task. b) It can and must be advanced even during the preparation for conflict; the preparation for conflict does not hinder, but makes us active, zealous and strong. c) Laziness and ease must be renounced, with self denial. STARKE: We must guard ourselves well on all sides, that the devil may not make a breach, for he goes about us like a roaring lion, 1 Pet. v. 8. In the common struggle against Satan and his hosts we must support and help one another. True builders of the church of Christ must not only industriously build, *i. e.*, teach and preach, but also diligently act on the defensive, and resist all the powerful incursions of the devil, and all godless conduct, Tit. i. 9. In the church militant we must work in full armor, and have the sword of the Spirit at hand, that we may be a match for temptations, Eph. vi. 16, 17. God can easily put to naught the crafty attacks of the enemy, Job v. 12.

Vers. 1-8. The assaults of the people of God. 1) How they originate against it a) Through enemies who threaten to undo His work. b) Through weak friends, who, in spite of, or, on account of watching and prayer, become depressed and dissuaded from the work. 2) How they are to be overcome. a) By readiness for the conflict. b) By confidence in the great, only-to-be-feared God, who fights for His people.—BEDE: *Plane hæc ira hæreticorum, hæc verba eorum sunt, qui se Samaritanos, hoc est, custodes legis*

Dei, frustra cognominant, cum sint maxime Deo contrarii ac legibus ejus, ut pote jam dudum a domo David, hoc est, ab unitate Christi et ecclesie per hæreses aut schismata aut mala opera segregati; qui ne sua forte impugnetur atque excludatur impietas, muros fidei ædificari metuunt. . . . Tules solent imbecilles appellare Judeos, hoc est, confessores fidei, et facile a gentibus superandos, dum in quotidiano animarum certamine plus amant vitia quam virtutis victoriæ palmam obtinere.—STARKE: To pray and keep good watch are the best means in the time of danger, Eph. vi. 18. This is the way of many people; they make, indeed, a good start in the Lord's work, but when it becomes hard they draw back, and wish to take no trouble, Matt. xiii. 20, 21. Honest souls should not allow themselves to be frightened back by them. Nothing makes one more courageous in war than to be entirely assured that God is with us, and fights for us, Rom. viii. 31; Ps. xxvii. 1.—Our task at the time of attack. 1) Towards defying enemies—to pray and watch, *i. e.*, to be prepared for conflict (vers 1-3). 2) Towards depressed friends, who yet increase the defiance of the enemy—to confirm their confidence in Him who alone is to be feared, and to sharpen their consciousness of the duty of the conflict (ver 8).—What attacks befall the servants of the Lord (as Nehemiah) in their work for the honor of God. 1) Through dangers on the part of defiant enemies, who cannot endure the difference between the kingdom of God and the world. 2) From the dejection, hesitation, and foolishness on the part of weak friends, who easily interrupt the work and put it back. 3) Through the breaches in the walls of Jerusalem, which render the defences of the city difficult.—Our duty to watch and pray. 1) Its cause—the malice of the enemy, their power, their aim, the whole attitude of their hearts towards the kingdom of God. 2) Its result: its fulfilment is difficult to many, certainly faithlessness, increased defiance of the enemy, and dissuasion from the work on the part of weak friends are excited; but in contrast to these are a) watchfulness—b) readiness for the conflict—and c) the increasing confidence in the Lord.—BEDE: *Hoc est unicum adversus hostes universos ecclesie suffugium oratio videlicet ad Deum, et industria doctorum qui die noctuque in lege ejus meditantur corda fidelium contra insidias diaboli ac militum ejus predicando, consolando, exhortando præmuniunt.*

Vers. 9-17. What obligation does the enmity of the world against the building of the kingdom of God lay upon us? 1) To advance the building with all our might, in spite of dangers (vers. 9, 10). 2) To be armed while at work (vers. 11, 12). 3) To heed the signal of the leader, when he calls to conflict (vers. 13, 14). 4) Perseverance in the preparation for war (ver. 15); joyful, sacrificing zeal in the work (ver. 16). In all positions severity towards ourselves, particularly towards our love of ease, and laziness.—STARKE: The church always needs those distinguished people, who can comfort the weak in faith, and timorous, and can give them a certain hope in the help of God, 1 Thes. v. 14. In Nehemiah the rulers of the city, and heads of the church, have an example of godliness in his confidence in God—of foresight and diligent watchfulness in his management of this important work, and his arrangement of such good order and war discipline, also of courage and boldness in his proved heroic spirit in the midst of such great fear, danger, and difficulty as that with which he was surrounded on every side in this difficult work. Also in the spiritual conflict it is obligatory upon teachers and watchmen of the church that they should set the example in watchfulness and perception of the public good, and not allow themselves to be annoyed by any trouble. Rev xvi. 15; Luke xii. 35.

Vers. 11, 12. The preparation for war of the Christian. 1) Why it is necessary the Christian has to build. His building is an attack upon the world, which is irritated by it to the conflict. 2) In what it consists. The Christian bears, even at work, the right weapons. 3) At what it aims. We must and will secure the continuance of the work, and cultivate the feeling of joy and assurance. God will exercise us at the same time in sobriety, self-denial, and activity. Vers. 18-21. The voice of our general in face of the enemy 1) What it takes for granted—that we are prepared for the conflict, even when at work. 2) Of what it reminds us—of the greatness of the work which imposes upon us the building of the kingdom of God in others, and particularly in ourselves; and on the many dangers connected with it. 3) What it demands—that we should heed the signal for conflict, and join ourselves with all the faithful in the strife. 4) What it promises—that God will fight for us, and finally cause our work to succeed.

CHAPTER V. 1-19.

1 AND there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren
 2 the Jews. For there were that said, We, our sons and our daughters are many;
 3 we might buy corn] for them, that we may eat and live. Some also there were that
 said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy
 4 corn, because of the dearth. There were also that said, we have borrowed money
 5 for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. Yet [and] now our

flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children [sons] as their children [sons]: and lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought into bondage *already*: neither is it in our power [and our hand is not to God] to redeem them; for [and] other men have our lands and vineyards. And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. And I said unto them, We, after our ability, have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer [and found no word]. Also [and] I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? [And] I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants might exact of [have lent] them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury. Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive yards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine and the oil, that ye exact of [lent] them. Then [and] said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then [And] I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. Also I shook my lap [bosom], and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performest not this promise [word], even thus be he shaken out and emptied [empty]. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise [word]. Moreover from the time that I was appointed [he (Artaxerxes) appointed me] to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. But [And] the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but [and] so did not I, because of the fear of God. Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work. Moreover [And] there were at my table a hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides [and] those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us. Now [and] that which was prepared for me (*i. e.*, at my expense) daily [for one day] was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me (*i. e.*, at my expense), and once in ten days store [large quantity] of all sorts of wine: yet [and] for all this required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people. Think upon [remember to] me, my God, for good, according to [om. according to] all that I have done for this people.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

¹ Ver. 5. The E. V. rightly supplies an equivalent to לַפְּרֹתָם.

² Ver. 6. וַיִּפְלֶךְ. This Niphal evidently carries the Chaldee, Syriac, and Samaritan meaning of the verb. Comp. Dan. iv. 24 (27) where the derivative noun is used. The literal translation here is "and my heart was con-sulted upon me." Why the lexicographers give it a Kal meaning I know not.

³ Ver. 15. אַחַר is rightly rendered "besides." After the forty shekels salary they received the bread and wine.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

Hindrances (2) from the Tyranny of Jews over one another.

It might at first sight seem as if this episodical chapter was out of place, and should properly follow chap. viii.; but there is no sound reason why we should not consider the complaint to have been made while all were engaged in the important work of fortifying the city, as a time when it would be the easier to remedy the evil under the pressure of the common danger.

Ver. 2. **We, our sons and our daughter, are many, etc.** The error of the Heb. text here in writing *rabbim* for *orebim* (requiring only one letter prefixed in the Hebrew) is very evident (according to Houbigaut), so that it should read in English, *we have mortgaged our sons and our daughters that we might buy corn*. Compare the structure of the next verse. The complaint was three-fold: 1. We mortgage our children for food. 2. We mortgage our estates for food. 3. We mortgage our estates for the royal tribute. In all these their brethren were the exactors, not only acting tyrannically towards them, but break-

ing the written law of God in its spirit (Ex. xxii. 35-27) as well as in its letter (see ver. 7).

Ver. 5. *Neither is it in our power.* Lit. "and my hand is not to God." So Gen. xxxi. 29.

Ver. 7. **Then I consulted with myself.**—The Niphal use of *malak* (*wayyimmalek*) is peculiar, and suggests a peculiar sense in this place. The Syriac use of the word as "consult" (see Dan. iv. 24, 27) is probably the right one here. **Ye exact usury.**—The words refer both to the pledges and the interest (ver. 11). **And I set a great assembly against them.**—In the midst of the necessity of the wall-building Nehemiah summons a great mass-meeting of the Jews (see the word *Kehillah* in Dent. xxxiii. 4) to have this fraternal outrage stopped instantly by the force of public opinion.

Ver. 8. The Jewish colony had probably often redeemed Jews from captivity.

Ver. 9. **Because of the reproach of the heathen.**—That is, so as to avoid giving them an opportunity to reproach us.

Ver. 10. **I likewise, and my brethren and my servants might exact of them.**—Rather: *I likewise, that is, my brethren and my servants exact of them, or rather "lent them."* It is a confession of Nehemiah that he too was implicated from the fact that he had found his own family engaged in the oppression. Hence he says: "let us leave off this usury." The law expressly forbade lending money to Jews on interest. See Ex. xxii. 25; Lev. xxv. 36; Dent. xxiii. 19. All the lands those rich men had acquired had been obtained in this way.

Ver. 11. This **hundredth part** was probably a monthly interest, that is, an interest at the rate of twelve per cent. per annum. *That ye exact of them.* Rather: "that ye lent them."

Ver. 12. The moral force of the great assembly produced an immediate conformity to Nehemiah's demand. His action was a master-piece of management. The oath would have greater solemnity as administered by the priests.

Ver. 13. **My lap.**—This is the bosom of the outer garment (*sinus togæ*), which was used as a pocket. (See for this significant action Acts xviii. 6.)

Ver. 14. This verse and those which follow form an interruption of the narrative. They show that Nehemiah was for twelve years governor of Judah, and did not write this history till the expiration of that time. The parallel between Nehemiah and Washington in refusing salary while saving the nation is striking.

Ver. 15. **Forty shekels of silver.**—This (like the interest in ver. 11) is probably to be reckoned for the month. The former governors had received their table and 480 shekels a year as salary. The 480 shekels would be only \$360 in amount of silver; but this would represent in value a large official salary in that day.

Ver. 16. A second point to which Nehemiah refers with satisfaction and as a proof of his disinterested conduct is his allowing no speculation in land on his own part or that of his immediate attendants.

Ver. 17. A third point is his free entertainment of a hundred and fifty Jews, and besides this visitors from surrounding nations.

Ver. 18. **The bondage.**—The service needed

to the king of Persia and also that which was needed for the restoration of their national welfare.

Ver. 19. **Think upon me, my God, etc.**—Rather: *Remember to me for good all which I have done to this people.* It becomes necessary sometimes for a man of God to declare his integrity against the oppositions and insinuations of enemies. In such cases he can without presumption expect God to vindicate His faithfulness. See Paul's words before the Sanhedrim (Acts xxiii. 1), and compare also 2 Cor. i. 12; iv. 4; 2 Tim. i. 3; Heb. xiii. 18.

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. The advantage taken in troublous times for men to prey upon their associates and kindred exhibits the deep depravity of human nature. The violence of open enemies and the presence of surrounding dangers should have encouraged the virtue and piety of the Jews by the odiousness of the opposite and their sense of weakness and need of the Divine help. But as often sailors on a wreck, or as men (*e. g.* the Florentines) in the midst of the plague, have given themselves up to debauchery and reveling, so the Jewish remnant, persecuted and straitened, oppressed one another. It was no little bravery in Nehemiah to face these tigers of his own nation, while guarding Jerusalem from the foreign foe. A weak spirit would have reasoned that it was enough to do the latter, and that domestic evils must be endured until a more propitious time for their cure. That "great assembly" was a grand token of Nehemiah's marvellous energy and fertile resources.

2. Nehemiah's refusal of official salary was like Paul's refusal of support at Corinth and Thessalonica (2 Cor. ii. 9; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8), a waiving of an undoubted right for the sake of the higher good. *Summum jus summa injuria* is a sentiment which every tender conscience must often put into exercise. It sees that the only right is to give up right. A sublime spirit discerns when *lex*, no longer *rex*, becomes *nez*.

3. Nehemiah's soul was frank with God. There is freedom of access to a throne of grace for every believer (Heb. iv. 16). "Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people." is not a presumptuous conceit, but a child-like simplicity. The gross mind of the world would confound the two. Where we know that God has led us in paths of righteousness, we may well use that knowledge and encourage our sons by it. Nehemiah had but few around him who could reach high enough to sympathize fully with him, and it was thus his great comfort to pour out his soul, *according to truth*, before the God, whose good hand had guided him. God wishes no mock modesty from us. His grace in our hearts and lives should be acknowledged (comp. 1 Tim. i. 12).

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Vers. 1-13. The most powerful hinderances to the development of the congregation. 1) That they are discords and separations, but especially the complaints of the poor against the rich. 2;

Whence they arise: from want of love. 3) What do they teach: they challenge to a more powerful proving of love, and lead, when such proof is given, to a new impulse in the life of the congregation, but particularly to new praising of the Lord in common.

The old, and ever new, need 1) In what it consists; want, poverty, and misery are ever in the Lord's congregation. 2) Whence this arises, a) From sin (that of others, but also our own), from laziness, discontent, ingratitude, etc. b) From God's wise intention: He knows the sins, and wishes to remove them; He wishes to give opportunity to the rich to exercise their love, and to the poor to struggle against their discontent. 3) How it is removed: not through all sorts of new social regulations and laws—not through home missionary societies, in so far as their work is scarcely experienced by the poor as a mark of love, and is easily looked upon by them as help owed to them, but through an awaking of the heart to the proving of true love and benevolence as the Lord ever anew renders possible.—STARKE: God scourges not alone with a single, but also at times with a double rod, and sends one cross and misfortune upon another. Job x. 17. But the godly have great consolations and promises on the other hand. Ps. xxxiii. 19; Ps. xxxvii. 19, 25. Usury against our poor brethren is forbidden. Lev. xxv. 36; Ps. xv. 5; Ez. xviii. 13; xxii. 12; for whoever builds his house with the property of others, gathers stones for his own grave. Sir. xxi. 9. It is a bad case when we show ourselves to our fellow-Christians in such a way that they must sigh and cry to God against us. Gen. xviii. 21; Sir. iv. 6.

Vers. 7–13. What renders the admonition to exercise love effective? 1) Mildness in example. 2) Readiness of the preacher and his friends to take precedence in the example of love (ver. 10). 3) The assurance that God rejects the unloving from His communion, and robs him of His blessing (ver. 13).

STARKE: Anger in office is not, indeed, forbidden, yet one should be angry so as not to sin,

Ps. iv. 5, and moderate himself properly. Sir. xxx. 26. As storming showers beat down the grain to the earth, but gentle drops, on the contrary, revive and ripen it, so is it also with speech. Friendly language has more effect than severe rebuke, particularly with the irascible and people of rank, who cannot submit to hard reproof.

Vers. 7–19. How important, but how difficult it is to go forward as an example in true proving of love. 1) How important (vers. 7–13). a) When one condemns hard-heartedness, but is himself hard-hearted, he shows that he was not in earnest in his condemnation. b) When one makes claim to the God of love against the unloving, but is himself unloving, he shows that he does not really possess the fear and faith of God, but hypocritically pretends to have it. c) Those who support their word by their actions always make the greatest impression. 2) How difficult. It is not sufficient to exercise love in that one particular in which one desires proofs of love, much more must love, self-denial, and self-sacrifice be shown in every relation (ver. 14), and indeed beyond common obligations (ver. 15), in spite of particular deeds, on account of which one could be entitled to make claims (ver. 16) in spite of the great sacrifice which the willingness for immolation imposes (vers. 17, 18). SCHLUSS: The example of true deeds of love is (ver. 19) particularly also so important on this account because it gives us the assurance and the joyful sentiment of the love and care of God, but it is always on this account so difficult because with sin is joined such want of love, so that we Christians can only find the prayer of Nehemiah (ver. 19) justified in the mouth of Christ, and only for Christ's sake are allowed to dare to beg for God's care and love.—STARKE: When necessity or other cogent reasons demand it, one should willingly forego that which otherwise he would with good reason demand and take. Matt. x. 10; 1 Cor. ix. 18; 1 Tim. v. 18. He never rules well who does not do everything he can. God will reward good works, not according to the worthiness of the merit, but from grace. Luke xvii. 18.

CHAPTER VI. 1–19.

- 1 Now [and] it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and *that* there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon
- 2 the gates); that Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in *some one* of the villages in the plain of Ono. But [and] they thought:
- 3 to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I *am* doing a great work, so that [and] I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I
- 4 leave it and come down to you? Yet [and] they sent unto me four times after this sort [word]; and I answered them after the same manner [after this word].
- 5 Then [and] sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner [after this word] the

- 6 fifth time with an open letter in his hand; wherein *was* written, It is reported among the heathen [*i. e.*, nations] and Gashmu [*i. e.*, Geshem] saith *it*, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king [and thou art to them for king] according to these words.
- 7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, *There is a king* in Judah, and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore [and now come], and let us take counsel together.
- 8 Then [and] I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest [there is not according to these words which thou sayest], but [for] thou feignest them out of thine own heart. For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done [and it shall not be done].
- 9 Now therefore, [And now], *O God*, strengthen my hands. Afterward [and] I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come [are coming] to slay thee; yea [and], in the night will they come [are they coming] to slay thee.
- 10 And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there that being as I am would go into the temple to save his life [and live]? I will not go in. And lo, I perceived that [And I perceived and lo] God had not sent him, but that [for] he pronounced this prophecy against me, for [and] Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have *matter* for an evil report [name], that they might reproach me.
- 11 My God, think thou upon [remember] Tobiah and Sanballat according to their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear. So [and] the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth *day* of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. And it came to pass that when all our enemies heard *thereof*, and all the heathen that *were* about us saw *these things*, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for [and] they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.
- 12 Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah [multiplied their letters passing to Tobiah] and the letters of Tobiah came unto them [and those which of Tobiah came unto them]. For *there were* many in Judah sworn unto him, because he *was* the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken [to wife] the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 2. כַּפְּרִיָּה, as if from כַּפִּיר, and not from כָּפַר. This peculiarity helps the hypothesis that כַּפְּרִיָּה may be intended.

2 Ver. 3. עֵלְהֶם. The use of עַל for אֵל is noticeable. See ver. 17, *et al.*

3 Ver. 6. גִּשְׁמוֹ, for גִּשְׁמֵם, not after the analogy of the prop. names in יְהוּ (where the variation is owing to a form of the divine name), but rather to be compared with יְהוּ (Ex. iv. 18) and יְהוּרָו (Ex. iii. 1).

4 Ver. 8. בִּרְאֵם, Aramaic for בִּרְאָם. See 1 Kings xii. 33, for the only other use of the verb.

5 Ver. 13. לְיִצְחָק is properly "to the intent that." The first one here anticipates the other two, thus "To this intent he was hired, to the intent that, etc."

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

(3) *Hindrances from the Heathen and their Jewish Confederates.*

Ver. 2. The omission of Tobiah's name is an indication that he was merely an attaché of Sanballat. Notice also (in the Heb.) that the prep. is not repeated before Tobiah, as it is before Geshem.—**Villages.**—Some take this as a proper name, *Chephirim*.—**Ono**, with Lod and Hadid, is mentioned in ch. vii. 37 between Jericho and Senaah, as if it might be in the Jordan

depression; but the name of Lod is generally identified with Ludd or Lydda in the Sharon plain, twenty-five miles north-west of Jerusalem. If so, the ordinary siting of Ono in that plain is doubtless correct. Eus. *b. ius.* places it at three miles from Lydda.

Why Sanballat should select so distant a spot is puzzling, unless he happened to be stationed there himself at the time. Otherwise he would know that the invitation would arouse Nehemiah's suspicions. There may be another Ono near Chephirah, which is ten miles north-west

of Jerusalem, and Chephirim (villages) may stand for Chephirah.

Ver. 5. **An open letter**, that its contents might alarm all the Jews, and create opposition to Nehemiah.

Ver. 6. **Gashmu, i. e. Geshem.**—According to these words.—Sanballat throughout makes no accusation, but refers to rumor. Nehemiah's answer is (ver. 8): *There is not according to these words which thou sayest, i. e. there is no such rumor.*

Strengthen my hands.—This interjected prayer must be taken from Nehemiah's journal at the time. When he writes the narrative, he quotes his ejaculation, as showing where his dependence was at that trying time.

Ver. 10. **Shemaiah** evidently (see ver. 12) was a prophet. The gift of prophecy did not prevent a man from selling himself to lie for others (see 1 Kings xxii. 22).—**Shut up.**—See Jer. xxxvi. 5. He was shut up perhaps in performance of a vow; Keil suggests as a symbol of his charge to Nehemiah. This use of 'azar is related to the derivative 'azarrah (a court).

The temple, i. e. the innermost building, the temple proper.

Ver. 11. **Would go into the temple to save his life**—Lit.: "would go into the temple and live." The last clause may refer to the death of any one violating the sanctity of the temple. See Num. xviii. 7. It may also mean what our translators give.

Ver. 13. **Do so and sin, i. e. shut myself up in fear,** and enter the holy place, into which only the priests could enter.

Ver. 14. Sanballat evidently had a strong party in Jerusalem, and among them many of prophetic rank hired with his money.

Ver. 15. **Elul** was the sixth month corresponding to parts of August and September.—**Fifty and two days.**—Hence the work was begun on the fourth of Ab, the fifth month. The work went on during the hottest part of the year (say, from July 19th to Sept. 8th).

Ver. 16. The marvellously short time in which the work had been done, and that, too, by Jews, whom Sanballat knew to be divided into mutually hostile parties, impressed him and his coadjutors with the sense of a divine co-operation with Nehemiah.

Josephus turns the fifty-two days into eight hundred and forty days, probably in his desire to tone down the marvellous for his readers.

Ver. 18. **Meshullam.** See ch. iii. 4.

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. Nehemiah, when persistently declining the invitation to meet Sanballat at the plain of Ono, exposed himself to the charge of opposing peace measures. This is one of the hardest trials of virtue, to continue steadfast in a true course at the risk of impugned motives and damaged reputation. Sanballat's fifth message and open letter sought to endanger Nehemiah with the king, while it seemed to show Sanballat's devotion to the king's interests. The refusal now to attend a conference would appear the worse. Yet the sturdy patriot and man of God rests upon his integrity and trusts in God. This

persistence in the right, come what would, makes Nehemiah a great man as well as a good man.

2. "Shemaiah" was such a common name among the Jews, that it is impossible to identify this prophet with any other person of his name (as *e. g.* the one in Ezra x. 21). He must, however, have been a man of prominence, and one, too, who had been in Nehemiah's confidence, or else the attempt would never have been made by Tobiah and Sanballat through him. It may have been the high position and reputation of Shemaiah that led the prophetess Noaliah and the rest of the prophets (ver. 14) into the false dealings with Nehemiah.

3. The expression of Nehemiah's soul for their punishment from God is the outcry for vindication, which one's very purity of heart demands. In such outcry the persecuted and innocent soul finds rest. Let none confound this with revenge.

4. It is not strange that Sanballat saw that the wall-building was wrought of Israel's God. The trouble with God's enemies is not that their knowledge is defective, but that their hearts are alienated. Evidences are multiplying constantly before them, but produce no change in their opposition. Sanballat was vexed because he was thwarted by the Lord God of Israel. Those fifty-two days of wall-building were clearly to his mind a token of divine assistance; but this knowledge did not stop his opposition.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Vers. 1-3. Can the enticements of the dissembling world really make any impression upon us? 1) What are they? They all come to this one thing in the end, that we shall care before all for ourselves, that is, for our temporal well-being, and therefore shall descend from our due height as children of God, and they aim not towards our salvation, but towards our destruction. 2) What have we to place in opposition to them? That we have a great work to do, the building of the walls of Jerusalem, that is, the securing the kingdom of God in others, and particularly in ourselves, the spreading and the improvement thereof, only through the most faithful performance of this great, infinite work, can we reach the high goal of our salvation.—*BENÉ: Nehemias personam fidelium doctorum tenens, nequaquam ad profanos descendere neque eorum hostiis inquinari sentit, sed in conceptis virtutum operibus devotus persistit; et quo acrius terere nitentur inimici, eo magis ipse bene operando terribilis eisdem inimicis fieri contendit.*

Vers. 1-9. The behaviour of those who grudge independence to the congregation. 1) They act as if they wish to aid it. 2) They seek to intimidate, as if the representatives of freedom were rendering themselves worthy of suspicion in a dangerous way. 3) Their only design is to rob the congregation of its capable leaders.

Vers. 10-19. The friends of the enemy. 1) They pretend that they are caring for the well-being and the security of the good. 2) They serve the enemy. 3) They only aim at destroying the good leaders.

Vers. 15-19. The most repulsive enemies. 1) They are not those from without who are grieved

when the independence of the congregation is secured, and its work crowned with success. 2) They are much rather the false brethren, who always desire to incite the outside enemy anew to disturbing interference by smooth words.—*BEDE: Semper habent electi foris pugnas, intus timores; nec salum apostolis, sed et prophete periculis ex genere, periculis ex gentibus, periculis ex falsis fratribus suspectam vitam agebant.* *STARKE:* What Paul writes concerning false brethren (2 Cor. xi. 26) that has Nehemiah also experienced for his portion. And it is indeed one of the heaviest griefs of the true servants of God, when they must see that those connected with them in religion, yes, indeed at times their colleagues, who labor with them in the same work, stand in prejudicial intercourse with the enemies of Christ and His church, and yet wish to be considered as co-members, striving for the honor of God. Those whom God awakens for spiritual building should conduct themselves circumspectly and courageously against the snares of the enemy, and not allow themselves to be frightened off by their slander, but cheerfully proceed. In the end the enemy will be cast down with fear in their consciences, and must acknowledge that the work is of God. Acts v. 39. When we waver in the midst of anxiety God refreshes us, and stretches His hand over the

rage of His enemies, and helps us with His right hand. Ps. cxvii. 11.

Vers. 1-19. Concerning the most critical and saddest hinderance which opposes us in defence of the congregation. 1) From whom it proceeds. Not principally from the outside enemy, not even then when they feign friendship, and, under the pretence of helping us, aim at the worst, but much more from false prophets, who make common cause with the outside enemy, and yet pretend that they wish to protect us from their snares. They excite our humanity to allow ourselves, for our security or ease, that which can become ruinous to us. 2) How it serves us. Our zeal, our fidelity and perseverance, and our watchfulness must be so much the greater; we shall have opportunity to keep ourselves in sufferings, not for our injury, but for our salvation. 3) How it is to be overcome. Through precaution and fearlessness, through the fear of God in which are united humility and genuine high courage, also through great watchfulness.—*STARKE:* Great lords, who seek to further the good of the church of God and of the commonwealth, are a thorn in the devil's eye. The cross is often never lifted from the godly, that they may live in continual communion with God. Ah, my God, I have also a great business to perform, namely, to save my soul, and better that of my neighbor. Grant that I may be faithful therein, then shall it go on well and succeed.

CHAPTER VII. 1-73.

1 Now [AND] it came to pass when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors,
 2 and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed, that I gave my brother Hanani and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem, for
 3 he was [as] a faithful man, and feared God above [*i. e.* more than] many. And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while [until] they stand by, let them shut the doors and bar *them*: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every
 4 one to be over against his house. Now [And] the city was large [broad on both hands] and great; but the people *were* few therein, and the houses *were* not builded.
 5 And my God put into my heart to gather [and I gathered] together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found
 6 written therein. These *are* the children [sons] of the province, that went up out of the captivity of those that had been carried away [of the carrying away], whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and [who]
 7 came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city; who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number, *I say*, of the
 8 men of the people of Israel *was this*; The children [sons—*so everywhere in this*
 9 *list*] of Parosh, two thousand a hundred seventy and two. The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two. The children of Arah, six hundred fifty
 11 and two. The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two
 12 thousand and eight hundred *and* eighteen. The children of Elam, a thousand two

- 13 hundred fifty and four. The children of Zattu, eight hundred forty and five.
- 14, 15 The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and three-score. The children of Binui, six hundred forty and eight.
- 16, 17 The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and eight. The children of Azgad, 18 two thousand three hundred twenty and two. The children of Adonikam, six 19 hundred three score and seven. The children of Bigvai, two thousand three-score 20, 21 and seven. The children of Adin, six hundred fifty and five. The children 22 of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight. The children of Hashum, three hundred 23 twenty and eight. The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and four.
- 24, 25 The children of Hariph, a hundred and twelve. The children of Gibeon, ninety 26 and five. The men of Bethlehem and Netophah, a hundred four-score and eight.
- 27, 28 The men of Anathoth, a hundred twenty and eight. The men of Beth-azma- 29 veth, forty and two. The men of Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven 30 hundred forty and three. The men of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and 31, 32 one. The men of Michmas, a hundred and twenty and two. The men of 33 Beth-el and Ai, a hundred twenty and three. The men of the other Nebo, fifty 34 and two. The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.
- 35, 36 The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty. The children of Jericho, 37 three hundred forty and five. The children of Lod, Hadid, and Oao, seven hun- 38 dred twenty and one. The children of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and 39 thirty.
- 39 The priests: The children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred 40, 41 seventy and three. The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two. The 42 children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven. The children of 43 Harim, a thousand and seventeen.
- 43 The Levites: The children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, and of the children of Hode- 44 vah, seventy and four.
- 44 The singers: The children of Asaph, a hundred forty and eight.
- 45 The porters: The children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Tal- 46 mon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, a hun- 47 dred thirty and eight.
- 46 The Nethinim: The children of Ziha, the children of Hashupha, the children of 47 Tabbaoth, the children of Keros, the children of Sia, the children of Padon, 48 the children of Lebana, the children of Hagaba, the children of Shalmai, 49, 50 the children of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the 51 children of Reaiah, the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children 52 of Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of Phaseah, the children of Besai, 53 the children of Meunim, the children of Nephishesim, the children of Bakkuk, 54 the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur, the children of Bazlith, the 55 children of Mehida, the children of Harsha, the children of Barkos, the children 56 of Sisera, the children of Tamah, the children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.
- 57 The children of Solomon's servants: The children of Sotai, the children of So- 58 phereth, the children of Perida, the children of Jaala, the children of Darkon, 59 the children of Giddel, the children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the 60 children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Amon. All the Nethinim and 61 the children of Solomon's servants, were three hundred ninety and two. And these 62 were they which went up also from Tel-melah, Tel-haresha, Cherub, Addon, and 63 Immer: but they could not show their father's house, nor their seed, whether they 64 were of Israel. The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of 65 Nekoda, six hundred forty and two.
- 63 And of the priests: The children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children 64 of Barzillai, which took one of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite to wife, and 65 was called after their name. These sought their register among those that were 66 reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put 67 from the priesthood. And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat 68 of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim.
- 66 The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and 67 three-score. Besides their man-servants and their maid-servants, of whom there

68 were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and they had two hundred
 69 forty and five singiug men and singiug women. Their horses, seven hundred thirty
 70 and six: their mules, two hundred forty and five: *their* camels, four hundred
 71 thirty and five: six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses.
 72 And some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work. The Tirshatha gave
 73 to the treasure a thousand drams of gold, fifty basins, five hundred and thirty
 priests' garments. And *some* of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the
 work twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pounds
 of silver. And *that* which the rest of the people gave *was* twenty thousand drams
 of gold, and two thousand pounds of silver, and three-score and seven priests' gar-
 ments. So the priests, and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and *some*
 of the people, and the Nethinim, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities; and when
 the seventh month came, the children of Israel *were* in their cities.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 3. יָנִיפּוּ for יִכְנְרוּ, ἀπαὶ λεγόμενον. The Targum Jonathan on 2 Kings iv. 4, וְכַנְרֵת הַקִּלָּת, is יָנִיפּוּ רִשְׁאָה.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

The Ordering of the City.

Ver. 1. The setting up of the doors on the gates is anticipated in the description in chap. iii. (See ch. iii. 1, 3, 6, 13, 14, 15.) It occurred after the wall was completed. (Comp. chap. vi. 1). **The porters and the singers and the Levites** (comp. ch. xii. 45-47). For the temple-porters in David's time, see the accounts in 1 Chron. ix. 17-27, and xxvi. 1-19. The Korhites or descendants of Korah, who were porters, were also singers, to whom are inscribed so many psalms. All of these porters and singers were Levites. Hence the threefold titles might not indicate distinct classes, but we might read it as a *hendiatris* "the Levitical singing porters." Yet from the later portions of this book (ch. x. 28; ch. xi. 15-19) we may gather that the singers and porters formed two distinct guilds, separate from one another and separate from the other Levites. Hence the three terms here represent three bodies of men. It is probable that the opening and shutting of the temple-gates were made with song. Perhaps some of the psalms inscribed to the Bene-Korah were so used.

Nehemiah seems to have set these Levitical porters at all the city gates, perhaps to give a more religious aspect to his work of defending Jerusalem.

Ver. 2. **Hanani**.—See ch. i. 2. **Hananiah's** position as ruler of the palace (*sar habbirah*) was probably the old office of the monarchy (*'al-kabbayith*) which Eliakim held (2 Kings xviii. 37) and which Jotham held while Uzziah still lived (*'al beth-hammelek*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 21). See note on ch. ii. 8. The old office was probably retained and its incumbent acted as vizier or prime officer to the governor. Nehemiah probably contemplated temporary returns to Persia, and therefore consolidated the government in this way, putting faithful men in the highest positions.

Ver. 3. **While they stand by**.—Rather, *until they stand by*. The command is, not to open the gates till high day, and not even then, unless the guard is ready to stand by and defend them.

The **watchers** were stationed throughout the city. These were formed of the inhabitants generally.

Ver. 4. **The houses were not builded**.—A general expression. The city was full of waste places.

Ver. 6. Here begins a copy of the list of Zerubbabel's company of ninety years before. See Ezra ii. It continues through this chapter. Verses 6 and 7 form the title of the list. **Province**.—Judea was now a province of the Persian empire.

That went up out of the captivity of those that had been carried away whom Nebuchadnezzar, etc.—Rather, *that went up from exile, the captives whom Nebuchadnezzar, etc.*

Ver. 7. **Nehemiah**.—Not the Nehemiah of this book. **Azariah**.—In Ezra ii., *Sraiah*. **Raamiah**.—In Ezra ii., *Reelaiah*. **Nahamani**.—Not mentioned in Ezra ii. Perhaps a mistaken repetition of Nehemiah. **Mispereth**.—In Ezra ii., *Mizpar*. **Nehum**.—In Ezra ii., *Rehum*.

Ver. 10. The 652 of this verse is 775 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 11. The 2818 of this verse is 2812 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 13. The 845 of this verse is 945 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 15. **Binnui**.—In Ezra ii. *Bani*. The 648 of this verse is 642 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 16. The 628 of this verse is 623 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 17. The 2322 of this verse is 1222 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 18. The 667 of this verse is 666 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 19. The 2067 of this verse is 2056 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 20. The 655 of this verse is 454 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 22. The 328 of this verse is 223 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 23. The 324 of this verse is 323 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 24. **Hariph**.—In Ezra ii. *Jorah*.

Ver. 25. **Gibeon**.—In Ezra ii. *Gibbar*.

Ver. 26. The 188 of this verse is 179 in Ezra ii., and divided into two parts. At this verse,

when "children" changes to "men," the names of towns (instead of those of fathers) begin.

Ver. 28. **Beth-azmaveth.** In Ezra ii. *Azmaveth*.

Ver. 32. The 123 of this verse is 223 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 33. **The other Nebo** (*Nebo A'her*). In Ezra ii. *Nebo* simply.

Ver. 34. The word "children" resumed, but the names of fathers are resumed for two verses only.

Ver. 37. The 721 of this verse is 725 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 38. The 3930 of this verse is 3630 in Ezra ii. In Ezra we find "the children of Magbish a hundred fifty and six," which is omitted in this copy of Nehemiah.

Ver. 43. **Hodevah.**—In Ezra ii. *Hodaviah*.

Ver. 44. The 148 of this verse is 128 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 45. The 138 of this verse is 139 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 46. **Hashupha.**—Heb. *Hasupha*.

Ver. 47. **Sia.**—In Ezra ii. *Siaba*.

Ver. 48. In Ezra we find "the children of Akkub, the children of Hagab," which is here omitted. **Shalmal.**—Heb. *Salmai*.

Ver. 52. In Ezra we find "the children of Assub," which is here omitted. **Nephishesim.**—In Ezra ii. *Nephusim* (K'ri).

Ver. 54. **Bazlith.**—In Ezra ii. *Bazluth*.

Ver. 57. **Perida.**—In Ezra ii. *Peruda*.

Ver. 59. **Amon.**—In Ezra ii. *Ami*.

Ver. 60. Thirty-five families of Nethinim were represented, and ten of Solomon's servants. Hence there was an average of less than nine to each family.

For the Nethinim see on ch. iii. 26.

Solomon's servants were doubtless those whom Solomon enslaved of the Canaanites. (See 1 Kings ix. 20, 21). Their descendants were probably regarded as engrafted into Israel, as were the Gibeonites.

Ver. 61. **Addon.**—In Ezra ii. *Addan*.

Ver. 62. The 642 of this verse is 652 in Ezra ii.

Ver. 65. **The Tirshatha.**—This title is given expressly to Nehemiah in ch. viii. 9, but in this list of those who came with Zerubbabel nearly a century before, it, of course, cannot refer to Nehemiah, unless we suppose that both in Ezra's list and in this of Nehemiah's there had been interpolated in the original record this 65th verse, to show a decision made by Nehemiah in his time. If that be the case, which is perfectly possible, then the latter part of the 70th verse is also an interpolation of Nehemiah to show his gifts to the work of separation in his time. If we do not accept this explanation, we must believe that Zerubbabel was the Tirshatha of Nehem. vii., and Ezra ii. FÜRST derives the word from *tarash*, and supposes this root means "to fear," or "to reverence," and refers Teresh (Esth. ii. 21) to the same. But may it not be from the more common root *yarash* (to possess)? The Persian *torsh* (revere) is in favor of the former. It is used as synonymous with *pe'hah* (governor). See ch. xii. 26.

Till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim.—This seems to be a circumlo-

cuting for "forever." The Urim and Thummim (whatever they were) were connected with the High-priest's breastplate (Ex. xxviii. 30) and with the oracular response of God on application by the High-priest (comp. Num. xxvii. 21 and 1 Sam. xxviii. 6). When these responses ceased or when the Urim and Thummim were lost, we cannot tell. We hear nothing of them after David's reign. The prophets seem to have taken their place. The Urim and Thummim being absent, there was no authority in Israel to determine the priestly status of these unregistered ones.

Ver. 66. **The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore.**—The numbers given in this chapter, up to this verse, amount to only 31,089. In Ezra ii. the amount is 29,818. If we add to the former sum the number of servants given in ver. 67, we have only 33,671, or 3,689 less than the gross amount of this verse. We have noted the omission in this list of four families. The differences in the numbers of the two lists also show how liable are numbers to be changed in transcription. The grand total, being the same in both lists, is probably correct.

Ver. 67. **Singing men and singing women,** *meshorerim umeshoreroth*. Comp. Eccl. ii. 8. These were probably a guild of servants, dating from Solomon's day.

Ver. 70. **The work of restoration. The Tirshatha.**—See on ver. 65.

Ver. 71. The repetition of the chief of the fathers seems to support the view of the Tirshatha sentence being an interpolation by Nehemiah. The 20,000 drams of gold here is 61,000 in Ezra ii., and the 2200 pounds here are 5000 pounds there, but if we add the people's gift of ver. 72 (not found in Ezra) we have here 40,000 and 4200 against 61,000 and 5000 there. So the sixty-seven priests' garments here are one hundred there. See remark on numbers in ver. 66.

The children of Israel were in their cities.—This seems to be the real ending of the quotation from the old register of Zerubbabel's day, and then Nehemiah's narration begins again, using almost the same words as Ezra's concerning the first migration. In Ezra it is *vayyeasphu ha'am keish e'hadh*, and in Nehemiah it is *vayyeasphu khol ha'am keish e'hadh*. This likeness was doubtless designed.

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. The walls were not to be substitutes for, but encouragements of, watchfulness. A perfect system of opening, shutting, barring and guarding the gates was to follow the successful up-building of the city-bulwark. Faithful men were to be put into the highest positions, and a larger number of Jews were to be induced to dwell in Jerusalem in order to its defence. The order, security and growth of Jerusalem, as the city of the Great King, Jehovah of Israel, formed the undivided aim of the son of Hachaliah.

2. The genealogies occupied an important place in Israel. They contained the certificate of church-membership for each Israelite. They

also contained the claims to official dignity that belonged to priest and Levite. The family-idea thus received a marked emphasis in God's redemptive government—an emphasis which is echoed by Malachi (Mal. iv. 6) and the angel that appeared to Zacharias (Luke i. 17). The appearance of the Nethinim in the genealogies is a forcible illustration of the impartial grace of God. That grace which would bring in all the Gentiles as children was foretold by the brotherly position of the Nethinim (of Gentile blood) among the people of God, the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

3. Those priests whose names were not in the lists were counted the same as polluted, that is, not simply as having a *blemish* (see Lev. xxi. 17-21), for such priests could eat of the holy things, but as having an *uncleanness* (see Lev. xxii. 3-6), which prevented all contact with holy objects. This shows the pre-eminence of externals in the Jewish religion—a necessary prominence where the externals had a precise spiritual significance. For, after all, it was the spiritual truth which was the basis of such exactness, and by no means the mere intrinsic value of externals.

4. The entire number of Jews who returned in Cyrus' day to Jerusalem was small—about 50,000, out of millions. Piety, patriotism and desire for change were three motives at work in the 50,000. But what a vast mass were unmoved by any of these motives, and were well satisfied with their exile! Some, however, like Daniel, remained from high and holy motives. The Jewish people is a *remnant*.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

The Lord, on His side, appoints watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem, who must allow themselves no rest day or night, and must not even give the Lord Himself any rest until He fortifies Jerusalem, and makes it for a praise in the earth. Isa. lxii. 6, 7. But now, when Jerusalem is scantily rebuilt, Nehemiah appoints watchmen, who shall guard the city and its gates. The first thing necessary for the congregation is praying hearts, whose petitions shall not slacken until the Lord is persuaded; these the Lord Himself must give. But when the prayers have been granted care must be taken for the preservation and using of that which has been granted. That the congregation itself must see to. And that they themselves can and must watch, that they must remain separated from the world, and that they will be secured in the maintenance of their peculiarity and independence, is their honor and joy. 2 There are always two tasks in the congregation, or church, of the Lord. As there are always enemies remaining

(so long as the kingdom is not of God and of His Christ), who cannot endure the spread of the blessing, which might proceed from the church, who would much rather indeed win its possessions and gifts, and would wish to make it like the world, so these enemies, especially then, when the powers of life are most active in it, come out to attack it most energetically, and fall upon its representatives most sharply in word and deed, therefore it must always have some to keep watch, to protect it, and fight the enemy. But again: so long as everything is in embryo, and the conclusion has not been reached, and there are yet those to be found capable of receiving and becoming participants in the goods and gifts of the church and in the salvation of the Lord, that is, those who can and will enter the congregation of the Lord, and increase and extend the Lord's kingdom, therefore, just on this account, such are necessary as will be engaged in the winning and reception of new members to the kingdom, who understand the situation, and can point out the spot where they also can build. 3. As Jerusalem, in Nehemiah's time, extended far on both sides, and was scantily populated, so also the city of God in all times has had space for new additions to its population. For, in truth, the rich possessions which God has prepared in His church for mankind, would only then be sufficiently turned to profit when every one called man should enjoy them, and it were itself full and sufficiently built out, and all had entered in. For that God, who has made all things for Himself, and for that Lord who has redeemed all, the totality alone, from which none is lost, forms a sufficiently great people.—*BEDE: Præcipit autem Nehemias, ne aperiantur portæ Hierusalem usque ad calorem solis, hoc est toto tempore noctis, ne videlicet aut obiectus tenebris hostis erumpat, aut certe aliquis incautus exiens ab hoste captus pereat. Quod etiam in hujus sæculi nocte tota custodes animarum debent salubriter agere, ne observantia piæ conversationis neglecta diabolus aut cohortem fidelium perturbaturus subintrat aut de ipsorum numero fidelium quempiam perditurus rapiat. Apparente autem sole justitiæ et clarescente luce futuræ beatitudinis jam non opus erit claustris continentiæ; quia nec adversariis ultra dabitur facultas impugnandi sive tentandi fideles, utpote sempiterna cum suo principe ultione damnatis. Unde in Apocalypsi sua Joannes de futura ejusdem sanctæ civitatis gloria dicit; et portæ ejus non claudentur per diem; nox enim non erit illis.*—*STARKE:* This is the final cause why cities and countries, kingdoms and principalities are founded, and filled with people that God may dwell there, and His church may have a certain shelter. God provides help, protection, and rest for His church, and as human protection is very insignificant, God with His angels is the best watchman.

CHAPTER VIII. 1-18.

1 AND all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that
 was before the water-gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book
 2 of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the
 priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all
 that could hear with understanding [that understood in hearing] upon the first
 3 day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before
 the water-gate from the morning until midday [from the light until half of the
 day], before the men and the women, and those that could understand [and the
 understandin^r]; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the
 4 law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit [tower] of wood, which they had
 made for that purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah,
 and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand
 Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah
 5 and Meshullam. And Ezra opened the book in the sight [to the eyes] of all the
 people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people
 6 stood up. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered,
 Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads,
 7 and worshipped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground. Also [and] Jeshua, and
 Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita,
 Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to under-
 8 stand the law: and the people *stood* in their place. So [And] they read in the
 book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to under-
 9 stand the reading. And Nehemiah, which *is* the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest
 the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This
 day *is* holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people
 10 wept, when they heard the words of the law. Then [And] he said unto them, Go
 your way, eat the fat [fat things], and drink the sweet [sweet things], and send
 portions unto them [him] for whom nothing is prepared: for *this day is* holy unto
 11 our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength. So
 [And] the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day *is*
 12 holy; neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way to eat, and to
 drink, and to send portions and to make great mirth, because they had understood
 13 the words that were declared unto them. And on the second day were gathered
 together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests and the Levites, unto
 14 Ezra the scribe, even to understand [consider] the words of the law. And they
 found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by [by the hand of]
 Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh
 15 month; and that they should publish and proclaim [cause the voice to be heard
 and to pass] in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount,
 and fetch olive branches, and pine [oil-tree] branches, and myrtle branches, and
 palm branches, and branches of thick [thick-leaved] trees, to make booths, as *it is*
 16 written. So [And] the people went forth, and brought *them*, and made themselves
 booths, every one upon the roof of his house [upou his roof], and in their courts,
 and in the street [square] of the water-gate, and in the street [square] of the gate
 17 of Ephraim. And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the
 captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua,
 the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was
 18 very great gladness. Also [And] day by day, from the first day unto the last
 day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days;
 and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly according unto the manner [statute].

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

¹ Ver. 6. וַיִּקְרְבוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ. This frequent combination, the former verb being never without the latter, indicates the two steps of the movement: "they stooped and bowed down." The verbs שָׁחָה, שָׁחָה and שָׁחָה are stronger than קָרַב.

² Ver. 7. The Hiphil of בָּנָה is used in vers. 7, 8, 9, with the true Hiphil force; but in vers. 2, 3, 12, it has the Kal sense.

³ Ver. 10. לְאִישׁ אֲזָן נָכוֹן לוֹ לְאִישׁ נָכוֹן לוֹ, by suppression of the relative, which is far harsher than the Eng suppression of the antecedent, e. g. "Honor to whom honor is due." Comp. 1 Chron. xv. 12.

⁴ Ver. 17. Notice the alliterative use of the three roots שָׁחָה, שָׁחָה and שָׁחָה.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

The Instruction of the People.

Ver. 1. Street.—Rather "square" or *plaza*. The water-gate, according to our view (see on ch. iii. 26 and xii. 37), was an inner gate connected both with the temple and with the subterranean water galleries of Ophel, by which there seems to have been a large open square for public assemblies. (See Excursus). **Ezra the scribe, Ezra hassopher.** In the next verse it is **Ezra the priest, Ezra hakkohen**. This is the first mention of Ezra in the book of Nehemiah. He had come to Jerusalem thirteen years previously, with about three thousand returning Jews (1754 males), holding a commission from Artaxerxes to appoint magistrates in Judæa. He had forced the Jews to separate from their heathen wives, and had then probably returned to Persia, as we find the Jews had relapsed into their former condition. As we do not meet with his name in Nehemiah till now, it is probable he followed Nehemiah to Judæa to assist him in another movement of reform.

Ver. 2. All that could hear with understanding—Lit., *All that understood in hearing, i. e.*, those old enough to understand. **The first day of the seventh month.**—This was a special "Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation." (Lev. xxiii. 24). A specific offering was appointed for that day, beside the burnt-offering of the month. (Num. xxix. 1-6).

Ver. 3. From morning.—Lit., *from the light, i. e.*, from daylight or an hour as early as was available. The reading must have occupied at least six hours. About one-quarter of the Pentateuch might be read in that time.

Ver. 4. Pulpit.—Probably the same that is called *stairs* in ch. ix. 4. The word here is strictly *tower* and there *ascend*. It was doubtless a very high platform so as to overlook a large crowd. (Comp. ver. 5). **Anaiah.**—See chap. x. 22. **Urijah.**—See ch. iii. 4. **Hilkiah.**—Not the Hilkiah of xii. 7. He lived in Zerubbabel's day. **Maaseiah.**—See xii. 41. **Malchiah.**—See x. 3. **Zechariah.**—See xii. 41. **Meshullam.**—See x. 7. All these named as standing with Ezra may have been priests. If so, the Anaiah of ch. x. 22 must be a different one from this one here named. As far as we can trace the other names, they appear to be priests.

Ver. 7. Jeshua.—See ch. x. 9. **Bani.**—See ch. x. 13. **Sherebiah.**—See ch. x. 12. **Jamin.**—Perhaps the Benjamin of ch. iii. 23.

Akkub.—See ch. xii. 19. **Shabbethai.**—See ch. xi. 16. **Hodijah.**—See ch. x. 10. **Maaseiah.**—Probably not the Maaseiah of ver. 4, or of ch. x. 25, or of ch. xi. 5, but possibly the Maaseiah of ch. iii. 23. **Kelita.**—See ch. x. 10. **Azariah.**—Perhaps the priest mentioned ch. x. 2. **Jozabad.**—See ch. xi. 16. **Hanan.** See ch. x. 10. **Pelaiah.**—See ch. x. 10. **And the Levites, i. e., and other Levites,** for the thirteen mentioned were Levites. These Levites seem to have read after Ezra and to have explained it to different parts of the crowd, while the Amens, the lifting up of the hands, the bowing and the worshipping (in ver. 6) occurred at intervals during the reading. The explanation may have been principally of archaic Hebrew words.

Ver. 8. So they read.—That is Ezra read and the Levites re-read and explained where necessary.

Ver. 9. The Tirshatha.—See on ch. vii. 65. The holiness of the day is used as an argument against mourning. Note the fact that the high-priest on whose mitre was written "Holiness to the Lord," was forbidden to mourn. (See Lev. xxi. 10. Comp. Lev. x. 6).

Ver. 10. Send portions.—See the spirit of this enjoined in Deut. xvi. 11, 12, with regard to the Pentecost season.

The joy of the Lord is your strength, i. e., a mirthfulness which springs from right relations to God is an element and sign of spiritual strength.

Ver. 13. To understand.—Rather, "to consider."

Ver. 14. In the feast of the seventh month, i. e., the feast of tabernacles. See Lev. xxiii. 34-43.

Ver. 15. This is a pregnant sentence, thus: And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities (Lev. xxiii. 4); so they proclaimed in Jerusalem, etc. The order is given on the 2d of Tisri, and the work is done in readiness for the 15th. The narrative runs the two together, confusing the time to the careless reader. **Unto the mount, i. e.,** mount of Olives. **Pine branches, 'alé 'et'z shemen,** branches of the oil-tree (Isa. xli. 19). Mr. Houghton (in Smith's Dict.) thinks it may be the Zackum or Balanites *Egyptiaca*. **Branches of thick trees, 'ale 'et'z avoth;** either specifically "branches of the Avoth tree," or branches of tangled trees."

In Lev. xxiii. 40, the command is to use,

1. The fruit of goodly trees.
2. The leaves of palm trees.
3. The boughs of Avoth trees.
4. Willows of the brook.

Here the olive tree, the oil tree, and the myrtle would come under the first head ("fruit" being used for any produce), while the willow-tree is omitted, perhaps because there happened to be none near Jerusalem at that time.

Ver. 16. **Street of the water-gate.**—See on ver. 1. **Street of the gate of Ephraim.**—From 2 Kings xiv. 13 and Neb. ch. xii. 39, we see that this gate was near the north-west corner of the city, between "the broad wall" and the "old gate," the "old gate" and "corner-gate" being perhaps the same. According to Keil, the Gate of Ephraim may have been attached to the broad wall and not have been destroyed. Hence it is not mentioned in chap. iii. There was, we may suppose, a large open place in the N. W. part of the city, corresponding to that by the water-gate in the S. E. part.

Ver. 17. **Done so.**—That is, kept the feast of Tabernacles with such gladness.

Ver. 18. **He read, i. e., Ezra.**

They kept the feast, i. e., of tabernacles. They had been from the second day (ver. 13), to this the 15th day of Tisri (Lev. xxiii. 34) preparing for it. The solemn fast-day of the 10th of Tisri had doubtless been excepted. It is passed over without mention in the narrative. **A solemn assembly, atzereth** (comp. Lev. xxiii. 36; Num. xxix. 35; Deut. xvi. 8; Jer. ix. 2; Amos v. 21). It seems to have been something more than the "mikra-kodesh" (holy convocation), and yet what more we cannot say. It is applied to the last day of the feast of tabernacles and to the last day of the passover week. JOSEPHUS (*Ant.* 3, 10, 5) applies it to Pentecost (in the Greek form *Isarthra*), as especially belonging to that day, which is the use of the word by the later Jews.

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. The constant study of God's word by the people was always, and is still, a distinguishing characteristic of the Jewish nation. The Levites were originally entrusted with the duty of reading the law before Israel every seventh year (Deut. xxxi. 9-13), and when Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xvii. 7-9) sent Levites throughout all the cities of Judah to teach the people from the book of the law of the Lord, he was doubtless using the Levites in a way familiar to the nation from the first. God's people were to keep in mind that they were not to follow the light of nature, but to consult the divine oracles for all their guidance (Rom. iii. 2).

Redemption was a *plan*, and the Church was a *scheme*, and the soul of the scheme was the written word of God.

2. The tears of penitence naturally lead to joy. When men mourn for sin, the Lord comforts them, saying: "Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet." The sinful woman who bathed our Saviour's feet with tears heard him say: "Go in peace" (Luke vii. 50). There may have been much that was only mere excitement, without a religious basis, both in the weeping and the merriment of this month of Tisri; yet we cannot but believe that there was a nucleus of true devotion in the movement, a mark of the holy succession that reached down to Simeon and Anna.

3. The booths of the tabernacle-feasts were memorials of the booth life of Israel (on leaving Egypt) that began at Succoth. The memory would encourage humility and gladness, bringing the thoughts of the people back to first principles, and making them to feel the Divine presence and protection (see Lev. xxiii. 43). The roofs of the houses were battlemented so as to preclude danger (Dent. xxii. 8) and the houses were low. The building of booths on the roofs was therefore a very natural thing. They would not be in the way of the multitude, and would have in each case somewhat of domestic privacy.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Vers. 1-12. The holiday of the Lord's congregation. 1) Its cause: the exterior one lies in the time, it is the seventh month, the true one in the proofs God has given, since He has secured the existence of the congregation before the world, fortified their city, *etc.* 2) Its celebration. The congregation shows a longing for God's word, uses it in good order, and listens to it with reverence. 3) Its blessing: sadness turned into joy. The ever permanent elements in the true service of God. 1) On the side of the congregation: hunger for the word of God. 2) On the side of the teachers—the right handling of the word of God—commences with the praise of God, which awakens the assenting acknowledgment of the congregation, communication of the divine word, the explanation and application of the same. On both sides resignation to God's word and being.—BENE: *Rogaverunt ipsi pontificem suum, ut allato libro mandata sibi legis, que agere debeant, replicaret, ut cum civitate adificata, operis quoque placiti Deo structura consurgeret, ne sicut antea propter negligentiam religionis civitatis etiam ruina sequeretur.*—STARKE: Even the common people must take care that they shall have the word of God pure and clear. Young people should be made to listen to the divine word from their childhood, that they may learn to fear God. If in the Old Testament all without exception have been obliged to listen to the law, how inexcusable it is if the papacy does not allow this to the people. Hearers should not become tired and impatient even if the sermon is rather long. The principal part of the service of God consists in praise, and in this we resemble the God-praising angels. The singing of Collects, prayers and Thanksgivings should be in an intelligible language, that the hearer may understand and be able to respond Amen. The Amen in a public assembly should be sung by each and all. If we should bow the knees of our hearts in particular before the Lord, it is proper that in outward gestures also we should show our humility before God. Preachers must not forget prayer in the arrangement of divine service. If teachers publicly kneel down and pray to God, it is proper that the hearers also should fall upon their knees with them. Teachers should aim at lucidity in explaining the word of God. If God gives us a joyful day we should not forget the poor.

Rejoice in the Lord always! That is 1) possible, for in communion with the Lord we have

consolation, promise, help, refreshment, *etc.*, in spite of all the calamities and difficulties of earth.

2) Necessary; for every day is holy to the Lord, and our conduct must always honor the Lord.

3) Wholesome; for joy in the Lord is our strength, and puts us in the position to wait with patience, makes us skillful, and guards us from all straying. Joy in the Lord is our strength, for 1) in ourselves we are weak and hesitating. 2) In the fulness of the Lord is grace for grace. 3) Precisely the joy in the Lord is fitted to cause us to have all that is comprehended in strength. With the prayer, gladden me with Thy help, and let my joy in Thee be my strength, can one gain anew each day consolation and joy, whatever task be before him.

Vers. 13-18. The festival of the people. 1)

Its foundation—the divine command—God wishes that the congregation should celebrate the holiday. 2) Its form; it exhibits itself also externally; in the Old Testament by hoots, which have their signification; in the New Testament through other ceremonies, which are not less full of meaning. 3) Its effect. Resignation to God's word and will, and from that a glorification of the entire life.—STARKE: Christians have in the world no continuing city, and their life is vain and fleeting. Well for them, then, if they strive to dwell in the eternal tents. Heb. xiii. 14. As the Jews had their holidays and festivals, so have we Christians, but upon the condition of Christian freedom. Coloss. ii. 16. The exercise of true religion gives a tranquil heart and joyful conscience; but false worship gives much annoying trouble, and tortures the conscience.

CHAPTER IX. 1-38.

- 1 Now [And] in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them [*i. e.*, upon 2 their heads]. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers [sons of strangeness], and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.
- 3 And they stood up in their place and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God *one* fourth part of the day; and *another* fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God. Then [And] stood up upon the stairs of the Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani, and 5 eried with a loud voice unto the LORD their God. Then [And] the Levites Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabnah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah said, Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God for ever and ever [from eternity to eternity], and blessed be [they blessed] thy glorious name [the name of thy 6 glory], which [and *it*] is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, *even thou, art* LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things* that *are* therein, the seas and all that is therein. and thou 7 preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. Thou *art* the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; and foundest his heart faithful before 8 thee and madest a [the] covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Gergashites, to 9 give *it, I say*, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous: and didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the 10 Red Sea [Sea of weeds]. And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou [and thou didst] get thee a name, as *it is* this 11 day. And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that [and] they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the 12 deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters. Moreover [and] thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in 13 the way wherein they should go. Thou camest down also [And thou camest down] upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right 14 judgments and true laws [laws of truth], good statutes and commandments: and madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath, and commandedst them precepts,

15 [and] statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: and gavest them bread
 from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock
 16 which thou hadst sworn [lifted up thy hand] to give them. But [And] they and
 our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy
 17 commandments, and refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that
 thou didst among them; but [and] hardened their necks and in their rebellion ap-
 pointed a captain to return to their bondage [*in place of "in their rebellion," in*
 Egypt]; but thou *art* a God ready to pardon [a God of pardons] gracious and mer-
 18 ciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. Yea, when
 they had made [Yea, they even made] them a molten calf, and said, This is thy
 God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought [and wrought] great pro-
 1 vocations; yet [and] thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wil-
 derness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the
 way; neither the pillar of [the] fire by night, to show them li ht, and the way
 20 wherein they should go. Thou gavest also [And thou gavest] thy good Spirit to
 instruct them, and withholdest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them
 21 water for their thirst. Yea forty years [And forty years] didst thou sustain them
 in the wilderness, *so that* they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and
 22 their feet swelled not. Moreover [And] thou gavest them kingdoms and na-
 tions, and didst divide them into corners [*or districts*]: so they possessed the land
 of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon [*perhaps*, the land of Sihon, the king
 23 of Heshbon], and the land of Og, king of Bashan. Their children also multipliedst
 thou [And their children thou didst multiply] as the stars of heaven, and brought-
 est them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that
 24 they should go in to possess *it*. [So [And] the children went in and possessed the
 land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land; the Canaanites,
 and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that
 25 they might do with them as they would. And they took strong cities, and a fat
 land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged [*cisterns hewn*], vineyards
 and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so [and] they did eat, and were filled,
 26 and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness. Nevertheless
 [And] they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind
 their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee,
 27 and they wrought great provocations. Therefore [And] thou deliveredst them into
 the hand of their enemies who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble when
 they cried [their oppressors who oppressed them: and in the time of their oppres-
 sion they cried] unto thee, [and] thou heardest *them* from heaven; and according
 to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand
 28 of their enemies [*oppressors*]. But after they had rest, they did evil again [they
 returned to do evil] before thee: therefore ledest thou [and thou ledest] them in
 the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them yet when
 [and] they returned, and cried unto thee, [and] thou heardest *them* from heaven;
 29 and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies; and testifiedst
 against [to] them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet [and]
 they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but [and] sinned
 against thy judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them [which a man shall
 do and live in them], and withdrew the shoulder [*gave a resisting shoulder*], and
 30 hardened their neck, and would not hear [did not hear]. Yet [And] many years
 didst thou forbear them [*i. e., act forbearingly towards them*], and testifiedst against
 [to] them by thy Spirit in thy prophets [by the hand of thy prophets]; yet would
 they not give ear [and they did not give ear] therefore gavest thou [and thou
 31 gavest] them into the hand of the people of the lands. Nevertheless [And] for
 thy great mercies' sake [*in thy great mercies*] thou didst not utterly consume them,
 32 nor forsake them; for thou *art* a gracious and merciful God. Now therefore [and
 now], our God, the great, and the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant
 and mercy [the covenant and the mercy], let not all the trouble [*distress*] seem
 little before thee, that hath come upon us [found us], on our kings, on our princes,

and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. Howbeit [And] thou art just in all that is brought [comes] upon us; for thou hast done right, but [and] we have done wickedly: neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers kept [done] thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against [to] them. For they have not served thee in their kingdom and in thy great goodness [blessings of prosperity] that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works. Behold, we are servants this day, and [as] for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also [and] they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests seal unto it [are on the sealed covenant].

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

- 1 Ver. 8. כָּרֹת inf. abs. for כָּרַת.
- 2 Ver. 22. וַיִּעַבְדוּם. This Aramaean form is found in Judges v. 14, where it is poetical.
- 3 Ver. 26. נָתַן. In this phrase (see 1 Kings xiv. 9; Ezra xxiii. 35, and here) the Tseré becomes Pattahh, as if from נָן not נָן.
- 4 Ver. 28. עָתִים רַבּוֹת לְרַבּוֹת עָתִים.
- 5 Ver. 38. אֲנִינָה. That this is not an adjective with בְּרִית understood is evident from its use in chapter xi. 21.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

The Confession.

The confession recorded in this chapter uses largely the language of the older Scriptures. For ver. 6 see Ps. lxxxvi. 10; Ex. xx. 11, and Deut. x. 14. For ver. 9, see Ex. iii. 7. For ver. 10, see Jer. xxxii. 20. For ver. 11, see Ex. xv. 5, 10. For ver. 12, see Ex. xiii. 21. For ver. 13, see Ex. xix. 20. For ver. 15, see Ps. cv. 40, 41. For ver. 16, see 2 Kings xvii. 14. For ver. 17, see Ps. lxxviii. 11; Ex. xxxiv. 6. For ver. 25, see Deut. vi. 10, 11. For ver. 27, see Judg. ii. 14, 18. For ver. 29, see Lev. xviii. 5. For ver. 33, see Ps. evi. 6. For ver. 35 and ver. 36, see Deut. xxviii. 47, 48.

Ver. 1. The twenty and fourth day of this month.—The 'Atzereth was the 22d day of Tisri. Two days after is this special day of fasting and confession. It must not be confounded with the *Yom-hak-kippurim* or Day of Atonement, which was the 10th of Tisri.

Earth upon them, &c., on their heads (see 1 Sam. iv. 12). Both earth and ashes were used on the head as a sign of sorrow. Comp. 2 Sam. xiii. 19. Our Eng. version has written here **sackclothes**, but everywhere else has used **sackcloth** for the Heb. plural.

This fasting, mourning and confession was not a swing of the pendulum to the other extreme from the joy and gladness of the Tabernacle's fast, but the action of the same religious spirit which recognized God's great favors, but which at the same time recognized the great errors of the people.

Ver. 2. The Bene-nechar or strangers were foreigners who had become mixed with the Jews by commercial interest or by marriage. Comp. chap. xiii. 3, 27.

Ver. 3. And read.—Probably as before, Ezra reading from the high platform to the great multitude, and the Levites explaining in different parts of the crowd. **One-fourth part of the day.**—Probably half way to noon. **Another fourth part.**—Probably the rest of the time till noon. Comp. chap. viii. 3.

Ver. 4. Stairs.—See on chap. viii. 4. **Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Sherebiah** appear again in ver. 5, but **Bunni, Bani** (2) and **Chenani** are replaced there by **Hashabniah, Hodijah, and Pethahiah**. So there appears to have been two movements. The Levites mentioned in the fourth verse opened the service with a loud cry, perhaps a doxology, and then the Levites mentioned in the fifth verse began the confession. **Bunni** is perhaps *Binnui* of chap. x. 9. **Bani** (2) is perhaps Benina of chap. x. 13. **Chenani** is probably Hanan of chap. x. 10.

Ver. 5. Hashabniah.—In chap. x. 11 *Hashabiah*. **Hodijah.**—See chap. x. 10. **Pethahiah.**—Perhaps *Pelajah* of chap. x. 10. The only Levites mentioned as sealing in chap. x. who are not mentioned here are, then, **Kelita, Miela, Rehob, Zaceur, Shebaniah** (2), **Hodijah** (2).

Stand up and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever.—This the eight Levites cry out to the people (some having perhaps seated themselves), and then they make the confession to God, doubtless from a written document prepared for the occasion, so that all the eight speak together, and so make a strong voice to be heard by all. The Hebrew of this confession is quite pure and largely borrowed from the older books.

And blessed be thy glorious name.—Here the Fut. Piel is, with *var conversive*, an assersion made by Nehemiah himself in an ejaculatory form to God, thus: "The Levites said,

Stand up and bless the Lord, *etc.*, and they [*i. e.*, the people] blessed thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise." The words of the people then begin with ver. 6.

Ver. 6. **Heaven of heavens.**—Intensive, for the nuseen as well as seen heaven. **Host of heaven**—*i. e.*, the angels.

Ver. 7. **Ur of the Chaldees** cannot be Mughair by the Persian gulf, as is the present prevailing theory. The Chaldees or Casdim in Abraham's day (or in Moses' day) were not so far south. Ur was more likely in northern Mesopotamia, though scarcely so near to Haran as Oorfa. The Semitic stock to which Abraham belonged seem to belong to northern Mesopotamia.

Ver. 8. The Hivites are left out of this enumeration, perhaps to please their descendants, the Nethinim. (See Josh. ix. 7.)

Ver. 11. **Mighty**—in the sense of violent. Comp. Ex. xv. 5 for the figure.

Vers. 13, 14. **Judgments, laws, statutes, commandments, precepts.**—In Hebrew the words are (in the singular) *mishpah, torah, hok, mitzvah*. The last word is translated in E. V. by "commandments" and "precepts." The *mishpah* has the idea of discrimination and decision in it. The *torah* is a code. The *hok* is a separate decree. The *mitzvah* is a simple order. The adjectives "right," "true," and "good," are exactly appropriate.

Ver. 17. **Appointed a captain.**—In Num. xiv. 4 it is only stated that they proposed to appoint one. The proposition had been really carried out. **In their rebellion.**—LXX: *ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ*, reading כָּרִים כָּרִים for כָּרִים. The LXX. is probably right. Comp. Num. xiv. 4. The words in Heb. come after "to their bondage."

Ver. 18. **This is thy God.**—Here "this thy Elohim," and in Exod. xxxii. 4 "these thy Elohim." In each case only one God is referred to. The plural style of the sentence in Exodus, both as to the demonstrative and the verb, is simply a conformity to the plural form of Elohim. The molten calf may have been a copy of Apis or Mnevis, or it may have been a cherub. Indeed Apis and Mnevis may have been Egyptian forms of the primeval cherubim.

Ver. 19. **To show them light and the way wherein they should go.**—Better: *to shed light on them and the way, etc.*

Ver. 20. **Thou gavest also thy good Spirit.**—Referring to the event described in Numb. xi. Comp. Isa. lxiii. 11.

Ver. 22. **And didst divide them into corners.**—Rather: *And didst distribute them into districts.* The words "and the land of the," *with erectz*, before "king of Hehbon," seem to be an error of transcription. "The land of Sihon, king of Heshbon, and the land of Og, king of Bashan" is probably the right reading (comp. Deut. ii. 26, 30, and 36), or the old formula may have been corrupted, "the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon," Deut. iii. 2, *etc.*

Ver. 24. **With their kings.**—Rather, *both their kings.*

Ver. 25. **Became fat.**—This is Hiphil as in Isa. vi. 10, and must be strictly rendered "made fat," *i. e.*, themselves.

Ver. 26. **Slew thy prophets.**—See I Kings xviii. 4; 2 Chron. xxiv. 21.

Ver. 27. **Their enemies who vexed them, and in the time of their trouble.**—Better: *their oppressors, who oppressed them, and in the time of their oppression.*

Ver. 29. **Testifiedst against.**—Rather, *testifiedst to.*—So in ver. 30 and ver. 34.

Ver. 32. **Since the time of the kings of Assyria, i. e.**, the days of Pul and Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings xv. 19, 29). This time was more than three centuries before Nehemiah's day.

Ver. 35. **In thy great goodness that thou gavest them.**—That is, *in the great prosperity (from thee) which thou gavest them.* So in ver. 25. "Thy goodness" is not God's moral attribute, but the prosperity He gave them.

Ver. 38. This verse is the first of the tenth ch. in Heb. Although the word "covenant" is inserted, it is warranted by the use of the verb "carath," the full expression being "carath berith."

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. If we marvel at the readiness of Israel to fall away into alliances with the heathen, we must also marvel at their readiness to return to their separation before the testimony of their law. There is no greater wonder displayed to us in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah than the speediness of the work of these reformers in drawing away the people of Israel from alliances, where pecuniary interest and personal affection had formed a double and most potent bond. There must have been a prodigious vitality in the old Mosaic commonwealth. No mere philosophic reformers would have dared to venture on so radical a movement against the deep-seated tendencies of the people, and no people but those who had a truly divine side to their life would have hearkened to such a proposition. With all their errors, how much there is to admire in Israel!

2. Every covenant with God must, on man's side, be founded on penitential confession of sin. For God's grace, which is the content of His part of the covenant, cannot enter a soul that harbors its wickedness. When David acknowledged his sin unto God, God's forgiveness poured in upon his soul. (Ps. xxxii. 5.) After this chapter of confession comes the chapter of the covenant, with its natural issues of reform.

3. This confession is a prayer, although it has no petition in it. It is the laying of the soul before God in the attitude of awaiting. Often the best part of a prayer is its rehearsal of God's goodness and our own shortcomings. This increases the receptivity of the soul. It removes worldliness, increases faith, makes the spiritual eyesight clearer, and brings it *en rapport* with heaven.

4. The distress of Israel under its political burdens is recognised as part of the discipline which God had exercised over the nation through its entire history. The covenant is not considered as broken by God in all this. He had been faithful. In this way Israel sees God's grace in the midst of the afflictions. An infidel heart would have regarded God as abandoning

His people, and have seen in their vicissitudes only the ordinary fate of nations. Events are to be judged not by their outward appearance, but by the subjective truth, on which they really depend. A godly soul understands this secret, and draws from it great peace and strength.

HOILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Vers. 1-3. The penitential and fast-days of the Lord's congregation. 1) Their time and cause. They must alternate with facts and festivals; even God's favors must prompt us to observe them. 2) Their aim—to confess sins, our own as well as those of our ancestors, and to praise God's mercy as contrasted with them (ver. 2). 3) The manner of their celebration. Occupation with God's holy law forms the foundation which helps us to a right understanding of sin, and a right appreciation of the grace. The aim is penitence, as also faith, which worships the Lord (ver. 3).—*BEDE: Manifestus ostenditur, quanta gratia devotionis omnes eorum persone novum post festa skenopzgia conventum fecerint, ut videlicet se tota intentione a scelerum contigiis expurgatos divino faderi conjungerent, ipsomque sancti faderis conditionem et sermone confirmarent et scripto, acri ab impiorum consortio separati securiores implerent opus, quod jam dudum ceperant; id est, congruus facte urbis cives de numero piorum instituerent.*—*STARKE:* Confession of our sins before God is an effect of true contrition for the same. Such confession is necessary 1). As regards God who demands it (Jer. iii. 12, 13), who also wishes to be recognised by men as holy, just, and true, and will not forgive any sin without confession. (Ps. xxxii. 5.) As regards the Mediator; for as He confessed our sins and the sins of the whole world before God, with words and deed through suffering punishment for His people, so must we, much more, confess our own sins, if indeed we wish to be partakers of the merit of Christ. (1 John i. 7, 8.) 3) As regards the Holy Spirit's office of correction, whose work it is to convince the sinner. 4) As regards ourselves, for if we will not confess we remain under God's wrath. (1 John i. 8.) 5) As regards our neighbor: for if we have provoked him, such provocation must be done away, and thereby the honor be given to God. God wishes that public assemblies should be held in the church. Heb. x. 15. When we keep penitential and fast-days, or go to the holy communion, we should fast, lay aside all adornment, and appear in plain dress, with honest, humble hearts.

Vers. 4-15. God's faithfulness to the covenant. 1) Its preparative activity. It lets itself far down, and gives the prospect of great and glorious things (vers. 4-8). Its saving activity (vers. 9-11). It takes pity upon misery, overcomes the oppressor, and removes hindrances and perplexities even in nature. 3) Its preserving and perfecting activities. It shows the way, and provides for God's flock, in body and soul, and incites it to appropriate the promises (ver. 8.) The goal of the Old and New Testament covenant life is, the earthly and heavenly inheritance. 1) The promise of the same. At the calling of Abraham: then in the gospel. 2) The way to it. Through the wilderness of Arabia;

then through the wilderness of life. 3) The power which proceeds from it, particularly for Israel after it had obtained the same for us already, while we yet hope for it.—*STARKE:* Our good, heavenly Father gives earthly goods in possession to His children, in order that they may have good hope of the heavenly inheritance.

Vers. 16-25. God's pardoning grace. 1) He does not refuse it in spite of our disobedience (ver. 16), in spite of faithlessness (ver. 17), in spite of open backsliding (ver. 18). Much more, He shows His gracious presence to lead us to the high prize of the calling (ver. 19), gives His good and Holy Spirit for instruction; gives also the bread and water of life for hunger and thirst (ver. 20). 2) He punishes indeed, but affords, even in the time of punishment experiences, proofs, and advances of grace (vers. 21-23). 3) He brings us richly blessed to the prize of the calling (vers. 24, 25).

Vers. 20, 21. God's gracious care. 1) He provides both for bodily and spiritual necessities. 2) He provides it by great and small, startling and insignificant miracles. 3) He provides it during the march through the wilderness, that He may bring His people into Canaan.

Ver. 21. The wisdom of the divine care. 1) Its manner: God often helps, not in a startling, but in an insignificant way, quietly, yes, secretly blessing. 2) Its reason. The faith of His people is best tried, exercised, and strengthened in this way. 3) Its aim. That the godly may accustom themselves in all things, even in the insignificant, to perceive God's helping father hand, and shall learn the art to let all and everything, even the daily common-place, be a cause of thanks and of joy.—*STARKE:* God punishes the persecutors of His people energetically. Our pillar of cloud, which shows us the way to our everlasting fatherland, is the ministry of the gospel, in which God is truly present and powerful. Although God does not immediately place all the godly in fruitful and pleasant places, nor give them bread from heaven, nor water from the rock, still He gives them, notwithstanding, necessary nourishment and clothing wherewith they should be satisfied. Matt. vi. 31, 32; 1 Tim. vi. 8. The wickedness of mankind is so great when left to itself, that they are not bettered by the divine benefits, but indeed become worse, and in the highest ingratitude towards our God, return evil for good. Although with us is a multitude of sins, with God is plenteous redemption. Ps. cxxx. 7. Let no one therefore say with Cain, My sins are greater than it is possible to forgive. Gen. iv. 13.

Vers. 26-31. God's educating wisdom. 1) God indeed chastises, but He again has mercy (vers. 26, 27). 2) God has mercy many times, but He also admonishes to follow His precepts, in the observance of which man has his life (vers. 28, 29). 3) He admonishes a long while, and punishes and increases His punishment to the utmost if He is not listened to, but nevertheless He never gives him entirely up whom it is possible to help (vers. 30, 31).

Vers. 26-37. The grounds for the petition for forgiveness and mercy. 1) God's unwearied mercy in the past (vers. 26-31). 2) God's justice and our guilt in the present, particularly as

they are to be recognised in connection with our troubles (verses 32-35). 3) The greatness of our need and trouble (vers. 36, 37).

Vers. 32-37. The debasement of the congregation at the present time. 1) Wherein it consists. 2) What is its cause. 3) What its aim.—**STARKE:** It is very consoling to think of the mercy of God which He has shown to our ancestors, for the same God lives yet. We must hold ourselves in true faith to the promises of God, for they will never fail. When the godly are involved in the greatest danger God cares for them the most, and knows how to rescue them. We are chastised by God that we may not be condemned with the world. When God wishes to deliver His people, He does not look at what they have de-

served, but at what His immeasurable mercy demands. These who have provoked God to anger by their sins have little happiness to expect so long as they go on without penitence. True confession—confession of the name of God and believing prayer, are the right means by which the enemy are again to be driven away. Lord, when trouble is present, they seek thee, *etc.* Isa. xxvi. 16. Although a false religion may have a great appearance of sanctity and piety before people, yet is it in the sight of God a great abomination. What beautiful surnames has God. Oh soul! mark them well, that thou mayest remember them when conscience accuses, and when thou art in trouble, that thou mayest not despond.

CHAPTER X. 1-39.

1 Now those that sealed [and on the sealed documents] were Nehemiah, the Tir-
2 shatha, the son of Hachaliah, and Zidkijah [*i. e.*, Zedekiah] Seraiah, Azariah, Je-
3, 4, 5 remiah, Pashur, Amariah, Malchijah, Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, Harim,
6, 7 Meremoth, Obadiah, Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,
8 9 Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah: these *were* the priests. And the Levites: both Je-
10 shua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel; and their bre-
11 thren, Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pelaiah. Hanan, Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah,
12, 13, 14 Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, Hodijah, Bani, Beninu. The chief of the
15, 16 people: Parosh, Pahath-moah, Elam, Zattu, Bani, Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, Ado-
17, 18 nijah, Bigvai, Adin, Ater, Hizkijah [*i. e.*, Hezekiah], Azzur, Hodijah, Hashum,
19, 20, 21 Bezai, Hariph, Anathoth, Nehai, Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, Meshezabeel,
22, 23, 24 Zadok, Jaddua, Pelatiah, Hanan, Ananiah, Hoshea, Hananiah, Hashub, Hal-
25, 26 lohesh, Pileha, Shobek, Rehum, Hashabnah, Maasiah, and Abijah, Hauan,
27 Anan, Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

28 And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters the singers, the
Nethinim, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands
unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters every one having
29 knowledge *and* having understanding; they clave to their brethren, their nobles,
and entered into a curse and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given
by [the hand of] Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the com-
30 mandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; And that
we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daugh-
31 ters for our sons: And *if* the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the
Sabbath day to sell, *that* we would not buy it of them on the Sabbath or on the
holy day: and that we would leave [*i. e.* leave the land to lie untilled] theseventh
32 year and the exaction [loan] of every debt [hand]. Also [And] we made ordi-
nances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the ser-
33 vice of the house of our God; for the shewbread [the bread of arrangement], and
for the continual meat-offering, and for the continual burnt-offering of the Sabbaths,
of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy *things*, and for the sin-offer-
ings, to make an atonement for Israel, and *for* all the work of the house of our God.
34 And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood-
offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at
times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as *it* is
35 written in the law: And to bring the first-fruits of our ground, and the first-fruits

36 of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD: also the first-born of our sons, and of our catile, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God: and that we should bring the first-fruits [beginning] of our dough [groats], and [of] our offerings [oblations], and [of] the fruit of all manner of trees, of [new] wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes [perhaps, and they the Levites pay tithes] in all the cities of our tillage [service]. And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take [perhaps, pay] tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes [tithe] unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into 39 [belonging unto] the treasure house. For the children [sons] of Israel and the children [sons] of Levi shall bring the offering [oblation] of the corn, of the new wine, and [of] the oil, unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

- 1 Ver. 31. וְנִטַּשׁ אֶת־הַשְּׂמֵנָה הַשְּׂבִיעִית [or מִשְׂאֵה כֹּל־יָד]. The ellipsis is to be filled from Ex. xxiii.
- 11. וְהַשְּׂבִיעִית תִּשְׁכַּח־מִנְּךָ וְנִטַּשְׁתָּהּ, where the pronoun refers to אֲרָצְךָ of the preceding ver. c.
- 2 Ver. 37. הַמִּנְחָה here and פִּעֻשָׁר in ver. 38. (Piel part. and Hiph. inf. of פִּעַר), if we follow the analogy of Deut. xiv. 22, and xxvi. 32, must refer to the paying and not to the receiving tithes.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

The Covenant.

Vers. 1-8. Because of these twenty-three names fifteen are supposed to be found in the list (ch. xii. 1-7) of the priests who came with Zerubbabel in the preceding century, it is held by many that this list contains only family names, and that these families were represented by descendants in the signing, Ezra, for example, signing for his ancestor Seraiah. But as we find Nehemiah in the list, and also the very Levites (vers. 9-13), who individually stood upon the stairs on the 24th of Tisri (chap. ix. 4, 5), it is better to suppose that the similarity of the names is accidental, and that family names only occur in the list of the people, vers. 14-27, if even there. The only alternative is harsh in two features: first, that the Levites on the stairs should be called, in a plain historical statement, by their family names; and secondly, that family names and personal names should be so strangely mixed. Moreover, it is to be noted that the family names of chap. vii. and of Ezra ii. are not all repeated here. We have abundant evidence of the very common use of the same names among the Israelites, and a theory, which that fact will explain, seems the easier one here.

Vers. 9-27. See above note.

Ver. 28. **The rest of the people, i. e.,** besides the chiefs given in vers. 14-27. The word *rest* (Heb. *sheer*) seems to carry its force to the other classes enumerated, to wit, *the rest of the priests, etc.*; that is, besides those enumerated. **Every one having knowledge and having understanding.**—This evidently qualifies the general phrase before it. Not all the rest, but those who had knowledge and understanding, joined their brethren in the reform.

Ver. 29. **Clave to their brethren, their nobles.**—That is, to their brethren, the chiefs

above mentioned. **Commandments, etc.**—See on chap. ix. 13, 14.

Ver. 31. **We would leave the seventh year and the exaction of every debt.**—The verb *natash* (leave) here seems to have a pregnant meaning. *We would leave fallow the land each seventh year* (comp. Exod. xxiii. 11), *and remit at that time* (lit.) *the debt of every hand.* See Deut. xv. 2.

Ver. 32. **The third part of a shekel.**—This tax, thus first laid, became afterward a half shekel. (See Matt. xvii. 24, where the Greek is *didrachma, i. e.,* a half shekel.) The half shekel tax of Ex. xxx. 13 is another matter, not an annual tax, but ransom money to be taken at a census as a mark of the Lord's ownership.

Ver. 33. **The shew-bread.**—Heb. *lehem hammaareketh* (bread of arrangement). The older phrase is *lehem hapanim* (bread of the face). **The continual meat-offering.**—Heb. *minhath hattamidh.*—**The continual burnt-offering.**—Heb. *olath hattamidh.* So the shew-bread is called *lehem hattamidh* (Num. iv. 7). So called as oft-recurring in distinction from the occasional offerings. Here, as we see, the offerings are those of each day, of the sabbaths, and of the new moons.—**The set feasts** are mentioned separately with *lamedh* (for).

Ver. 34. **For the wood-offering.**—Heb. *kurban haetzim.* The feast of the wood-offering (Josephus, B. J., II. 17, 6) on the 14th of Ab arose from this institution of Nehemiah. It was the day when those assigned to the duty brought in the wood for the altar. (See Lev. vi. 12.)

Ver. 35. **The first fruits of all fruits of all trees.**—See Lev. xix. 21 and comp. Deut. xxvi. 2.

Ver. 36. **The first born of our sons.**—That is, by bringing redemption-money, as ordered in Numb. xviii. 15, 16. **Cattle.**—Heb. *behemath.* Here *unclean beasts*, as contrasted with the herds and flocks below. These were also redeemed. (See Num. l. c.)

Ver. 37. **First fruits of our dough** (groats or ground meal).—See Num. xv. 20. **Offerings**—*i. e.*, all special offerings. **Chambers**.—*Heb. lishcoth*. The cells or chambers in the courts of the temple. **Might have the tithes**.—Many read *might pay tithes*, anticipating the statement of the next verse. **Tillage**.—There may be a reasonable doubt whether *anodhak* ever means tillage, unless, as in 1 Chron. xxvii. 26, it is qualified by another noun. It may mean here "service" in the relation of servants to God, as elsewhere. To suppose that the cities of work or service must mean the country towns, is scarcely credible.

Ver. 38. **To the chambers, into the treasure house**.—Rather, *to the chambers of the treasure house*, one of the buildings in the temple area. **The tithe of the tithes** belonged to the priests (Num. xviii. 26-28), the children of Aaron.

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. The natural leaders of a people are largely responsible for the people's conduct. The priests, Levites, and chiefs, the nobles of the nation readily find a following. Nehemiah, as Tirshatha, puts his own name first to the solemn reform-document, and then he causes the nobles to set their names to the instrument. A reform begun the other way in the lower circles of society is apt to degenerate into the excesses of revolution. The healing salt should be thrown in at the sources of the streams, if the waters are to be cured.

2. The points specially indicated, wherein the reform was most pressing, are (1) marriage alliances, (2) Sabbath-observance, (3) usury, (4) temple-taxes of the third part of a shekel, of first-fruits and of tithes. On these points we may believe the people had been especially remiss. They were the points where their covetousness would operate to undermine their piety, and thus the integrity of the commonwealth. Was not that, which has become a distinctive trait of the Israelitish race, already in Nehemiah's time beginning to develop itself?

3. When a people grow remiss in the support of religious privileges, the foundations of society are shaken. The moral tone of any people can only be cultivated and sustained by systematized methods, for natural depravity must take advantage of the lack of discipline, and prove too strong for morality. Religion, in any true and high sense, is an exotic, and must be tenderly cared for in this sin-grown earth. The zeal of

Nehemiah and other reformers for the thorough establishment of religious rites is a wise example to all who come after them. Where the state cannot enforce such a result, public opinion can be made.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ver. 1. To what the consideration of the Lord's faithfulness to the covenant leads us: 1) To penitence and conversion which shows itself through obedience. 2) To faith—particularly in the fact that the Lord always keeps His covenant with us, and that it is only necessary that we on our part should confirm and maintain it. 3) To hope that the Lord will set us free, and evermore aid us to the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Vers. 31, 32. The principal duties of the congregation and its members: 1) To keep themselves unspotted, and particularly separated from the world. 2) To practice communion with the Lord, and especially in the way that is beneficial to us in this mortal state. **BERG:** *Porro sabbatismus orationum ac devotionis nostræ, in qua vacamus a temporalibus agendis, ut æternitatis gaudia dulcius gustare mereamur, recte dici septimo adsignatur quia future quietem vitæ ac beatæ laudationis imitatur: sed diem sabbathi alienigenæ querunt profanare, cum terrene cogitationes in tempore nostræ orationis importune nos conturbant, et memoria sive delectatione temporalium rerum ab amore intimo nituntur extrahere.—Imponunt asinis vinum, vas et fucus et omne onus, et inferunt in Hierusalem, motu oblectamentis carnalibus stultos animi nostri motus onerantes, per hæc et hujus modi tentamenta quietem nostri cordis deo debitam violare conantur.* Comp. chap. xiii. 15.

Vers. 33-40. The tasks to which each member of the congregation must submit himself. 1) The offerings which must be made directly to the Lord for the erection of His buildings, expenses of the service, *etc.* 2) The doing that which assists the servants of the Lord. **STARK:** My God! I remember that I too made a covenant with Thee at my baptism. I beseech thee seal the same also in me, and give me in my heart the pledge, the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. i. 21, 22; 2 Cor. v. 5). We must not only ourselves have a Christian zeal for true religion, but also incite others to it, and admonish them (Heb. x. 24; Ps. xlix. 2). Marriages with the godless are displeasing to God, and dangerous (1 Tim. ii. 14). Nothing must be so near to us that it withdraws us from the service of God.

CHAPTER XI. 1-36.

- 1 AND the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also
 [and the rest of the people] cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem, the
 2 holy city, and nine parts to dwell in [the] other cities. And the people blessed all
 the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.
- 3 Now [And] these *are* the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem: but in
 the cities of Judah dwelt [and which dwelt in the cities of Judah] every one in his
 possession in their cities, *to wit*, Israel [*i. e.*, the people], the priests, and the Le-
 4 vites, and the Nethinim, and the children [sons] of Solomon's servants. And at
 Jerusalem dwelt *certain* of the children [sons] of Judah, and of the children [sons]
 of Benjamin. Of the children [sons] of Judah; Athaiah, the son of Uzziah, the
 5 son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahala-
 leel, of the children [sons] of Perez [*i. e.*, Pharez): and Maaseiah, the son of Ba-
 6 rib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni [Shelah's family]. All the sons of Pe-
 rez that dwelt at Jerusalem *were* four hundred three-score and eight valiant men.
- 7 And these are the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of
 Joed, the son of Pedaiiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel,
 8 the son of Jesaiah [*i. e.*, Isaiah]. And after him Gabbai, Sallai, nine hundred
 9 twenty and eight. And Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer: And Judah the
 10 son of Senuah *was* second over the city [was over the second city]. Of the priests:
 11 Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin. Seraiah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of M-
 shullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* the ruler of
 12 the house of God. And their brethren that did the work of the house *were* eight
 hundred twenty and two: and Adaiah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the
 13 son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malehiah, and his
 brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two: and Amashai, the son
 14 of Azarel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, and the r-
 brethren, mighty men of valour, a hundred twenty and eight, and their overseer
was Zabiel, the son of one of the great men [son of the mighty].
- 15 Also [And] of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam,
 16 the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; and Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief
 of the Levites *had* the oversight of [were over] the outward business of the house of
 17 God. And Mattaniah, the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, *was*
 the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer [*perhaps*, the chief of the prai-
 e-song who gave thanks at prayer-service]: and Bakbukiah the second among his
 brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun.
 18, 19 All the Levites in the holy city *were* two hundred fourscore and four. More-
 over [And] the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates,
were a hundred seventy and two.
- 20 And the residue of Israel, of the priests, *and* the Levites, *were* in all the cities of
 21 Judah, every one in his inheritance. But [And] the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel:
 22 and Ziha and Gispah *were* over the Nethinim. The overseer also [and the overseer]
 of the Levites at Jerusalem *was* Uzzi, the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the
 son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. [Some] Of the sons of Asaph, the singers
 23 were over the business of the house of God. For it [there] was the king's com-
 mandment concerning them, that a certain portion should be for the singers [and
 a sure ordinance concerning the singers] due for every day [the thing of a day on
 24 its day]. And Pethahiah, the son of Meshezababel, of the children of Zerah, the son
 of Judah, was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.

- 25 And [As] for the villages with their fields, *some* of the children [sons] of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba and *in* the villages [daughters] thereof, and at Dibon, and *in* 26 the villages [daughters] thereof, and at Jekabzeel and in the villages thereof, and 27 at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Beth-phelet, and at Hazar-shual, and at Beer- 28 sheba, and *in* the villages [daughters] thereof, and at Ziklag, and at Mekonah, and 29 in the villages [daughters] thereof, and at En-rimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jar- 30 muth, Zanoah, Adullam, and *in* their villages, at Lachish and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and *in* the villages [daughters] thereof. And they dwelt from Beer-sheba into the valley of Hinnom.
- 31 The children also of Benjamin [and the sons of Benjamin] from Geba dwelt at Michmash [dwelt from Geba to Michmash] and Aija, and Bethel, and *in* 32 their villages [daughters], and at Anathoth, Neb, Ananiah, Hazor, Ramah, Git- 33, 34, 35 taim. Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen.
- 36 And of the Levites were divisions *in* Judah, and in Benjamin [divisions of Judah were to Benjamin].

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 17. הַתְּהִלָּה instead of being an error for הַתְּהִלָּה , may be for בְּתֵּהִלָּה , "chief at the beginning of prayer he gave thanks."

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

*The Places of Abode.**

Ver. 1. **The rest of the people also.**—*And the rest of the people*—that is, other than the rulers.

Ver. 2. **That willingly offered themselves**—*i. e.*, those of the people, beside the tenth part chosen by lot, who also consented to dwell in Jerusalem as the place of greatest danger and need. (See chap. vii. 4.)

Ver. 3. The relative construction should be used with both clauses, thus: *now these are the chiefs of the province who dwell in Jerusalem, and those who dwell in the cities of Judah (every one in his possession in their cities)*—*to wit, Israel, etc. Israel*—*i. e.*, the people of Israel as contrasted with priests, Levites, *etc.* **The children of Solomon's servants.**—See on chap. vii. 57.

Ver. 4. **Athaiah** was chief of the Bene-Pharrets, or children of Perez (Pharez). See Gen. xxxviii. 29; 1 Chron. iv. 1. In 1 Chron. ix. 4 he is called *Uthai*, and his genealogy traced by a different line.

Ver. 5. **Maaseiah** was chief of the Shilonites or children of Shelah. His grandfather Colhozeh is probably the same as the father of Shallun in chap. iii. 15. He is called *Asaiah* in 1 Chron. ix. 5. **Shiloni.**—Heb.: *hash-shiloni*. Not a man's name, but a family's title, to wit, the children of Shelah, Judah's son. See 1 Chron. ix. 5. These descendants of Shelah are counted with those of Pharez. *Athaiah* and *Maaseiah* were thus the chiefs of Judah. *Joel* of the sons of Zerah, mentioned in 1 Chron. ix. 6, is omitted here.

Ver. 6. This verse appears to be out of its place. It should precede ver. 5.

Ver. 7. The family of **Jesaiah** in Benjamin, of which **Sallu** was chief, is not otherwise known. Sallu's pedigree is differently reckoned in 1 Chron. ix. 7. The text in Chronicles is probably defective.

Ver. 8. **Gabbai** and **Sallai** are other Benjaminite chiefs.

Ver. 9. **Joel the son of Zichri** was overseer (Heb.: *pakid, ἐπισκοπος*) over both the Judahites and Benjamites of the city. His office was possibly a police one. **Judah the son of Senuah** was over the second city (not second over the city).—The second city was a well-known part of Jerusalem. It was there Huldah the prophetess lived in Josiah's time. See 2 Kings xxii. 14, where the Eng. vers. has "college" for the Heb. *mishneh*. In Zeph. i. 10 the Eng. vers. has "second." It was probably the part of the city built up north of the temple. The parallel chapter in 1 Chron. (chap. ix.), which seems to be very corrupt in its reading, appears to have "Joel, the son of Zichri," in "Elah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri," and to have "Judah, the son of Senuah," in "Hodaviah, the son of Hasenuah," the former a Benjaminite, and the latter an ancestor of Sallu. That list also introduces as Benjamites "Ibnciah, the son of Jeroham," and "Meshullam, the son of Shephathiah, the son of Renel, the son of Ibiyah."

Joel and Judah were the two inspectors or overseers over the Judahites and Benjamites in the entire city.

Vers. 10, 11. There is great confusion in this part of the record, and we are not helped much by 1 Chron. ix. Both lists have been copied probably from a defective record. **Jedaiah, Joiarib** and **Jachin** were the heads of three of the twenty-four courses of priests in David's time (1 Chron. xxiv. 7, 17). **Seraiah** was high-priest before the captivity (1 Chron. vi. 14). These names appear to be fragments of a record which in its fulness showed the heads of these families in Nehemiah's time. The phrase "ruler of the house of God (*negid beth ha-elohim*) can belong to Ahitub or Seraiah. The Eng. vers. wrongly inserts "was." It is a title of the high-

* This chapter is intimately connected with chapter vii. 4, showing Nehemiah's plan of increasing the population of the city. The genealogies and then the confession and covenant came in parenthetically—the former as part of the process in the plan, and the latter as chronologically happening while Nehemiah was maturing the plan.

priest. See 2 Chron. xxxi. 13. Also compare 1 Chron. ix. 11. Also see 1 Chron. xii. 27, where Jehoiada (*neyid* of the Aaronites) seems to be the same as Ahitub the father of Zadok.

In ver. 10 **Jedaiah, the son of Joiarib**, is doubtless wrong, and the form in 1 Chron. ix. 10 should be followed, to wit, *Jedaiah* and *Jehoiarib*. In ver. 11 (as in 1 Chron. ix. 11) the words **the son of Meraioth** are out of place and should follow "Ahitub," as Meraioth was grandfather (1 Chron. vi. 7) or great-grandfather (Ezra vii. 3) of Ahitub. For this last discrepancy we may suppose the two sequences in the high-priesthood of "Amariah, Ahitub, Zalkok" (one before Solomon, and the other after Solomon) are the occasion. One list has taken the latter, where Ahitub's grandfather is Azariah, and the other has taken the former where Ahitub's grandfather is Meraioth. [We use "father" and "grandfather" in the formal sense, denoting the proximity of the names in the records, not the actual relationship.]

Ver. 12. **And their brethren**—*i. e.*, the brethren or kin-folk of the chiefs of the priests whose names are lest in the above record (as we have seen in the preceding note). **Adaiah** was chief of the children of Malchiah, the head of the fifth course in David's day (1 Chron. xxiv. 9).

Ver. 13. **Chief of the fathers**.—This clause seems to be out of place, for we can hardly suppose that the Malchiah family were all chiefs. Adaiah had 242 in his kinsfolk, over whom he was chief, just as the representatives of the high-priest's family and the families of Jedaiah, Joiarib and Jachin had 822 in their kinsfolk (ver. 12). This phrase "chief of the fathers" belongs to all these head men of families, and was probably at the head of the list originally. It may have found its place here from the analogy of the phrase "mighty men of valour" in ver. 14. See 2 Chron. xxv. 12 for a collocation of the two phrases. **Amashai** (*Maasi'in* in 1 Chron. ix. 12) was chief of the children of Immer, the head of the sixteenth course in David's time. His pedigree in 1 Chron. ix. is merely a corruption of this one.

Ver. 14. **Their brethren**.—Probably an error for "his brethren"—that is, Amashai's. **Their overseer was Zabdiel**.—He was *pakid* (see on ver. 9) of all the priests. He is called *son of the mighty ones*—a phrase that seems to denote a remarkable ancestry. The numbers here and in 1 Chron. ix. 13 differ by 563. Errors in numbers and in names are almost necessities in transcribing.

Vers. 15-17. This list of Levites omits the names of *Heresh, Galal* and *Berechiah*, given in 1 Chron. ix. 15, 16; but contains the names of *Shabbethai* and *Jozabad* not mentioned there. In this list (ver. 14) we have **the son of Bunni** (*i. e.*, Bani, one of the families of Merari), where in 1 Chron. ix. 14 we find "of the sons of Merari." **Bakbukiah** here is *Bakbakkur* there. **Zabdi** here is *Zichri* there. **Abda** here is *Obadiah* there. Of the Levitical chiefs, *Shabbethai* and *Jozabad* had the oversight of the outward business of the house of God.—That is, attended to the secular department of service as directors therein (comp. 1 Chron. xxvi. 29). **The principal to begin the thanksgiving**

in prayer.—Literally "the chief of the beginning gave thanks to prayer." Some would read *tehillah* instead of *tehillah*, a most natural correction. We should then have "the chief of the praise-song [who] gave thanks (as introductory) to prayer."

Ver. 18. These six (or nine) Levitical chiefs had a constituency of 284.

Ver. 19. **Akkub, Talmon**.—The list in 1 Chron. ix. adds *Shallum* (as chief of all) and *Alhiman*, and makes the number 212 instead of 172. The account in 1 Chron. is much more extended on this matter of the porters, thus showing that this record (as is that also) is but a fragment of an older document. Both copies have been marred in the transcribing.

Ver. 20. This verse belongs between ver. 21 and ver. 25, after Jerusalem is disposed of.

Ver. 21. **Nethinim—Ophel**.—See on chap. iii. 26.

Ver. 22. The *pakid* (see on ver. 9) of all the Levites, including the Nethinim, was **Uzzi**. The last clause should read: *The singers of the sons of Asaph* (or some of the sons of Asaph, the singers,—see same construction in ver. 25) *were over the business of the house of God*. This "business" is not the "outward business" of ver. 16. If (with Keil) we disregard the *Athnahh*, we may consider *Uzzi's* pedigree as going on in this last clause, thus: "the son of Micha, of the sons of Asaph the singers in the service of the house of God." In this case the parallel with ver. 17 would be striking. There may be an omission in that verse before *Mattaniah*, and this *Uzzi* may be the first of the three leading singers—*Bakbukiah* and *Abda* being the other two. But see next note.

Ver. 23. Read: *for it was the king's command concerning them and a sure ordinance for the singers for each day's duty* (lit. "the thing of a day on its day"). *Uzzi* was *pakid* of the Levites generally, but the *Asaphites* took turns in directing the Levitical work. This 23d verse—making the singers (in the plural) the main subject, seems to show that our E. V. is right in stopping *Uzzi's* genealogy (in ver. 22) at *Micha*, and then beginning a new passage. The *Masorites* took this view, as the *Athnahh* with *Micha* shows. There is probably some confusion between ver. 22 and vers. 15 and 17, if we may judge from the names. Compare the passage in 1 Chron. ix.

Ver. 24. **Pethahiah of the Zerahites (or Zerhites) was at the hand of the king**.—This does not mean that he was at *Susa*, but that he was the king's special agent. Comp. 1 Chron. xxiii. 28, where the Levites are said to be at the hand of the sons of Aaron. *Pethahiah's* office may have taken him often to *Susa*, and he would thus be the go-between between the king and *Nebemiah*.

Ver. 25. **Kirjath-Arba—i. e.**, Hebron (Josh. xiv. 15). **The villages thereof**.—*I. e.*, the daughters thereof. The word is a different one from that at the beginning of the verse (*hatzêr*). It is repeated after *Dibon*, but the other word returns after *Jekabzeel*. This use of daughters for dependent towns is common in the earlier books. **Dibon**.—Doubtless the *Dimonah* of

Josh. xv. 22. **Jekabzeel**.—The *Kabzeel* of Josh. xv. 21.

Ver. 26. **Jeshua**.—Probably the *Shema* of Josh. xv. 26. the letters in Hebrew being easily mistaken in transcription. **Moladah** is El Mill. **Beth-phelet**.—The *Beth-palet* of Josh. xxi. 27.

Ver. 27. **Hazar-shual**—like all the above, except Hebron and Moladah, is unknown.

Beersheba is Bir es-Seba, twenty-five miles south-west of Hebron, and ten miles west of Moladah.

Ver. 28. **Ziklag**, conspicuous in David's history (1 Sam. xxx.), is supposed to be Asluj, on the road from El Mill to Abdeh. **Mekonah**—possibly a mistake for *Madmannah* of Josh. xv. 30. It only requires a *mem* dropped and a *daleth* changed to a *kaph*.

Ver. 29. **En-rimmon** is spoken of in Josh. xv. 32 as two places. Keil supposes them two towns closely neighboring which finally grew into one. **Zareah**.—*Zoreah* (Josh. xv. 33) or *Zorah* (Judg. xiii. 2) is Zurah, fourteen miles west of Jerusalem. **Jarmuth** is 16 miles south-west of Jerusalem, on the slope of the mountain country, and about eight miles from the Shephelah or Philistine plain. It is 15 miles from Hebron.

Ver. 30. **Zanoah** is Zanuua, or, perhaps, Kh. Sanut. **Adullam**—identified by GANNEAU with Sh. Mndhkur, on the east side of Wady Sur, near Socoh. **Lachish**—36 miles south-west of Jerusalem. **Azekah** is Deir el Aashek. From Beersheba unto the valley of Hinnom (or valley of the sons, or son, of Hinnom) is a distance of nearly 50 miles.

Ver. 31. Read: *and the children of Benjamin dwell from Geba to Michmash and Aija and Bethel and her villages*. **Geba** is Jeba. **Michmash** is Mukhmas. **Aija** or *Ai* is probably Tell el Hajjar, as VAN DE VELDE thinks. **Bethel** is Beitin.

Ver. 32. **Anathoth** is Anata, Jeremiah's birth-place. **Nob** is probably Neby Samwil, according to Lieut. CONDER's suggestion (*Quarterly Statement of Pal. Expl. Fund.* London, Jan. 1875). **Ananiah** is unknown.

Ver. 33. **Hazor** is not identified. **Ramah** is Er-Ram. **Gittaim** is unknown.

Ver. 34. **Hadid** is supposed to be near Lydda. **Zeboim** is not identified. **Neballat** is Beit Nebala, near Lydda.

Ver. 35. **Lod** is Lydda (Ludd). **Ono** is believed to be near Lydda, at Kefr Auna. (See VAN DE VELDE.) **The valley of craftsmen**—i. e., Charashim (see 1 Chron. iv. 14) was probably in the vicinity of Lydda.

Ver. 36. Read: *And of the Levites divisions of Judah went to Benjamin*. These Levites were transferred from former stations in Judahite towns to stations in Benjamite towns.

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

I. Jerusalem was peculiarly the post of labor and danger,—of labor, because the fortifications would require constant guarding, and of danger, because the enemies of the Jews would naturally concentrate their efforts against the holy city. A willing offering of any to dwell in Jerusalem was therefore a mark of self-denial for the sake of country and religion. The popular blessing

fell upon such. Even those who did not so volunteer could not but admire this devotion, and join in the general admiration. Happy is the people, where there is such a cause for the public favor.

2. The additional population of Jerusalem included men of Judah, men of Benjamin, Levites, and Nethinim. There were, doubtless, remnants of the ten tribes with preserved pedigrees mingled with the returned Jews, as we find four centuries later Phanuel mentioned as of the tribe of Asher (Luke ii. 36), but none of these seem to have been reckoned in the public genealogies. They had not come back with Zerubbabel, for it is not probable that many (if any) from the remnant of the ten tribes went into captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, unless we consider the coming to Jerusalem of "divers of Asher and Manasseh and Zebulun" in Hezekiah's day (2 Chron. xxx. 11) was a coming for a permanent abode. But we may believe, that, after the return, stragglers from the remnant of the northern kingdom joined the Jews at Jerusalem, for that in the north a remnant preserved the truth against all the immigration of heathen nations is evident from the appearance of Galilee in the New Testament period, which could not be owing simply to the Maccabean influence, such as are described in 1 Maccab. v. 21, seq.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ver. 1, 2. It might be very difficult for the poorer families of the congregation to find means of subsistence in Jerusalem, as there was no longer a royal court there, and a troop of higher officers, who could afford work and gain to the lower classes. They might find it much easier to get along in the country, where they could cultivate the ground. Nevertheless Nehemiah and the heads of the congregation had to insist upon it that as many as possible should settle again in Jerusalem. For this there were very urgent reasons. It was not the consideration alone that the congregation would only then be worthily represented to the neighboring people, and would only be in part secure, if it possessed a large, mighty, and flourishing chief city, to which, in times of danger, it could withdraw as to a trustworthy asylum. The main point was, that as many as possible of the congregation must live in direct proximity to the Temple and its service, that their connection with God could the better be furthered and fortified, and be promoted and consecrated, which was so desirable for it. There was the consideration that above all upon Zion and the mountain of the house of the Lord rested the promises of the prophets, and that especially from them the law and the word of the Lord should go forth. (Isa. ii. 2-4; Micah iv. 1.) The congregation should feel itself called upon, as much as lay in its power, to help in the fulfilment of such promises, also to further as much as possible, the honoring of the Lord there in Jerusalem. It had certainly in the prophetic word a warrant that the Lord would here protect and bless it. At least equally urgent calls has Christendom not to scatter itself hither and thither into all sorts of sects and communities, neither to be satisfied with the observ-

ance of religion in their houses, but to hold faithfully to the one church, which is founded on God's word and provided with His promises, and instead of despising it on account of its insignificance, poverty, and needs, all the more to raise it by all self-consecration and gratitude, even if one should thereby suffer disadvantages, and even dangers, in worldly things, and should draw upon himself slights and persecution. "And let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." (Heb. x. 23-25.) That in which a sect has appeared to be preferable in power of love and sanctity has proved itself generally, in great part to be mere empty appearance.

Vers. 3-19. It is very worthy of notice that in the numbering of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, not the priests but the tribes of Judah and Benjamin take the lead, and only then follow the priests and Levites; so much the more worthy of notice, because in the new congregation, following the captivity, according to the entire direction which its development took, and according to everything which was considered as of the greatest moment, the high-priests, and the priesthood in general, had a particularly high significance. It is as if the consciousness were indicated, that the priests and Levites, in spite of their distinction, which the Lord had apportioned to them in the affairs of Israel, had been nevertheless nothing at all, if they had not had a congregation near and around them, and if they had not succeeded in obtaining satisfactory fruit for their activity, namely, a genuine and true piety, which should substantially prove they were not there in vain. Would also that Christian priests, that is, preachers of the gospel, might preserve a lively consciousness that it is not enough for them to have fellowship with their brethren in

office, that they are nothing, and can profit and signify nothing, if not some, if only a small congregation stand by them, in whom the seed which they sow, springs up, grows, and bears fruit. STARKE: Ver. 3. In every time there are some pious and God-fearing people who separate themselves from the world, and seek the good of their souls rather than of their bodies.

Vers. 25-36. When one looks at the space which the Jewish congregation inhabited round Jerusalem, how very small was the territory occupied by the people of God, the only race which possessed a clear knowledge of the only true and holy God! A few miles, from three to six, north and south, east and west, comprised the entire district. Compared with our countries, yes, even with our provinces, this district appears to us almost as a vanishing nothing. And nevertheless what powers for the subjugation of entire humanity, for the transformation of all its relations, and for the subliming of all circumstances, has God the Lord been able to put in the people of this oasis, in the, at the same time insignificant, and in many respects miserable race, which cultivated the ground there or raised cattle! If any where surely here arises a testimony for Paul's word, "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." (1 Cor. i. 27.) A consoling promise also for Christendom in those times in which it appears as though it were being compressed on all sides, and when it is in truth losing position after position. Let it lose in length and breadth, in order afterwards to gain so much the more in height. Even the gates of hell cannot swallow up the church of the Lord.

STARKE: Ver. 25. God collects to Himself a church from among many peoples by the word of the gospel, that the heavenly Jerusalem may be filled.

CHAPTER XII. 1-47.

- 1 Now [And] these *are* the priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel
- 2 the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, Amariah, Malluch, Hat-
- 3, 4, 5 tush, Shechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, Iddo, Ginetho, Abijah, Miamin, Maa-
- 6, 7 diah, Bilgah, Shemaiah, and Joiarib, Jedaiah, Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah.
- These were the chief of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua.
- 8 Moreover [And] the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and
- 9 Mattaniah, *which was over* the thanksgiving, he and his brethren. Also [And]
- 10 Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, *were over* against them in the watches. And
- Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also [and Joiakim] begat Eliashib, and Eliashib
- 11, 12 begat Joiada, and Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua. And
- in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah;
- 13, 14 of Jeremiah, Hananiah; of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; of Me-
- 15 lieu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai;
- 16, 17 of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginethon, Meshullam; of Abijah, Zichri; of Minia-
- 18, 19 min, of Moadiah, Piltai; of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; And

- 20, 21 of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; of
 22 Hilkiyah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel. The Levites in the days of Eliashib,
 Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua were recorded [according to the] chief of the
 23 fathers: also [and] the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian. The sons of
 Levi, the chief of the fathers, were written [recorded] in the book of the Chronicles
 [book of the events of the times], even until the days of Johanan, the son of Elia-
 24 shib. And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of
 Kadmiel with their brethren over against them to praise *and* to give thanks, ac-
 cording to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward.
 25 Mattaniah, and Bakkukiah, [and] Obadiah, [were singers]. Meshullam, Talmon,
 Akkub, *were* porters keeping the ward at the thresholds [treasuries] of the gates.
 26 These *were* in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in
 the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.
 27 And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites out of
 all their places to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness
 [to keep the dedication and festivity], both with thanksgivings and with singing,
 28 *with* cymbals, psalteries and with harps. And the sons of the singers gathered them-
 selves together, both out of the plain country [circuit] round about Jerusalem, and
 29 from the villages of Netophathi; also [and] from the house of Gilgal [Beth-gilgal],
 and out of the fields of Goba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded their vil-
 30 lages round about Jerusalem. And the priests and the Levites purified themselves,
 31 and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall. Then [And] I brought up
 the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great *companies of them*
that gave thanks, whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung
 32 gate [rubbish gate]. And after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of
 33, 34 Judah, and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah,
 35 and Jeremiah, and *certain* of the priests' sons with trumpets; *namely [the priests'*
names have fallen out—here follow the Levites' names] Zechariah the son of Jona'han,
 the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur,
 36 the son of Asaph: And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai,
 Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the
 man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them. And at the fountain gate, which
 37 was over against them, [and over the fountain gate and in front of them], they
 went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the
 house of David, even unto the water gate eastward.
 38 And the other *company of them that gave thanks* went over against *them*, and I
 after them, and the half of the people, upon the wall from beyond [past] the tower
 39 of the furnaces even unto the broad wall; and from above [past] the gate of Eph-
 raim, and above [past] the old gate, and above [past] the fish gate, and the tower
 of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood
 40 still in the prison gate. So [And] stood the two *companies of them that gave thanks*
 41 in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me: And the priests;
 Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, *and* Hananiah with
 42 trumpets; and Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan,
 and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang loud [made *their voice*
 to be heard], with Jezrahiah *their* overseer.
 43 Also [And] that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had
 made them rejoice with great joy: [and] the wives also and the children rejoiced:
 so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.
 44 And at that time were some [men] appointed over the chambers [which were]
 for the treasures, for the offerings, for the first fruits, and for the tithes to gather
 into them out of [according to] the fields of the cities the portions of the law [*i. e.*,
 appointed by the law] for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced [the joy of
 Judah *was*] for the priests and the Levites that waited [that stood *at their posts*].
 45 And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward
 of the purification [And they kept the ward (or charge) of their God, and the ward
 of the purification, and so did also the singers and the porters *keep their ward*], ac-
 46 cording to the commandment of David, *and* of Solomon his son. For in the days

of David and Asaph [see note] of old, *there were* chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God. And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion [the thing of a day on its day], and they sanctified [dedicated, as in 1 Chron. xvi. 28] *holy things* unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified *them* unto the children of Aaron.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

¹ Ver. 38. לְמוֹאֵל for לְמוֹאֵל from the root מֹאֵל, according to Ewald. The usual form is מוֹל or מוֹל. May it not be from מֹאֵל, formed like a Hoph. participle?

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

The Dedication of the Walls.

Before the ceremony of the dedication is rehearsed, a preliminary statement regarding the priests and Levites, as chief actors in the dedication, is made.

Vers. 1-9. This is a list of the principal priests and Levites who came with Zerubbabel from Babylon in the preceding century.

We have already spoken of the *accidental* identity of names, in many of these, with those who sealed the Covenant (ch. x. 1-8). If the question is here asked, "Why, then, are not the names of the sealers put down in vers. 12-21, as the representatives of the old priestly houses of Zerubbabel's day?" the reply is that the sealers were in Eliashib's day, but the representatives of the priestly families in vers. 12-21 were of Joiakim's day, Eliashib's father. The persons were not the same, and hence we do not look for the same names. We have three sets of names. In ch. xii. 1-7 we have those of Jeshua's time (*i. e.*, Zerubbabel's); in ch. xii. 12-21, we have also those of Joiakim's day. In ch. x. 1-8 we have those of Eliashib's day.

But another question is raised by the fact that in Ezra ii. 36-39 and Neh. vii. 39-42 only four orders of priests are said to have come up with Zerubbabel, to wit, those of Jedaiah, Immer, Pashur, Harim, *i. e.*, the 21, 3d, 5th and 16th orders, Pashur representing Malchijah, (see Neh. xi. 12), while here are twenty-two families. The answer is suggested by Keil that those four represent grand families (and not the four priestly orders) and these represent an inferior division into twenty-two, two of the names, Jedaiah and Harim, being accidentally the same with two of the four. I know not, however, why the four courses or orders may not be intended in ch. vii. 39-42 and the twenty-two families belong to these four. Keil's reasoning seems defective.

Ver. 7. **And of their brethren.**—This does not refer to the Levites, for they are especially mentioned immediately afterward. It is a phrase in apposition, thus "chief of the priests, namely, their brethren."

Jeshua or Joshua, the high-priest at the return from Babylon under Cyrus (B. C. 536), nearly a hundred years before.

Ver. 8. We have already shown that the identity of names here with those in ch. x. is accidental. See notes on ch. x. 1-13, and the first note in this chapter. Hence the identification of Juhah, Mattaniah and Bakbukiah with Hodi-

jah (ch. x. 10), Mattaniah of ch. xi. 17, and Bakbukiah of ver. 25 (which identification Keil suggests) is an error, as these last three were men of Nehemiah's time (see ver. 26), while the first three were of Jeshua's day, (see vers. 1, 7).

This Mattaniah and his brethren were **over the thanksgiving** ('*al huppuyedoth*) in Jeshua's day. The Mattaniah of ch. xi. 17 was "the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer" (*rosh hat-tehillah yehodheh lat-tephillah*) in Nehemiah's day. The phrases are not identical. One refers to several men, the other to one.

Ver. 9. Bakbukiah and Unni were chiefs of the Levitical relays, who, in Jeshua's day, kept the watches over against the Levites commissioned to sing the thanksgivings. *Mishmar* must mean a watch or guard, even in ch. xiii. 14 and in Ezek. xxxviii. 7.

Vers. 10, 11. The pedigree of the high-priests from Zerubbabel's time to the time of Alexander the Great, *i. e.*, from B. C. 536 to B. C. 332. As Nehemiah's government of Jerusalem was B. C. 446-434, we have this genealogy carried a century beyond him by a later hand. **Jonathan** is evidently a mistake in transcription for **Johanan**, as in vers. 22 and 23.

Vers. 12-21. A list of the representatives in Joiakim's day of the priestly houses whose names are obtained from those chiefs of the priests who came with Zerubbabel, as given in vers. 1-7.

Melicu = *Malluch*. *Hattush* is omitted (see ver. 2). **Shebaniah** = *Shechaniah*. **Harim** = *Rhum*. **Meraioth** = *Meremoth*. **Miniamin** = *Miamin*. Miniamin's representative is omitted,—dropped accidentally in transcription. **Sallai** = *Sollu*. These changes in a list evidently intended to be a copy of one immediately preceding form a good instance of the uncertainty of names in these old genealogical registers.

Vers. 22, 23. An interjected statement by the later hand. The Levites were regularly to the time of Alexander the Great recorded by the names of their chiefs, and the priests also, that is, to the reign of Darius (Codomannus). But the book of the Chronicles (1 Chron. ix.) only contained their names to Johanan's high-priesthood. That is, probably in Jaddua's time the record was no longer engrossed. Keil's effort to make these verses refer to Nehemiah's time as the ultimate is ingenious but forced. The days of Johanan and the days of Jaddua cannot mean the days in which they were living as young men or boys, but the days of their active high-priesthood. Hence the Darius is not Nothus, but Codomannus.

Vers. 23-26. The Levites in Joiakim's day and in Nehemiah's time. **Hashabiah** = Hashabiah in ch. ix. 5.

Sherebiah (see ch. ix. 5). **Jeshua**, the son of **Kadmiel**. See ch. ix. 4, where *Jeshua and Bani and Kadmiel* is probably for "Jeshua ben Kadmiel." These were leaders of the singing Levites.

Mattaniah is put probably by mistake among the porters. He was a singer. (see ch. xi. 17). The same remark may be made of **Bakbukiah** and **Obadiah** (Abda). See, as before, ch. xi. 17.

Meshullam is *Shollum* in 1 Chron. ix. 17. **Porters keeping the ward at the treasuries of the gates.**—See 1 Chron. xxvi. 15, 17. These were the store-chambers attached to the various gates, inner and outer, belonging to the temple.

Ver. 26. Joiakim was probably high-priest when Ezra arrived at Jerusalem, Eliashib his son soon succeeding.

Ver. 27. The preliminary statements regarding the priests and Levites being ended, here begins the account of the dedication of the walls. **Out of all their places**, for the Levites were scattered throughout the province (see ch. xi. 3). **To keep the dedication with gladness.**—Instead of supposing a preposition wanting, we may take *sim'ah* as a concrete and read *to keep the dedication and festivity*.

Psalteries and harps differed but slightly from one another. The *nebel* or psalterly had more strings than the *kinnor* or harp. They both rather resembled our guitar than our harp.

Ver. 28. **The sons of the singers.**—Heb. *Bené hamshorerim*. That is the guild or company of singers of the three great Levitical families of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun. **The plain country round about Jerusalem.**—Heb. *hikkikkar sevivoth yerushalayim*. There is no plain country round about Jerusalem. The *kikkar* must here be simply "circuit" (*περίχωρος*). Compare ver. 29.

If *kikkar* is to have here its specific meaning of "the valley of Jordan" (as Keil insists), then we must insert *umin 'hatzrê* between *hikkikkar* and *sevivoth* (for an omission likely to happen) and read "the valley of Jordan and from the villages round about Jerusalem." The idea that the valley of Jordan at Jericho could be said to be *sevivoth yerushalayim* (round about Jerusalem) is absurd.

Netophathi, the gentile noun without article, seems to be for *Netophah*, a place near Bethlehem (ch. vii. 26). Beit Netif, which is fourteen miles west of Bethlehem, seems too far off.

Ver. 29. **And from the house of Gilgal.**—Rather, and from *Beth-haggilgal* or Beth-Gilgal. Although we should look for a Jijilia or a Beit-Jijilia for the modern name of this place, yet as no such name occurs near Jerusalem, we may suppose Beit-Jala close to Bethlehem to be the modern representative.

Geba is now Jeba, six or seven miles north of Jerusalem. **Azmaveth** is not identified.

Ver. 30. The purification of priests, Levites, people, gates and wall was accomplished, doubtless, by a series of prescribed sacrifices.

Ver. 31. Read literally, *appointed two great thanksgivings*, i. e., two great thanksgiving-com-

panies. Perhaps the *thodthoth* in ver. 27 has this concrete meaning.

Judah is used in this verse for the whole people of Israel.

Whereof one went on the right hand.—Literally, and *processions on the right hand*. The whole passage should read, and *appointed two thanksgiving-companies and processions. On the right hand, etc.* (i. e., the one on the right hand).

Although it is not mentioned, yet it is clear that the two processions started at the valley-gate, the same at which Nehemiah had started to examine the ruined walls of the city on his arrival (chap. ii. 13). The valley-gate was at or south of the present Jaffa Gate (see on chap. ii. 13). **Dung-gate.**—(See l. c.)

Vers. 32-34. There followed the one thanksgiving company of Levites to the right (i. e., to the South) one-half the princes of Judah (i. e., chiefs of the entire Jewish people) with **Hoshaiah** at their head. The names in vers. 33 and 34 are the names of these princes. The names of Judah and Benjamin are not the tribal names.

Ver. 35. **And certain of the priests' sons with trumpets.**—This should close a section, as the names that follow are not of priests but of Levites. The priests' names have probably dropped out. In the corresponding list of the other procession the priests' names are given (see ver. 41). **Priests' Sons**, i. e., sons of the priests, i. e., priests.

Zechariah, an Asaphite, is leader of those who bear the Davidic instruments of music.

Ver. 36. **Zeehariah** had eight with him, as **Jezrahiah** had eight with him in the other band (see ver. 42).

Ezra the scribe went before all except the thanksgiving-company of ver. 31, just as Nehemiah took this position in the other band (see vers. 38, 40).

Ver. 37. **The fountain-gate** we believe to have been near the pool of Siloam, and the **water-gate** to have been an interior gate not far from the present south wall of the Haram. (See for these and the stairs of the city of David the notes on ch. iii. 15, 26; also see Excur.). We may read this verse, and *over the fountain-gate and in front of them they went up over the stairs of the city of David at the going up of the wall above the house of David even unto the water-gate eastward*. We explain this description thus; that the procession kept along the south wall of Zion until it reached a point on the descent of that wall over against the fountain-gate and the pool of Siloam. There it would be *over the fountain-gate*. At this point it turned north ("in front of them"), leaving the main wall and passing up over the line of the great stairs that led up to the city of David (Zion), where an inner wall ran up and along the eastern crest of Zion. This inner wall had a place called *Beth-David* below it on the side of the Tyropœon valley. (Or if *me'ol* be translated "past," then the Beth-David may be placed above). The procession would thus pass along Zion's eastern front and cross over to Ophel and the water-gate at a point where the Tyropœon was not so deep and broad.

Ver. 38. **And the other company of them that gave thanks.** (See on ver. 31).

Read and the second thanksgiving company which

went in the opposite direction, and which I followed and half the people (went) upon the wall past the tower of the furnaces even to the broad wall. By "the people" are meant those who formed the procession, not the people at large. The Heb. *me'al* here when used before "the tower of the furnaces" must mean "past." We cannot conceive the procession's passing over a tower. (See note on ver. 37, where the phrase "above the house of David" occurs). For "the tower of the furnaces" and "the broad wall," see on ch. ii, 8, 11. Also see Excursus.

Ver. 39. The gate of Ephraim must have been at the north-eastern extremity of the broad wall. The prison gate was on the north side of the temple, not connected with the palace prison of Jer. xxxii. 2. See Excursus. (For the other localities here mentioned, see on chap. ii, and Excursus.)

Vers. 40-42. The latter part of ver. 40 and verses 41 and 42 belong before the former part of ver. 40. There may have been an error of transcription, or it may be a roughness of rhetoric.

Comp. ver. 41 with the first part of ver. 35, and verse 42 with vers. 35 and 36.

Ver. 43. Great sacrifices, *i. e.*, thank-offerings which were eaten by the offerers in a happy feast, after "the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord" (Lev. iii.)

Ver. 44.* At that time.—Evidently the time of the dedication. Some.—Heb, "men." The treasures (or stores) comprised the three sorts enumerated, to wit, the first-fruits, the tithes, and the free-will offerings. Out of the fields.—Rather, according to the *fills*. The portions of the law, *i. e.* the portions appointed by the law (as in margin). For Judah rejoiced for the priests and Levites that waited.—Rather, for Judah rejoiced in the priests and Levites who stood at their posts. The people gladly gave the prescribed offerings for the priests and Levites, so that there was no sense of burden upon them, nor any friction between the Levites and the people.

Ver. 45. The singers and the porters formed two important bodies of Levites. They kept the ward, that is, performed their appointed duties. The verse is improperly divided in the E. V. It should read, *And they* (the priests and Levites of ver. 41) *kept the ward of their God and the ward of the purification, and so did also the singers and the porters keep their ward.* The priests and Levites attended to their duties of public worship and purifying, and the singers and porters observed their appropriate functions.

Vers. 46, 47. The *wav* before "Asaph" is generally supposed an error, and the verse is read "for in the days of David, Asaph of old was chief." This will explain the singular "chief," (the plural *K'ri* being unsupported). But still

it is difficult to see why Asaph's headship should be mentioned just here. It may be suggested that the Masorites are wrong, and that the 46th and 47th verses (Silluk being removed) should run together, "all Israel" being subject in both, anticipated in ver. 46, from ver. 47, thus: *for in the days of David and Asaph, of old, chief of the singers and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God,—and all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah gave, etc.* From David's day to Nehemiah's the care of Israel for the Levitical singers and porters was marked.

Sanctified, *i. e.*, Brought as consecrated or dedicated. As in I Chron. xxvi. 28.

The Levites brought as dedicated to the priests the *tithe* of that which was dedicated to them. (Num. xviii. 26.)

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. Both the Heb. *hanukkah* and the Greek *enkainia* define a "dedication" as the initiation or beginning of a new thing. There is no notion of consecration in the word. There is no grace conferred or new nature implanted. Even in the dedication of the temple, it was only the Lord's miraculous presence which consecrated the place. The dedication of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah and his brethren was simply a joyful religious celebration of the work achieved under the gracious providence of God. The priests indeed purified the walls, but so they purified the people. Everything Jewish was purified; so that this purification is no distinct part of the dedication. The primal element in the dedication was joy, exhibited in music, vocal and instrumental, and in thanksgiving. There was a formal recognition of God's mercy and loving-kindness by the assembled people.

2. The culminating point in the day's observance was certainly when the two processions, after each passing over half the wall, met at the temple and united their praises with new emphasis, while "great sacrifices" were offered on the brazen altar. The high position of the temple would add much to the imposing character of this service.

3. The ministers of religion were not considered as useless, "non-producing" men by the godly Jews. Even the singers were reckoned worthy of a public support. It is a low, materialistic philosophy that cannot see the moral importance of leaders and teachers of religion in a community, and that without them material accumulation will only expedite national destruction.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Vers. 1-26. It was without doubt a matter of piety that in the time after the exile, they restored more and more the old classes of priests and Levites which had existed before the exile. It was a necessity for the congregation, which deserved all consideration, to have again an equally manifold-numbered, complete equipment for the establishment of the beautiful service of the Lord, as before the exile. It was also for the priests and Levites themselves most important and wholesome that they should find themselves together again in the old divisions, and

* The opinion that vers. 44-47 are an insertion by another hand than Nehemiah's is founded on the change from the 1st person to the 3d person, and from the assumption that here is described the same transaction as in ch. xiii. 10-13. The former argument is too weak to trust anywhere. (How would it apply to Ezra ch. vii.?) The latter argument is baseless, for the passage xiii. 10-13 refers to a different event.

should also acknowledge their venerable ancestors as their heads. Who can estimate the blessing there is, when descendants remain conscious that they are preceded by many and ancient ancestors in piety and the service of God, when in families piety too becomes a matter of tradition, when the children know that parents and grandparents have prayed for them, and particularly for their spiritual prosperity, and when they feel themselves called upon by this to pray again in turn for their children and grandchildren. It was an enviable time when in the Christian church likewise there were Aaronic families, when the children received an impulse from the example of parents and ancestors to devote themselves to the service of the word, and when the parents knew no higher joy than to see their children advancing to the same high office which their fathers had occupied. The first condition of a proper, worthy exercise of the office, which shall be rich in blessing, is indeed the pouring out of the Spirit, and the Spirit breathes where He listeth, but even in the Christian church the ordained ways hold an important position by the side of extraordinary ones. In connection with the fact that the number of the priests' classes was about the same as before the exile, Beda's remark is applicable: "*Sic sæpe sancta ecclesia ex detrimentis suis majora recepit incrementa, cum uno per incuriam lapsu in peccatum plures exemplo ejus territi ad persistendum in castitate fidei fiunt cautiores. Sæpe idem ipsi, qui peccaverunt, majores post actam penitentiam bonorum operum fructus ferre incipiunt, quam ante incursum peccati ferre consueverunt. Sæpe ab hæreticis ecclesia vastata, postquam instantia catholicorum doctorum lucem veritatis recepit, plures ad cognoscendam tuendamque rationem recuperantes ejusdem veritatis filios procreavit. Neque enim unquam beati patres Athanasius, Ambrosius, Hilarius, Augustinus, et ceteri tales tot et tam magnificos in sanctam scripturam tractatus conderent, si non contra fidem rectam tam multifarius hæreticorum fuisset error ortus.*"

Vers. 27-43. The feast of dedication. 1. Whose part is it? The congregation's, to which God has anew given protection and power against its enemies, but also the individual believer's, when the Lord has secured to him his position, and has even enclosed it with a wall. 2. How is it to be celebrated? In that we purify ourselves from all that displeases the Lord, that we thankfully consecrate His gifts, that is, put them at His service, that we rejoice in them as a proof of the grace that desires our salvation, and thereby cause our faith to be strengthened, etc. 3. What blessing has it? It appropriates thus truly God's gifts to us, and enkindles thus our zeal to honor God with new desire by consecration, devotion, and homage.—BEDA: *Facta autem civitas sancta dedicatur, cum, completo in fine*

sæculi numero electorum, ecclesia universaliter in caelis ad visionem sui conditoris introducitur.—How must the congregation celebrate the feast of dedication? 1. With joyful thanks, that the power and salvation of the Lord has surrounded them as a wall for their protection against the world, and for their separation from the same. 2. With firm trust, that the Lord will still farther protect them. 3. With the sincere vow to hold themselves separate from the world, and to live to the Lord. True joy. 1. Its right, the God who has given us life, wishes also that it shall move joyfully; the God who always anew overwhelms us with favors, wishes that they should fulfil their mission, that is, make us happy, in the end holy. 2. Its occasion is God's grace, which has strengthened, protected, assured, or elevated our lower or higher life. The chief sites in Jerusalem testified to this, and in the Christian church, yes, indeed, in our lives, all the heights testify thereof. 3. Its kind—it raises itself to God, is a joy in Him, that is, becomes a service to God and our neighbor.—

BEDA: *Requiruntur et Levite spirituales, hoc est, assumpti in sortem regni de omnibus locis suis, quando mittet filius hominis angelos suos et congregabit electos suos a quatuor ventis, a summo terre usque ad summum caeli. Faciunt illi dedicationem in lætitia, cantico, gratiarum actione, atque in organis musicorum variis, cum in perceptione æternæ vite invicem gaudebunt.*—STARKE: Dedications shall take place with praise and thanks, singing and praying, not with sins and wantonness. That should be the delight and joy of our hearts when we see that the city of God, that is, the Christian church, is protected by God within by the defence of faithful authorities. (Ps. lviii. 2.) Christian joy, at the proper time, does not displease God.

Vers. 41-47. What is also needful: 1. That there should be teachers and servants in the church. 2. That they should perform their service without being hindered in it by lower cares. 3. That the congregation should joyfully supply them with what is necessary for their support.—BEDA: *Illujus autem capituli nobis expositio allegorica in promptu est; quia dominus statuit eos, qui evangelium annuntiant, de evangelio vivere. Sed vix illis sacerdotibus ac ministris sanctorum, qui sumptus quidem cum gaudio sumere a populo delectantur, sed nihil pro ejusdem populi salute laborare, non aliquid sacri ducatus ei recte vivendo præbere, non de suavitate regni caelestis ei quippiam dulce prædicando canere, sed nec januam ei supernæ civitatis aprire, municipatum in caelis habendo, verum potius occludere perverse agendo probantur.*—STARKE: It is God's will and command that with the treasure of the godly word and for the maintenance of the same, we should make a provision that churches, schools, and those who serve in them may be supported. (1 Chr. xxvii. 20; 2 Chr. xxiv. 8; xxxi. 4; xxxiv. 9.)

CHAP. XIII. 1-30.

1 On that day [of dedication] they read [it was read] in the book of Moses in the audience [ears] of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite
 2 and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but [and] hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit [and] our God turned the
 3 curse into a blessing. Now [And] it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.

[Events of 12 years' later date].

4 And before this, [in the face of this], Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of [being set over] the chamber [chambers] of the house of our God *was* allied unto
 5 Tobiah: And he had prepared [and he prepared] for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to *be given* to
 6 the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests. But [and] in all this *time* was not I at Jerusalem; for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, came I unto the king, and after certain days [at the
 7 end of days] obtained I leave of the king: And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the
 8 courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore: therefore [and] I cast forth
 9 all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then [and] I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the
 10 house of God, with the meat-offerings and the frankincense. And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given *them*: for [and] the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then [and] contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered
 11 them [*i. e.*, the Levites and singers] together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah [And all Judah brought] the tithe of the corn and the new wine
 12 and the oil unto the treasuries. And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them [at their hand] *was* Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office was [and it was upon them] to distribute unto
 14 their brethren. Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds [kindnesses] that I have done for the house of my God, and for the
 15 offices thereof. In those days saw I in Judah *some* treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also [and besides] wine, grapes, and figs, and all *manner of* burdens, which they brought [and bringing them] into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified *against them* in the day wherein they
 16 sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein [And the Tyrians dwelt therein], which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto
 17 the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then [And] I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet [and] ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. And it came to pass that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark [were shaded] before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut [and the gates were shut], and charged [commanded] that they should not be opened till after the sabbath, and *some* of my servants set I at the gates, *that* there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. So [and] the merchants and
 21 sellers of all kinds of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or [and] twice. Then

[and] I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about [before] the wall? if ye do *so* again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no
 22 *more* on the sabbath. And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and *that* they should come *and* keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and spare [pity] me according to the greatness [abundance] of thy mercy.

23 In those days saw I also [the] Jews *that* had married [carried to dwell *with them*]
 24 wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, *and* of Moab: and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod (and could not speak [were not acquainted with speaking] in the Jews' language), but [and] according to the language [tongue] of each people [of
 25 people and people]. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain [men] of them, and plucked off [tore out] their hair, and made them swear by God, *saying*, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their
 26 daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon, king of Israel, sin by these things? yet [and] among many nations was there no king like him, who
 [and he] was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: never-
 27 theless even him did outlandish [foreign] women cause to sin. Shall we then [and shall we] hearken unto you to do [hear that ye do] all this great evil, to transgress
 28 against our God in marrying [carrying to dwell *with us*] strange wives? And *one* of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high-priest *was* son-in-law to Sanbal-
 29 lat the Horonite; therefore [and] I chased him from me. Remember them, O God, because they have defiled [on account of the defilings of] the priesthood, and
 30 the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. Thus cleansed I [And I cleansed] them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business; and for the wood-offering, at times appointed, and for the first-fruits. Remember me, O God, for good.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

¹ [Ver. 6. נְשֵׂאֲלֹתַי. The lexicographers interpret this Niph. as Kal. But both here and in 1 Sam. xx. 6, 23 (the only places where the Niph. occurs), the meaning "to receive permission" seems to be necessary. It would be a quasi passive of the Kal meaning.

² Ver. 19. לֹא-יָבוֹא אֲשֶׁר omitted before לֹא-יָבוֹא.

³ Ver. 22. שְׂכָרֵימָם. Way omitted. Yet we may read "come as keepers of the gates."

⁴ Ver. 24. וְכִנְיֵיהֶם stands absolutely, for כְּנִיָּהּ being singular takes וְכִנְיָהּ as its nominative.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

Ver. 1. **On that day**, *i. e.* the day of dedication of the walls, as in xii. 43, 44.

The part of the law which forbade mingling with the other nations was specially read on the dedication-day. Deut. xxiii. 3 would naturally be read, as also Deut. vii. 1-6. The reference to the former passage here uses the words *adh clam* (forever), which are not found alone in Deuteronomy. There it reads: "Even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever," where the "forever" seems to signify the perpetuity of this ordinance, and not the perpetuity of their exclusion. It is quoted here in brief, without any design to change the meaning. No Moabite or Ammonite family could be admitted to the privileges of Jewry until in the tenth generation after quitting heathenism and formally allying itself with Israel.

Ver. 2. The reference to Deut. xxiii. 3-5 continues through this verse, the passage being condensed throughout. In the Heb. we have the singular, *he hired* (*i. e.* Balak) as in Deut. xxiii. 4.

Ver. 3. The result of this reading was a careful exclusion of the mixed multitude (*erev*) from Israel. This was a different act from that of the 24th of Tisri. Then Israel separated itself *from the strangers*. Now they separate the *erev from Israel*. The former was a withdrawal; this an expulsion. For *erev*, see Ex. xii. 38.

Nehemiah's Reform Movement on his Return to Jerusalem.

Ver. 4. **Before this**.—This should be "in the presence of this" (*in conspectu ejus*), with the circumstantial and not the temporal signification of *liphne mizzeh*. For Eliashib's evil conduct occurred while Nehemiah was away on his visit to Susa in Artaxerxes' thirty-second year, and *not before* the dedication-day. The meaning is, that Eliashib, the high-priest, notwithstanding all this reform wrought by Nehemiah in Artaxerxes' twentieth year, *in the face of it all*, dared, twelve years after, when Nehemiah was far away, to introduce Tobiah into the courts of the temple.

Nehemiah closes his record with a brief sketch of a new reform movement which he had to make twelve years later, owing to a long absence from Jerusalem at the Persian Court, in which

time evil men had sought to undo his former work.

Between ver. 3 and ver. 4 we have therefore a gap of twelve years in the chronology.

We have no reason to suppose that Eliashib allied himself with Tobiah or (through his grandson) with Sanballat until this season of Nehemiah's absence, when Eliashib may have supposed that he would never return.

Nehemiah in all probability did not write this book of his doings at Jerusalem till late in life, when his second visit to Jerusalem was a thing of the past, as well as his first visit.

Eliashib, the priest (*i. e.* the high-priest), **having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God.**—The participle is *being set over* (as in the margin). The "chamber" (*lishchah*) is used collectively for the "chambers." As high-priest, he would have control of all the various buildings in the temple-courts where the treasures of corn, oil and wine were preserved.

Was allied to Tobiah.—In what way we know not. *Karov letoviyjah*. A predicate adjective after so long a sentence, not in apposition ("being allied"), but as in E. V. a distinct assertion ("was allied"). A new fact is stated, and we are led to believe that this alliance marked a fearful period of falling away, after Nehemiah had turned his back. If it had existed before, we should have had mention made of it.

Ver. 5. A second fact in the miserable business. The high-priest prepared for Tobiah a great chamber, probably by knocking many into one (see ver. 9), in which Tobiah resided when at Jerusalem (see ver. 8). This desecration Eliashib may have defended on the score of Tobiah being by blood a Jew (see on ch. ii. 10), and the necessity of keeping on good terms with the influential men of the surrounding provinces.

These chambers had held all the unbloody sacrificial offerings and the tithes.

The Levites are distinguished from the singers and porters, although the singers and porters were Levites. So, on the other hand, the Levites are distinguished from the priests, although the priests were Levites. The Levites, as here designated, were these engaged in the more immediate sacrificial services, in attendance on the priests.

Ver. 6. **In the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon,** *i. e.* in B. C. 434-3. Probably the "time set" by Nehemiah and approved by the king (ch. ii. 6) was twelve years. At the expiration of this term he was obliged to leave the superintendence of affairs at Jerusalem and return to the court. Artaxerxes is called "king of Babylon," instead of "king of Persia," probably because at this time of Nehemiah's return the court was removed to Babylon for some special state reason.

After certain days.—Lit. *at the end of days*, a very general expression, and may here mean several years.

Obtained I leave, to wit, to return to Jerusalem.

Ver. 8. This decided action shows that Nehemiah returned with full powers from the Court.

Ver. 9. **The chambers.** See on ver. 5. The tithes are omitted in the enumeration, because, as we see by the next verse, the people had ceased paying tithes, and hence there were none to put in the store-chambers.

Ver. 10. **For the Levites, etc., were fled.** Rather: *and the Levites, etc., were fled.* They fled to their own fields to work for their living, because their tithes were withheld. Their own fields were these belonging to the Levitical cities.—**The singers, that did the work,** is a pregnant phrase for "the singers and porters who performed service."

Ver. 11. **The rulers** (*seganim*). The Pers. word does not necessarily refer to rulers set over the people by the Persians, although it may include such, but extends to all who might exercise authority by birth, election or otherwise. The Pers. word is used as a familiar term for magistrates.

Set them in their place.—That is, *put the Levites back into their positions.*

Ver. 12. **Unto the treasuries** (or store-houses). *Or for stores.*

Ver. 13. **I made treasurers.**—The Hiphil of *Atzar*, "to store." Lit.: "I caused to store over the store-houses." That is: "I placed men over the store houses, whom I caused to store the stores in them."

Sholemiah.—See ch. iii. 20.

Zadok.—See ch. iii. 29.

Pedaiah.—See ch. iii. 26 and ch. viii. 4.

Next to them.—Lit. *at their hand*, as their assistant.

Ver. 14. This prayer is not one of self-glorification, but of faith in God's truth. A man who knows he is doing right in the sight of God can say so to God without presumption. It is a testimony of God's grace, and he can rejoice in it.

Ver. 15. **In those days** of my return to Jerusalem. The Sabbath had become desecrated in Nehemiah's absence, so that in some cases the works of the farm were wrought on that day, and produce brought to Jerusalem, and there sold on the Sabbath.

Ver. 16. Tyrian traders in fish and other products were plying their trade in the city on the Sabbath.

Ver. 17. **The nobles** (*horim*), not the "rulers" of ver. 11, but the higher classes generally.

Ver. 18. See Jer. xvii. 20-27.

Ver. 19. **When the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath.**—This seems to show that the day among the Jews did not begin at sunset. For here *after sunset when it began to be dark*, it was *before the Sabbath*. Only a special Sabbath was counted from the evening before. See Lev. xxiii. 32.

Ver. 20. **The merchants, or traffickers.**—On arriving with their wares, according to their wont, they find the gates shut, and are obliged to pass the night outside the walls until the Sabbath is over.

Ver. 21. When this hint was not enough, Nehemiah sends them word that if they make their appearance again before the gates on the Sabbath to lodge there, they will be arrested. This broke up the evil.

Ver. 22 **Cleanse themselves**, as for a holy service, and so guard the Sabbath by guarding the gates. For the prayer, see on ver. 14.

Ver. 23. **In those days** of my return from Jerusalem. As at ver. 15.

Jews that had married.—With the article, *the Jews that had married*. As the children's speech was affected, these Jews must have lived on the outskirts of the Jewish province near the Philistines, Ammonites and Moabites. For children will always know the prevailing language of a district. **Ashdod** seems to stand for all Philistia, at this time probably the most conspicuous Philistine town.

Ver. 24. **And could not speak in the Jews' language.**—A parenthetical phrase.—The succeeding "but" should be "and."—**Of each people**, *i. e.* Ammon and Moab.

Ver. 25. Here is described the action not of a private man in his ungovernable rage, but of a public officer in the faithful use of his power. Notice the word **contended**. In ver. 11 Nehemiah contends with the rulers regarding the neglect of the tithes; in ver. 17, he contends with the nobles regarding the profanation of the Sabbath, and here he contends with the Jews who had married heathen wives for this open disregard of the law.

Ver. 26. **Beloved of his God.**—Comp. 2 Sam. xii. 24. This does not imply saving grace on God's part or holiness on Solomon's part. It only denotes special favor and privilege. Compare Mark x. 21.

Outlandish, *i. e.* foreign.

Ver. 27. **Shall we then hearken unto you to do, etc.** (*welakhem hanishma laasoth*).—Lit.: *And for you is it heard to do, etc., i. e.* "do we hear that you do all this great evil?"

Although it is not stated expressly, it is implied in ver. 30, that Nehemiah insisted on a separation from the "outlandish" wives, as did Ezra many years before (Ezra x. 3).

Ver. 28. Finding that Eliashib's grandson had married Sanballat's daughter, Nehemiah makes a public example of so glaring a case of defiance to the law, for here the special sanctity of the priesthood was desecrated (Lev. xxi. 6-8).

I chased him from me (*abrihehu me alai*). Lit.: "I made him flee from off me." Nehemiah forced him to leave Jerusalem, and be no longer a burden to his government.

Ver. 29. The covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites was, first, the general covenant with the tribes as Israel's teachers and God's special servants (Deut. xxxiii. 8-11), and, second, the special covenant of priesthood (Lev. xxi. 6-8).

Ver. 30. **Thus cleansed I them from all strangers**—The irregularities regarding tithes, the Sabbath, and the marriages were all attributable to connection with strangers. When this was stopped, the careful ordering of the priestly and Levitical work was made easy, which had all been disarranged and much neglected in Nehemiah's absence.

Ver. 31. **The wood-offering** (see on ch. x. 34) and the **first-fruits** are mentioned for all the offerings, as those most apt to be neglected.

Remember me, O my God, for good.—See on ver. 14.

HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL.

1. The severe exclusion of the Moabite and Ammonite was an enacted token against sin. Even these blood relations of Israel were to be kept away as polluted, because they showed no sympathy with Israel, and made a deliberate and vile attempt to plunge Israel into sin. A permanent horror was to be erected between Israel and these monsters of iniquity. The key to many of the stern Mosaic statutes is to be found in the necessity of holding up the heinousness of sin, which men are ever ready to make light of. (See the exegetical commentary for an explanation of this statute.)

2. The lapse of Israel on Nehemiah's return to Persia throws into clear light the immense work which Nehemiah had wrought, and the remarkable power of the man. His influence had worked the reform and had upheld it, and when his presence was removed the structure at once began to crack and crumble. A generation later Malachi lamented over the spiritual waste that Judah presented. Great as Nehemiah was, he could not make healthy the diseased body of Jewry. He could only, by the force of his character, rouse the people to a decent semblance of righteousness. And yet, while he was powerless to renew the nation, we may believe that his influence ran down private channels in families and humble houses to the very time of the Messiah, making green lines of spiritual growth amid the arid desert of Judaism.

3. Ezra had effected a reform a dozen years before Nehemiah came to Judah. He had separated the Jews from the heathen people, and in this reform had forced the highest in the land to dissolve their wicked matrimonial alliances. The book of Ezra concludes with this statement. When Nehemiah arrived there was a new separation from strangers effected. (Ch. ix. 2.) Whether the mingling with the heathen had again amounted to marriage alliances we may not say. It may have only involved mercenary partnerships. A dozen years later again on Nehemiah's second visit, there is a necessity for a most stern application of Nehemiah's personal and official power to cure the same old evil, which seems to have been bolder than ever.

4. There are times when good men must assume great severity of manner and allow a holy indignation to fire their souls. Gentleness of style before barefaced villany is weakness and inefficiency. Had Nehemiah acted with a soft and effeminate method, the offenders would have laughed at him. God loves to guide with His eye, but sometimes He uses the thunderbolt.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Vers. 1-3. The duty of the church to purify itself constantly anew. 1. In regard to those with whom they assimilate themselves; in the Old Testament, in regard to the Ammonites, *etc.*, not on account of their nationality, but on account of their ways; in the church, in regard to those who not only go astray, but also who will

not allow themselves to be bettered, and who thus exclude themselves. 2. Whereon it grounds itself; not only on the right of self-preservation, but also upon God's word. 3. What it aims at; namely, that the church set forth more and more what it should be as Christ's spotless bride.

STARKE: One cannot read or preach God's Word too often, for one always finds something which one had not noticed or known before.

What God has commanded one must perform, even though it may seem hard to us, and we may draw upon us the enmity of others in its performance.

Vers. 4-9. The sanctity of holy places. 1. That upon which it is grounded; in the Old Testament, upon the fact that God had connected His peculiar presence with the temple; in the Christian dispensation, upon the fact that God's honor dwells in the churches, that is, is cherished there. 2. What it hinds us to; to uphold the churches in a condition corresponding to their aim, or where they are lacking to restore them in a worthy manner. 3. What blessing it has for us; it reminds us of the holiness, the majesty and the glory of our God, and fosters our

regard therefor; it works frequently by elevating and edifying, whereas an unworthy desecration of churches only promotes the crudity from which it has sprung. BEDE: *Et tu quidquid inter fideles infidelitatis et immunditie reperis continuo projice foras, ut immundatis credentium cordibus, que sunt gazophylacia Domini, cum virtutum fuerint plena divitiis, vasa Domini inferantur; hoc est, illa ipsa corda que paullo ante vasa erroris fuerant per culpam denuo vasa Domini fiant per correctionem; ibique sacrificium bonae operationis et thus pura orationis, ubi pridem spelunca erat latronum, inveniantur.*

Vers. 30, 31. The retrospect of a servant of God upon his life and his usefulness. 1. It elevates him, because God's grace was with him, and made him worthy to engage in the cause of God and the salvation of mankind. 2. It humbles him, because he was so unworthy of this grace, and moreover because he has fallen so far short of what he might have been able to accomplish through its means. 3. It drives him to prayer, that God would also be merciful to him at the last for Christ's sake, whose righteousness is also his.

EXCURSUS ON THE GATES, ETC.

1. **The Sheep-Gate.**—Heb. **שַׁעַר הַצֹּאֵן**. LXX. *ἡ πύλη ἡ προβατική*. It is mentioned in Neh. iii. 1, 32, and xii. 39. It is probably the same as *ἡ προβατική* of John v. 2. In Nehemiah it is mentioned as near to the tower of Meah, and that is near the tower of Hananeel. From the fact that it seems to have had no locks and bars (see Neh. iii. 1, and comp. iii. 3, 6, 13, 14, 15), we conjecture that it led directly into the temple-precinct, where a Levitical guard was always present in place of locks and bars. Its name was doubtless given because through it the flocks were driven for the sacrifices, or because they were kept in pens by this gate. The present St. Stephen's gate is usually supposed to mark the site of the sheep-gate, and if so, the Bethesda pool (John v. 2) would be the Birket Israil, which is now satisfactorily proved not to be a moat. Eusebius describes Bethesda as *two pools*, and the Bordeaux pilgrim (about the same time) speaks of it as *twin fish-pools*. The Birket Israil may have been divided into two by a transverse wall in their day, or they may have counted the Birket Hammam Sitti Mariam, just north of the St. Stephen's gate and outside the walls, as one of the two pools; or, again, they may have intended by Bethesda the twin-pools under the convent of the Sisters of Sion near the north-west corner of the Haram, the position defended by Mr. Geo. Williams. The account in Nehemiah makes it necessary to place the sheep-gate *somewhere* in the region of

the St. Stephen's gate; but if our argument concerning the absence of locks and bars is worth anything, we must put the gate to the south of Birket Israil. To add to this necessity, we may doubt if the city wall extended farther north than the temple-precinct corner, until long after Nehemiah's day, when Agrippa built the third wall. If the Fountain of the Virgin is Bethesda, as Dr. Robinson thinks, then the *προβατική* of John v. 2 is another gate than that of Nehemiah, situated on Ophel.

On the whole, we are inclined to place the Sheep-Gate in the *north* wall of the temple-precinct, and in close neighborhood to the Birket Israil. In that case the two towers of Meah and Hananeel would be parts of the old Baris or fortification north of the temple, which afterward became altered and enlarged into Antiochia.

2. **The Fish-Gate.**—Heb. **שַׁעַר הַדָּגִים**. LXX. *ἡ πύλη ἡ ἰχθυηρὰ* (ἰχθυρὰ, xii. 39: ἰχθυαῖα, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14; in Z ph. i. 10, it is *πύλη ἀποκεντρούτων*, *gate of the stabbers*, probably **שַׁעַר הַדָּגִים** being read for **שַׁעַר הַרְגָּיִם**). It is mentioned in *ll. cc.* It was between the sheep-gate and the old gate, as we see from the Nehemiah passages. The Zephaniah passage does not help us. The passage in 2 Chronicles seems to describe the building of the second wall (comp. Joseph. v. 4, 2) by Manasseh ("on the west to Giboa in the valley, and on the east to the entering in at the fish-gate"). If so, it would put the fish-gate

near the Baris, where that wall ended (Jos. l. c.).

3. **The Old Gate.**—Heb. שַׁעַר הַיְשָׁנָה. LXX. ἡ πύλη Ἰαसानά. Keil insists that the Ἰαसानά is genitive, and follows Arnold in supplying חוֹמָה, thus calling it “the gate of the old wall.” Schultz says: “the gate of the old town.” If we take it as a genitive, it may be “the gate of Jeshanah,” a name given because the road through it led to Jeshanah in Ephraim (2 Chron. xiii. 19), mentioned by Joseph. Antiq. 3, 11, 3, and 14, 15, 12. The LXX. seem to have taken this view. But it need not be a genitive, as we have in Is. xiv. 31 הַלְּיָלִי שַׁעַר (the שַׁעַר being treated as feminine) and שַׁעַר הַפְּנִיקוֹת (Ezek. viii. 3).

We are inclined to identify this gate with the “corner gate” of Zech. xiv. 10 and Jer. xxxi. 38 (שַׁעַר הַפְּנָה or שַׁעַר הַפְּנִים), and so to let it mark the north-east corner of the city-wall. The cited passages in Zechariah and Jeremiah seem to put the gate in relation with the tower of Hananeel. If the Fish-gate were close to that tower, then it would be very natural to mention the Old Gate or Corner Gate next to the tower, in describing a section of the wall. In 2 Kings xiv. 13 the “corner gate” is only four hundred cubits from the gate of Ephraim, but in which direction we cannot tell. If eastward, then it was very likely the same as the Old Gate; but if westward, then the gate of Ephraim, and the corner-gate may be unmentioned in Nehemiah’s account of the rebuilding, because belonging to the undestroyed portion of the wall on the western end of the north wall, which part many suppose is the “broad wall” of Nehemiah. Of course in this case, the corner gate and the old gate are different gates. We can, at any rate, quite confidently claim that the corner-gate was at either the north-east or the north-west corner of the city.

4. **The Valley-Gate.**—Heb. שַׁעַר הַנָּיָה. LXX. ἡ πύλη τῆς φάραγγος. In ch. ii. 13 ἡ πύλη τοῦ Γωλληδὰ (by joining גַּיָּה and לַיְלָה as one word). This gate (mentioned in ch. ii. 13, 15; iii. 13; 2 Chron. xxvi. 9) was evidently north of the dragon-well (בְּיַר הַתַּנִּינִי), wherever that was. If the Birket Sultan is the Dragon well (which is very doubtful), we may put the valley gate about a thousand feet south of the present Jaffa Gate. The “tower of the furnaces” would correspond to the north-east tower of the present citadel, perhaps is identical with this very ancient piece of masonry. It does not seem possible by any scheme to identify the valley-gate with the Gate Gennath of Josephus, for that must have been east of the western starting-point of the first wall, where the name of valley-gate would have been a misnomer. If the valley-gate were just north of the northern end of the Birket Sultan, the Dung-gate would come exactly at the southern extremity of Zion, over the deep ravine of Hinnom. The name of valley-gate was doubtless derived from the broad and deep Wady er Rababi (Hinnom), out to which it led.

The most natural point for a gate on this side the city is where the present Jaffa Gate is. If we put the Valley-gate there, then the Dung-gate will come opposite the Birket Sultan.

5. **The Dung-Gate.**—Heb. שַׁעַר הָאִשָּׁפֶת. In Neh. iii. 13, שַׁעַר הָאִשָּׁפֶת. LXX. ἡ πύλη τῆς κοπρίας. The Heb. is not so strong a word as the Greek, and may be rendered *Rubbish-gate*.* This gate was a thousand cubits from the Valley-gate (ch. iii. 13). The extreme southern point of Zion would be a very natural place, from which to empty rubbish down into the deep valley below. Here we might place the Dung-gate, making it the same as the (later) Gate of the Essenes. With Robinson, we would consider the *Bethso* of Josephus the Heb. בֵּית צוֹאֵה or Dung-place. The Dung-gate, however, must be opposite the Birket Sultan, if the Valley-gate is placed at the present Jaffa Gate. See the preceding note.

6. **The Fountain-gate.**—Heb. שַׁעַר הָעַיִן. LXX. ἡ πύλη τῆς πηγῆς. In Neh. ii. 14 ἡ πύλη τοῦ Αἴν (untranslated). In Neh. xii. 37 τοῦ αἰνεῖν by a gross error. That this was close to the pool of Siloam (the “King’s pool” of ch. ii. 14, the “pool of Siloam by the king’s garden,” comp. ch. iii. 15), there can be no doubt. In 2 Kings xxv. 4 it is called “the gate between two walls, which is by the king’s garden.” It was a gate down in the Tyropæon Valley, and at a corner, as the expression in 2 Kings xxv. 4 indicates.

7. **The Water-gate.**—Heb. שַׁעַר הַמַּיִם. LXX. ἡ πύλη τοῦ ὕδατος. At this gate one procession halted at the dedication-service, while the other halted at the Prison-gate (ch. xii. 37, 39). This would place the Water-gate at the south of the temple, and the Prison-gate at the north of the temple. They could scarcely have been in the city-wall, but were probably gates leading from the inner temple-enclosure to the outer. The water-gate may have derived its name from its leading to the remarkable cisterns lately discovered by Capt. Warren south of the Haram. It will be noticed that nothing is said of rebuilding either of these gates. We would put the Water-gate at the southern limit of the “mountain of the house,” near the present entrance to El-Aksa. This accords with the Talmud, Mid. 2, 6.

8. **The Prison-Gate.**—Heb. שַׁעַר הַמַּסְפָּרָה. This is referred to in the last section. It was probably the same as the שַׁעַר הַמַּפְקָר of ch. iii. 31 (i. e. gate of visitation of punishment).

If we follow the course of the second dedicative company (ch. xii. 38, 39), we are constrained to put this gate between the sheep-gate and the temple, probably at the north limit of the “mountain of the house.” But in ch. iii. 25 we find the “court of the prison” mentioned, as in Jer. xxxii. 2; xxxiii. 1, and xxxvii. 21. This

* [The “east gate” of Jer. xix. 2 is in Heb. שַׁעַר הַחֲרוֹת, which is indicative of either הַחֲרוֹת or שַׁעַר הַחֲרוֹת. If the former be the right reading, then this gate (“the pottery-gate”) may very likely be the same as the dung or rubbish-gate.—Tr.]

was attached to the king's palace, and was therefore at the south of the Haram. This prison, into which Jeremiah was cast, was probably the State-prison, while another prison, near the "prison-gate" (whence it derived its name), was a temple-prison, for offenders against the worship.

9. *The Gate of Ephraim.* —Heb. שַׁעַר אֶפְרַיִם. LXX. ἡ πύλη Ἐφραΐμ. Neh. viii. 16; xii. 39; 2 Kings xiv. 13. This gate was four hundred cubits from the corner-gate (wherever that was), and had an open square near it like that at the water-gate. It was also between the broad wall and the old gate. So much the cited passages show. It doubtless derived its name from the fact that the main northern road to the Ephraimite country led through it. For a like reason it may have been called the "gate of Benjamin" (Jer. xxxvii. 13; Zech. xiv. 10), the Benjamite country lying north of the city, and the road through this gate leading to its chief cities. This gate was not rebuilt by Nehemiah, because, probably, it was in the "broad wall" (*i. e.*, as Keil and others hold, in that 400 cubits of wall which Joash broke down, and which Uzziah rebuilt in a stronger manner. 2 Chron. xxvi. 9). It probably coincided with the modern Damascus Gate, at which ancient substructions are found.

10. *The first Gate.* Heb. שַׁעַר הָרִאשׁוֹן LXX. ἡ πύλη ἡ πρώτη. (Zech. xiv. 10). From this only mention of this gate, we would naturally place it between Benjamin's gate and the corner gate. If the Old Gate and Corner Gate are the same, then we should have to suppose an important gate on the north of the city not elsewhere mentioned. But may not the peculiar phraseology of the Zechariah passage lead us to identify the first gate and the corner gate? The words are "unto the place of the first gate unto the corner gate." That may mean "unto the place where the first city gate is, beginning at the north, to wit, unto the corner gate." The adjective "first" seems more appropriate to distinguish one of a series, than to represent the peculiar name of a gate.

11. *The High Gate.* Heb. שַׁעַר הַגָּבוֹהַ LXX. ἡ πύλη ἡ ὑψηλή (in Jer. xx. 2, πύλη τῆς ὑπερφύρου; in 2 Chron. xxiii. 20, ἡ πύλη ἡ ἰσωτέρα). The passage in Jeremiah calls this the "high gate of Benjamin by the house of the Lord." "The passage in 2 Chron. xxvii. 3 calls it the 'high gate' of the house of the Lord." In 2 Chron. xxiii. 20, we see that it was between the temple and the palace. Of course, then, it was not a gate of the city wall. It is called "gate of the guard" in 2 Kings xi. 6, 19.

12. *The Inner Gate.* Heb. שַׁעַר הַפְּנִימִית. (Ezek. viii. 3).

13. *The New Gate.* Heb. שַׁעַר הַחֲדָשׁ. (Jer. xxxvi. 10).

14. *The Middle Gate.* Heb. שַׁעַר הַתֶּוֹךְ. (Jer. xxxix. 3).

15. *The Gate of Sur or of the foundation.* Heb. שַׁעַר הַסּוּר אוֹ שַׁעַר הַיְסוּדוֹ. (2 Kings xi. 6; 2 Chr. xxiii. 5).

16. *The East Gate.* Heb. שַׁעַר הַמִּזְרָח. (Neh. iii. 29).

17. *The Horse Gate.* Heb. שַׁעַר הַכּוֹסִים. (2 Chron. xxiii. 5; Jer. xxxi. 40. Comp. 2 Kings xi. 16).

These six, together with the gates mentioned by Ezekiel in his vision of the temple, are very evidently, like No. 11, gates of inner walls, and do not belong to the circuit of the city fortifications.

18. *The Corner Gate.* See above, under Nos. 3 and 10.

19. *The Gate of Benjamin.* See above under No. 9.

20. *The Gate Miphkad.* See above under No. 8.

21. *The Tower of Meah.*

22. *The Tower of Hananeel.*

These were evidently near one another, and stood between the Sheep Gate and the Fish Gate. We have supposed that they were towers of the special fortification north of the temple, known afterwards as *Baris*, and in Roman times as *Antonia* (Neh. iii. 1; xii. 39; Jer. xxxi. 38; Zech. xiv. 10).

23. *The Tower of the Furnaces.* Heb. תּוֹרֵי הַתַּנּוּרִים. LXX. πύργος τῶν θανούριμ. The natural point in the circuit for this would be anywhere between the second wall's beginning and the valley gate. What is more likely than the very old N. E. tower of the present citadel (the supposed Hippicus) should be it?

24. *The Broad Wall.* Heb. הַחוּמָה הַרְחֵבָה. LXX. τὸ τεῖχος τὸ πλατὺ.

Keil supposes with much probability that this was that four hundred cubits of wall broken down by Joash from the gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate (2 Kings xiv. 13) and afterwards rebuilt of greater breadth by Uzziah.

25. *The stairs that go down from the city of David.* Heb. הַפְּעִלוֹת הַיּוֹרְדוֹת מֵעִיר דָּוִד. These, mentioned in Neh. iii. 15, are again referred to in ch. xii. 37. From the latter passage we should gather that the company marched around the wall as far as the neighborhood of the fountain of Siloam, and then left the wall and passed up the stairs to Zion and along Zion's eastern edge till they crossed over to the water gate at the temple. We suppose, therefore, that these stairs ascended from the king's gardens to his palace, (the Davidian palace) on Zion (ch. xii. 37, "the house of David").

26. *The Sepulchres of David.* Heb. קְבֻרֵי דָוִד. The places of sepulture of David's family were probably near his own palace on Zion. We should place them at the S. E. corner of the present Zion wall. The wall along Ophel is marked by reference to sites on the opposite side of the Tyropæon.

27. *The Pool that was made.* Heb. הַבְּרֵכָה הַעֲשׂוּיָה. This may be the Fountain of the Virgin, about which there has been so much careful work of human hands in the galleries and cisterns connected with it.

28. *The House of the Mighty.*

29. *The Armory.*

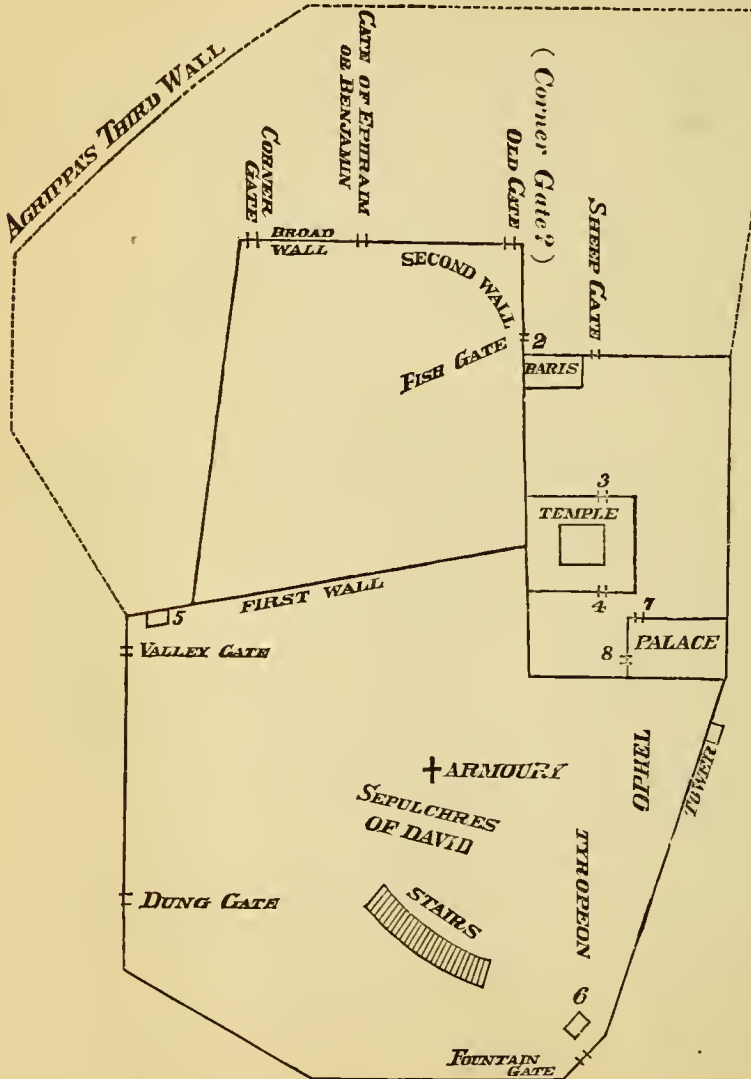
To these we have no clue. They may have been both on Ophel.

The destruction of the city was so complete by Titus, and then by Hadrian, that the gates of the

later city can be no guide to the position of those of the ancient city. We must depend on the Scriptures and Josephus, with perhaps a little help from Rabbinical tradition. It seems very clear that the main city wall in Nehemiah's day ran directly from the southern brow of Zion over to Siloam, and then northward along Ophel to the S. E. corner of the Haram. On Ophel there

may have been an intricacy of wall, by reason of which the topography in the latter part of ch. iii. is very difficult to explain. As Ophel was a fortress, there may have been several angles in the wall there for strategic purposes.

We have given a crude sketch of the walls, gates, etc., as we suppose them to have existed in the days of Nehemiah, as a help to the understanding of the 3d and 12th chapters.



1. Tower of Meah.
2. Tower of Hananeel.
3. Prison Gate (Miphkad).
4. Water Gate.

5. Tower of the Furnaces.
6. Pool of Siloam.
7. Horse Gate.
8. High Gate.

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