

" The Authenticity of the Chronicler's
Account of the Restoration of Israel
in the Light of Ezra & Nehemiah --
A Critical & Historical Study. "

A Thesis offered in completion of the
work done for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh

by

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Preface

No doubt one should offer an apology for the presumption of presenting a thesis on a subject so thoroughly overworked already by veteran scholars as the Restoration of Israel. It is impossible to read through the vast amount of research on the subject without being conscious of how limited is the scope for any original contribution by one who still stands on the mere threshold of O. T. studies. I can only plead that in attempting the task I was obedient firstly, to an all-absorbing interest in the subject which all my previous studies evoked, and secondly, to a growing conviction that the subject had reached a stage of such diversified opinions as to warrant a fresh examination in the light of all the accumulated evidence.

For purposes of convenience the thesis is divided into four main sections. The first, on the Linguistic Evidence, seeks to set forth and evaluate concisely the main arguments based on language against the authenticity of the Chronicler's narrative. Although the result is largely negative, the fact that these linguistic arguments have never been adequately attacked, so far as I know, apart from very summary treatment in some of the standard histories of the period, and that they have been made the primary basis for such sweeping indictments against the Chronicler's authenticity, makes it seem only right that the evidence should be laid bare and its inadequacy, as a proof against the Chronicler's narrative, be revealed. The second section is more positive, and seeks to assemble concisely but comprehensively all the relevant sources of the Persian period which bear witness to the authenticity of

the Chronicler's account. In the light of this evidence the documents of Ezr.-Neh. are examined and are found to agree in form and content with other Persian parallels of the time. It is true that much of this material is not new. A good deal of it is quite old, some of it has been referred to, and in part quoted by, the standard works of Kittel, Sellin, Lods and Oesterley, etc. in their treatment of the period, but no attempt has been made to marshal the evidence in its completeness and to apply its concentrated testimony to the Hebrew account. In the third section we come to the main body of the thesis to which the first two sections are largely prolegomena. Here the salient episodes of the Chronicler's history of the Restoration are critically examined, and wherever possible conclusions have been drawn. Here again most of these conclusions are not new; indeed, many go back to the Chronicler himself. No studied attempt has been made to blaze new trails for the sake of originality. The fact can hardly be overstressed that the thesis is, in part at least, a sustained protest against the many blind trails with which past research has confused the subject. The main effort here has been to set forth throughout an unbiased statement of the evidence as it at present exists, with the purpose of making clear what stands firm and what does not in a field of study where diversity of opinions is extremely great. In the final section a very brief attempt is made to illustrate and evaluate the main trends of the Chronicler as an historian and to apply those trends to the problems of his Restoration history.

It will be readily apparent that no attempt has been made to deal with all the problems which fall within the limits of the

Chronicler's story. To do this would have carried the work far beyond all reasonable bounds, even if, in the present circumstances, it had been possible. But all the main controversial issues of the Chronicler's narrative gather round the question of Authenticity, and this is the chief reason for dealing with the subject under this main theme. Another reason for thus limiting the subject can be equally appreciated when one considers the extraordinary difficulties of sustained research under war conditions in a part of the world so isolated from all university libraries. It is because of this second reason that so few of the references and footnotes have the page or chapter given. This is especially the case with references to German authors.

Finally I would like to express my deep appreciation to Professors Rankin and Porteous of New College, Edinburgh, whose constant help and encouragement was an unceasing source of inspiration in carrying the work to completion, and last, but not least, my great thanks are due to Mr. W. H. Sandham, Librarian of Knox College Library, Toronto, without whose unfailing interest and labour in the procuring of source-material the task could never have been accomplished.

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Abbreviations

- Alt. Forsch. Altorientalische Forschungen.
 AJSL..... American Journal of Semitic Languages & Literatures.
 AJT..... American Journal of Theology.
- Baum. Aram. "Das Aramäische im Buche Daniel" by W. Baumgartner
 in the ZAW. 1927.
 BDB..... Hebrew & English Lexicon of the O.T. by Brown,
 Driver & Briggs.
 Bert. SIJF..... "Die Stellung der Israeliten u. der Juden zu den
 Fremden" by A. Bertholet.
 Br. EJ..... "Early Judaism" by L.E. Browne.
- CAH..... "The Cambridge Ancient History."
 Comp. HV..... "The Composition & Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah
 by C.C. Torrey in Beihefte ZAW. 1896.
 Cow. Aram. "Aramaic Papyri of the 5th Century" by A. Cowley.
- Diod..... Diodorus Siculus.
 Dr. Aram..... "The Aramaic of the Book of Daniel" by G.R. Driver
 in JBL. 1926.
 Dr. IOT..... "The Intro. to the Literature of the O.T." by S.R.
 Driver.
- ERE..... Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics.
 ES..... "Ezra Studies" by C.C. Torrey.
 Exp. T..... The Expository Times.
- F. Chr. Frag..... "Die chronologischen Fragen in den Büchern Esra-
 Nehemia" by J. Fischer in Bib. Stud. 1903.
- Gaster Sam..... "The Samaritans" by M. Gaster.
 G. Gesc..... "Geschichte des Volkes Israel" by D.H. Guthe.
 Geis..... "Die literarischen Beziehungen der Esramemoiren
 insbesondere zur Chronik u. den hexateuchischen
 Quellschriften" by J. Geissler.
 Ges. Kaut..... Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar --- Kautzsch.
- HBD..... Hastings Bible Dictionary.
 Herod..... Herodotus.
 Holz. EN..... "Die Bücher Esra u. Nehemia" by C. Holzhey.
 Hoo. NE..... "Nouvelles études sur la Restauration Juive" by
 A. van Hoonacker.
- ICC..... The International Critical Commentary.
- J. Ant..... "The Antiquities of the Jews" by F. Josephus.
 JAOS..... Journal of the American Oriental Society.
 JBL..... Journal of Biblical Literature.
 JHS..... Journal of Hellenic Studies.
 JRAS..... Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great
 Britain & Ireland.
 JTS..... Journal of Theological Studies.
 J. Wied..... "Die Wiederherstellung Israels unter den Achaemeniden
 by S. Jampel.

- KAT....."Die Keilinschriften u. Alte Testament" by H. Winckler.
 Kegel KE....."Die Kultusreformation des Esra" by M. Kegel.
 K.En.Bib.....Ezra & Nehemiah in Encyclopaedia Biblica by W.H.Kosters.
 K.FEJ....."Zur Frage der Entstehung des Judenthums" by R. Kittel.
 K.Gesc....."Geschichte des Volkes Israel" by R. Kittel.
 K.MP....."Von Moses bis Paulus" by F.X. Kugler.
 K.Wied....."Die Wiederherstellung Israels in der persischen
 Period" by W.H. Kosters.
- Loft. IE....."Israel After the Exile" by W.F.Lofthouse.
 L.PRJ....."The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism" by Lods.
- MoIOT....."The Intro. to the O.T." by J.E.McFadyen
 Meinhold ES... "Esra der Schriftgelehrte?" by J. Meinhold in
 Beihefte ZAW 1925.
 Mey. Ent....."Die Entstehung des Judenthums" by E. Meyer.
 Mont.Sam....."The Samaritans" by J.A.Montgomery.
- N.Wied....."Die Wiederherstellung des jüdischen Gemeinwesens
 nach dem babylonischen Exil" by J. Nickel.
- Oest. H.vol.ii "History of Israel" by Oesterley & Robinson vol.ii.
 Olm.HPS....."History of Palestine & Syria" by A.T.Olmstead.
- P.Gesc....."Geschichte der Meder u.Perser bis zur makedonischen
 Eroberung" by J.V.Prasek.
 P.HE....."A History of Egypt" by Flinders Petrie vol.iii
 PSBA.....Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology.
- R.HAP....."History of Ancient Persia" by R.W.Rogers.
 R.JS....."Juden u.Samaritaner" by D.J.W.Rothstein.
- SBAT.....Society of Biblical Archaeological Transactions.
 SBOT.....Sacred Books of the O.T.
 Sch.ES....."Esra der Schreiber" by H.H. Schaeder.
 Sch. IB....."Iranische Beiträge" by H.H. Schaeder.
 S.Gesc....."Geschichte des israelitisch-jüdischen Volkes" by E.Selliⁿ
 Smith BHT....."Babylonian Historical Texts" by Sidney Smith.
 Sm.LEN....."Die Listen der Bücher Esra u.Nehemia" by R. Smend.
 S.Stud....."Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der jüdischen
 Gemeinde nach dem babylonischen Exil" by E. Sellin.
 Stade Gesc...."Geschichte des Volkes Israel" by S. Stade vol.ii
- T. Gesc....."Geschichtliche u.literarkritische Fragen in Esra 1-6"
 by J. Theis.
 T. LBL....."Late Babylonian Letters" by R.C.Thompson.
 T. SOG.....Theologische Studien des Osterreichischen Leo-gesellschaft^t
 1927
 Well.Bespr...."Besprechung von Ed.Meyer'Die Entstehung des Judenthums'
 by J. Wellhausen.
 Well.HI....."History of Israel" by J. Wellhausen.
 Well.RJE....."Die Rückkehr der Juden aus dem babylonischen Exil" by
 J. Wellhausen.
 W.PJ....."Post-Exilic Judaism" by Adam Welch.
 W.WC....."The Work of the Chronicler" by Adam Welch.
- X.Cyro....."Cyropaedia" Xenophon.
- ZAW.....The Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.

S E C T I O N

1

THE LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

Chapter 1.

The Aramaic Sections of Ezra.

An important section of the Hebrew record of the Restoration is written in Aramaic and this phenomenon has evoked considerable criticism both linguistic and historical. This Aramaic section might be set forth as follows:-

1. a) Ezra 4:8-16. A letter written by certain officials to Artaxerxes, King of Persia, in protest against the rebuilding of the city and walls of Jerusalem.

b) Ezra 4: 17-22. A letter written by Artaxerxes, King of Persia, in reply to the above officials authorising the prohibition of further building in Jerusalem.

c) Ezra 4: 23-24. A statement to the effect that the King's order was promptly and vigorously executed, with the result that "The work of the house of God" ceased until the reign of Darius.

11. a) Ezra 5: 1-5. A statement to the effect that Tattenai, satrap of "Beyond the River" questioned the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.

b) Ezra 5: 6-17 A letter written by Tattenai to Darius, King of Persia, asking him to investigate the existence of a decree of Cyrus invoked by the Jews in defence of their temple building in Jerusalem.

c) Ezra 6: 1-12. A decree from Darius, King of Persia, in reply to Tattenai's request, to the effect that the decree of Cyrus was found and was to be honoured.

d) Ezra 6: 13-18. A statement to the effect that the temple was duly completed in the 6th year of Darius and formally dedicated.

111. a) Ezra: 7:12-26. A letter of Artaxerxes, King of Persia, given to Ezra, the Scribe, authorizing his mission to Jerusalem to

organise the community according to the law of his God.

This brief statement sufficiently displays, even without further elaboration, the importance of this Aramaic section, and this importance is instantly enhanced when the passages in question are fully examined, for they contain the official records of the Persian authorization of the salient events of the Restoration period during the reigns of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes. This section contains some of the most interesting facts about the permission for the Jewish Exiles to return home in 537 B.C., the events surrounding the rebuilding of the Temple 520-516 B.C., attempts at fortifications, and the Mission of Ezra and his caravan in the reign of Artaxerxes I (i.e. circa 457 B.C.) or Artaxerxes II (i.e. circa 397 B.C.). In addition to the facts themselves, this section reveals more clearly than any other section of the Restoration literature, except the opening chapters of Nehemiah, the points of contact between Persia and the Jewish community in Jerusalem; and these contacts are further magnified by the fact that many of them are official contacts between the king and officials of his realm. Hence we have here material of the first importance for any attempted reconstruction of the Restoration, and an evaluation of this material will largely determine our treatment of the history of this period.

We need not be surprised, therefore, to find that this section has been an increasingly important factor in evaluating the record it contains. Some of the most drastic criticism of the Hebrew account of the Restoration has been levelled at this Aramaic section, and any attempt at a re-examination of the main problem of Restoration History would most suitably begin with these

Aramaic documents. These documents have been assailed from two sides, the linguistic and the historical, and for the sake of clarity it would be better to separate the two sides in our treatment here, though the first is largely the foundation on which the second is built and both sides are intimately related to one another. The problem can best be attacked by stating as briefly as possible the main lines of argument, on the linguistic side, which seek to establish, first, that the Aramaic language of these documents is decidedly later than the events which they record, by some 300 years; and secondly, that, as a result of that, these documents lack all historical worth. Torrey and Hólscher built upon the data afforded by the nature of the Aramaic, the far-reaching conclusions that this whole section is a fabrication partly of the Chronicler's and partly of some other or others whose work the Chronicler possessed. Torrey aptly states this view in the sentence "The theory of their (Aramaic documents') authenticity, in any sense whatever, has evidently not a leg to stand on". But before we criticise these conclusions, let us state briefly the arguments drawn from the Aramaic language itself upon which these conclusions are based. The most authentic statements in recent times on this question are the brief article of G.R. Driver, and the more exhaustive work in German by W. Baumgartner on the Aramaic of Daniel. By these scholars the attempt is made to compare the Biblical Aramaic (BA) of Daniel (DA) and Ezra (EA) with the older Aramaic inscriptions and the Elephantine Papyri (EP)

i ES Pgs. 140 ff. & Comp. HV.

G. Hólscher "Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia" in Die Heilige Schrift 1920
Dr. Aram. 1926.

Baum. Aram. 1927.

H.H. Rowley "Aramaic of the O.T." 1929

ii ES Pg. 157.

iii in JBL 1926.

iv In ZAW 1927 - cf also Rowley "The Aramaic of O.T." 1929

v For bibliography see Rowley above.

on the one hand, and with later Jewish Aramaic on the other. By means of this comparison they have concluded that the language of Daniel is as late as the 2nd century B.C. and that of Ezra somewhat earlier, but later than the EP (i.e. than the 5th century B.C.). Driver would place Ezra, at the earliest, in the last half of the 5th C,ⁱ while Baumgartner claims it is within a few decades of Daniel which he dates in the 2nd century B.C. Let us briefly state and examine the validity of the arguments advanced for these conclusions.

1. The alternation of א ('aleph) & ה (he).

In Aramaic the Emphatic state Masc. and Fem. was normally written with א ; whereas the Absolute State Feminine had ה . But in BA there is great fluctuation in the use of א & ה and while this is also true of EP, Baumgartner feels there is reason to regard BA as later than the EP on this point. Now BA has some 30 cases of the Emphatic written with ה instead of אⁱⁱ, but of these 12 are of the same word (הה/הה), and the alternation is one present in most Aramaic texts, even the earliest. Schäderⁱⁱⁱ shows it exists in EP, even in respect of the same word (א'הה + ה'הה) and also in Pahlavi texts. Moreover it is reasonable to expect such fluctuations in the case of endings having the same sound. It is true that we cannot explain it as a phenomenon by attributing it to scribal confusion,^{iv} since it occurs outside Biblical texts^v, but its

i "The language of Ezra is almost identical with that of this second period" i.e. 450-400 B.C. JBL 1926 Pg. 118

ii See Rowley "Aram. of O.T." Pg. 41-2 & Baumgartner ZAW 1927. Pgs. 90-95

iii Sch. IB Pg. 232

iv As Montgomery does in ICC Pg. 18.

v In Nabataean & Palmyrene - See Rowley ibid Pg. 49.

numerical frequency in BA as contrasted with other material (e.g. EP) can be traced to the errors or indifference of copyists, since BA was certainly subjected to scribal transmission to a degree to which no other extant Aramaic can lay claim. Hence it is impossible to admit that the variation of \aleph & \beth constitutes any proof for a late date of BA, and even those maintaining the late date put little weight on this point.

11. The alternation of \beth (zayin) & \daleth (daleth); \beth (qoph) & \aleph ('ayin)
 \aleph (sin) & \daleth (samekh);

It is here that we have one of the strongest indications of a later date for BA than EP. It would appear that \beth was the earliest means of denoting the 'd' sound, for which the Phoenician script possessed no special sign, and \beth is used predominantly in North Syrian and Assyr. Bab. texts, though \daleth also appears. In EP \beth predominates, but there are some 50 cases of \daleth , a process of alternation which Driver dates between 460 and 400 B.C. but which Baumgartnerⁱⁱ shows to exist throughout the century. Thus while EP fluctuates between \beth and \daleth , BA uses exclusively \daleth except in one case (\beth Dan. 6: 23), which is the usage of Palmyrene and Nabataean.

Similarly the sound originally denoted by \beth , is in BA denoted by \aleph (North Syrian and often the EP has $\aleph \beth \beth \aleph$, 'earth', and $\beth \aleph$, 'wood', as also in Assyr. Bab. and Murasu documents). The only exception to the use of \aleph in BA is in Jer. 10: 11 where both forms occur. In EP both forms occur from 471 B.C. and even in the case of the same word ($\aleph \beth \beth \aleph \neq \aleph \aleph \beth \aleph$). Here again the almost exclusive use of \aleph in BA is also the use of the Targums.

ⁱ cited by Baumgartner ZAW 1927 Pg. 96

ⁱⁱ " " " i.e. in years 484, 465, 460 B.C. in EP.

Also ψ was finally replaced in Jewish Aramaic by ϕ , but the replacement occurs only sporadically in BA where ψ predominates in line with the older usage.

Wilson'sⁱ suggestion that we have here the work of a spelling reformer, and St. Clair Tisdall'sⁱⁱ view, accepted by Batten,ⁱⁱⁱ and renewed by Schäder,^{iv} that the BA has been modernised by an orthographical editor, are interesting conjectures, but the proof on which they rest is slight. However it is rather strange that in BA, where the critics have stressed the presence of both early and late forms, we find only the late forms of τ and ν whereas \int ^v does appear sporadically in late Aramaic. If final judgment is to rest on numerical statistics we would have to place BA among the latest of Aramaic texts, a place not even the most radical would accept.

111. Pronouns and Suffixes.

In BA for the 1st. Per. plural suffix and for the 1st. Per. plural of the perfect of the Verb, we have the form $\aleph\int$. In early and late Aramaic the corresponding form is τ . In fact Nabataean alone uses $\aleph\int$ apart from BA. But since the early and late form is τ , it cannot be held that $\aleph\int$ is distinctly late on

- i "Aram. of Daniel" 1912.
- ii Jour. of Trans. Vic. Instit. Pg. 206 ff 1921.
- iii ICC Pg. 12
- iv Sch. IB Pg. 244 ff where he finds proof of orthographical revision in the word $\aleph\tau\tau$ Dan. 3: 2, 3 which he claims the writer wrote with τ instead of \int as it appears in Ezra 7:21 (cf 1:8) where the chronicler retained the original correct form of the loan word.
- v Rowley "Aram. of O.T." Pg. 21-22 (Nabataean)

the grounds of Nabataean alone. All that can justly be said is that $\aleph\bar{\aleph}$ is a peculiarity of BA and Nabataean. Had BA used the distinctly late form it would have had $\bar{\aleph}$. It is interesting, further, to note that there is one case of $\aleph\bar{\aleph}$ in the EP.ⁱ

In the pronominal suffixes of the 2nd and 3rd persons plural the earlier forms are $\square\bar{\aleph}$ + $\square\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$ respectively, and the later forms are $\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$ + $\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$. Both forms exist in EP, but the earlier forms predominate. In Ezra both forms exist in practically equal proportions ($\square\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$ -9 times, $\square\bar{\aleph}$ -5 times (=14); $\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$ -14 times and $\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$ -once (=15)).ⁱⁱ In Daniel we find exclusively the later forms. Schäder regards the fluctuation in Ezra as the pressure of a living, spoken language upon an archaic literary form, and the absence of such fluctuation in Daniel as due to orthographical revision, but apart from his one point given in a footnote on Pg. 7 he supplies no proof for these assertions. Hence we must admit that in this connection Ezra is earlier than Daniel and to some extent later than EP on this particular point.

In case of the 3rd. Personal pronoun plural, Ezra uses almost exclusively the earlier form $\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$ and once a late form $\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$ (5: 4). The EP and older inscriptions use $\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$ only. Daniel never uses $\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$, but $\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$ and $\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}\bar{\aleph}$, the later forms. In this evidence, we see grounds for Daniel's being later than Ezra, but hardly any for Ezra's being later than the EP.

i Pg. 120 line 15. Cow. Aram.
ii cf. Rowley "Aramaic of the O.T."

IV. The Causative Forms of the Verb.

Of the three semitic causative forms 'sa'; 'ha'; and 'a', BA has the 'sa' form in the case of 3 verbs לִשְׁׁׁׁ^i (Daniel) and נִשְׁׁׁׁ^{ii} and סִסְׁׁׁ^{iii} (Ezra), and one of these (in the form לִשְׁׁׁׁ^{iv}) appears in the EP four times. The 'a' form which is the late form generally found in Palmyrene, Nabataean and the Targums, occurs in BA only 4 times^v and of these only one is in Ezra. Similarly there is one instance of the late form in EP.^{vi} The predominant form in Ezra is identical with the EP and the older inscription, that of 'Ha'. Hence the causatives supply no grounds for a late date of Ezra. They rather suggest an identical dating with EP and it is further interesting to note that BA in conformity with older Aramaic retains the preformative לִ^vii in the Imperfect and Participle while Nabataean and Palmyren^o drop it.

V. Reflexive Forms of the Verb

It is probable the form לִל^viii was used from the beginning for the reflexive, but לִל^ix soon arose, probably due to the analogy of the Hiphil and Hopal. In BA לִל^ix predominates, appearing in Daniel some 14 times and in Ezra 4 times, whereas

לִל^x , which is the late usage common in Palmyrene and the Targums is found in Daniel six times and not at all in Ezra, except in

- i. Dan. 3:15, 17 bis, 28; 6:15, 17, 21, 28 bis
- ii. Ezra 6:15
- iii. Ezra 4: 12, 13, 16; 5: 3, 9, 11; 6: 14, 15.
- iv. See Rowley Pg. 91
- v. לִל^viii (Dan 3:1), לִל^viii (Dan. 4:11), לִל^viii (Dan. 5.12)
 לִל^viii (Ezr. 5:15)
- vi. Cowley Pg. 127 line 6 - referred to by Rowley Pg. 82
- vii. Rowley Pg. 83
- viii. Dan. 2: 9, 13, 25, 34, 35; 3: 19, 24, 27, 28, 5:11, 23, 27; 6:20, 24.
- ix. Ezra 5:1; 6:2; 7:15, 16.
- x. Dan. 2:45; 3:19; 4:16; 6:8; 7:8, 15.

references given on Page 3, but it is sufficient to indicate the lines of argument, and the final result to which they lead. This result, according to Baumgartner, whose treatment is the soundest and most comprehensive, is that EP, Ezra, Daniel, Nabataean and Palmyrene, represent what he calls "mittleres aramäisch", dating from the 5th century B.C. He does not agree with Driver that the changes date from the middle of the 5th Century, since they actually cover the whole century and are found even in the earliest EP. In this period of flux Daniel stands between EP and Nab.-Palmyrene, i.e. in the 3rd. or 2nd. century B.C. While Baumgartner admits that there are minor differences between Ezra and Daniel which would put Ezra earlier than Daniel, these he does not regard as sufficient to separate them by more than a few decades - or a century at the very most. With this result H.H. Rowley completely agrees, "For the contention that Biblical Aramaic stands somewhere between the Aramaic of the Papyri and that of the Nabataean and Palmyrene inscriptions, we believe the evidence to be overwhelming".ⁱ With respect to Ezra he concludes, "From the study of the language alone we could not speak more definitely than to say that the Aramaic sections of Ezra may have been written in the fourth or third centuries B.C."ⁱⁱ We might add for completeness that this date is favoured by the external evidence for the date of Daniel,ⁱⁱⁱ by which we know that the book was known in the 2nd century B.C.

Nevertheless, although the evidence as set forth seems to be voluminously impressive, we find that upon examination, it is

i H.H.Rowley "Aram. of O.T." Pg.11 cf similarly Pg. 38; 64; 106; 136; 156; etc.

ii ibid Pg. 156

iii Montgomery ICC Pg. 3.

reducible to a few points. Of the 7 heads under which the data have been listed and examined here, only five yield any evidence whatsoever, namely: I The alternation of $\aleph + \daleth$ of the emphatic state.

II " " of $\int + \daleth$; $P + \daleth$; $\psi + \daleth$.

III Pronouns and suffixes.

V Reflexive forms of the verbs.

VII $S'' \daleth + S'' \aleph$ verbs.

But when we weigh this evidence, in the light of an impartial valuation, we find that it continues to shrink both in quantity and in quality. Of the above five points, No. V counts only for Daniel and not at all for the Aramaic of Ezra. Hence we are left with only 4 points which might be said to count in the dating of the Ezra text. Of these four points, Nos. I and VII cease to be of any practical value when we bear in mind the continuous transmission of the biblical texts by scribes who failed to distinguish between $\aleph + \daleth$ since, to the ear, both had exactly the same sound. In any case, this fluctuation is not by any means confined to BA. The alleged proof consists not in the fact of its occurrence, but rather in its greater frequency in BA than in other texts; but it is precisely this frequency which is the natural result of a frequent copying by the scribes, a process to which, as far as we know, other non-biblical literature was not subjected. Therefore, it cannot be held that the fluctuation of $\aleph + \daleth$ in BA, on the grounds of its frequency alone, constitutes any proof that the Ezra text is later than the events it describes. If we accept the explanation here offered, for points I and VII, we are left with two remaining points which indicate lateness for Ezra's text, namely Nos. II and III. In these we have

Ezra's use of τ ; \aleph ; \aleph] and the use of η ; η]; η].

Among these points it has already been pointed out that \aleph cannot be called distinctly late merely because Nabataean used it; it could with equal right be urged that Nabataean here retained an archaic use not found in other late texts, or that its limited use indicates peculiarity and not literary development. Similarly η] in the case of Ezra stamps it as in conformity with earlier usage. It remains now to ask, first, whether the two main points to which this evaluation has led are sufficient to admit the date to which the text has been assigned, and secondly, if the text can be so dated, does that prove the further assertion that the history therein contained is false?

It should be remembered at this point that "While the majority of Philological commentaries and standard articles upon the bk. (Daniel) now accept the late date for its origin, nevertheless this tendency may not arrogate to itself the whole of scholarship, as there still remain excellent modern scholars who vigorously defend the traditional position".ⁱ Such a statement can be made with even greater justice in respect of Ezra. The most formidable attack on Baumgartner's position in recent times has been made by the able scholar H. H. Schaeferⁱⁱ and whose criticism repays careful examination. His general position might be briefly stated. He warns us that in dealing with the Aramaic of Ezra we must not forget that in the Achaemenian period we have

i Montgomery ICC on Daniel Pg. 38 and he names in a footnote - Comm. of the R.C. Scholars d'Enviu and Knabenbauer, those of Fuller, Thompson and Wright, and the collection of Studies by Wright; Wilson "Studies" and Boutflower etc.

ii Sch. IB.

to do with both a spoken, living language and also a more stereotyped literary language. Furthermore it is evident that the Jews of Elephantine did not speak or use Aramaic at all fluently as they did Hebrew,ⁱ and whenever they departed from official forms popularised by the Persian chancellories they betray difficulties and Hebraisms. He sums up the data produced by Baumgartner under two main heads;

i) Phonetic changes

ii) Form changes.

The first series he would explain not as changes of sound, but a modernisation of orthography, and the second series not as indicating historical literary developments but as the penetration of the living spoken tongue into that of an archaic, written language. Thus he would explain the alternation of the consonants $\int + T$; $P + \aleph$; $\psi + \aleph$; $\psi + O$ etc. In the case of the BA with its exclusive use of T and its use of \aleph etc. and other late forms, he explains these phenomena as the work of a revising editor (see Pg. 6 Note iv). Finally he claims too much has been made of Nabataean and Palmyrene before they have been properly revised and studied, and that all critics have ignored the Pahlavi texts that afford strong counter proofs. Schaeder now examines the data of Baumgartner in detail in the light of this general position and concludes in these words: "Die Sprache der EP und das BA sind identisch. Die Erscheinungen, durch die sich das BA von den EP sprachgeschichtlich abzuheben scheint, treten, wie

i Cow. Aram. Pg. 118ff.

wir gezeigt haben, auch in diesen selben auf". (Pg. 253).

Hence he claims to have arrived at two further conclusions -

a) Positively - the assertion that the documents of Ezra must be discredited as unauthentic on the grounds of their language not being that of the 5th century B.C. is untenable.

b) Negatively - the attempt made by Baumgartner to establish a terminus post quem for the Aramaic of Daniel based on the language must be abandoned as a failure since the only sure terminus post quem is the introduction of Persian Aramaic by Darius I. With this result Sachau is also in accord. Montgomery also, who accepts the late date, plainly admits that "Statistical arguments are not conclusive" and again in speaking of the linguistic data under discussion, he says "such evidence is not extensive" and also points out that the Aramaic displays a less fixed form than the Hebrew since unlike the Hebrew it was not given the extreme care in transmission which the Hebrew sacrosanct text enjoyed. Torrey, in the very section in which he seeks to demonstrate the lateness of BA in relation to the EP on the differences of the text, declares that between Ezra and Daniel "there is no possibility of any scientific division into 'earlier' and 'later' sections. ---

- i E. Sachau "Drei aramäische Papyrusurkunden aus Elephantine" 1907 Pg. 3
- ii ICC on Daniel Pg. 14
- iii " " " Pg. 19
- iv " " " Pg. 11
- v ES Pg. 162

There is not a single particular major or minor, in which the one of them can be said with confidence to belong to a more advanced stage of development than its fellow". In a footnote to this sentence he neatly disposes of the evidence against his view. This aptly illustrates Torrey's capacity to see things as he wants to see them. Anyone who admits the difference between EP and BA as proof that the latter is later than the former, could hardly help but see the same proof for Daniel being later than Ezra.

It must not be overlooked that even among the data assembled by the advocates of a late date for Ezra, there is much that cuts across that view. We have already pointed out that Ezra's almost exclusive use of the older form of the 3rd Personal Pronoun plural (Pg. 7) speaks for identity with EP as against Daniel. Similarly Ezra's use of the causative forms of the verb is identically that of the EP and older Aramaic (Pg. 8). The reflexives also (Pg. 8-9) show Ezra's usage to be, if anything, prior to the EP and Daniel. These facts are not given in any attempt to establish similarities between BA and EP. No one can question such similarities, but in the emphasis of their differences we must not forget their similarities. In addition to these facts already shown, there are some others. BA has the peculiar habit of prefixing $\text{~}\text{S}$ to the 3rd Per. Masc. Sing. and Plural, and 3rd Per. Fem. Plural of the verb $\text{~}\text{~}\text{~}\text{~}$. It is claimed that this was an expedient to avoid confusion with the proper sacred name Yahweh ($\text{~}\text{~}\text{~}\text{~}^7$)

but this would not explain its use in the plural forms where such confusion would be impossible. It is a peculiarity of BA which has never been adequately explained, and it is entirely absent from EP whose authors also revered Yahweh, though with much less exclusivism. The point is, BA possessed such a peculiarity, and it is highly possible this is by no means the only one. Another peculiarity of BA is the insertion of a $\bar{\tau}$ in the Peal Imperfect of $\bar{\nu}\bar{\tau}$ which is not the case in EP. For the fact is that BA displays certain features peculiar to itself, and it is not impossible that such peculiarities as the unwavering use of $\bar{\tau}$ & $\bar{\nu}$, and the use of $\bar{\nu}\bar{\tau}$ for the 1st. person plural suffix and verb, speak as much, for the fact that BA represents phenomena of its own quite independent of a chronological development. Indeed the truth behind the conjectures of Schäder may not be orthographical revision, or a mixture of spoken and written forms, though both agencies may have been at work, but rather that in these separate communities we have separate literary idiosyncrasies. The presupposition of the critics has been that the Aramaic material at our disposal, drawn from many diverse sections of the Achaemenian world, has a literary history proceeding along a straight line. This is as much of a conjecture as that of Biblical orthographical revision. It is quite probable that the differences between the EA and the EP are not differences of date but differences of place. In other words what has been commonly supposed to be chronological literary developments, may

really be not chronological, but basically geographical. An intolerant exclusivism is an unmitigated characteristic of the Restored Community and of Post-exilic Judaism generally. If we were to seek a unifying bond for post-exilic Jews it would be the bond of religion, and yet it has always been a remarkable fact that the Jewish settlement of Elephantine displayed characteristics of their faith wholly inconsistent with the cultic ideals and practices of Jerusalem. While Yahweh is their God and the one for whom they maintain a temple and worship, ecclesiastical funds collected are distributed among several gods of which Yahweh is one. Yahweh receives an equal amount with "Anatbethel" and a smaller amount goes to Ishumbethel.ⁱ Oaths are taken not only in the name of Yahweh, but in the name of "Anathya'u" and "Herembethel".ⁱⁱ Whether we have here variant names for one or two gods, or whether there were four besides Yahweh, we are not told, but that others were recognised and tolerated is certain. At least one Jewish writerⁱⁱⁱ knew of the situation and he identified it with preexilic idolatry which he roundly condemns. Furthermore, in the famous papyrus^{iv} which forms a letter written by the Jews of Egypt to the Persian governor at Jerusalem 408 B.C., requesting him to use his influence with the Egyptian authorities that they might be allowed to rebuild their temple which had been destroyed by certain priests of Chnub, we get a picture of an

i Cow. Aram. No. 22 lines 123-5 Pg. 72
 ii " " No. 44 " 3 Pg. 148, No. 7 line 7 Pg. 21
 iii Jer. 44
 iv Cow. Aram. No. 30 Pg. 108 ff.

elaborate cultus and sacrificial system. They further remark that a previous letter on the subject was sent to Johanan the High Priest of Jerusalem and certain nobles of the Jews, to which, up to date, no reply had been received. They seemed to have lived on equal terms with the Egyptians and intermarried among them.ⁱ To pretend to be able to establish the detailed differences between the cultus in Egypt and that in Jerusalem, as though these papyri were documents of faith rather than letters of specific interest, would be dangerous folly. For our purpose here it is sufficient to point out that while these Jews regarded themselves as faithful members of the chosen race with a reasonable claim upon their Jerusalem brethren, yet they violate at least three basic tenets of the contemporary Judaeen cult, namely a strict allegiance to Yahweh alone, a repudiation of all temples outside Jerusalem, and an insistence on purity of race, and they do all this without any apparent consciousness of not being at one with their religious home. If the community reflected in the EP could hold such crucial divergences from the Jerusalem cult and yet appeared not to be conscious of it or troubled by it, in respect of the things which both communities prized as their highest and most unique bond of union, then is it unreasonable to expect equally remarkable divergences in respect of their peculiar use of a borrowed language? The strange thing is that their use of it was so much alike.

i Cow. Aram. No. 14 Pg. 42

Let us briefly summarise the conclusions we have thus far reached, concerning the Aramaic of Ezra.

- i. The evidence for the lateness of EA can be reduced to four main points. Of these, two - the alternation of final \aleph + \aleph in the case of Nouns and Verbs - yield evidence only from the fact of their frequency, not from the fact of their occurrence. This frequency is precisely what scribal transmission would produce in the case of sounds so identical. Hence the evidence is actually reduced to two points (Pg. 11ff).
- ii. It has been shown that a very different view of the same data can and has been taken by very competent scholars, and that even some of those who accept the late date admit the linguistic evidence cannot be regarded as conclusive. (Pg. 12 ff.)
- iii. Furthermore BA exhibits certain characteristics even produced in the evidence of a late date which contradict that theory, and strongly speak for a date contemporary with EP and other earlier inscriptions. (Pg. 15).
- iv. In the same connection as the above, certain characteristics were indicated which must be admitted to stand as distinct peculiarities of BA which are not paralleled elsewhere. This led to the observation that even the remaining two points of evidence for a late date might be similarly explained, especially the use of \aleph and that of τ + ν ; since \aleph being used only elsewhere in Nabataean cannot in any case be used for lateness in Ezra, any more than it can be used for archaism in Nabataean; and since τ + ν are so exclusively used in BA without the degree

of fluctuation that even later documents exhibit. (Pg. 16).

v. Finally these peculiarities are explained as idiosyncrasies of a particular geographical area and not as forming necessarily a straight line of literary development which is itself a conjectural presupposition of the argument for a late date. That differences of locality carried with them far-reaching differences of custom and life EP supremely illustrate in matters of religion, and to a lesser degree in their Aramaic. (Pg. 16 ff.)

In the light of this investigation we conclude that no conclusive evidence has been produced to date EA later than the 5th century B.C. which cannot with equal validity be otherwise interpreted. If however, the view that EA is later than EP is to be entertained at all upon linguistic grounds, it must be held purely as a tentative possible interpretation pending the disclosure of more certain light upon the subject.

Chapter 2

The Hebrew of the Ezra Memoirs.

The Aramaic Sections of Ezra are not the only part of the Chronicler's restoration history whose authenticity has been attacked on a linguistic basis. The shadow of suspicion has lingered for a generation over the Ezra Memoirs themselves and especially over those parts of Ezer. - Neh. where the Chronicler does not profess to be incorporating sources. The most devastating onslaught in this direction was made by Prof. C.C. Torrey,ⁱ who has built up a formidable array of evidence which he maintains with unbroken tenacity.ⁱⁱ In this position he is not alone. But in answering the argument it is only fair as well as practicable to attack the question at the citadel of its strength. According to Torrey the Chronicler in Ezer. - Neh. preserves two main sources, namely Ezra 4: 8-6, 14 in Aramaic, and Neh. 1, 2, 3: 33-6: 19, the authentic memoirs of Nehemiah. All the rest of Ezer.-Neh. is the unvarnished imagination of the Chronicler. Perhaps the best way to state the case concisely is to let Torrey speak for himself; "No fact of O. T. criticism is more firmly established than this; that the Chronicler, as a historian, is thoroughly untrustworthy.

- i Comp. HV 1896
ES 1910
- ii G. Hölscher "Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia" in Die heilige Schrift vol. ii 1920
Well. Bespr. 1897
T.K. Cheyne M.A., D.D. "Jewish religious life after the exile" 1898 and others in varying degrees;-
Oest. H. Vol. ii.
Dr. IOT.
K. En. Bib.

He distorts facts deliberately and habitually; invents chapter after chapter with the greatest freedom; and, what is most dangerous of all, his history is not written for its own sake, but in the interest of an extremely one-sided theory. In passing judgment on his account of the Ezra-Nehemiah period, it is only necessary to inquire: 1. What part of his narrative receives confirmation from other sources; and 2. what is the nature of such sources, and the character of their testimony. Where his account is not supported by any other witness, the matter is settled, strictly speaking, without further discussion".ⁱ According to this view the whole record of the Restoration apart from the two exceptions named, is unhistorical; the return of the exiles, the resuscitation of the Judaeian cult by them, the person and work of Ezra the scribe, are all the fictitious fabrications of a pious ecclesiastic who deliberately set out to mislead his contemporaries by means of this dishonourable fraud in order to maintain the unchallenged authority of the Jerusalem cult.ⁱⁱ These far-reaching conclusions Torrey regards as proved beyond any reasonable doubt by the linguistic evidence of Chronicles, Ezra 7-10 and Neh. 8-10. With great care an array of evidence is built up to show the identity of authorship between what Torrey regards as the Ezra memoirs (Ezr. 7-10 and Neh. 8-10) and Ezr. 1-6 (and 1 & 2 Chr.). This is extended also to embrace Neh. 11-13. In his introduction

i Comp. HV. Pg. 52
 ii ES. Ch. vii

to his later work,ⁱ Torrey deplures the fact that this evidence has not been publicly evaluated and that his proof has generally been ignored. In view of the radical conclusions to which this evidence has led Torrey, it is impossible to ignore it without careful examination. Such an examination is now to be attempted, not with any idea of repudiating the linguistic affinities between Chronicles and Ezer. - Neh. but in order to set forth this evidence in its true light. The charge against the Chronicler as a fraudulent propagandist will be examined in its proper place.ⁱⁱ We are concerned here only with the two related questions, first whether this evidence supports the claim that the style of Ezer.-Neh. conforms to the style of Chronicles apart from the two exceptions named, and secondly whether the results obtained substantiate the claim that this history is purely fictitious. For the sake of convenience and clarity let us group the evidence under numerical heads.

1. רָחַם רַחֲמֵי (to extend loving kindness).ⁱⁱⁱ The word רָחַם is common in the O.T. to denote an attitude men have for one another or for God, and particularly as a quality characteristic of the Deity.^{iv} This expression under review cannot serve, in any case, as evidence of the Chronicler's style since it nowhere occurs in the books of Chronicles. But the idea is common elsewhere in variant forms.^v

i ES 1910 Pg. vii ff.
 ii Section IV
 iii Ezra 7: 28; 9:9 (and only here with hiphil)
 iv BDB Pg. 339
 v Gen. 39:21 (רָחַם); Is. 66:12 (רָחַם); Ps. 66:20 (רָחַם)
 Ex. 3:21 retains the idea in different words (cf. 11:3; 12:36)

The word תִּוֶּן gives us an insight into the Chronicler's method, nevertheless, in the expression 'keepeth covenant and mercy'ⁱ where all three instances of it occur in prayers taken from earlier usage. Daniel borrowed the same expression (9:4). What we see here is the Chronicler's adoption of stereotyped devotional phraseology which had come down from the past as a legacy which many authors readily adopted.ⁱⁱ But it is difficult to understand why the expression we are examining should be advanced as a mark of identity of authorship for Chronicles and Ezer. - Neh. when it actually never occurs in Chronicles.

2. $\text{שֹׁלֵי$ (Counsellor). It is difficult to see how Torrey can regard the fourⁱⁱⁱ uses of this word in Chr. and Ezer.-Neh. as a technical use found nowhere else. The first instance of it is paralleled in 2nd Sam. 15:12 where the same man Ahithophel is described in precisely the same terms, 'David's counsellor'. The second instance of it is a reference to the Persian King and his seven 'counsellors' in the Aramaic decree of Artaxerxes, and the third is Ezra's own reference to these seven 'Counsellors', written in Hebrew. This will later be shown to be a faithful portrait of the Persian Court and not a fanciful elaboration of the Chronicler.^{iv} The last reference is not to King's counsellors at all but to paid agents hired by Judaeans opponents to frustrate

i 2 Chr. 6:14; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; cf. 1 Kgs. 8:23; Deut. 7:9,12.

ii e.g. 1 Chr. 17:13 = 2 Sam. 7:15; 2 Chr. 1:8 = 1 Kgs. 3:6

iii 1 Chr. 27:33; Ezer. 7: 14 - 15 (Aram); 8:25 (cf. 4:5)

iv Pgs. 102 ff.

the enterprise of building going on in Jerusalem. This citation shows the opposite of what Torrey desires to maintain, namely, that we have in this word no technical use confined solely to the Chronicler but a term of wide connotation and belonging to a wide range of authors. Even its use as a King's counsellor is widespread.ⁱ

3. רָצַף (Hithpael). It must be admitted that this form is a common feature of the Chronicler's style,ⁱⁱ but it is by no means an exclusive feature.ⁱⁱⁱ But this fact militates against the view that the Chronicler is the fabricator of the Ezra memoirs, since in those sections of Ezer. - Neh. which come under review, although the verb occurs only four times, only once is it used in the Hithpael (Ezr. 7:28). It is used twice in the Qal. (Ezr. 9:12; 10: 4) and once in the Hiphil (Neh. 10:30). These facts indicate that these chapters of Ezra (7-10) and Nehemiah (8-10) reflect rather an independent source, in their use of this word in the same way as Nehemiah's memoirs.^{iv} Even in Ezra 1-6 which Torrey attributes mainly to the Chronicler this verb is used only twice and never in the Hithpael. (Ezr. 1:6; 6:22).

- i Is. 19:11 (Pharaoh's counsellors); 40:13 (Divine court above) Mic. 4:9 and Jb. 3:14 use the word in close association with the word 'king' implying its official connotation. cf. Dan. 3: 24, 27; 4:36, 6: 7 where idea is common, only expressed by a Persian word, רָצַף
- ii Dr. IOT Pg. 536 No. 8 & BDB.
- iii Gen; 48:2; Nu.13;20; Jud. 20:22 1 Sam. 4:9, 30:6; 11 Sam. 3:6; 10:12; 1 Kgs. 20:22; Dan. 10: 19,21; etc. etc.
- iv Neh. 2: 18; 6:9; 5:16, & chs. 3 & 4 passim.

4. יְשׁוּבָה This expression, like the last one considered affords no evidence, since it cannot be regarded as a mark of the Chronicler's style. It never occurs in the books of Chronicles at all, and Driver lists it as a characteristic of the Nehemiah memoirs.ⁱ The expression in its complete form occurs only four times;ⁱⁱ once in the Ezra memoirs and once in the Chronicler's introduction to the same, and twice in the Nehemiah memoirs. In an abbreviated form it occurs four times; once in the Chronicler's introduction and three times in the Ezra memoirs proper.ⁱⁱⁱ It never occurs in Ezra 1-6, which Torrey regards almost wholly as the Chronicler's. Indeed the only two uses of it by the Chronicler are in his introduction to the Ezra Memoirs where it is obviously borrowed from the sources introduced. When the Chronicler wishes to express the idea himself he uses the expression common in other late Hebrew writers.^{iv} Besides, the idea of the Hand of God as the source of blessing, disaster, prophetic inspiration, etc., is profusely dispersed throughout the whole range of the O.T. The only logical conclusion to which the evidence leads us is that this expression is a mark, not of the Chronicler's style at all, but of independent sources, namely the Memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah, but more typical of the latter than of the former.

i Dr. IOT Pg. 553

ii Ezr. 7:9; 8:18; Neh. 2:8, 18.

iii Ezr. 7:28; 8:22, 31

iv viz "The Eye of their God was upon..." Ezr. 5:5; Ps.33:18; 34:15; Jb. 36:7 etc.

5. $\psi \parallel \overline{\text{7}}$ (Hithpael - to enroll). This form is found only in the Chronicler's work, and would appear to be an unmistakable mark of his style. But it is worth noting that of the 15 times it is used in 1st. and 2nd Chronicles, 14 are in association with accompanying genealogical lists. Of the 5 times it is used in Ezer. - Neh., two occur in the famous duplicate lists of Ezra 2 and Neh. 7, and about the origin of these lists nothing definite has yet been said beyond the probability that they were not the Chronicler's original. ⁱ The remaining three occurrences ⁱⁱ are also in association with lists that more than probably did not belong to either of the Memoirs to which they are now attached. ⁱⁱⁱ All this emphasises the point that before any weight can be attached to this term as evidence for the Chronicler's style, it must first be decided from what source or sources these genealogical lists come, and on this dark question no certain light has as yet been given apart from the general view that in all probability they did not originate with the Chronicler himself, but rather that he found them among the ecclesiastical sources upon which he drew.

6. $\text{M} \text{D} \text{S} \text{D}$ (Kingdom). This is a common term in the Chronicler's work, and is used seven times in these sections of Ezra and Nehemiah which Torrey attributes to the Chronicler. ^{iv} But over ^v against the thirty occurrences mentioned in Driver's list the

- i Batten ICC Pg. 71ff. - see also Pgs. 136-141 of Ch. 5
- ii Ezer. 8:1,3; Neh. 7:5
- iii Batten ICC Pg. 318 & 264 respectively
- iv Ezer. 1:1; 4:5, 6; 7:1; 8:1; Neh. 9:35; 12:22
- v Dr. IOT Pg. 536 No. 9.

older word $\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{ו}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{ו}}$ occurs no less than twenty-one times in 1st. and 2nd. Chronicles and twice in Ezra and Nehemiah. In addition to this a glance at the lexicon (BDB) will readily show that

$\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{ו}}\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{ו}}$ is equally common in Esther, Daniel and the Psalter; a fact which Driver admits, and this can mean only that the word is common in late Hebrew literature generally.

7. $\overline{\text{ל}}$ (introducing a direct object). This is a mark of the Chronicler's style only in the sense that it is a mark of late Hebrew literature. One need only consult the lexicon to see how widely it is used, even in what is commonly regarded as early material.

8. a) The use of $\overline{\text{ל}}\overline{\text{ו}}$ (Hiphil) is common in the O.T. meaning 'to cause to understand,' often in the sense 'to interpret'. It is in this sense that we get it in connection with the levitical reading of the law. It indicates priestly instruction based on the Torah. The same 'interpretative' sense is found in Daniel (8:27; 9:22), only here the basis of instruction is that of a vision and of divine revelation rather than the written Torah. Elihu declares there is a divine spark in man which renders him capable of 'understanding' (Job. 32:8) and Deutero-Isaiah rhetorically asks "Who hath caused Him to understand?" (40:14).

i 1 Chr. 16:20; 29:11,30; 2nd. Chr. 9:19; 11:1; 12:8; 13:5,8; 14:4; 17:5,10; 20:6,29; 21:4; 22:9-10; 23:20; 25:3; 29:21; 32:15; 36:23. Ezer. 1:2; Neh. 9:22.

ii BDB Pg. 511 Section 3.

iii e.g. Jos. 24:9; Gen. 9:27 1 Sam 23:10; 2 Sam.3:30; 6:16; 8:5; Hos. 10:1; Amos 6:3 etc. It is used once in Ezra (8:16), once in Neh. (9:32).

iv Neh. 8:7,9, also 2 Chr. 35:3.

This capacity of spiritual discernment is the repeated plea of the Psalmist.ⁱ What we have here is the use of a common term in late Hebrew for intellectual and moral understanding. Each writer appropriates the term and gives it that peculiar nuance in keeping with his peculiar interests.

b) $\gamma^{\prime} \gamma^{\prime\prime}$ (Expert). This expression is used some seven times in 1st and 2nd Chronicles, and five times in Ezra and Nehemiah.ⁱⁱ Of these occurrences in Chronicles four are definite references to experts in music or sacred song,ⁱⁱⁱ one to Levitical instructors (2 Chr. 35:3) without stating the nature of the instruction, but it is fair to guess it must be either the Torah, or music as referred to above; the two other references are to wise men in the sense of counsellor and oracle respectively (1 Chr. 27:32; 2 Chr. 26:5). Of the occurrences in Ezzr.-Neh., three are references to people who have a capacity of discernment (Neh. 8:2,3; 10:29) two to levitical instructors as above (Ezra 8:16; Neh 8:9). From all this we see that while the term technically denotes "one skilled" in something, the realm of skill varies widely even within these limits set by Torrey. It embraces a skilled musician of the levitical choir, levitical instructors both in music and in the written Torah, royal counsellors, ecstatic prophets, as well as ordinary men and

i Ps.119: 34, 73, 125, 130, 144, 169.

ii 1 Chr. 15:22; 25:7, 8; 27:32; 2nd Chr. 26:5, 34:12; 35:3; Ezra 8:16; Neh. 8:2,3,9; 10:29.

iii 1 Chr. 15:22; 25:7,8; 2 Chr. 34:12

women capable of being instructed. Moreover a glance at the lexiconⁱ will show how these usages are not confined to the Chroniclerⁱⁱ beyond his appropriation of the term for his levitical interests.

9. $\square']']']'$ (Nethinim). The word occurs in 1st. and 2nd. Chronicles only once (1 Chr. 9:2), but seventeen times in Ezra and Nehemiah.ⁱⁱⁱ Of these six references, 2 duplicate pairs occur in the famous lists of Ezra 2 and Neh. 7, and four others in connection with similar lists Ezra 8; 20 (bis) (Neh. 10:29; 11:3), and the impossibility of attributing these lists to the Chronicler's invention has been already indicated. Of the remaining seven instances, two are found in the Ezra Memoirs (Ezr. 7:24; 8:17) and four among the Nehemiah Memoirs (Neh. 3:26; 31; 11:21 bis). Only one can be definitely said to come from the Chronicler's pen in Ezr.-Neh. and this, from his introduction to the Aramaic decree (Ezr. 7:7) on which this introduction is naturally based. Of course it is easy to assume, like Torrey, that wherever the word occurs we have an interpolation of the Chronicler. That may be so, but it must be recognised as an assumption and not as a proof of the Chronicler's style. In addition it is interesting to note that this term, which is so rife in Ezr.-Neh. and in connection with the vital interests of the Chronicler,^{iv} is used only

i BDB Pg. 107

ii cf. a) 1 Kgs. 3:9, 11 where $\eta' \eta'$ = worldly wisdom and moral judgment

b) Prov. 8:9; 17:10, 24; 28: 2, 7, 11 where $\eta' \eta' \eta'$ = one of understanding

c) Dan. 1:4 skilled in knowledge

d) Ps. 33:15 skilled in men's acts

iii Ezra 2:43, 58, 70; 7: 7, 24; 8: 17, 20 (bis)
Neh. 3:26, 31; 7:46, 60, 73; 10: 29; 11:3, 21 (bis)

iv See Section iv.

once in 1st. and 2nd. Chronicles. That fact is surely significant, and if these books are to be taken as affording a basis for the Chronicler's style, certainly this word can hardly be cited as one of his characteristics.ⁱ

10. $\text{לְבַד־וְיַדְּפָרָה}$ - (expressed by name). This phrase is used five times by the Chronicler.ⁱⁱ It is used once in the Ezra Memoirs (Ezra 8:20) and there, in connection with a levitical list whose origin is quite uncertain. That it was not exclusively used by the Chronicler is shown by its occurrence in Nu. 1:17, also in connection with a list of names.

11. וְיָדָה (goods). The word is used eight times in the Chronicler,ⁱⁱⁱ and four times in Ezra.^{iv} But it is also used no less than eleven times in Genesis,^v twice in Numbers (16:32; 35:3), and three times in Daniel (11:13, 24, 28). Driver, who mentioned it among the Chronicler's characteristics, refers his reader to it listed also as a characteristic of P.^{vi} One might ask why it does not occur in other sections of Ezer.-Neh. where, according to Torrey's theory, it might be expected.^{vii} Certainly no passage could be stamped as the Chronicler's because this word is used in it.

- i See Batten ICC Pg. 87 ff. where he gives reasons to show that the reference in Neh. 3:31 is earlier than the Chronicler, and where the term probably occurs also in the disguised form in Nu. 3:9; 8:16, 19.
- ii 1 Chr. 12:31; 16:41 2 Chr. 28:15; 31:19.
- iii 1 Chr. 27:31; 28:1; 2 Chr. 20:25; 21:14, 17; 31:3; 32:29; 35:7.
- iv Ezra 1:4, 6; 8:21; 10:8.
- v Gen. 12:5; 13:6; 14:11, 12, 16,^(6is) 21; 15:14; 31:18; 36:7; 46:6
- vi Dr. IOT Pg. 537 No. 20 - cf Pg. 132 No. 17.
- vii viz. Ezra 6:8; 7:26; Neh. 9:25.

12. $\square \text{ } \dot{\text{ר}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{כ}} \dot{\text{ל}} \text{ } \dot{\text{ר}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{ש}} \text{ } \dot{\text{ר}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{ש}}$ (Chiefs of the priests). This phrase is used only four times in the O.T., - twice in Ezra's memoirs (Ezr. 8: 24, 29) and twice in the Chronicler (Ezr. 10:5; 2 Chr. 36:14). But it should be noted that it does not occur in the section with which Torrey desires to identify the Ezra Memoirs (viz. Ezra 1-6), nor can its solitary occurrence in Chronicles make it a characteristic of its author. The fact that the Chronicler uses so often the word $\dot{\text{ר}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{ש}}$ in connection with $\square \text{ } \dot{\text{ר}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{ש}}$ and $\dot{\text{ש}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{ר}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{ש}}$ to denote religious leaders and priests ⁱ would seem to imply that this expression under discussion was not his customary ⁱⁱ phrase.

13. $\dot{\text{ר}} \dot{\text{ל}}$ as relative is distinctly a late usage and found ⁱⁱⁱ five times in Chronicles, and three times in Ezra (Ezra 8:25; 10:14, 17). But even if we discount the ten occurrences elsewhere which a change in pointing might regularise, we are ^{iv} still left with three genuine cases, and the usage does not occur in Torrey's touchstone (Ezra 1 - 6).

- i BDB Pg. 978 No. 5 eg. $\square \text{ } \dot{\text{ר}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{ש}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{ר}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{ש}}$; $\dot{\text{ש}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{ר}} \dot{\text{ל}} \dot{\text{ש}}$
 ii Nor is it listed by Driver as one of his characteristics.
 iii 1 Chr. 26:28; 29:8,17; 2 Chr. 1:4; 29:36.
 iv Jos. 10:24; 1 Sam. 9:24; Ez. 26:17 - see BDB Pg. 209 sec. 3 and Ges. Kaut Pg. 447, para. 138 sec. 3b.

14. $\text{כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל־נִשְׁתַּדְּרָה}$ (All Israel found present). It is difficult to see how Torrey can claim this expression as peculiar to the Chronicler. The complete expression in the form given above occurs twice; once in 2nd Chronicles 31:1, and once in Ezra 8:25, and in these two the participle is differently pointed.ⁱ Variations of the expression such as 'All the children of Israel that were present', 'the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present', 'all the priests that were present', 'the king and all that were present', etc. are common in 2nd Chronicles.ⁱⁱ If what Torrey is drawing attention to is the use of the Niphal participle of נָסַד meaning 'present', then one can find more examples of it outside the Chronicler's workⁱⁱⁱ than within it, and these from early as well as late Hebrew literature.

15. כַּדָּיִם (Bowls). The word only occurs in the Chronicler, four times in one verse (1 Ch. 28:17) and in Ezra (1:10; 8:27). It must be noticed, in justice to Torrey, that one of these occurrences is in the Ezra Memoirs and the other in his touchstone of Ezra 1 - 6, but it remains a question whether a word so rare can be used as a reasonable link in the chain of evidence.

i The form נִשְׁתַּדְּרָה occurs only in Ezra 8:25 - everywhere else נִשְׁתַּדְּרוּ

ii 2 Chr. 5:11; 29:29; 30:21; 34:32,33; 35: 7,17,18.

iii Jud. 20:48. 2 Kgs. 19:4 = Is. 37:4; 1 Sam. 13:15,16; 21:4 (Heb.) Is. 22:3. Gen. 19:15; Est. 1:5; 4:16.

is expressed in the Ezra Memoirs in two other idioms, within a few verses of the one we are considering.ⁱ If the Chronicler's style is as stereotyped as Torrey believes it to be, why does he repeat, within a few verses, identically the same idea in three different ways? Is it unreasonable to suggest that the similarity of 1st. Ch. 29:7-8 to Ezra 8:33, both passages denoting the peculiar interests of the Chronicler in ecclesiastical gifts and devotion, is due to the Chronicler's dependence upon a written source, namely the Ezra Memoirs? Perhaps, instead of both cases being the product of the Chronicler's mind, the former is dependent upon the latter.

19. $\gamma^{\prime}\delta\zeta$ Ezra 8:35. (he-goat). About this word Torrey declares that it is "found elsewhere only in two passages from the hand of the Chr. viz. Ezra 6:17 (Aramaic) 2 Chr. 29:21; and in the eighth chapter of Daniel".ⁱⁱ This statement is an indication of Torrey's method of reasoning. He assumes in his proof what he has set out to prove. In reality, the only case which is beyond doubt the Chronicler's is 2nd. Ch. 29:21. But it is to be admitted that there is a marked similarity, verbal as well as contextual, among the three passages. Nevertheless it cannot be overlooked: i) that the passages are nowhere verbally identical,ⁱⁱⁱ ii) that the numbers in the verses are

i Ezra 8:25 ($\alpha\eta\zeta$); 8:29 ($\gamma^{\prime}\delta\zeta$)
 ii Comp. HV Pg. 18.
 iii Ezra 8:35 $\alpha\eta\zeta$; 6:17 (Aram.) $\alpha\eta\zeta$; 2 Chr. 29:21. $\alpha\eta\zeta$; cf. Dan. 8: 5, 8, 21.

different in all three passages, although the number of 'he-goats' in the two Ezra passages agrees against the number in 2nd Chronicles, iii) that all three passages are in connection with a very special sacrifice made at the Jerusalem shrine as the result of a new stimulus in the religious life of the people.ⁱ If, as is generally agreed, the Chronicler is the author of 1st. and 2nd. Chronicles and the author - editor of Ezr. Neh., and in the light of his ecclesiastical interests,ⁱⁱ it would be difficult to conceive of these passages as not bearing a marked similarity. But this does not prove that the sections in the Ezra Memoirs and the Ezra Aramaic are fabrications of the Chronicler. If there are reasons for believing that the aramaic documents and the Memoirs rest on genuine sources, then this similarity indicates rather where the Chronicler most probably got his details for the earlier history, which is exactly the reverse of Torrey's assumption.

20. $\text{N}^{\text{is}} \text{זָּרַף$ - (and when.....were ended etc.). The use of the Piel Infin. Const. with the prep. כִּי as an adverbial clause occurs five times in 2nd Chronicles; three times in the form above, twice with the third plural masc. suffix. It occurs only once in the Ezra Memoirs (9:1). The usage is by no

i viz. as result of 1) Hazekiah's reformation, 2) the rebuilding of the 2nd temple, 3) the arrival of Ezra, respectively.

ii See section IV

iii 7:1; 20:23; 24:14; 29:29; 31:1.

means peculiar to the Chronicler since it is found no less than six times in other writers.ⁱ If this were a peculiar mark of the Chronicler, it is strange that it does not occur in 1st Chronicles, or, if Torrey's contention were right, in other parts of Ezra which he attributesⁱⁱ to the Chronicler.

21. $\text{ST}\overline{\text{T}}$ - (Niphal - to separate oneself). The form is used twice in 1st Chronicles (12:8; 23:13^(Eng.)), and seven times in the sections of Ezer. - Neh. which Torrey attributes to the Chronicler,ⁱⁱⁱ and once in Numbers (16:21). A study of the context of the passages reveal that every one of the references in Ezer.-Neh. is in connection with the separation of the pure Judaeans stock from the contamination of the surrounding peoples caused by mixed marriages, whereas the passages in Chronicles and Numbers deal with other matters.^{iv} We may note also that neither Chronicles nor Ezer.-Neh. uses only the Niphal.^v What this evidence clearly shows us is that the passages in Ezer.-Neh. are most probably related, certainly in their historical reference, and perhaps also in their literary origin. But that this can establish their origin as the Chronicler's concoction because in another context he uses but twice the same word in the Niphal is difficult to accept.

- i Ex. 31:18; 2 Sam. 11:19; 1 Kgs. 8:54; (= 2 Chr. 7:1); Ps. 71:9; Prov. 5:11 (with $\overline{\text{T}}$); Dan. 12:7.
- ii cf Ezra 10:17 where the common usage of $\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{S}}\overline{\text{T}}$ in the imperf. with $\overline{\text{T}}$ occurs to express this clause.
- iii Ezra 6:21; 9:1; 10:8,11,16; Neh. 9:2; 10:29 (Heb.).
- iv 1 Chr. 12:8 - men who clung loyally to David.
23:13 - the setting apart of Aaron.
Nu. 16:21 - safeguarding of Moses & Aaron from wrath of God
- v cf. Ezer. 8:24; Neh. 13:3; 1 Chr. 25:1; 2 Chr. 25:10. (All in the Hiphil).

22. $\text{לְיָסְרָאֵל וְלְכָל־אֲדָמָה}$ - (The peoples of the lands). We are here introduced to a thorny problem on which there is no definite agreement. The question at issue is to whom precisely does this phrase and its variant equivalents refer? The phrase, as given above, occurs only twice in the books of Chronicles (2 Chr. 13:9; 32:13). In the first case it refers to the surrounding pagan peoples of pre-exilic days whose religious manners Abijah, King of Judah, accuses Jeroboam, King of Samaria, of emulating. The second reference made by the emissary of Sennacherib is to these same surrounding peoples regarded as common enemies of the Assyrian Empire, of whom the Hebrews also form a part. A few verses further on the same reference is made in a slightly variant form (2 Ch. 32:17..... לְכָל־אֲדָמָה). In other words, the Chronicler is using in these two instances a plural for the commoner singular form to denote the non-Jewish peoples that surrounded the Hebrew nation.ⁱ The expression occurs six times also in the section of Ezer-Nehemiah which Torrey regards as the Chronicler's.ⁱⁱ But the facts that do not support Torrey's theory are these:-ⁱⁱⁱ

i) In five cases out of six of its occurrence in Ezer.-Nehemiah the reference is quite definitely to people whose intermarriage had caused a contaminating influence in the restored community. The moot question is, who are these people?

i See expression לְכָל־אֲדָמָה - BDB Lexicon; & Cruden's Concordance Pg. 487 & in particular Gen. 23:7,12,13, 42:6; Ex. 5:5; Lev. 20:2,4, etc.

ii Ezer.9:1,2,11; Neh. 9:30; 10:28; and Ezer.3:13.

iii The exception is Ezer 3:3.

Are they identical with the non-Jewish neighbours in the old pre-exilic sense, or are they simply these people, mostly Jews, who had never gone into exile, and whose life during the interval had become tainted by foreign elements? It is possible that both classes are covered by the term since the expression under review does certainly refer to pagan neighbours quite apart from mixed marriages in the one exception we have named.ⁱ But apart from this one exception it is hard to escape the conviction that in these passages of Ezer.-Neh. the reference is to all Jews, who, during the disintegrating upheaval of the Exile, failed to observe strictly in marriage the pure ideals of Judaism as represented in the 'Returning Exiles'.ⁱⁱ If this is so, then the expression in Ezer.-Neh. is reserved almost exclusively for a definite class of people, mostly Jews, quite distinct from the older meaning illustrated in 2nd. Chronicles and retained in Ezra 3:3.ⁱⁱⁱ

ii) It must be observed, a) that the idea voiced in 2nd Chronicles by this expression (viz - pagan neighbours) is found at least four times in Ezra 1-6 and only once in this form.^{iv} So much variety in so short a space for one idea would not indicate any stereotyped form which could be claimed as the distinguishing mark of a particular author.

- i See note iii Pg. 38
 ii Oest. H. Vol.11 Pg. 85ff.
 iii Although here too the reference may be to apostate Jews who had never gone into exile.
 iv Ezra. 4:1 אֲדֵרְסָיִם אֲדֵרְסָיִם "Adversaries of Judah".
 " 4:4 אֲדֵרְסָיִם אֲדֵרְסָיִם "people of the land".
 " 6:21 אֲדֵרְסָיִם אֲדֵרְסָיִם "the heathens of the land".
 " 3:3 אֲדֵרְסָיִם אֲדֵרְסָיִם "the peoples of the lands".
 cf. also Neh. 5:17.

It must be observed further, b) that not even in the books of Chronicles is one form used consistently.ⁱ What we have in the form under discussion is but one way, among many others, of expressing the general idea of Israel's foreign neighbours and the evidence of Chronicles and Ezra 1-6 does not indicate that the Chronicler was partial to any one form. That the forms we have discussed were not exclusively associated with any one set of ideas can be seen by recognising how Haggai and Zechariah use the form commonly reserved for foreign neighbours to denote the Jews who had not gone into exile,ⁱⁱ but who had remained in their own country and who, as far as these prophets are concerned, are not in anyway inferior to these who had returned.

iii) Finally we should note that although the Ezer.-Neh. sections which use this expression we are considering, do so almost exclusively as a reference to people of mixed marriage, yet many other forms are used, even in these very sections, to express precisely the same idea. We have in Ezra 10:2 $\text{אִשׁוֹתֵי הַגּוֹיִם הַזֵּה}$ (strange women of the peoples of the land); in Ezra 10:11 the same repeated; in Ezra 10:14,17,18, $\text{אִשׁוֹתֵי הַגּוֹיִם הַזֵּה}$ (strange women) repeated three times over; in Neh. 9:2, אֲנָשֵׁי זָרִים (strangers);

i	1 Chr.	5:25	$\text{אֲנָשֵׁי הַגּוֹיִם הַזֵּה}$	"The peoples of the land"
	"	16:28	$\text{אֲנָשֵׁי הַגּוֹיִם הַזֵּה}$	"clans of the peoples"
2	"	32:17	$\text{אֲנָשֵׁי הַגּוֹיִם הַזֵּה}$	"heathens of the lands"
	"	32:19	$\text{אֲנָשֵׁי הַגּוֹיִם הַזֵּה}$	"the peoples of the land"
	cf. also	Jos. 4:24		
ii	Haggai	2:4; Zech.	7:5; $\text{אֲנָשֵׁי הַגּוֹיִם הַזֵּה}$	"The people of the land"

in Neh. 10:31 $\text{יְרֵמִיָּהוּ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל}$ (peoples of the land) all synonyms for this expression and all in reference to mixed marriage. In other words we have here four variant alternatives occurring seven times to express the same idea which is expressed five times only in the form under examination, and all of them in the very same sections, and in the very same context. ⁱ Is it not unreasonable to regard the fifth variant, ⁱⁱ which occurs only once more often than one of the others, as the indelible stamp of the Chronicler's style because in quite another context and with quite another meaning it occurs twice in 2nd Chronicles?

To sum up the argument it has been shown that:

- i) this particular form in Ezer.-Neh. denotes something quite different from what it denotes in 2nd Chronicles; in the former it means 'contaminating Jews' in the restored community; in the latter, 'pagan neighbours'.
- ii) The idea of 'pagan neighbours' is expressed in a wide variety of forms both in Chronicles and in Ezra.
- iii) The idea of 'contaminating Jews' in the restored community is expressed also by a variety of forms even in those sections of Ezer.-Neh. which use the expression we are examining.

23. $\text{וְ$ (Explicative - even, namely). This usage, like וְ introducing the accusative, is not a peculiarity of any one author.

- i Of course Ezra 3:3 may also refer to mixed marriages but it is not stated in the context and so we omit it as evidence.
- ii viz. the form under discussion.

It can be found throughout the O.T. but especially among
late authors.ⁱ

24. $\square' \psi] \aleph \psi]$ - (to marry wives). The expression occurs four
times in the books of the Chronicles; and four times in Ezr.-Neh.ⁱⁱ
but only one of these has the complete form.ⁱⁱⁱ Obviously we have
here a late equivalent of the older expression $\square' \psi] \pi \rho \zeta$ (to
take wives) and it is an expression found only once elsewhere
(Ruth. 1:4). This would seem strongly to favour Torrey's view
if it were not for the following facts which cannot be overlooked:-

- i) The expression is not exclusively the Chronicler's.
- ii) In the very sections in which this usage occurs
in Ezr.-Neh. we have another expression which
occurs solely in Ezr.-Neh. and nowhere else,
used seven times in the same context and with
the same meaning.^{iv}
- iii) In the same sections we find an instance of
the older classical usage (Neh.10:31 (Heb.) $\pi \rho \zeta$).
This evidence shows that in dealing with the
same subject Ezr.-Neh. uses three different ways
to express the idea of marriage with foreigners,
viz. $\aleph \psi]$ in common with the Chronicler and Ruth,
 $\pi \rho \zeta$, reminiscent of the old classical age,

- i Torrey calls attention to the refs. 2nd Chr. 2:12; 23:4. cf.
1 Chr. 13:1; 2 Chr. 28:15; 33:8; Ezr.8:24; 9:1 Neh. 9:32;
(Pg.18). But consult BDB lexicon Pg. 514 for a list of
parallels to these in P and other books.
- ii 1 Chr. 23:22; 2 Chr. 11:21; 13:21; 24:3.
- iii Ezra 9:2,12; 10:44; Neh. 13:25.
- iv $\square' \psi]$ in Hiphil with $D' \psi]$ - see Ezr.10:2,10,14,17,18
Neh. 13:27 and 13:23 (with $\pi \rho \zeta$)

and לשׁוּׁן which is peculiar to itself.

If any one of these is to be selected as a mark of its style surely it would be the last rather than the first.

25. שׁוּׁן (Trespass). This word as a noun and verb is common in Chronicles for 'sin' as rebellious acts against Jehovah. It is used five times in the section of Ezra which we are considering and all of them refer to the offence of mixed marriage. It occurs twice in Nehemiah (1:8; 13:27), once in Nehemiah's prayer when he refers to Israel's rebelliousness against Jehovah, and once in reference to mixed marriage. Nevertheless it must be noticed that in the same sections of Ezra, and in connection with the same subject, another word is used no less than six times, common alike to the Chronicler and other writers, and that שׁוּׁן is by no means confined to the Chronicler, but is common in late literature. Even the word שׁוּׁן associated with this word twice in Ezra and used otherwise profusely in Ezz.-Neh. is used only once in Chronicles, though often in other writers. It seems clear enough that what we have here is but the Chronicler's and Ezz.-Neh.'s common use of late Hebrew vocabulary.

26. פָּׁנִים (fearful). Why this word should be adduced as evidence is hard to imagine since it occurs only twice in Ezra, four times elsewhere in the O.T. but never in Chronicles.

- i 1 Chr. 5:25; 9:1; 10:13; 2 Chr. 12:2; 26:16,18; 28:19,22; 29:6,19; 30:7; 33:19; 36:14. etc.
- ii Ezz. 9:2,4; 10:2,6,10.
- iii viz. שׁוּׁן N&V Ezz. 9:6,7,13,15; 10: 10,19 and for other refs. see BDB Pgs. 79-80
- iv BDB Pg. 591 also Dr. IOT Pg. 134 No. 43 where it is listed as a mark of P. cf. especially Jos. 7:1; 22: 20; Dan. 9:7; Prov. 16:10
- v Ezz. 1:11; 2:1; 4:1; 6:19,20,21; 8:35; 10:7,8,16; Neh. 7:6; 1 Chr. 5:22 - and with שׁוּׁן Ezz. 9:4; 10:6.
- vi Ezz. 9:4; 10:3; Jud. 7:3; 1 Sam. 4:13; Is. 66:2,5.

27. Preps. שׁוֹמֵר טוֹב It cannot be denied that this usageⁱ is abundant in the Chronicler and is extremely rare elsewhere. It occurs also five times in Ezr.-Neh. although one of these may well be spurious.ⁱⁱ Nevertheless Ezra.-Neh. prefers the more classical method of טוֹב without the שׁ ,ⁱⁱⁱ and in spite of the Chronicler's overwhelming monopoly of this usage, it^{iv} does occur four times elsewhere.

28. פָּרַשׁ יָדָיו (to spread out the hands in prayer). This is a common expression in the O.T., and it is difficult to understand why Torrey should have included it in his list at all. It occurs three times in 2nd. Chronicles in connection with Solomon's dedicatory prayer paralleled in 1 Kings,^v and once in Ezra (9:5). Over against these instances must be set^{vi} at least nine occurrences elsewhere.

- i At least 24 instances: see BDB Pg. 725 iii and Dr. IOT Pg. 538 No. 38.
- ii Ezr. 3:13; 9:4,6; 10:14 (bis) - but last instance - see Kittel's note for another reading (2 MSS.Vrs. have שׁוֹמֵר טוֹב)
- iii Ezr. 9:7,12 (bis), 14; 10:17; Neh. 3:16, 26 etc.
- iv Jos. 13:5; Jud. 3:3 which Torrey admits; also 1 Kgs. 18:29, which Torrey rejects as corrupt - but textually there is no corruption. A variant reading in the LXX does not necessarily make its Massoretic parallel corrupt where the text in question is otherwise sound. Also Est. 4:2 (שׁוֹמֵר טוֹב) which is not an exact parallel of the others and so is not classed among the list in BDB
- v 2 Chr. 6:12, 13, 29 = 1 Kgs. 8:22,38,54.
- vi 3 times in 1 Kgs. as above, plus Ex. 9:29,33; Job. 11:13; Ps. 44:21 (Heb) Is. 1:15; Jer. 4:31. - cf. Is. 65:2, Lam. 1:17 (טוֹב)

29. ׇיִשָׁר (after אֲׇיִשָׁר). Here again it is hard to understand this expression being included as evidence. It occurs in Ezer. 9:6, and if it is really a part of the text,ⁱ it must be either vocative duplicating the second word of the verse, or in apposition to the object of the preposition. In either case it would be an extremely common usage.ⁱⁱ But Torrey's comparison of it with the form in 1st. Chr. 29:17 indicates that he must take it as a vocative, and as such, it is difficult to understand how Torrey failed to consult Driver's list on the characteristics of Ezer.-Neh., where this very usage is given as a distinct mark of the Nehemiah Memoirs.ⁱⁱⁱ Moreover its prevalence, especially in a stereotyped formula, in one of those very sections of Nehemiah which Torrey has used repeatedly as part of his evidence for the Chronicler's style, is a severe blow to his whole theory (viz. Neh. 13). The evidence before us here would certainly indicate that if Neh. 1-7 is recognised as genuine memoirs of Nehemiah and so not the Chronicler's fabrication, then certainly Neh. 13 is also part of these memoirs.

i It is probably a dittography - see Kittel's note.

ii See BDB Pgs. 43-44 & Cruden's Concordance Pg. 259.

iii Dr. IOT Pg. 553 - used as voc. Neh. 5:19; 6:14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31 cf. also Neh. 2:8, 12, 18; 7:5.

30. לְעֵלְיוֹתָם - (exceedingly). The expression with this meaning occurs only in the Chronicler, and to erase a word from the text in Ezr. 9:6 in order to identify it with the Chronicler's usage is typical of Torrey's manner, but hardly permissible as proof.ⁱ
31. לְבִלְעָד - (without). The expression in this form occurs four times in the books of Chronicles,ⁱⁱ and once in Ezra (9:14), but nowhere else. Nevertheless the use of לְבִלְעָד plus the infinitive to express the same idea is not peculiar to the Chronicler and Ezr.-Neh.ⁱⁱⁱ but is a common usage in late literature.
32. רִאשֵׁי אֲבוֹתָם (heads of the fathers). Because the Chronicler is fond of an expression, this does not give him a monopoly of it, especially when it is widespread in the O.T.^{iv} But its great prevalence in Ezr.-Neh.^v does favour Torrey's view.
33. Neh. 7:70-72 and 1 Chr. 29:6-8. No one can deny the similarity between these passages. They both give a list of donations for a new temple about to be built. The passage in Chronicles is the dedication of gifts and treasure for the new temple for which David was preparing. The passage in Nehemiah (cf. Ezr. 2:68-9) is a similar dedication for the new temple of the restored community. But apart from this identity of subject

i See BDB. Pg. 752 & Dr. IOT. Pg. 536 No. 13.

ii 1 Chr. 22:4; 2 Chr. 14:12; 20:25; 21:18 - cf. also 36:16 (לְבִלְעָד)

iii Ezr. 9:15; 2 Chr. 20:6; Hag. 1:6; Est. 8:8; 4:2; Ecc. 3:14; Ps. 40:6 etc. cf. also 2 Chr. 15:3 (לְבִלְעָד)

iv See BDB. Pg. 911 for large list of occurrences.

v Ezr. 2:68; 3:12; 4:2, 3; 8:1; 10:16; Neh. 7:70,71; 8:13; 11:13; 12:12; 22, 23 -

matter we are faced with extraordinary differences, both
factual and verbal.ⁱ

In respect of the words to which Torrey calls particular attention we can add that while $\gamma\zeta\dot{\iota}\alpha$ (treasury) is mentioned in both passages it does not occur in any one stereotyped phrase. In Neh. 7:70 it is merely "Treasury", in 7:71 (and Ezr. 2:69) it is "treasury of the work" ($\pi\zeta\alpha\zeta\dot{\iota}\alpha$) while in 1st. Chr. 29:8 it is "treasury of the house of God". The only reason for regarding the word as meaning precisely the same thing in both passages is because both passages are dealing with precisely the same subject.ⁱⁱ The word (10,000) occurs twice in 1st Chr. 29: 7, and twice in Neh. 7: 70-72 each time in a different form and both differing from the form in Chronicles and it occurs four times outside

- i In Neh. "heads of the fathers" ($\gamma\psi\alpha\dot{\iota}$) in Chr. "Princes..... ($\gamma\psi$) of tribes, 1000's, rulers" etc. In Neh. they gave to the "work" ($\pi\zeta\alpha\zeta\dot{\iota}\alpha$); in Chr. to the "service" ($\pi\iota\iota\gamma\gamma\alpha$) of the house of God". In Neh. the gifts are 1000 gold daries ($\alpha\dot{\iota}\gamma\gamma\alpha$), 50 basins, 530 priestly garments, 20,000 gold daries (as above), 2200 silver pounds ($\alpha\dot{\iota}\gamma\gamma$) etc. etc. whereas in Chr. we have 5000 gold talents ($\alpha\dot{\iota}\gamma\gamma\alpha$) 10,000 daries ($\alpha\dot{\iota}\gamma\gamma\alpha$), 10,000 silver talents (as above), 18,000 brass talents, 100,000 iron talents, etc.
- ii For evidence of the general use of the word in other contexts see BDB. Pg. 69

of Chr. ⁱEzr.-Neh. in varying forms. The words for "Daric"
 have already been discussed. ⁱⁱ

34. ⁱⁱמִשְׁרָטִים וְזָבָחִים (porters and singers). These forms to denote the Levitical singers and porters of the temple are technical terms found frequently in the Chronicler and Ezr.-Neh. and nowhere else. Here is surely strong evidence for Torrey's view, but we need to remember that identity of interests does not necessitate identity of authorship. Torrey makes an interesting admission when he says, "The reason for giving the Porters and Singers 'special mention' in Ezr.-Neh. is the purpose (the same which moved the Chr. to write this whole history!) to show that 'all the institutions of the true "Israel" 'as they existed in the third century B.C., and as they had been established ⁱⁱⁱby Moses and David, 'were restored complete when the exiles returned' The point where this statement goes astray is in the assumption that the identity of interests and purposes between the Ezr.-Neh. sources and the Chronicler is proof of identity of authorship.

35. ^{iv}סֹפֵר (Scribe). This word will be discussed at length later where it will be shown that we have here in Ezr.-Neh., in

i Jon. 4:11 (ⁱיָרָא); Hos. 8:12 (ⁱⁱיָרָא); Ps. 68:18 (ⁱⁱⁱיָרָא)
 Dan. 11:12 (^{iv}יָרָא)

ii See No. 16 also previous Pg. Note. 1
 iii Comp. HV. Pg. 22
 iv. Chap. 4.

all probability, a technical term to denote a Persian official. At least we have in Ezz.-Neh. a particularised use of the word to denote a man skilled 'in the Law'. This idea of a literary specialist is not foreign to the books of Chronicles or to other Hebrew literature,ⁱ but the specialised use of the term in Ezz.-Neh. is not paralleled in Chronicles where the term is used in the more ordinary senses.ⁱⁱ

36. The omission of the Relative. It is true that in prose the Chronicler is by far the greatest example of this characteristic.ⁱⁱⁱ But the four instances in Ezz.-Neh. cannot constitute any decisive link even if these four be genuine.^{iv} But quite apart from doubting the text, it must be acknowledged that the usage is not entirely foreign to prose outside of Chronicles and that Ezz.-Neh. does not make any habit of this idiosyncrasy of the Chronicler's.^v

Many of Torrey's references, however, hardly deserve individual comment. Many of them are of common occurrence in the O.T., such as the number $\aleph \beth \daleth \lrcorner \lrcorner \lrcorner$,^{vi} the liturgical response

- i 1 Ch. 2:55; 27:32. cf. Jer. 36:21, 26, 32; Ps. 45:2 (Heb.); Ez. 9:2,3, etc. and Jer. 8:8, where it does refer to one skilled (falsely) in the law.
- ii cf. 1 Chr. 2:55; 2 Chr. 34:13 & BDB Pg. 708.
- iii Dr. IOT Pg. 537 No. 30.
- iv Ezz. 1:5,6; Neh. 8:10; 13:23 - but the last may be a copyist's error - cf. with Ezz. 10:14 & 17 where relative exists.
- v See Gen. 39:4; Ex. 18:20; Jud. 8:1; 20:15; 1 Sam. 6:9; 1 Kgs. 13:12; 2 Kgs. 3:8, (cf. 2 Chr. 18:23) - Ges. Kaut. 155 i d; also see Ezz. 8:25; 10:14, 17 - Ges. Kaut. 138i
77 as relative.
- vi Ezz. 8:24; - BDB. Pg. 797.

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 the verb ⁱⁱ קָוַן (to establish), used three times in
 Ezz.-Neh. (Ezr. 3:3; 7:10; Neh. 8:10), but every time in a
 different sense, each of which can be paralleled in the O.T.
 It is strange indeed that, if as Torrey claims, these sections
 of Ezz.-Neh. were composed by the Chronicler, this word, so
 common in Chronicles, is so carefully avoided when it might
 easily have been used. ⁱⁱⁱ Similar expressions common in the O.T.
 are, the word ^{iv} $\text{חַג$, a religious festival, the word אֱמֻנָה
 used distributively, the niph'al participle of אָמַן meaning
 'faithful', ^{vi} and it should be noted that neither of the
 references given by Torrey actually has this form. (2 Chr. 19:9;
 31:12 = אֱמֻנָה). Many other instances given are by no means
 confined to the Chronicler; such as, the word ^{vii} שָׁמַר , the
 phrases ^{viii} $\text{שָׁמַרְתָּ$ and ^{ix} $\text{שָׁמַרְתָּ$, and שָׁמַרְתָּ . In reference to

- i Deut. 27:15-26 (12 times); Neh. 5:13; 8:6; Jer. 11:5;
 1 Chr. 16:36 = Ps. 106:48 = 41:14; (Heb.); 72:19; 89:53 (Heb.) etc.
- ii BDB Pg. 465 ff. & Dr. IOT Pg. 536 No. 6.
- iii e.g. Ezr. 3:6, 8; 4:12, 13, 16; 5:11; 6:11, 18; 9:9; Neh. 2:6;
 3:1, 3, 6, 13-15; 4:9; 6:1; 7:1; 9:37; 13:11.
- iv BDB Pg. 290.
- v Gen. 10:5; Ex. 12:3 cf. Neh. 13:10 etc.
- vi cf. 1 Sam. 2:35; 22:14; Job. 12:20; Ps. 89:38 (Heb.);
 101:6; Pr. 25:13; Is. 8:2 - Neh. 7:2; 13:13.
- vii Ezr. 8:34 - See BDB Pg. 1054.
- viii cf. Neh. 7:73 & 2 Chr. 5:3; cf. 1 Sam. 17:19, 24 - see
 BDB. Pg. 481 & 874 for other examples.
- ix. BDB. Pg. 970 - especially 2 Sam. 6:12 etc.

ⁱ
 7707 Torrey compares Neh. 8:5 with 2 Chr. 6:3. The only point in common is that both describe a religious service, and apart from the fact that they differ verbally, Torrey failed to point out that the real source of 2 Chr. 6:3 is 1 Kgs. 8:14 which the Chronicler copied verbatim. To use such an instance as evidence amounts to an attempt to prove the Chronicler's fabrication of sources by reference to an indubitable case where his sources are most conspicuously preserved. The expression 7707 (in one's place) while occurring three times each in Chronicles and Ezz.-Neh., can be found just as many times in Daniel. The two uses of 7707 in Ezz.-Neh. can hardly be identified with the use of the word in reference to Solomon which is nearer to the meaning given to it in the Wisdom Literature. The word 7707 occurs three times only in the O.T. But when the one instance of it in Chronicles is so much in doubt, it would be most precarious to use it as a source of evidence. Of the two instances of 7707 for 'a proclamation', one is a copy of Ezz. 1:1 and it is difficult to claim a single instance as a

- i cf. Job. 29:8; Eze. 2:1; Dan. 10:11; Est. 8:4; 1 Kgs. 3:16; 2 Kgs. 23:3; Deut. 27:12. for other examples of the same use.
- ii 2 Chr. 30:16; 34:31; 35:10; Neh. 8:7; 9:3; 13:11; Dan. 8:17,18; 10:11 & note Dr. IOT Pg. 507 No. 14 where it is listed as a mark of Daniel's style.
- iii Ezz. 8:18 "Man of understanding", Neh. 8:8 "sense".
- iv cf. 1 Chr. 22:12 & 2 Chr. 2:11 (Heb.); with Job. 17:4; Pr. 3:4; 13:15; Ps. 111:10. The verb in hiphil (twice in Neh. 8:13; 9:20) is also common in O.T. - see BDB. Pg. 968.
- v Neh. 8:10; 1 Chr. 16:27 & Ezz. 6:16 (Aramaic).
- vi 1 Chr. 16:27; = Ps. 96:6 where 4 MSS read 7707 for 7707 - whereas the LXX reads in 1 Chr. 16:27 7707. Hence it is quite uncertain which word is the original, or even which passage.



characteristic of the Chronicler when another writer also used
the same expression. ⁱ The expression $\square\dot{\imath}^{\dot{\imath}} \square\dot{\imath}$ (day by day) does
not occur outside Chr. and Ezz.-Neh., but there is considerable
variety in expressing the same idea in both Chronicles and Ezz.-
Neh. ⁱⁱ In Torrey's examination of Neh. 13 we find many of the
expressions already discussed repeated. It need hardly be said
that only after Ezra 7-10 and Neh. 8-10, have already been
proved the Chronicler's fabrication, can they be used in evidence
against Neh. 13. The above discussion should have made clear
whether or not that has been done. The form $\pi \dot{\imath} \psi \dot{\imath}$ (chamber)
ⁱⁱⁱ found only in Nehemiah never occurs in Chronicles, and that $\tau \square \pi$
nowhere refers to "good works" in the O.T. outside of Torrey's
^{iv} four references in the Chronicler is purely a matter of opinion.

To what, then, does this examination lead us? Out of
thirty-six separate heads under which we have summarised the
evidence, twenty-four can be definitely paralleled in other parts
of the O.T. ^v of which thirteen instances are widespread. ^{vi} Of the
^{vii} remaining twelve instances, three never occur in Chronicles and

- i 2 Chr. 30:5; 36:22 = Ezz. 1:1; 10:7; Neh. 8: 15 - cf.
Ex. 36:6.
- ii 2 Chr. 30:21 & Neh. 8:18 cf. 2 Chr. 24:11; Ezz. 3:4;
Neh. 11:23; 12:47; see BDB. Pg. 400e.
- iii 3:30; 12:44; 13:7.
- iv Neh. 13:14; 2 Chr. 6:42; 32:32; 35:26. - But note 2 Chr.
6:42 is identified in BDB.Pg. 339 with quite other
instances. Cf. Is. 55:3. also Is. 63:7 "famous deeds"
- Moffatt's trans.
- v Nos. 2,3,6 - 8, 10,11,13,14,17 - 21, 23 - 25, 27 - 29
32,33,35,36.
- vi Nos. 2,7,8,11,14,17,23,25,28,29,32,33,35.
- vii Nos. 1, 4, 26.

ⁱ
 one never occurs in Ezer.-Neh. Hence we are left with eight
ⁱⁱ
 instances common to Chronicles and Ezer.-Neh. and found nowhere
 else and these are the ones that form the strongest evidence
 for an identity of authorship. But even these eight are not
 convincing proof. Two of them occur only once and one of them
ⁱⁱⁱ
 only twice in Chronicles, and it is difficult to regard such
^{iv}
 slight usage to constitute "earmarks" of style. Two others of
 the eight, while common to Chr. and Ezer.-Neh. do not fall in
 Ezra 1-6, which Torrey makes an important standard of the
^v
 Chronicler's style. This leaves three instances unaccounted for.
 In each of these cases it has already been indicated why they are
 highly questionable evidence, and over against them must be put
 those instances that point in an opposite direction. Under heads 3
 and 4 we saw that there was good reason to believe the Ezer.-Neh.
 usage indicated a source distinct from Chronicles. While Ps³7 in
 the hithpael was typical of Chronicles, it was not so used except
 once in Ezer.-Neh. The expression under head 4, while typical of
 Nehemiah's memoirs, never once occurs in Chronicles, which uses
 another idiom for the same idea. In two other cases (Nos. 18 and
 19) we saw that the passages concerned dealt with the same subject
 and one that lay very near the Chronicler's heart. In the one case

- ⁱ No. 30
- ⁱⁱ Nos. 5, 9, 12, 15, 16, 22, 31, 34.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Nos. 9, 12 once; 22 twice.
- ^{iv} Nos. 16, 31.
- ^v Nos. 5, 15, 34. - see Pgs. 27, 33, 48.

the great variety used in Ezer.-Neh. does not support the idea that this is based on Chronicles. In the other case the differences of detail are great and the identity of subject would be quite sufficient to give rise to surface similarities. If there exists any external evidence for the belief that Ezer.-Neh. do contain certain authentic sources outside the Chronicler's imagination, then many of these similarities would bear witness rather to the very reverse of Torrey's theory. They would suggest that, owing to identity of interests, the Chronicler embellished his pre-exilic history from the sources of Ezra and Nehemiah. This hypothesis is further reinforced by what has already been said under head 34. Finally the independence of the sources of Ezer.-Neh. is strongly supported by its unique usages that differ from the use of the same terms in other writers, including the Chronicler. This has already been suggested under heads 22 & 35. While Torrey's charge is correct, as far as I can find, that no one has published a repudiation of his evidence, yet it is true that he has failed to win the support of the majority of O.T. scholars in the far-reaching conclusions he claims to have proved,ⁱ

i K. Gesc. where he shows:- that Torrey ignores evidence contrary to his theory, selects from Driver only what is relevant to it and actually misinterprets the lists in Driver. Kittel's view is that the evidence does nothing more than illustrate that Ezer.-Neh. and Chr. belong to the late Hebrew literature.

cf. also S. Gesc. 1932; F. Chr. Frag. 1903; J. Wied. 1904 Oest. H. vol. ii 1932; Mey, Ent. ; Br. EJ. etc.

and much evidence to the contrary he simply waives aside.ⁱ
 Geissler'sⁱⁱ laborious effort to trace the linguistic roots of
 Ezer.-Neh., while admitting, as all do, the literary contacts
 between Ezer.-Neh. and Chronicles, shows also many reasons which
 do not support Torrey's claims. If Torrey feels abused by
 indifference, why did he not spare Geissler the same fate? It
 is no part of our purpose to arbitrate between these two, each
 of whom seeks to prove what the other denies, but it must not
 be overlooked that Geissler has produced an amazing bulk of
 evidence which supports the independence of the Ezra Memoirs.
 Our purpose has been to show simply that the evidence for the
 untrustworthy nature of the Ezra Memoirs on a linguistic basis
 is inadequate.

In the detailed investigation of the evidence no
 attempt has been made to minimise the similarity between
 Chronicles and Ezer.-Neh. At a later stage and in another con-
 nection it will be shown how indissolubly the two books form a
 single history from the hand of one author called the Chronicler.ⁱⁱⁱ
 But, in view of the tenacity with which Torrey has maintained the
 position that apart from minor exceptions,^{iv} the whole Hebrew
 record of the restoration is historically baseless on the ground
 of its linguistic identity with Chronicles, it has been necessary

- i e.g. ES. Pg. 241 foot note.
- ii Geis.
- iii Section 4.
- iv Nehemiah Memoirs & one Aram. document.

to lay this evidence bare as concisely as possible. No one who has taken the trouble to examine it can deny the closeness of relation between Chronicles and Ezer-Nehemiah. It is the closeness that must necessarily exist between two portions of a history produced by the same man. But when all due allowance is made for this fact, the evidence does not produce any convincing proof that the sources of Ezer-Nehemiah which the Chronicler claims to have preserved, are nothing but a baseless fraud. What the evidence does show is that much of it is quite irrelevant, being found throughout the Old Testament, and that even the small number of instances which are relevant contain quite as many facts against the theory as can be adduced in its favour.

C O N C L U S I O N .

In the preceding two chapters the evidence has been examined and evaluated, a) for the lateness of EA, and b) for the identity of style and language between the Ezra Memoirs and the rest of the Chronicler's work. The first was found to be only one plausible interpretation of the facts which was highly tentative. The second, while making full allowance for the similarity which obviously must obtain between two sections of a history written by the same man, was found to be quite inadequate as a dogmatic proof that no sources were preserved in the Ezra Memoirs. We now turn to apply, in a word, these conclusions to the claim that the history contained in these documents is false, on the basis of linguistic proof. These proofs simply do not exist, although the authenticity of the history has been challenged on quite other grounds which will be considered in the following sections. It cannot be too strongly asserted that these conclusions, of which Baumgartner, Hölscher and Torrey are the outstanding exponents are completely ⁱ unsound.

i It is significant, and in fairness to Prof. Baumgartner it should be stated, that in a personal interview in Basle July 11th, 1939, he admitted that H.H. Schaeder in his two works "Iranische Beiträge" & "Esra der Schreiber" had convinced him of the authenticity of the Ezra Memoirs and as a result he had broken with Hölscher & Torrey, with whom he had agreed when he wrote the article on Daniel (ZAW. 1927). Hence Baumgartner would no longer maintain the position with which we have here associated his name.

But let us suppose that this linguistic evidence did prove the lateness of EA and the Chronicler's diction in the Ezra Memoirs; it needs to be emphasised that these two facts in themselves do not prove that the history they enshrine is false.ⁱ Kittelⁱⁱ aptly criticises this fallacy in an unanswerable argument, not unmixed with humour, when he suggests that the Chronicler, casting his material in his own language, never for a moment imagined that some 20th century professor would brand him a liar. His view may be right that the Chronicler made notes in his own way and produced his history as an intelligible version for his contemporaries, and that the differences between his style and that to which his sources originally belonged are no greater than those that modern versions of the classics habitually introduce. At least, conjectural though it be, Kittel's view is quite reasonable,ⁱⁱⁱ and no scorn of Torrey's can alter that fact. There is no doubt that much of our O.T. history, preserved in the Bible, stands today in a language later than the events it describes. Are we to regard the whole range of Hebrew history prior to the 8th century B.C., and much of it prior to the 3rd century B.C., as the imaginary saga of priestly fabricators, pawned off upon a people so superstitiously gullible as to make it their highest rule of life, the very oracle of God? It would be interesting to read a Hebrew history from which was discarded all that did not conform to the standard Torrey imposes on Ezer.-Neh. It would at least be brief. So far as the linguistic evidence goes, there is nothing

i A view maintained by most scholars of the period; see footnote to Pg. 54.

ii K. Gesc. 1929

iii ES Pg. 163 footnote.

to support the contention that the historical content of the Aramaic documents and the Ezra Memoirs is unauthentic. If the authenticity of this history is questionable, then it must rest on evidence of a different kind.

S E C T I O N

II

THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Chapter 3

The Achaemenian Policy and Practice.

In the discussion of the linguistic problem of the Aramaic sections, two results emerged. First, that the evidence adduced to prove that the language was not that of the 5th Century B.C., did not appear to be as formidable as is generally supposed. Second, that, even if this evidence did prove that the forms used were those of a later date than the 5th Century B.C., that fact does not prove that the contents of the documents are also of a later date. The date of the language does not determine the date of the subject-matter.

It is now necessary to turn to an expanding of this second conclusion by marshalling whatever evidence exists for the authenticity of these Aramaic documents in respect of their content. To do this, we must turn to the sources of Persian History as at present known to us, and bring forward whatever there is within it which illuminates the content of these Aramaic portions of Ezra. If these Persian decrees in Ezra are found to be isolated phenomena which have no support in Persian practice, then there would be weighty grounds for the belief that they are spurious. But if, on the other hand, it can be shown that they are in general conformity to the Persian practice, and that phenomena, accepted by Persian scholars as reliable, can be shown to be parallel to these documents in Ezra, then we have important evidence for the genuineness of these decrees, which would require overwhelming facts to the contrary to be overridden. Let us now turn to an examination of this evidence, first of all by elucidating the general policy of the Achaemenian Kings, in so far as it concerns these documents,

and in the next chapter, by applying the results obtained to the facts of the documents in closer detail.

We need to examine the question of whether the official policy of the Achaemenian rulers was the same as that reflected in these edicts, and whether the contents of these portions of Ezra are in any way supported by what we know of Persian history from other sources. In considering this question we must take into account also the Edict of Cyrus as given in Hebrew (Ezr.1: 2 - 4), since it is referred to and partly quoted in the Aramaic sections (Ezr. 5: 13-15; 6: 3-5). From the Aramaic sections of Ezra upon which the history of the Chronicler's story rests, we gather the following impression of Achaemenian policy towards the Jews:

Soon after the accession of Cyrus to the throne of the Babylonian Empire, he issued a proclamation that the exiled Jews might return to Jerusalem, their national capital, and rebuild the ruined temple of Jehovah; that others who did not actually go themselves, might contribute in all practical ways to that task; that the precious vessels belonging to the Jewish temple which Nebuchadrezzar had taken to Babylon, were to be restored by Sheshbazzar who was named as governor. In the reign of Darius the Great, Tattenai, satrap of "Beyond the River" questioned the authority of the Jews in Jerusalem who were engaged in rebuilding the temple. The Jews having appealed to the Edict of Cyrus, the matter was referred to the king for investigation, and a reply

from Darius was to the effect that the Edict in question had been found and was to be honoured, and moreover instructions were given to the satrap to furnish the expenses and needs of the project from the imperial funds. Hence the temple was duly completed. In Ezra 4 we have a section which relates to certain building operations in Jerusalem which were opposed by certain officials who referred the matter to Artaxerxes. A reply was sent that their treasonable charges appeared substantial and the work was to be stopped. The editor's statement that "the work of the house of God" ceased until the reign of Darius (Ezra 4:24) is the only indication that this interruption refers to the temple. From the letters themselves it would appear to be fortifications etc. pertaining to the City. Finally we are told that Artaxerxes commissioned Ezra, the scribe of the Law, to go to Jerusalem and establish the community on the basis of his law-book; and sent him loaded with royal gifts and with absolute authority to carry out his mission.

From this brief summary of the facts as recorded in these sections of Ezra, we find that Cyrus, the petty ruler of an obscure and subject people, who had risen within the short space of a dozen years, by a series of astounding victories, to the status of an unchallenged monarch of an enormous Empire, is acknowledged as the liberator of an oppressed people and the champion of their dishonoured faith. The disgrace of exile which was an ever-present reminder of the disintegration of their national life, and the destruction of their national shrine, was

to be ended. The widow that lay in the dust and ashes (Lam. 1) shall no more be desolate, and the right hand can now remember its skill, nor need the tongue cleave any longer to the roof of the mouth, (Ps. 137: 5-6), for a rhapsody of joy shall replace the sorrow of their night. The prophetic voice is once again calling the people to rejoice. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; that she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins". (Is. 40: 1-2). And the significant fact of all this, for our purpose here, is that the prophet does not hesitate to attribute all this to Cyrus, King of Persia, as the divine agent of the Most High, "I have raised up one from the North, and he is come; from the rising of the sun one that calleth upon my name, and he shall come upon rulers as upon mortar and as the potter treadeth clay". (Is. 41:25)ⁱ.

Now when we turn to the available sources of Persian history we find that this policy of magnanimity towards subject peoples and of religious toleration, which is here attributed to the early Achaemenian rulers, was a recognised habit and not an isolated instance. One of the first pieces of evidence to be

ⁱ cf. Is. 44:28; 45:1 where Cyrus is actually named.

considered is the Persian Verse account of Nabonidus,ⁱ which gives us a picture of events surrounding the last King of Babylon. (555-538 B.C.). From this tablet we learn the following facts which throw light upon our subject. Injustice and oppression were the cause of much discontent and unrest during the early years of his reign. (Col. 1: 1-15). He became the victim of a demonic possession which led him to build a sanctuary alien to the religious traditions of his people, and to absent himself from the country he ruled. He set up a god called "Sin" which evidently was not the god "Sin" recognised by his subjects, (Col. 1: 16-32), and undertook the building of a temple for "Sin" in Harran, during which operations he ordered the New Year's Festival to lapse. (Col. 11: 2-15). He boasted that he would conquer the aggressive Cyrus (Col. v 2-7). In the final column (Col. vi) we are informed of the restoration of the old rites of Babylon and of the return of the gods to their respective cities, etc. Sidney Smithⁱ gives an excellent reconstruction of these somewhat disjointed facts by a penetrative study of other cuneiform texts and of Herodotus. For clarity it might be well to summarise his results. A funerary inscriptionⁱⁱ has been found at Eski - Harran which gives a biographical record of a parent of Nabonidus. Herodotus (l. 185-188) informs us that Labynetus was the son of Nitocris, who as queen carried out building operations

ⁱ Smith BHT. Pg. 27 ff.

ⁱⁱ "Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften", Langdon.

during the reign of Nebuchadrezzar and was buried near Babylon. Thus this parent referred to in the inscription must be the father of Nabonidus, and since he is stated to have spent a long life "before the face of Sin", he must have been a priest of Sin in Harran. If, therefore, the parents of Nabonidus were living in Harran when Nabopolassar captured it, they would normally have been taken captives to Babylon, and the mother put into the King's harem, or as in this case, in the harem of the king's son Nebuchadrezzar. The father, for some reason, probably out of respect for his priestly office, might have been left in Harran. Hence after a few unsuccessful reigns, following the death of Nebuchadrezzar, the choice fell on Nabonidus, as the son of the great king's favourite wife. Thus, if this reconstruction is right, we have a boy of Syrian origin, belonging to a priestly family that worshipped Sin of Harran, as the last Babylonian king. In Langdonⁱ (Nabonid No. 1) there is an inscription which shows that Nabonidus undertook the repair of the temple at Harran, and Sin is given the place of honour among the gods. It seems evident, therefore, that the sacrilege which the Persian Verse account attributes to demonic possession (Col. 1. 17-18) is this restoration of the temple at Harran, which doubtless involved many other ways in which Nabonidus identified his sympathies with an alien cult. He went so far as

i Pg. 64 Note ii.

to abandon the New Year's festival while he was attending to these operations in Harran, and this would certainly rouse the resentment of the priesthood in Babylonia.

More evidence of this same kind is contained in the Nabonidus Chronicle,ⁱ a tablet which is most probably a copy of an original belonging to the time of Artaxerxes I. It refers to the omission of the New Year's festival in the year 548 B.C. (Col. 11.5-8), in the year 546 (Col. 11. 10-18), in the year 545 (Col. 11.12-22), and in the year 544 (Col. 11.23-5). With the return of Nabonidus to Babylon in 538 B.C. the New Year's festival is resumed (Col. 111. 5-11), and the gods of the country are gathered to Babylon (Col.111. 8-10), perhaps because of the increasing danger of Cyrus; and this removal of the gods was most probably resented by the priests since those of Borsippa, Kuthah and Sippar did not come in (Col. 111. 11-12). Finally Nabonidus attempted flight but was captured (Col. 111. 15-16). On the entry of Cyrus there was unbounded rejoicing. He was welcomed as a liberator and a restorer of the Faith. Babylon was given peace, and the gods were restored to their respective homes. (Col.111.15-22

ⁱⁱ
When we turn to the Cyrus Cylinder we find these facts reiterated:

- i Smith BHT. Pgs. 98ff.
- ii See A. H. Sayce, "Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments", Pgs. 146ff. where the full inscription is given.

"The gods living within them left their shrines in anger, when (Nabonidus) brought them into Babylon; Merodach went about to all men, wherever were their seats; and the men of Sumer and Accad, whom he had sworn should attend him (besought him to return). The favour he granted, he came back, all lands even the whole of them, rejoiced and ate, and he appointed a king to guide aright in the heart what his hand upholds. Cyrus, king of Elam, he proclaimed by name for the sovereignty.....Merodach, the great Lord, the restorer of his people, beheld with joy the deeds of his vice-regent who was righteous in hand and heart. To his city of Babylon he summoned his march, and he bade him take the road to Babylon; like a friend and a comrade he went at his side,.....Nabonidus, the king, who worshipped him not, he gave into his hand. The men of Babylon, all of them, (and) the whole of Sumer and Accad, the nobles and priests, who had revolted kissed his feet, they rejoiced in his sovereignty, their faces shone.....the sanctuaries of Babylon, and all its fortresses I established in peace. As for the sons of Babylon.....their ruins I repaired and I delivered their prisoners..... I restored the gods who dwell within them to their places and I enlarged (for them) seats that should be long enduring; all their peoples I assembled, and I restored their lands. And the gods of Sumar and Accad, whom Nabonidus, to the anger of the Lord of Gods (Merodach), had brought into Babylon, I settled in peace in their sanctuaries by the command of Merodach, the great Lord. In the goodness of their hearts may all the gods whom I have brought into their strong places daily intercede before Bel and Nebo that they should grant me length of days; may they bless my projects with prosperity, and may they say to Merodach my Lord, that Cyrus, the king, thy worshipper, and Kambyses, his son, deserve favour".

Herodotus concludes his story of the capture of Babylon on the same note, "It was a day of festivity among them,

and whilst the citizens were engaged in dance and merriment,
 Babylon was, for the first time, thus taken.ⁱ

It is quite evident that in these documents an unmitigated attempt to blacken the name of Nabonidus is being made, and every effort strained to portray Cyrus as the glorious liberator of the people.ⁱⁱ The charge that Nabonidus, for instance, did not worship Marduk is false, and we know that Nabonidus displayed great interest in restoring the ancient rites.ⁱⁱⁱ But when all due allowance is made for such exaggerations, an impartial study of these documents indicates that Nabonidus did manage to incur the bitter resentment of a certain priestly class, and that his overthrow by Cyrus, was hailed with manifest satisfaction. It is possible that the exact details of the situation are beyond recall, but at least it seems probable that Nabonidus did two things which led to his unpopularity. He was the enthusiast of a foreign cult practised at Harran, and he also instituted certain changes in ritual, which were interpreted by him as a return to the orthodox tradition as he understood it, but which the priests regarded as heretical innovations. As regards Cyrus, there is no reason to doubt the substance of the facts concerning him which the documents give. He captured Babylon without resistance, paid homage to the great Marduk, restored the gods to their rightful

ⁱ Herod 1. 191

ⁱⁱ See O.E. Hagen "Keilschrifturkunden zur Geschichte des Königs Cyrus", 1891.

ⁱⁱⁱ Clay, "Miscellaneous Inscriptions in the Yale Collection", No. 45 I.ii. 10.

seats, repaired the damage done to the dwellings of the poor, protected the city and its shrines from pillage, and allowed all to return to their homes and normal occupations. It has long been recognised that Cyrus embarked upon a new policy which reversed all the traditions of the past. He began a new attitude in international relationships whose potency has not as yet been completely exploited. Oesterley declared, "His considerate treatment of the subjects of his vassal states and his broad-minded toleration of every form of worship, mark him out as one of the most enlightened rulers the world has ever seen"ⁱ. Welch does not question this statement, but he questions the purity of the motives, and puts the policy of Cyrus down to expediency rather than magnanimity.ⁱⁱ Whatever be his motives, it cannot be denied that the policy of Cyrus was a new adventure and full of fruitful results. When we compare this evidence with the policy of Cyrus as revealed in the various forms of his Edict to the Jews as contained in Ezra, we cannot but agree with the conclusion of Lods, "The measures adopted by Cyrus in dealing with the Jews were merely the application to an individual case of the general principles of his policy."ⁱⁱⁱ

The Greek historians have been at no small pains to illustrate this aspect of Achaemenian policy. Xenophon has cast a halo of glory around the head of his hero, and doubtless his

i. Oest H. Vol. 11 Pg. 65
 ii WPJ. ch. 5.
 iii L. PRJ. Pg. 185.

imagination made up for whatever his sources lacked. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that his portrait faithfully reflects the main substance of his hero's policy. He declares that Cyrus had a magnetic influence upon men which inspired within them unflinching obedience, in which they willingly and gladly surrendered themselves to his will.ⁱ One of the supreme lessons he learnt from Cambyses his father was that the surest way to gain the affections of one's subjects was to prove oneself their benefactor.ⁱⁱ Certainly no one can doubt that Cyrus excelled in this art. This policy is illustrated further in his choice of leaders. Xenophon declares that Cyrus extolled the value of choosing one's leaders and one's army from the best men, irrespective of their nationality. He did not select his men only from among his own countrymen but chose always those who "will be most likely to contribute to your strength and to your honour".ⁱⁱⁱ We can see how he carried out this policy in his choice of such men as Sheshbazzar, "the prince of Judah", (Ezra 1:8), and Zerubbabel, and the policy was continued by his successors in the appointments of Nehemiah and Ezra.

We have evidence that Cyrus carried out his principle of magnanimity even towards his former foes. After the defeat of the Median forces Astyages, their king, was captured and remained a captive for the rest of his life, but Herodotus assures us that he, "in no other instance treated him with severity".^{iv} In no other way

i Cyro. I. i 3,5.

ii " I. vi 24.

iii " II. ii 26.

iv Herod. I. 130; but cf. Isocrates who, in a funeral oration over Evagoras, Kg. of Salamis, in Cyprus, claims Cyrus put Astyages to death.

was this spirit more displayed than in his treatment of Croesus, king of Lydia, as given in Herodotus.ⁱ According to the story Croesus was set bound upon a huge pile of wood which was duly lighted, and the king's end seemed near. But Cyrus relented, and with the aid of a downpour of rain which extinguished the flames, Croesus was spared, and he in turn induced Cyrus to spare Sardis from pillage by reminding him that he would be spoiling only his own wealth. Hence "Cyrus immediately ordered him to be unbound, placed him near his person and treated him with great respect", and promised to grant him any request he might ask. He later took Croesus to Ecbatana with him, relied upon his counsel even to the last of his career. Indeed Croesus was given regal status with cavalry and footmen and a part of his royal income, and some historians have accepted these statements as facts.ⁱⁱ Similarly Josephusⁱⁱⁱ and Eusebius^{iv} quote Berosus to the effect that Cyrus spared the life of Nabonidus and made him governor of Carmania. But it must be admitted that these stories are open to some doubt. The first one is thrown under suspicion by the fact that the Nabonidus Chronicle (Col. 11. 15-17) speaks of Cyrus crossing the Tigris in 547-6 B.C. and conquering the land of "Lu..." and killing its king, who might well be identified with Croesus of Lydia who was overwhelmed in that year. The second account is questioned because it is inconsistent with the account of Xenophon^v to the effect that the troops of Gobryas

i Herod 1. 88, 90, 93, 95, 207, also cf. X. Cyro. VII i & 11
 ii R. HAP. Pg. 49.
 iii "Contra Apionem" i. 20-21
 iv "Praep. Evang. IX. 41.
 v Cyro. viii. 5,31.

killed Nabonidus. Nevertheless although the evidence is inconsistent, there is no certainty that "Lu..." does refer to Lydia, or that Xenophon, whose picture of Cyrus is notoriously imaginative, is right in this particular instance. Indeed Xenophon records also an incident of how Cyrus pardoned the rebel Armenian king, returned his wife and children, and left him in charge of his territory.

However, even if Cyrus did execute the heads of these kingdoms which he had to subdue in his upward climb to supremacy, this would not militate against the fact we are at pains to illustrate. All evidence shows, without any serious contradiction, that Cyrus initiated a new attitude of conciliation toward those he conquered, and exhibited a fine sense of how best to win the goodwill and cooperation of his subjects by not riding roughshod over their national and religious sensibilities. When all this evidence is weighed in the balance, quite apart from those questions of detail about which Persian authorities are not yet agreed, the facts stand out that Cyrus ascended the Babylonian throne, regarded as a welcome liberator by a large section of the people, and that he earned their regard not by any false propaganda, but by concrete deeds of redress and toleration in political and religious affairs. Thus the facts which Ezra records about Cyrus and his dealings with the exiles, are in complete harmony with all else which we know about him.

We need to notice at this point that the policy of Cyrus which has been set forth above did not die with him, but became the

recognised practice of his successors. Cambyses succeeded his father as ruler of the vast empire so far won, and he desired to extend it still farther. Thus began the Egyptian campaign with which most of his reign was concerned. The noble bearing of Psammenitus, King of Egypt, as he watched the humiliation of his children and friends, melted the heart of Cambyses who spared his life and he "received no further ill-treatment".ⁱ Herodotus further explains that it was a Persian custom to hold the sons of kings in the greatest reverence and to permit them to govern their father's domains as long as they remained loyal, and he cites illustrations to prove the point. However Psammenitus revolted, and later paid for it with his life. Cambyses followed Cyrus also in his tolerant regard for the religious practices of the Egyptians, and for this we have documentary evidence. On the statue of Uza-hor-res-neit,ⁱⁱ in the Vatican at Rome, we have a record written by a high official of the period, the admiral of the Egyptian Fleet, in which he records his life history. In this record we learn these facts: Cambyses accepted the name Mesut-Ra, and was instructed by this writer in the mysteries and greatness of "the great goddess" Neit, her temples and worship. The king ordered the foreigners who had taken up their abode in the sanctuary to go, the temple was purified, and all revenues previously

ⁱ Herod. 111. 15

ⁱⁱ For translation see P. HE Vol. 111 Pgs. 360-363. Also H. Brugsch "Geschichte Aegyptens unter den Pharaonen", 1877; and Rogers "History of Egypt" Pg. 79 etc. Mey. Ent. Pg. 71.

confiscated were restored. From this, a contemporary record during the reign of Cambyses, we gather that he used every possible means of conciliating his subjects in Egypt, and that he did it in the one way most effective in those days, by identifying himself with the religious life of the people and in the guise of a defender of their faith. Moreover in the letter written by the Jews of Elephantine to Jerusalem for permission to rebuild their damaged temple, Cambyses is specifically mentioned as showing particular partiality to the Jewish shrine even when his outrages violated those of the Egyptian.ⁱ Of course, we need not forget the insane excesses associated with the name of Cambyses which certainly do not lend support to a spirit of tolerance. According to Herodotus,ⁱⁱ he murdered his brother Smerdis through jealousy,ⁱⁱⁱ then his sister-wife, for deprecating the deed.^{iv} He shot an arrow through the heart of his cupbearer, the son of his trusted friend Prexaspes, merely to test his aim,^v and outraged the sanctities of the Egyptian temples and deities.^{vi} But these outrages are all attributed to the excesses of a mental collapse which overtook him as the result of his military failures,^{vi} and over against these must be placed the sober fact that his conquest of Egypt did have a much more permanent effect than Herodotus allows. For instance, although Herodotus discounts

i	Cow. Aram. No. 30: 13ff.
ii	Herod 111, 30.
iii	" 111, 32.
iv	" 111, 35
v	" 111, 37, 29.
vi	" 111, 30, 38.

his Ethiopian campaign as a dismal failure,ⁱ yet he elsewhere
 admits that Ethiopia was subject to Persia in the time of Darius,ⁱⁱ
 that Egypt did not rebel against Persian rule until 485 B.C.
 when Darius had to remove Aryandes, the governor, whom Cambyses
 had set up,ⁱⁱⁱ and that "the Ethiopians who came from beyond Egypt"
 comprised a part of Xerxes' army against Greece.^{iv}

That Darius, the Great, continued the policy of the first
 two Persian monarchs, especially in the sphere of religion, is
 strongly attested. In crushing revolt Darius was effective and
 ruthless,ⁱⁱⁱ but although strong measures were needed to deal with
 political rivals like Aryandes in Egypt, he displayed marked interest
 in, and sympathy for, the religious and intellectual welfare of his
 subject peoples. In the inscription of Uza-hor-res-neit,^v the
 author continues by stating how he had been instrumental in
 redeeming the religious practices and the pitiable condition of the
 poor, after "the very great calamity which came to pass in the whole
 land". This may very likely refer to outrages occasioned by the
 mental collapse of Cambyses in which he is said to have desecrated
 certain temples. This task was carried out by the express order
 of Darius who sought to revive the priestly schools of learning,
 made provision for the scribal teachers and ordered the restoration
 of all temples and feasts, as the following quotation shows:

- i Herod 111, 25.
- ii " 111, 91, 97.
- iii " IV, 166.
- iv " VII, 69
- v See Note Pg. 73.

"His Majesty, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Darius, ordered me to go to Egypt while his Majesty was in Aram (Syria), as he was great king of all lands and great prince of Egypt, in order to re-establish the school of sacred scribes after its ruin. The foreigners brought me from land to land, and brought me safely to Egypt, according to the word of the lord of both plains. I did as his Majesty had ordered. I provided for all the staff of scribes, and the sons of the wealthy; the children of the poor were not admitted; and I gave them to the care of the learned in all their works. His Majesty ordered that they should be given all good things, to fulfil all their needs. I gave them all their revenues, all their needs according to the word, as had been done for them before. His Majesty did this because he knew the virtue of this work of restoring all that he found wrecked, and to restore the names of all the gods, their temples, their endowments, and the management of their feasts forever".¹

According to this contemporary inscription we see another side of Darius from that derived from a study of the Behistun Inscription. We see him here as the reformer who seeks to restore the ancient rites and privileges of a subject people who had suffered grievous calamities, and as the tolerant conciliator seeking to win the esteem of those beneath his rule. Surely the letter of Darius in Ezra 6 is just another instance of precisely the same spirit in favour of the Jews whose goodwill was a bulwark on his western flank. In other ways also we know that Darius expressed his interest in the religious aspect of Egyptian life. In the temple at El-Khargeh, which may have been built by Darius, his name is

i P. HE. Vol. iii Pg. 362.

i

inscribed on the walls. In the temple at Ed-Fu there is an
 inscription of gifts made by Darius in the 19th year of his
 reign,ⁱⁱ and hints of his religious tolerance were known also
 to classical writers.ⁱⁱⁱ But in no document is this spirit
 more clearly illustrated than in the famous Gadatos inscription
 where Darius reproves the gardener for trespassing upon the
 territory of Apollo, and for exacting tribute there in violation
 of express commands based upon the settled policy of his Achaemenian
 forebears:

"The King of Kings, Darius, son of Hyspaspes, to his
 slave Gadatos: I have learned that you do not in all
 respects obey my injunction. In so far as you cultivate
 my land by transplanting the fruits of 'Across the
 Euphrates' to the parts of Lower Asia, I commend your
 purpose, and because of this, there shall be laid up
 for you great favour in the king's house. Nevertheless
 because you are setting at naught my policy towards the
 gods, I will give you, if you do not change, a proof
 of my injured feelings. For you have enforced tribute
 from the holy gardeners of Apollo and have ordered them
 to dig unhallowed ground, not knowing the mind of my
 forefathers towards the gods, who told the Persians the
 whole truth".^{iv}

- i a) H. Brugsch "Geschichte Aegyptens unter den Pharaonen".
- b) " " "Reise nach der Oase von El Kharge".
- c) J. Wied.
- ii Lepsius "Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie". 1875
- iii Herod. 11. 110; Diod. 195ff.
- iv G. Cousin and G. Deschamps "Bulletin de correspondance
 Hellénique"
- v xiii 1889 529ff. cf. Olm. HPS. pg. 570ff. & Mey. Ent. Pg. 19

Here we have royal action taken concerning the religious interests of another people and based upon the established policy of former kings. A copy of the letter was presumably kept in the archives of Apollo just as the copy of a similar letter written to Tattenai would be kept in the archives of Jerusalem, though in the latter case it would be written in Aramaic, the literary medium of the west.

Even in the Behistun inscription, where Darius is most severe in putting down rebellion, we find this policy of the Achaemenian kings thrusting itself through the most barbarous deeds. After describing how the rebel Smerdis was slain, Darius gives the characteristic interpretation of the act: "(Thus) saith Darius, the king: the kingdom that hath been wrested from our line I brought back, (and) I established it in its place as it was of old. The temple which Gaumata, the magian, had destroyed I restored for the people and the pasture lands and the herds and the dwelling places, and the houses, which Gaumata, the magian, had taken away. I settled the people in their place, (the people of) Persia, and Media, and the other provinces. I restored that which had been taken away as it was in the days of old. This did I by the grace of Auramazda....."ⁱ Here we have the same attitude of Cyrus as a restorer of the popular traditions which one false to the true interests of the people had damaged or removed. How much of this was political propaganda it is difficult to say, but it would certainly be unreasonable to suppose that something so characteristic of the earlier Persian kings was a baseless fraud.

ⁱ Behistun Inscription Col. 1. XIV.

It can of course be objected, that Darius was no weak appeaser in dealing with opposition and the Behistun Inscription is strong evidence that he could crush all political rivals with a barbarity that approximated the worst Assyrian outrages. He thought nothing of slaying the false Smerdis,ⁱ of mutilating Phraortes of Media, by cutting off his nose, ears and tongue, putting out his eyes, holding him in fetters for the public gaze and finally crucifying him at Ecbatana.ⁱⁱ The same treatment was given to Citrantakhma, rebel of Sagartia,ⁱⁱⁱ and to Vahyazdata.^{iv} Nor does the Greek historian, Herodotus, fail to reveal this aspect of Darius. Because a certain Ebazus asked that one of his three sons be left behind when Darius was recruiting men for his ill-starred Seythian campaign, the king graciously replied that the three might remain, and promptly had all three of them slain,^v though he could treat the defeated Milesians with great humanity,^{vi} and pardon the Eretrians.^{vii}

In order to ensure his safe and speedy retreat during the same ill-fated expedition, Darius had no scruples about leaving to their fate all the weak and wounded.^{viii} When he had finally reduced Babylon to subjection, Darius levelled the walls and

i	Behistun Inscription	Col. 1	xiii
ii	"	"	Col.11. xxxII
iii	"	"	Col.11. xxxiii
iv	"	"	Col.111. xLiii
v	Herod	iv.	84
vi	"	VI	20.
vii	"	VI	cxix
viii	"	IV	135.

removed the gates, "neither of which things Cyrus had done before",ⁱ and crucified some 3,000 of the leading citizens. But while these atrocities should be in fairness remembered in any attempt to reveal the true character of Darius, they must be set over against the background of his times and of the extraordinary upheavals with which he had to contend at the beginning of his reign. No king could have ascended the throne amid more insuperable difficulties with practically his whole Empire in open revolt: "(Thus) saith Darius, the King, I fought nineteen battles, (and) by the grace of Auramazda I overthrew nine kings....."ⁱⁱ The fact that he reduced the country to settled peace in so brief a time and with such effectiveness, and that he was able to give to it a vast organisation which held it together in order and discipline, has distinguished him as one of the greatest rulers of all time. When we remember the ethics of absolute dictatorship that obtained in the world of his time, and on which Cyrus and his successors made such a remarkable advance, the wonder is that his reign was not marked by unrelieved barbarity. But there stands, in magnificent contrast, abundant evidence that, like Cyrus and Cambyses before him, he sought to conciliate his subjects by wise and tolerant interest in their religious and social life. The correspondence in Ezra Chs. 5-6 is but one illustration of his

ⁱ Herod III 159

ⁱⁱ Behistun Inscription Col. LV. 52

ⁱⁱⁱ Herod VII 7.

natural magnanimity and wise political astuteness.

After Darius the Great, there is a definite decline in the effectiveness of the Persian rulers. Xerxes inherited a rebellion in Egypt which had broken out before his father's death, when Aryandes, appointed prefect by Cambyses, struck coins in his name and this was interpreted by Darius as rebellion.ⁱ Having put this down,ⁱⁱ and appointed Achaemenes, his brother, over Egypt, Xerxes turned his attention to the Greek war which consumed most of his reign. Another rebellion in Babylon was put down with stern vigour, in which every vestige of Babylon as a separate state was obliterated.ⁱⁱⁱ The great temple of Esagila was razed, and the gold statue of Marduk, removed.^{iv} Henceforth no rebel could grasp the hands of Bel Marduk in token of sovereignty as was customary at the New Year's Festival. Such ruthless and desperate attempts to deal with a growing unrest which was destined to become a running sore in the side of Persian kings can be seen also in the reign of Artaxerxes reported in Ezra ch. 4. Xerxes, claims Rogers,^v in agreement with Tarn,^{vi} ended his days in debauchery and luxury amid the idleness and excess of the harem of which the book of Esther affords a vivid picture.

Another important piece of evidence for the monarch's interest in the religious affairs of his subjects comes from the reign of Darius II. (424 B.C.-404). This consists in an order

- i Herod IV 166.
- ii " VII 7.
- iii See Arrian III 16; VII 17; Aelian "Varia Historia" XIII 3; Strabo "Geography" XVI i - & cf. R. HAP.
- iv Herod I. 183.
- v R. HAP.
- vi CAH. Vol VI Pg. 2.

from Darius in his 5th year (i.e. 419) to the Jews of Elephantine to keep the festival of Unleavened Bread:

"To my brethren, Yedoniah and his colleagues the Jewish garrison, your brother Hananiah. The welfare of my brethren may the gods seek. Now this year, the 5th year of King Darius, word was sent from the King to Arsames, saying: In the month of Tybi (?) let there be a passover for the Jewish garrison. Now you accordingly count 14 days of the month Nisan and keep the Passover, and from the 15th day to the 21st day of Nisan (are) seven days of Unleavened Bread. Be clean and take heed. Do no work on the 15th day and on the 21st day. Also drink no beer, and anything at all in which there is leaven do not eat from the 15th day from sunset till the 21st day of Nisan, 7 days, let it not be seen among you; do not bring (it) into your dwellings, but seal (it) up during those days. Let this be done as Darius the king commanded. (address.) To my brethren Yedoniah and his colleagues the Jewish garrison, your brother Hananiah".¹

It is true that the original is by no means as complete as this restored version by Cowley would imply, but sufficient remains, apart from all emendations, to show the real significance of the letter. It is written by a Jew, Hananiah, who evidently held a sufficiently important official post to be entitled to despatch an order in the King's name. We know from another papyrusⁱⁱ that his visit to Egypt was a well-known event by which things could be dated. Indeed he may well be the brother of Nehemiah who twenty five years before (i.e. 444 B.C.

i Cow. Aram. No. 21
ii Pap. 38 line 7 (Cowley).

carried grievous news to Babylonia from Jerusalem which led to Nehemiah's mission.ⁱ The letter is addressed to Yedoniah who appears to be at the head of the Jewish community in Elephantine, and who still held that position in 408 B.C., when he wrote to Jerusalem concerning the rebuilding of the damaged temple.ⁱⁱ There is some doubt as to whether the Passover is included in the order and as to how novel it was for these festivals to take place. Strong indications would suggest that these feasts were irregularly held prior to the Restoration, and that Ezra is mainly responsible for giving them a permanent and ordered place in Judaism.ⁱⁱⁱ But there can be no doubt that an order based upon the king's authority was issued to these Jews in Elephantine, and that it specifically concerned the celebration of a religious festival and its ritual.^{iv} Cowley's conclusions are worth quoting:

"Various reasons may have induced the Great King to intervene in the religious affairs of an obscure settlement, but whatever they were, the case is exactly parallel

- i Neh. 1:1. - cf. W. R. Arnold, "The Passover Papyrus from Elephantine" in JBL. Vol. xxxi Pg. 1. 1912. Sachau "Drei Aramaische Papyrusurkunden" 1908.
- ii Pap. 30. (Cowley).
- iii For a full discussion of this point see Cow. Aram. Pgs. xxiv ff. and Pgs. 60 ff.
- iv cf. Lev. 23: 5-8; Ex. 12:18-19; 13:7; 23:15; 34:18; which show how Darius' order enforced the Jewish law.

to that of the letter of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7:12-26, and shows that we need not doubt the authenticity of the latter document. The similarity of style of the letter in Ezra to that of texts in this collection is striking. No doubt in both cases the king was only responsible for the general order or permission. The details are due to his Jewish Protégésⁱ What has hitherto seemed incredible is that they (the Persian Kings) should have concerned themselves with details of ceremonial, as in the letter of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7., but the present papyrus (and the style of other letters in this collection) removes all reason for doubting the genuineness of the Persian letters in Ezra".ⁱⁱ

The same interest in the religious affairs of his subjects is borne out in the carving and hymns of the temple in the Oasis of El Khargeh, already referred to.ⁱⁱⁱ

No one can look into this evidence from the Persian sources without recognising its cumulative weight. A great deal of it comes from inscriptions contemporary with the events they describe, and even when due allowance is made for all propagandist exaggeration, one clear impression is left. This impression is that the spirit which inspired the documents in Ezra is the spirit of the Persian Kings in their deliberate effort at conciliation and toleration extended towards their subject peoples. If it is felt that too much has been made of the Greek writers, one can answer with growing conviction

i Cow. Aram. Pg. xxiv

ii " " Pg. 62

iii Pg. 89 - See Brugsch "Grosse Oasis El Khargeh" (taf. viii, and 27, 48; Hay "Records of the Past" viii, 137 and "Soc. Bib. Archaeolo: Transactions" V, 293.

that the weight of scholarly opinion is increasingly in favour of their validity. In discussing the question of the parents of Nabonidus, Sidney Smith uses the evidence of Herodotus to aid him in his reconstruction of the events behind the Persian Verse account of Nabonidus, and paid tribute to this source in these words: "Herodotus has so often been proved right where his critics have thought him wrong that in the absence of definite evidence to the contrary his statement may be accepted without question".ⁱ A striking illustration of this truth can be found in Professor A. T. Olmstead's article, "A Persian Letter in Thucydides".ⁱⁱ Here Professor Olmstead examines in detail the letter of Xerxes written to Pausanius who had returned certain of the king's relatives and had asked for his daughter in marriage in return for his subjection of the Greeks.ⁱⁱⁱ While Thucydides admits that he did not always give a verbatim report of speeches, yet this examination proves without doubt that it was not his practice to insert forged documents as some scholars would have us believe.^{iv} Professor Olmstead compares this letter in detail with such sources as the Behistun Inscription, the Inscriptions of Persepolis, the Gadatos Inscription, and other known Persian documents, and it cannot be denied that it is a

i Smith HT. Pg. 37.

ii AJSL Vol. xLix Jan. 1933 Pgs. 154-61.

iii See Thucydides, i, 129, 3.

iv ES ch. 6.

genuine letter with its evidential value for O.T. studies:

"This Persian document in Thucydides does its bit in broadening the background for Jewish History. It does more, for the parallels with the Aramaic rescripts assigned to the Persian Kings in Ezra cannot be explained away, and thus there is one more witness to their authenticity".ⁱ If the Greek authorities painted a picture of the early Achaemenian rulers which was inconsistent with that depicted in the inscriptions, then there would be solid grounds for ignoring their witness, but we have seen that such is not the case. While in details the Greek writers may be imaginative, legendary and not scientifically historical in our modern sense, nevertheless, in the main impression they all give of the tolerance and religious interest of the Persian Kings, they are giving a faithful witness to the facts supported by contemporary documentary evidence, and by the progress of scientific scholarship. Even many of the so-called unhistorical details are being found not quite so fabulous as was commonly alleged. At least, we can conclude, from what we have seen so far, that the decrees and letters in Ezra are in the manner and spirit of the fixed policy of the Achaemenian monarchs in their new venture of tolerant and helpful encouragement towards their subject peoples in national and religious affairs.

ⁱ See Note ii, Pg. 85.

Chapter 4

The Persian Documents in Ezra.

It is now necessary for us to turn to the documents in Ezra in order to see how closely many of their details are paralleled by similar details in the sources of Persian history. Many of these parallels have already been indicated in the preceding chapter, and where that has been done, only a brief reference will be made here. But we must apply in detail some of this evidence already exhibited to the actual documents as they appear in Ezra, as well as fresh evidence not yet presented.

We note first that the Aramaic sections of Ezra obey the general form of all official letters belonging to that period. Aramaic was the official medium of expression for all such documents, a fact which all the evidence of archaeological results confirm. It was the language of political business and private letters from the Assyrian period to the third century B.C. when Greek began to supersede it. As early as 701 B.C. the ruling classes in Judaea understood Aramaic, since the representatives of Hezekiah appealed to the Assyrian Envoy Rabshakeh to utter his unpleasant threats in Aramaic so that the common people might not understand (2 Kgs. 18:26 cf. Is. 36:11), and it is highly probable that the use of Aramaic for official business goes back at least to the unsettlement occasioned by the deportations of 722 B.C., when Samaria fell before Assyria. At any rate, by Persian times Aramaic was well known as the common medium of expression and the official language of the imperial chancelleries, not only

in the western provinces "beyond the Rivers", but also in Egypt
 as the Elephantine Papyri show,ⁱ and even as far as India.ⁱⁱ Indeed
 one of the problems with which Nehemiah had to deal was the
 ignorance of the people of their own mother-tongue. (Neh. 13:
 23 ff.) Therefore the fact that the Ezra decrees and letters
 are in Aramaic, except for the decree of Cyrus (Ezr. 1:2-4), is
 quite natural and completely in keeping with the Persian practice.

The formal opening of the letters in Ezra conforms to
 the general rule, though in some cases the date is omitted. It
 was customary to state usually at the beginning of the letter
 the date, the sender's name and the one addressed, together with
 suitable titles if any. Letters varied, however, in the degree to
 which they observed this rule. Babylonian letters of the same
 period, like those in Ezra, illustrate this, although here the
 date is at the end.

"(Dated) in the month ofthe twenty-first day, the
 seventh year of Cyrus, the king of Babylon, King of Countries".ⁱⁱⁱ
 In the same collection we have other letters obeying the same
 rule dated in the third, fifth year of Cyrus,^{iv} and in the second
 year of Cambyses.^v The Elephantine papyri illustrate the same
 general rule found in almost all letters.^{vi} Another distinctive

- i Mey. Ent. Ch. 1
 K. Gesc.
 Cow. Aram. Pg. xv ff.
 Sch. IB.
 Olm. HPS.
- ii CAH. Pg. 62 where a discovery at Taxila reveals an
 inscription in Aramaic.
- iii T. LBL. No. 166.
- iv Nos. 179, 218 and 219.
- v No. 236.
- vi Cow. Aram. Nos. 1,2,5,6,8,9,13,14,15,20,21,25,28,29,30 etc.

thing about the opening of the letters of this period is the frequency with which the god is invoked in blessing upon the recipient of the letter. Here is a typical illustration:

"Letter from Ebabbara - sadunu to the Governor my father. May Bel and Nabu grant peace, happiness, health and long life unto my father". i

Practically all the letters in the collection follow the same rule. This is particularly the case when an inferior is addressing his superior, such as the governor, satrap or king. Similarly the Elephantine Papyri abound in this practice, one of the fullest being the famous papyrus in which the religious community wrote to the governor of Judaea for authorisation to rebuild the temple destroyed three years before (i.e. 411 B.C.).

"To our Lord Bigvai, governor of Judaea, your servants Yedoniah and his colleagues, the priests who are in Yeb the fortress. The health of your lordship may the God of Heaven seek after exceedingly at all times, and give you favour before Darius the king and the princes of the palace more than now a thousand times, and may he grant you long life, and may you be happy and prosperous at all times". ii
iii

Many others follow the same pattern.

One can hardly compare this opening formula with the documents in Ezra without noticing the similarity which stamps them all as belonging to the same general type, although due allowance must be made for the confused way in which the Chronicler often inserts the documents into his history, destroying to some extent the official beginning of the letters. (e.g. Ezer. 4: 7-11).

- i T. LBL. No. 2.
- ii Cow. Aram. No. 30.
- iii e.g. Nos. 17, 21, 38, 39, 40, 41, 57, etc.

Where the beginning is not so blurred, we get the recognised formula: "Unto Darius the King, all peace". (Ezr. 5: 7b). A trace of the date of the Cyrus decree is found in the part of it quoted by Darius:

"In the first year of Cyrus the King, Cyrus the King made a decree....." (Ezr. 6: 3a.).

A fuller opening is found in the decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra, though even here there is evidence of an omission after the word 'perfect' where the invocation of blessing has fallen out:

"Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra, the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of Heaven, perfectand now", (Ezr. 7:12).

Here we note a distinct similarity, even in the language used, between this Edict of Artaxerxes and the beginning of Darius' in his famous Behistun inscription cut in the rock on the road from Babylon to Ecbatana as an immortal tribute to his military successes:

"I am Darius the Great King, the King of Kings, the King of Persia, the King of the provinces, the son of Hystaspes, the grandson of Arsames, the Achaemenian". i

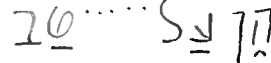
The letters in Ezra all refer to the king in some variety of the same title, e.g. "Cyrus, king of Persia", (1:2); "Artaxerxes, the King", (4:8); "Darius, the King", (5:7); "Cyrus, King of Babylon, Cyrus the King" (5:13; 6:3); "Artaxerxes King of Kings" (7:12). In the same way the Chronicler refers to the Persian Kings in other parts of his narrative. We have seen already in Pap. 30 quoted on Pg. 89 how the usual title for Jehovah as "God of Heaven", characteristic in this history of the Chronicler, is

i "Inscription of Darius the Great at Behistun" Col. I.i.
ii Ezra 1:1,7,8; 3:7; 4:3; 6:13,15; 7:1; Neh. 2:1; 5:14; 13:6.

also the title used by the letters of the Elephantine.

Another feature worth noting about the form of these letters is the gracious way in which any request is made to a superior, and that this preface "If it please....." becomes a stereotyped formula with which the request begins. In the letter of Tattenai, satrap of "beyond the River", who wrote to King Darius about the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, after having stated the situation, he makes the real request for which the letter is written, introduced by this formula, "Now, therefore, if it seem good to the King....." (Ezr. 5:17). Now in the letter written from Elephantine to some official about the desecration of the Jewish temple on the part of Egyptian Priests and Waidrang, the governor, complaining that this interfered with the regular offerings to the "God of Heaven", a request is made for a cessation of this state of affairs and for the rebuilding of the altar destroyed. But this request, which is the real burden of the letter, is prefaced with the same formula, "If it please your Lordship...", and this is repeated three times within four lines, and in three cases the exact words are used which are found in the Ezra letter. ⁱ In the other requests about the same matter ⁱⁱ this formula also is used in exactly the same words.

From the illustrations given above, all taken from the

i Cow. Aram. No. 27 lines 19, 21, 22.  cf. Ezr. 5:17.
 ii No. 30 line 23.
 No. 31 " 22.

same period of Persian history which coincided with the Restoration as described in Ezer.-Neh., one can hardly escape the conviction that the Aramaic sections of Ezra do conform to the same general mould in which all such documents were cast at that period. This is true not only in form but often in actual verbal identity, where recognised forms were used in the civil service of the Archaemenian Empire, just as stereotyped forms for such letters are still used to this day.

Let us now turn to the more essential content of these documents, and emphasise what has already frequently been implied if not mentioned, in the previous chapter. This is the way in which Persian history supplies parallels to the very facts recorded in these documents. Although we have no complete copy of the Cyrus Edict among the Aramaic documents in Ezra, we have two references to it which in all probability contain direct quotations, and a Hebrew version, Ezer. 1: 2-4. From these three brief passages we can gather a fairly clear idea of what the original decree contained, and we shall limit our discussion to those facts which these passages supply, and which find support in similar Persian parallels. The decree, as we have it in Ezer. 1: 2-4, begins "All the Kingdoms of the earth hath Yahweh, the God of Heaven given to me....." It appears strange that Cyrus, the great conqueror should attribute his success to Yahweh, the god of

ⁱ Ezer. 5: 13- 17; and 6: 3 - 5.

Israel, and it is tempting to regard this as one of those convenient Hebraisms sufficient to stamp the decree as the fabrication of a priestly or scribal enthusiast.ⁱ But are we to regard the Cyrus Cylinderⁱⁱ as a fabrication on the same basis? Here Cyrus expressly declares that Marduk, the god of Babylon, delivered the reins of government into his hands, sponsored his conquering exploits, led him to Babylon, and commanded his restoration of the gods. Indeed, he commends himself to the favour of the great god Marduk as a worshipper, at the end of the document. As to the original religion of Cyrus, and how far, if at all, he adhered to the Zoroastrian cult of Persia which became the established religion of the Achaemenians by the time of Darius,ⁱⁱⁱ are moot points, but the facts are that Cyrus deliberately embraced the leading deities of his conquered Babylonians and went out of his way to show them favour. To say that he did this also in the case of every obscure people who happened to fall beneath his sway like the exiled Judaeans would go far beyond our evidence, but the opening decree in Ezra is in accord with this monarch's avowed practice, and to suggest that he would not have issued such a decree to the Jews and therefore this passage is a fabrication of the

i Sch. ES., W. PJ. Pg. 23; ES. Ch. 7.

ii See Pg. 66ff.

iii For a discussion see "Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran" by A.V. Williams Jackson.

Chronicler is certainly to stretch an unwarrantable assumption to the breaking point. If Cyrus issued any decree at all to the Jews, this is precisely the form we would expect, unless he decided, for reasons beyond our imagination, to depart radically from his usual form. We know also that Darius, the Great, in his Behistun Inscription, never fails to emphasise the same essential fact that all his successes and notable deeds are attributable to the favour and help of Auramazda:

"(Thus) saith Darius, the king, By the grace of Auramazda am I king; Auramazda hath granted me the kingdom;"ⁱ

and again:

"These are the provinces which are subject unto me; by the grace of Auramazda they became subject unto me....";ⁱⁱ

and the same idea of Auramazda's favour and aid is brought in again
iii
and again with monotonous repetition. Of course, Darius acknowledges only Auramazda, the Persian God, because, first, he is not conquering other peoples but subduing the rebels of the Persian Empire and would have no cause to honour any but the Persian deity, and secondly, because by now the faith of Auramazda was firmly established in the Empire as the State religion in a way it could not be in the reign of Cyrus, when both the Empire and this religion were just in their initial stages. We have already noted how the title, "The God of Heaven" was characteristic, not merely of the Chronicler, but of all Jewish references to Jehovah

- i Col. 1. V.
- ii Col. 1. VII.
- iii See Col. 1. 8, 9, 13, 14, 18, 19.
 - " 11. 20, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 33.
 - " 111. 36, 38, 41, 45, 46, 50.
 - " 1V. 62.
 - " V. 72, 75, etc.

in the Persian Empire, similar to Cyrus' references to Marduk as "The Great Lord". It was a stereotyped title found in the Elephantine Papyri.

The permission for the exiles to return to Jerusalem (1:3), the order for the rebuilding of the ruined shrine (1:2; 5:13; 6:3), mentioned each time the decree is quoted, and the restoration of the sacred vessels (5: 14-15; 6:5), are but the Jewish counterpart of the precisely similar action which Cyrus took in respect of Babylon.ⁱ In the light of our discussion of Cyrus' policy in the last chapter, there is nothing in all this which is not in accord with it. There may be grounds for questioning the return of the sacred vessels on the basis of conflicting Hebrew sources,ⁱⁱ but certainly no objection can be based on Persian evidence. Just as Cyrus entered Babylon as the liberator of the oppressed, the champion of the legitimate faith, restoring the gods to their respective seats and allowing the subjects to return to their homes and lawful occupations,ⁱ so in order to win the goodwill of these Jewish exiles, whose hearts smarted under the injustices of previous monarchs whose glories Cyrus laboured to eclipse, one of his first acts was to restore them to their native land and to rehabilitate the old shrine inseparably bound up with their national pride.

ⁱ See Cyrus Cylinder, quoted, pg. 66 ff.

ⁱⁱ See Ch. 5.

The decree also mentions the fact that Cyrus delivered the vessels into the hand of one Sheshbazzar whom he made governor (5: 14-15) and who, we are told in other sections of the narrative, was a "prince of Judah" (1:8); and also that he laid the foundation of the temple (5:16). These questions will concern us later in their proper place, but if there is any truth in Meyer'sⁱ suggestion that Sheshbazzar is the son of Jeconiah, the captive king of Judahⁱⁱ whose reign ended within three months at the age 18 (597 B.C.), and who was subsequently released and honoured by Evil Merodach,ⁱⁱⁱ then we have another instance of Achaemenian policy exhibited in the decree. That a Jewish prince is selected to be their first governor, and moreover, that this prince is the son of a monarch who had been at one time abused by Nebuchadrezzar, who had brought such dishonour to the Jewish race, is not a scribal attempt to glorify an insignificant event by a false 'hebraism', but a deliberate attempt of Cyrus to reverse the oppressions of the past and to enhance the effort he was making to win the goodwill and favour of his subject people. We have already seen how Xenophon bore telling witness to this method of selection, and that Herodotus corroborated it in speaking of^{iv} Cambyses.

ⁱ Mey. Ent.

ⁱⁱ 2 Kgs. 24:15 cf. 1 Chr. 3:18 - Shenazzar.

ⁱⁱⁱ 2 Kgs. 25:27 ff. cf. Jer. 52: 31ff.

^{iv} See Chap. 3 Pg. 70 ff.

In one place (6: 3-4) the decree gives the specifications for the temple and the order that the expenses are to be met from the king's funds. This section holds much difficulty because of the language as well as the facts. What, for instance, is the meaning of $\alpha - \xi \eta \iota \omicron \upsilon$?ⁱ Why are the measurements so unlike the original temple of Solomon? (cf. 1 Kgs. 6:2). Why is the length omitted? It is clear that we are faced with grave difficulties here which may prove beyond solution, and which lend support to the notion that these facts are Hebraic elements of a priestly character which formed no part of the original decree. That may be so, but if it is, it is because of internal evidence of a Hebraic kind, and not because of the impossibility for such facts to be included in a Persian decree. In our study of Darius, the Great, we saw how he set about the restoration of the temples and shrines of Egypt, the setting up of schools etc., and the provision of sufficient revenues for these purposes.ⁱⁱ In all probability, he built the temple at El Khargeh, and made substantial gifts to that of Ed-Fu. In the Gadatos inscriptionⁱⁱⁱ we saw how he reprimanded the collection of taxes from the gardeners of Apollo which had been diverted for special religious

i One of the best suggestions I have met is one given by my fellow student, Rev. Robert Schnell, who would translate "And its foundations bearing a height of 60 cubits" - See ICC. Pg. 144 for other suggestions.

ii Ch. 3. Pg. 75 ff.
iii " " Pg. 77 ff.

purposes. This, of course, does not prove that Cyrus did the same thing for the Jews, but it does prove that the details of the temple-building and the expenses of the same, were not minutiae beyond the personal interest of a Persian monarch. In the case of Cyrus, his empire had not fully taken shape and his revenues were certainly not organised in the elaborate system which later developed under Darius, but he would readily realise that a few exiles who were about to return through pathless deserts to a barren hill-country which had been the prey of marauding bands for 70 years, were quite unlikely to have the means to build a temple straight away even before they had homes. It is therefore altogether likely that these facts would be impressed on Cyrus, even if he himself did not mention them. Hence we find that in the portions of the decree that have been preserved for us, he made two orders which sought to aid the Jews in this respect. The first was that a general canvass was to be made of all Jews for the purpose, even of those who remained behind in Babylon (1:4), and secondly, that additional grants were to be made from the revenues of the king (6:4). The reference is too vague to determine from just what sources this revenue was to be derived, but it would most naturally be from the territory most directly concerned, namely "across the River". If, therefore, we admit, that it is in keeping with the policy of the Persian Kings to implement their projects with the funds whereby alone they can be properly carried out, then there seems every reason to believe

with Meyer and Welch,ⁱ as against Oesterley,ⁱⁱ that limitations to the expenses were originally set down in the decree in the form of specifications for the building. At least it is quite unreasonable to say that such facts would not have been put into a Persian decree. There seems every good reason why they should be there.

In this discussion of the Cyrus Edict, we have seen that all the salient facts can be paralleled in the attitude and action of the Persian monarchs, particularly of Cyrus himself, towards other peoples in similar circumstances. His recognition of the national god, his permission for the resuscitation of their national life and shrine, together with such restitution for their past wrongs as was in his power to make, the appointment of the governor who, in all probability, was a Judaeen prince, and his provision for the defraying of the expenses incident to these undertakings, are all in keeping with his express policy of tolerance and magnanimity.

In coming now to the sections which concern the time of Darius the Great, we are conscious at once of the background of that vast system of organisation which was his special contribution to the Achaemenian Empire. Here Tattenai, the satrap of the Western province, "beyond the River", investigates certain building

ⁱ Mey. Ent. and W. PJ.
ⁱⁱ Oest. H. Vol. 11.

operations going on in Jerusalem under the Jewish authorities. Finding that their authority is alleged to rest on a decree of Cyrus, Tattenai refers the matter to Darius for investigation. The investigation substantiated the Jewish claim and Tattenai and his associates receive orders to allow the building to proceed and to honour the conditions on which the authority rested by supplying all that was necessary for its completion (5:6 - 6:12). Later, under Artaxerxes, we find officials in Jerusalem, like Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the Scribe, appealing to the king direct, to prohibit certain building operations in the city which appear to be in the form of fortifications. The claim is made that these operations are preliminary to a rebellion characteristic of the past history of the city, which would cut off from the king revenue and other advantages which he now enjoyed. The reply is received that their protest has been sustained and operations are to cease (4: 7-23). In the reign of a king of the same name, Ezra the scribe, is commissioned, by Artaxerxes and his "seven counsellors", to go to Jerusalem, with supreme authority and with enormous gifts, to set up a religious and civil system of government based on a law book in Ezra's possession and backed by the full authority of the king (7: 12-26). These Aramaic sections reflect a well-organised empire of far-flung dimensions and with an elaborate and efficient system of provincial administration. Herodotusⁱ informs us that

ⁱ Herod III. 89.

Darius organised the empire into satrapies, each with its own Satrap or Administrator. These satrapies contained more than one national group. Many different little kingdoms may be grouped under one satrap and all were responsible for a part of the Empire's revenue. It would carry us far beyond the scope of our present purpose to investigate the whole question of Persian administration, which can be readily found in standard works.ⁱ The fact that is important for our purpose is that this system of administration is strongly reflected in our documents. The Satrap is a man of great responsibility and is in charge of the collection of revenue. He was often a man of high birth and in some cases, related to the king. Darius was not the first to appoint Satraps. In all probability, he merely developed a system whose incipient stages went back to Cyrus and Cambyses,ⁱⁱ and Xenophon attributes to Cyrus the appointment of Satraps over at least six provinces.ⁱⁱⁱ We know that Cambyses had given such a position to Aryandes in Egypt.^{iv} In addition to this elaborate system of satrapies with all its complex administration through subordinate governors and officials responsible to the king, there was an elaborate system of postal communication by means of couriers on which the whole efficiency of the Empire rested.^v The king to whom direct appeal could be

i e.g. R. HAP. and CAH. Vol. IV Ch. 7.

ii Two officials are called 'Satraps' in the Behistun Inscription Col. III, 38 and 45.

iii X-Cyro. VIII 6, -8.

iv Herod IV, 166.

v Herod VIII, 98 where he says "Nothing mortal travels so fast as these Persian messengers".

made even over the heads of the satrap, retained the power of an unchallenged dictatorship aided by his council of seven advisers.ⁱ In our Aramaic documents in Ezra we see all this reflected. The whole territory is under the Satrap Tattenai, who is responsible to the king for whatever happens within his domain. But the local officials can appeal direct to the king, and they did, in asking for a search for the Cyrus Edict and when the local chancellor and Scribe called upon Artaxerxes to stop treasonable operations in Jerusalem. Each appeal receives prompt attention at the Imperial Court. Tattenai is ordered to carry out the Cyrus decree and to furnish all aid to do it. Artaxerxes ordered the fortifications to cease. All this was only possible in an Empire well-organised, strongly supervised from headquarters and bound together by a fast system of communication. Ezra, the Scribe, is sent out direct from the king with orders and powers that make him virtually a satrap, with authority to enforce obedience, and these powers are conferred on him by the highest authority, the king and his seven counsellors. These documents in Ezra, as far as Persian history is known, are thoroughly in keeping with the political and civic organisation of Persia as we know it from Darius the Great onwards. They take their place beside the Uza-hor-res-neit, the Behistun, and Gadatos inscriptions, as well as the Elephantine Papyri, as witnesses to the political and religious administration of a great Empire. That Tattenai should investigate the building

ⁱ i.e. Seven family heads who helped him secure the throne, Herod. III. 76-88.

operations in Jerusalem, and, when an appeal was made by the Jews to an Edict of Cyrus as the grounds of this authority, that he should refer the matter to Darius the king, was but the proper recognition of his responsibilities as Satrap of the Western province.ⁱ To have acted otherwise would have been a violation of his trust. In this case, Tattenai does not prejudice the issue by any views of his own. All judgement is suspended until the king issues a decision. In the case of the letter sent to Artaxerxes (Ezr. 4:7ff), the writers definitely urge the king to a decision in favour of their own views. No doubt a certain amount of inter-state rivalry and political jealousy entered into the protest, but it needs to be recognised here that what is challenged is no ordinary temple building, but rather "they are building the rebellious and the bad city, and have finished the walls and repaired the foundations" (4:12). It is the fortification of a stronghold whose past history is alleged to be one of treachery and sedition, that is opposed, and it is opposed on the grounds that it will end in an effort at independence at the expense of the king. It is quite possible, indeed probable, that these officials are exaggerating a situation in order to enhance their own political prestige, but it cannot be maintained that their action is in any way inconsistent with their privileges as officials of the Persian Empire whose protest had every right to be heard.

ⁱ cf. Herod. V. 32 - where Artaphernes - commander of the "sea coast of Asia" - referred his project of an invasion of Naxos to Darius before attempting it.

There can be no serious objection to the fact that the letter suggested Babylon as the place where the Cyrus Edict was to be found, whereas it was actually discovered at Ecbatana. It would be quite unreasonable to expect every Satrap to know the exact location of every document in the archives of the Empire. Babylon, being the capital and seat of government, it is natural that the request should be made for an investigation to take place where it was most likely for the document in question to be found. Such a search was made, but the document was not found in Babylon but in the archives of Ecbatana, in the province of Media (6:2). In fact, this apparent discrepancy affords additional grounds for the case that these documents are authentic. While it was natural to expect that such an Edict would be kept at Babylon, yet it is not unreasonable to learn that it was at Ecbatana. We know that Ecbatana was the citadel and capital of Media where the Median Kings maintained a royal palace and treasury. It was retained by the Persian Kings as a royal summer residence, and there Cyrus is reported to have been accustomed to spend two months each year to escape the heat of Babylon. It must be left

ⁱ See Mey. Ent. where he asserts a fabricator would have removed the inconsistency; and S. Gesc. Pg. 79 ff., who regards 'Babel' as a general term for Babylonia (Ps. 87:4; 137:1; Is. 14:4; etc.).

ⁱⁱ Herod. I. 98.
ⁱⁱⁱ Strabo Bk. XI ch. 524.
^{iv} X.Cyrol. VIII. vi. 21.

to Persian scholars to fix the exact chronology of the movements of Cyrus during the first year of his reign, but if he entered Babylon in the autumn,ⁱ and had to consolidate his position there, and establish the changes indicated in the Nabonidus Chronicle and Cyrus Cylinder, then it is quite probable that the edict issued to the Jews was not given before the following summer while at Ecbatana. But here we are in the realm of conjecture. The important fact is that Ecbatana was a royal residence of the Persian Kings and had a treasury of its own where official documents were stored, and anyone who has had any experience with imperial civil service, even in our modern days of efficiency, will know that it is no unusual phenomenon to look for a document 18 years old in one place and to find it in quite another.ⁱⁱ The fact has all the marks of authenticity.

Another fact which betrays a Persian custom in the decree of Darius, is the request that prayer should be made for the king. We have already discussed the question of the expenses of the temple being met by imperial funds as contained in the Cyrus Edict. What was said there applies equally to the demand in the Darius Edict that these conditions be carried out, and in addition that all the necessities for sacrifice etc. be supplied (Ezr. 6:8 ff.) We have seen how this was done by Darius in connection with the temple of Egypt. But Darius adds to these lavish donations the purpose of his beneficence:

i CAH. vol. iv Pg. 12. (in Oct. Markheshwan).

ii See Pg. 136 footnote.

"That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of Heaven and pray for the life of the King and of his sons". (6: 10).

Herodotus informs us that this is a Persian custom. In describing the methods and nature of Persian sacrifices, He declares

"The suppliant is not permitted to pray for blessings on himself alone; but he prays for the welfare of the king particularly, and for his whole nation". i

This practice is signally illustrated at the end of the Cyrus Cylinder:

"In the goodness of their hearts may all the gods whom I have brought into their strong places daily intercede before Bel and Nebo that they should grant me length of days; may they bless my projects with prosperity, and may they say to Merodach, my Lord, that Cyrus, the King, thy worshipper, and Kambyses, his son, deserve favour". ii

It was a common practice in the east to invoke the favour of the deity upon the reigning Sovereign and his house, and how this was done in ordinary correspondence has already been shown. That the priestly dignitaries at Jerusalem should be commanded to invoke the goodwill of Yahweh upon the sovereign on whose gracious acts they were dependent for their national and religious privileges was quite in keeping with the order of the day, as the documents mentioned show. That it was not merely a Persian custom is shown in Jeremiah's order to the exiles to do the same thing (Jer. 29:7).

The Darius Edict concludes with a definite threat against

i Herod I, 132.
ii see ch. 3 Pg. 67.

all who attempt to alter the contents of the edict or to destroy the temple, for whose erection it provides:

"And I have made a decree that any man who shall alter this command, a beam shall be pulled out of his house and he, lifted up, shall be smitten upon it and his house shall be made a ruin (?) for this; and the God who has placed his name there, shall overthrow every king and people who shall stretch out its hand to alter (or) destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem: I, Darius, have made a decree, let it be promptly (?) done". (Ezr. 6: 11-12).

A similar threat concludes the Artaxerxes Edict given to Ezra the Scribe, "And whoever shall not perform the law of thy God, and the law of the king, punishment (judgement) shall be promptly exacted from him, whether death, or banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment". (Ezr. 7:26). Undoubtedly these threats are made to render inviolate the authority of the Persian Kings whose commands no one was to question,ⁱ and to enhance the prestige of the Jewish community in whose favour the commands were issued; but whatever be their motive, it cannot be questioned that these threats are in the Persian manner. In the Behistun Inscription of Darius, the Great, after stressing the fact that every word is strictly in accordance with fact, Darius concludes with a definite threat upon all who shall conceal or destroy this inscription, and with a prayer of blessing upon all who publish and safeguard it,

"If thou shalt not conceal this edict (but) shall publish it to the world, then may Auramazda be thy friend, may thy house be numerous and mayest thou, thyself, be long lived. (Thus) saith Darius, (the king):

i S. Gesc.

"If thou shalt conceal this edict and shall not publish it to the world, may Auramazda slay thee (and) may thy house cease.----- (Thus) saith Darius, the King: Thou who shalt hereafter see this tablet, which I have written, or these sculptures, destroy them not, (but) preserve them so long as thou livest: (Thus) saith Darius, the king: If thou shalt behold this tablet or these sculptures, and shall not destroy them, but shall preserve them as long as thy line endureth, then may Auramazda be thy friend, (and) may thy house be numerous. Live long, and may Auramazda make (fortunate) whatsoever thou doest. (Thus) saith Darius, the king: If thou shalt behold this tablet or these sculptures, and shalt destroy them and shalt not preserve them so long as thy line endureth, then may Auramazda slay thee, and may thy race come to naught, and whatsoever thou doest may Auramazda destroy". i

No one can read these sections of the famous inscription, alongside the two quotations from the decrees in Ezra without noting their striking similarity. But there is even more important evidence on this point which is significant, particularly because it exists in Aramaic and is dated at this very period by one who has been the most merciless critic of the authenticity of the Ezra decrees. ⁱⁱ The first is an ancient Aramaic inscription cut from a cliff near the river Cydnus about 15 miles N.E. of Tarsus and now owned by the Museum of Yale University in the United States. There was evidently an image in connection with the monument but it has complete disappeared. Torrey gives us the following translation:

"This image N N S T (𐤍𐤏𐤔𐤕) erected before A D R S W N (𐤀𐤃𐤓𐤔𐤗𐤎), because he protected my spirit, which is his. Whoever evil does to this image, Sahar (𐤑𐤏𐤕) and Samas (𐤑𐤓𐤔) will require it of him.

- i Behistun Inscription Col. IV; 60, 61. 65-67.
 ii See Articles by C.C. Torrey in JAOS. vol. 35 1917, Pg. 371ff: and in AJSL. vol. 34 1918, Pg. 185 ff.

The second is a Lydian-Aramaic bi-lingual inscription included in the "Publications of the American Society for the excavation of Sardis" published by E.T. Brill in Leiden.ⁱ Torrey gives this translation of it:-

"On the 5th of Markeswan, in the 10th year of Artaxerxes, in the fortress of Sardis. This is the Stele and the tomb-cavern, the fire-pillar (?) and the vestibule, which are above Sardis. This is the vestibule of the descendants of Mani, son of Kumli, of the family of Siruk. Whoever seizes upon this Stele, or the tomb-cavern, or takes away the pillar of the front of this vestibule of the cavern; whoever destroys or injures anything; Artemis of Koloe and of the Ephesians will take away his estate, his house, his property, soil and water, and everything belonging to him shall be scattered both for him and for his heirs". (?)

These inscriptions are a close parallel to the section in Ezra with which we are concerned. They are in Aramaic, their content is very similar and they are dated on linguistic grounds in the fifth century B.C. the second one in the reign of Artaxerxes I, the alleged patron of Ezra, by Torrey, who has given no quarter to the genuineness of the Ezra decrees. With this evidence before us, there remains no reason to doubt that the threats recorded in the Ezra decrees did form part of the Persian decrees from the beginning. At least, there are no grounds for regarding them as distinct Hebraisms, whereas we have seen grounds enough for them as established Persian usage.

One feature of the letter to Artaxerxes (Ezra 4:7ff) cannot be passed in silence, since it has been made so much a bone

ⁱ Vol. VI Pt. 1.

of contention by scholars, although it does not directly fall under the scope of our present discussion of 'Persian' evidence. This is the reference to "The great and noble Osnappar" who is credited with the settlement of colonists in or around Samaria. Since we know nothing of this Osnappar, the question is: with whom can he be most probably identified? The most popular identification has been that of Meyer, who claims the name stands for Assurbanipal (668-626 B.C.) and would amend the text to read, $\gamma\text{D}\text{I}\text{I}\text{I}\text{I}\text{O}\text{N}$ instead of $\gamma\text{D}\text{I}\text{O}\text{N}$ ⁱ. If this colonisation refers to the events subsequent to the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C., it may be parallel to the account of 11 Kings 17:24 ff. But here the colonisation is carried out by Shalmaneser. Even this is questionable since the city did not actually fall in Shalmaneser's reign, but in Sargon's, and it would be more than probable that the biblical writer has confused the actual conqueror, Sargon, with his predecessor who led the attack. In Ezra 4:2 we have a similar reference to Esar-haddon (681-668 B.C.). He was the grandson of Sargon and father of Assurbanipal. It is tempting to identify Osnappar with Esarhaddon,ⁱⁱ and Hoonacker and Jampelⁱⁱⁱ accept the facts in Ezra as authentic on the basis of research by Schraeder

i Mey. Ent. Pg. 29 ff. - where he points out that the final γ is a compensation for the Persian lack of a S - the present spelling being a translation of a Persian original

ii As Schraeder has done, KAT, iii. 246.

iii Hoo. NE and J. Wied., Pg. 74.

and Winckler.ⁱ From this we can gather that we are dealing with allusions that external evidence, so far at least, does not corroborate. The text itself is uncertain.ⁱⁱ The Lucian text had "Shalmaneser" to bring it into conformity with the account in 11 Kings which we have seen to be itself mistaken. Indeed the whole passage is badly confused. But these confusions and lack of corroborations from outside do not stamp the document as spurious. If the Chronicler were fabricating this section, it is most unlikely that he would have deliberately inserted the name of a king who did not exist, and make allusions to historical events for which there were no grounds, especially in view of the way in which so much else in the documents finds external support. The very fact that he retains facts that are not otherwise known in a document which, we shall see elsewhere, he obviously misinterpreted, is an important reason for suspending hasty judgment.

A point in the decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra to which growing significance has been attached is the title conferred on Ezra who is called, "Ezra, the Priest (עֲזָרָה) the scribe, (שֹׁכֵן הַדָּבָר) of the Law of the God of Heaven" (7:12). These titles have been subjected to exhaustive study in recent years,ⁱⁱⁱ and the conclusion drawn that they represent definite official titles of the Persian regime with a significance beyond the original meaning of the old

- i Schraeder KAT. ii 373 and ²⁴⁶iii and Winckler Alt. Untersuch. Pg. 97. (who believed Assurbanipal settled people in environs of Jerusalem after his father Esar-haddon had despoiled the area).
- ii See ICC. Pg. 166, 172.
- iii Meinhold ES. and also Mey. Ent. and K. Gesc. and Sch. ES.

Hebrew conception of 'Scribe' (סֹפֵר). The general meaning of סֹפֵר in the O.T. is "writer" and was used of a person who was employed in writing of some kind, such as correspondence and literary matters. A person of this nature was employed at the King's court, and as such the word is used as an official title equivalent to 'secretary'.ⁱ Similar usages are found in the Elephantine Papyri.ⁱⁱ A parallel case to the papyri is in Neh. 13:13 where we can translate "I commanded over the treasuries Shelemiah, the Priest, and Zadok the scribe". While the text is very uncertain at the beginning of the verse, it is quite clear that these officials are given the task of looking after the distribution of the Tithes. But the word 'scribe' is also used to denote a writer in the sense of author, quite apart from any official capacity.ⁱⁱⁱ It is easy to see how this use of "scribe" could easily develop into the meaning of "literary specialist" or scholar (Schriftgelehrte) which it obviously connotes in reference to Ezra. Ezra is clearly not merely a writer. The words, "ready scribe in the law" (Ezr. 7:6), can hardly mean that Ezra is the author of the Law, but that he is an expert in the knowledge of the Law; he is its skilled exponent.^{iv} It is in this sense that the word is used in Ezr.-Neh. Schäder

- i 2 Sam. 8:17; 20:25; 1 Kgs. 4:3; 11 Kgs. 18:18,37; 2 Chr. 26:11; cf. Ezek. 9: 2,3.
- ii Cow. Aram. No. 17: 1,6, $\text{סֹפְרֵי הַמְּדִינָה}$ - "Notaries of the province" No. 2: 2,4, $\text{סֹפְרֵי הַכֶּזֶבֶת}$ - "Clerks of the Treasury".
- iii See Ps. 45:2 cf. "Words of Ahikar" I. i in Cow. Aram. Pg. 212 where סֹפֵר is used to describe a wise and fluent author: - cf. Ezr. 7:6 where same word סֹפֵר is used in sense of 'expert in'.
- iv Ezr. 7:6,12 etc. cf. Ben Sirach 38:24 and 1 Chr. 2:55; 27:32

claims that the Chronicler "ist der erste Zeuge für den neuen Sprachgebrauch. Wir können sagen: aus 'Schreiber' wurde "Schriftgelehrte" weil Esra in der Tradition der Jüdischen Gemeinde aus einem Schreiber ein Schrift gelehrte wurde".ⁱ We know of the high place the Scribe, in this sense of literary expert, held in the Egyptian chancelleries. From among the scribes were derived the highest officials of the state. Ahikar the wise and ready scribe, was "the counsellor of all Assyria and bearer of the seal of Senacherib king of Assyria".ⁱⁱ The Amarna tablets are a witness to the early profession of the scribe. His position became in time one of the highest educationally and politically. "Er ist im Unterschied vom gewöhnlichen Volk zugleich, der Gebildete, der die Wahrheit des Satzes kennt, dass Bildung Macht ist".ⁱⁱⁱ It is obvious according to Schaeder that in this decree we have a little-used title which describes an official of the Persian government, and that this usage supports the view that the document is genuine.^{iv} The Persian title denoted Ezra as the official minister of the Persian government sent to Jerusalem on important official business. As such the title $\aleph \beth \daleth \lrcorner$ denotes the high office Ezra held in

- ⁱ Sch. ES. Pg. 42.
- ⁱⁱ Cow. Aram. "Words of Ahikar I 2-3 Pg. 212 cf. also "Wisdom of Amen-em-hotep".
- ⁱⁱⁱ K. Gesc. Pg. 714.
- ^{iv} Schaeder shows how the use of $\aleph \beth \daleth \lrcorner$ instead of $\aleph \beth \daleth \lrcorner$ for Priests shows the Persian recognition of the official status of the Jewish, self-chosen designation, whereas the second word is used for pagan priests opposed to Jewish (see Cow. Aram. No. 27:3); secondly $\aleph \beth \daleth$ for 'Law' is a Persian word; and he explains all Hebraisms in the decree as due to the fact that Ezra himself wrote this decree, or others under him wrote it.

the Persian government; but lest it be ignored that his particular function was to expound the Jewish law, the title is expanded by the words, "in the law of Moses which the Lord the God^{of Israel} had given" (7:6), and "even the scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel" (7:11) by the Chronicler. Welch claims that the best that can be made of Schaefer's efforts is to say that the decree contains a correct Persian title, and even on that fact Persian scholars must pass judgement, but that such a fact cannot prove the decree authentic. This is true, but if, as Schaefer alleges, this title does signify that Ezra was a high Persian official sent to organise the Jewish community on the basis of the Law, it forms a strong link in the chain of evidence, that these documents possess a considerable array of facts in favour of their authenticity.

There are many words and phrases in the documents that lend support to our view.ⁱⁱ We have already noticed the invocation of peace upon the recipient of the letter as a characteristic stereotyped formula of Babylonian letters, the Elephantine Papyri and also in the Aramaic section of Ezra; the formal title, "King of Kings", as illustrated in the Persian inscriptions and in Ezra; and also the formula with which requests were introduced, as well as the accepted title for Jehovah as "the God of Heaven", common to the Elephantine Papyri and Ezra. In our discussion of the decrees in Ezra we noted how much of their actual content was similar to other Persian inscriptions of the same kind, similar not only in

i W. PJ.
 ii For Persian Loan words in the documents see Mey. Ent.

ideas, but often in verbal identity. But in addition to all that we have mentioned, there are many words and phrases that are distinctly Persian in these documents which cannot be lightly set aside.ⁱ Edward Meyer has been the foremost champion of the theory that our documents are Aramaic translations of Persian originals on the grounds that there are so many Persian words and expressions contained in them,ⁱⁱ with the exception of the Ezra decree (Ezr. 7:12 ff), which was put directly into Aramaic. To this Wellhausen retorts, "den halbe Daniel und ein grosses Teil der syrischen Litterature als persisch reklamiert werden konnte".ⁱⁱⁱ Certainly the presence of Persian loan-words do not prove any document was originally written in the Persian language, but their presence is thoroughly natural in documents which purport to be official decrees of the Persian government, and what Meyer claims may yet prove to be true. If it were true, it would certainly not be an isolated phenomenon. The eleven sheets of papyri containing the Aramaic translation of a Persian account of the Story of Ahikar is proof of the fact that Aramaic translations of Persian literature were customary,^{iv} and among people of the same race to whom the decrees in Ezra were given. There are other expressions, however,^v which indicate a technical use in the Persian period. Schaeder has found one of these in the use of the word 𐤀𐤃𐤁 (Ezr. 4:18,

i See Appendix Pg. 119

ii Mey. Ent.

iii "Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen", Feb. 1897, Pg. 90.

iv See Cow. Aram. Pg. 205 ff. where he shows this Aram. a/c to be based on old Persian as illustrated in Behistun inscription.

v Sch. IB.

cf. Neh. 8:8) "The letter which ye sent hath been 'plainly' ($\psi \bar{\eta} \eta \eta$) read before me". The meaning of this word here is 'interpret' or 'translate'. The letter which was written in Aramaic, was read to the king in translation so that he could understand. Similarly when Ezra read the Law, which was in Hebrew, it was necessary to interpret it for the people to grasp its meaning (Neh. 8:8). Schaefer finds this specialised meaning supported in the Mishnaic use of the word to indicate that $\bar{\eta} \eta \eta$ is to be 'translated' or expressed $\bar{\eta} \eta \eta$, and in the parallel use of "UZVĀRTAN" in Persian,ⁱ and in the fact that, in the corresponding Greek canonical texts and in the Greek texts of Esdras A, (2:22 & 9; 48 respectively), the word is carefully avoided. If this deduction is correct, then this is an added proof that these documents are authentic, for if they were fabrications of the Greek period how could they contain a term of the Persian chancellery system in its correct use, which in the Greek period was no longer understood? Another reference which seems to rest on solid fact is the allusion to the "book of the annals of thy fathers" in the letter to Artaxerxes (Ezr. 4:15).ⁱⁱ There can be no doubt that such records were kept. Finally even a casual survey of the Elephantine Papyri would show how many words and phrases appear in them which have an identical or very similar usage in the Ezra documents. The following examples may be taken

ⁱ Sch. IB. Pg. 208 ff.

ⁱⁱ cf. Esther 2:23; 6:1; 10:2 and see the "Göllnischef" Papyrus of an Egyptian's visit to Byblos for wood, where the prince Zerkarbaal had the chronicle of his father brought and read to him. - Erman and Max Müller Pg. 136.

to illustrate the fact: The word ללללל (companions) in Pap. 17: 1,5, 21:2,11; 30:1; 31:1, (cf. Ezer. 4:7,9,17,23; 5:3,6; 6:6,13); the word לללל discussed above (interpreted) in Pap. 17:3 (cf. Ezer. 4:18, Neh. 8:8); the word ללל (word was sent) in an impersonal use in Pap. 21:3; 26:6, (cf. Ezer. 7:14); the uncertain word לללל in Pap. 26:5,9, (rendered 'specification') 30:11 (rendered 'furniture'), (cf. Ezer. 5:3,9, rendered 'wall'); the expression ללללללל (we will pray for you) in Pap. 30:26 (cf. Ezer. 6:10);ⁱ the expression ללללללללל (we have sent (and) given instructions) in Pap. 30:29 (cf. Ezer. 4:14); the name לללל (Samaria - the city or district) in Pap. 30: 29 (cf. Ezer. 4:10,17); the word ללללל (a record) in Pap. 32:1, 61:1 (cf. Ezer. 6:2 where ל becomes ל); the expression לללללללללללל (a wise and ready scribe) in Words of Ahikar Col. I.i (cf. Ezer. 7:6);ⁱⁱ finally, to this list should be added the preface to a request לללללללללללל (if it seem good.....) common to the papyri and Ezra.ⁱⁱⁱ

When one examines the Aramaic sections in Ezra in the light of our present knowledge of Persian history, it is difficult to see how any unbiased inquirer can doubt their authenticity. We have shown how the decrees illustrate the official and customary literary forms of the period. We have seen how the contents of these decrees and letters reflect the usages, the

i See Pg. 105 ff. where this is discussed.

ii See Pg. 111 ff.

iii See Pg. 91 ff.

attitudes, the organisation and historical facts of the Persian period, and finally we saw how many expressions, words and phrases bear verbal similarity to other contemporary documents of the same kind. Much of the attempt to prove the spurious nature of these decrees rests upon the assumption that they contain distinctive Hebrew elements that would never have found a place in a Persian document. There is no need to deny that, in their present form, there are Hebrew elements in the Ezra documents. But even if such elements exist, they cannot obliterate the clearly recognizable authentic material which form the basis of these decrees. Whatever the Hebrew elements are, we must recognise them as a result of an internal evaluation of the documents, and not on the basis of their inconsistency with preconceived notions of what should or should not form part of a Persian Edict. From our survey of the material in the light of their historical background and origin we have found overwhelming confirmation of the fact that the Ezra Decrees faithfully reflect the practice and policy of the Achaemenian Kings and also in form and matter correspond precisely to other Persian documents of the same period.

Appendix to Chapter 4

Chief words thought to be of Persian origin in Ezra.

i	אֲדָרָגָדָא	Ezra 7:23 exactly.
ii	אֲדָרָגָדָא	" 5:8; 6:8,12,13, 7:17,21,26 - diligently, promptly
iii	אֲדָרָגָדָא	Ezra 4:14 fitting, proper.
iv	אֲדָרָגָדָא	" 4:13,20; 7:24 tribute
v	אֲדָרָגָדָא	" 7:21, treasurer
vi	אֲדָרָגָדָא	" 6:1, 5:17; 7:20 treasure
vii	אֲדָרָגָדָא	4:9 judges.
viii	אֲדָרָגָדָא	" 7:14,12,26 law, decree.
ix	אֲדָרָגָדָא	" 5:3 time
x	אֲדָרָגָדָא	" 4:9 for Taroporda, i.e., beyond the bridge
xi	אֲדָרָגָדָא	" 4:18,23; 5:5, letter
xii	אֲדָרָגָדָא	" 5:14; 5:3,6; 6:6,7,13. Governor.
xiii	אֲדָרָגָדָא	" 4:11,23; 5:6 copy.
xiv	אֲדָרָגָדָא	" 4:17; 6:11, 5:7,11, command, word, affair.

S E C T I O N

III

THE CHRONICLER'S NARRATIVE.

Chapter 5

The Return in the Time of Cyrus.

It has been shown in the previous chapters that the charges directed against the authenticity of the Chronicler's account of the Restoration based on linguistic and historical grounds are exaggerated and unsound. The linguistic evidence in respect of both the Aramaic and Hebrew sections does not support the hypothesis that the documents and the history are spurious fabrications. Even if this evidence did prove the Aramaic as late, and the Hebrew as the Chronicler's peculiar style those facts could not prove either that the Aramaic decrees are false or that Ezra never existed. But it has been shown how far from such a proof the evidence really is. Secondly, in the realm of Persian history and documents, it was found that the Chronicler's account not only conforms to the dominant spirit of the Achaemenian régime, but also that it finds both verbal and factual corroboration in the Persian source-history contemporaneous with it. The attitude so long prevalent, that the Chronicler's decrees are such as no Persian monarch would make rests on sinking sand. Hence it can be stated without reserve that from the stand-point of language and Persian policy and practice, there is no serious objection to, and much support for, the authenticity of the Chronicler's restoration history.

But this does not mean that the Chronicler's account is necessarily above question. It simply means that the real question of its authenticity rests on internal rather than on external grounds. It is now necessary to examine this account on an intrinsic basis, guided always, of course, by whatever light we

have (been) given in the previous discussions. Of course, in this examination no attempt will be made to cover all the details of the Chronicler's account. That would take our survey beyond our specific subject. Only those aspects of the story will be discussed which are relevant to the authenticity of the account. But as will readily be found those relevant aspects are the main aspects, and all the important events of the Chronicler's history of the Restoration will come under review. In this and the following chapter let us consider the main events of the first six chapters of Ezra. In the present chapter let us confine our attention to the salient facts in the time of Cyrus, namely the Return of the Exiles under Sheshbazzar and their initial undertakings. In the next chapter we shall consider the salient facts in the time of Darius, namely the rebuilding of the Temple. The chief problems will emerge if we state succinctly the Chronicler's own sequence of events:

Cyrus the King, in his first year, authorised by a written decree, the return of the Jewish exiles to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the ruined temple. The specifications and financial aid for the temple building were also given, and the sacred vessels which Nebuchadrezzar took away when he conquered Jerusalem were delivered to Sheshbazzar, prince of Judah, who was to restore them to their proper home. The news was greeted with a ready response, and some 42,360 besides 7337 servants and 200 singing men and women, set out for Jerusalem where they duly arrived. In the seventh month, Joshua the priest and Zerubbabel,

obviously the leaders of the restored community, inaugurated the cultus by erecting an altar, "for fear was upon them because of the people of the countries", by celebrating the feast of Booths and by observing the full ritual of daily offerings and sacrifices. So far the temple building was not begun, but preparations for its erection were under way (3:7). By the second month of the second year after their arrival in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel and Joshua began the work on the temple by laying the foundations and appointing the Levites to superintend the work. The foundation-stone was laid amid music and full cultic ritual and great communal rejoicing. But certain "adversaries" of Judah and Benjamin petitioned Zerubbabel to have a share in the work, since they claimed to be servants of the same God. But, the petition being rejected, the "adversaries" hindered the work by every means in their power so that the work ceased until the reign of Darius. At this point the Chronicler inserts the Aramaic letter (4:7-23), written to Artaxerxes complaining that the returned exiles were rebuilding "the rebellious and wicked city, and have finished the walls and repaired the foundations". The complaint is lodged that this act of defiance can only mean disguised revolt against the Persian sovereign. The king replied that such building operations must cease, and the opponents of Jerusalem carried out the instruction "with force and power". The Chronicler rounds off the letter with the statement that the building of the temple ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius. But in this second year of Darius, under the fervour of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah

Joshua and Zerubbabel carried on the building of the temple. But no sooner had they begun than Tattenai, satrap of "beyond the River", questioned their authority for the act. Now the Chronicler inserts the Aramaic documents, consisting of a letter of Tattenai to Darius and Darius' reply. In the first letter, Tattenai refers the matter to the king with the request that the Cyrus Edict invoked by the Jews be found and examined. He also claims that according to the Jews, Sheshbazzar, who had brought back the sacred vessels, had also laid the foundation of the temple which had been in the process of building since then but which was as yet unfinished. Darius replied that the Edict in question was found at Ecbatana and that its instructions were to be carried out at the expense of the state. As a result the temple was finally completed on the 3rd day of Adar in the 6th year of Darius, and an elaborate dedicatory service took place, fittingly crowned in the following month by the celebration of the Passover.

The first question which obviously must be faced is: Did the exiles actually return during the reign of Cyrus, and if so, what was the nature of this return? It has been shown that in the Persian records, not only is there nothing to suggest that permission for such a return was improbable, but that much evidence exists for its probability. Nevertheless it remains to be seen whether from the Hebrew sources this permission was

ⁱ See Section 2.

carried into effect. That such a return took place in the time of Cyrus has been seriously denied on the grounds that Haggai and Zechariah, whose activity was the stimulus which led to the completion of the temple in the reign of Darius, imply no such return.ⁱ It is true that Haggai and Zechariah make no specific mention of the return under Cyrus, but it is very precarious to place much weight on an argument 'ex silentio' unless other positive evidence exists for its support. That these prophets imply that no return took place prior to their own day rests purely upon a matter of interpretation which Wellhausen and Sellin have ably shown to be unsound.ⁱⁱ Nevertheless Haggai and Zechariah present a contemporary picture of paramount importance, and one which cannot be wholly reconciled with the impression given by the Chronicler. Haggai, in the second year of Darius, addressed a people who were regarded by him as struggling against economic depression and despair as a result of their own

ⁱ K. Wied. followed by R.H. Kennett, *Cam. Bib. Essays* 1909 and S.A. Cook - *CAH.* vol. iii Ch. 18.

A more recent alternative to Kosters' idea is that of Gallig, in "Syrien in der Politik der Achaemeniden bis zum Aufstand des Megabyzos" (*Der Alte Orient.* xxxvi 3/4 1937) who, conscious of Kosters' negative position for no return under Cyrus, supports the contention that the events of which the Chronicler writes as having taken place in the time of Cyrus, actually took place under Cambyses, since only thus would the western states be in a sufficiently consolidated condition for the Persian King to permit some 40,000 Jews to return. But Schaefer (*Orientalische Literaturzeitung* 41 Feb. 1938 Pg. 101 ff) has ably shown that this is pure conjecture based on the probable situation in Syria and Palestine at that time, and wholly unsupported by any documentary evidence whatsoever.

ⁱⁱ See Well. *RJE* and *S. Stud.* where all the evidence is minutely examined and Kosters' whole position shown to be hypothetical; cf. other criticisms in *Hoo. NE.* & *J. Wied.*

personal selfishness and spiritual indifference. An unrelieved series of barren harvests and droughts had brought the inevitable scarcity of life's material necessities. The radiant glow of prosperous times had given way to a hopeless grind against ever increasing need, and no amount of energy or optimism was rewarded with the promise of a better day (1: 6-9). With this dead weight of repeated disappointment went a hardening of the spiritual nature and a preoccupation with personal welfare and comfort. Despair and need dried up the springs of ambition and courageous action. Beyond the building of their own homes and the satisfaction of their own needs, the peoples' interests did not go (1: 4,9). The prophecy of Haggai is an impassioned challenge to rouse these people out of the spiritual stupor into which they had fallen and to summon them to grapple to their hearts the high destiny to which they had been called, of which the tangible mark was the rebuilding of the ruined temple. It would be a sad misreading of the prophetic message to let the practical form of Haggai's challenge blind us to the spiritual impact of his life and work.ⁱ The ruined temple, whose rebuilding people regarded with indifference while they spent their days and nights adding luxury to their own homes (1: 2,4,9), was the concrete symbol of a ragged faith. The rebuilding of the temple was not so much a ceremonial necessity of ecclesiastical fanaticism as the outward sign of a new confidence

ⁱ As in the case of Theo. H. Robinson, "Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel", Pg. 177.

and a new hope. Haggai did not content himself with thunderous denunciations: he pointed to a concrete solution and roused a hopeless people to courageous faith in a future for which there was no material substantiation. Haggai shared the post-exilic, priestly doctrine so strongly marked in the Chronicler, that misfortune denotes sin, and blessing is the reward of fidelity. The meaning and evaluation of this form of reasoning will be discussed later,ⁱ but in anticipation, let us note that when Haggai attributes his people's hard times to their neglect of the temple which lies 'waste' (1:4-10), he means that all nature is sacramental of a divine providence and is one means through which God searches the heart. In this he has not departed from the authentic stream of pre-exilic prophecy. His heart's desire is to lift men to a knowledge of, and confidence in, God, "I am with you, saith the Lord" (1:13); "be strong and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts" (2:4). That spiritual repentance does not necessarily bring an immediate change in one's material state was not unknown to Haggai, who found that encouragement had often to be repeated (2:15 ff) and reinforced by a reassertion of the Messianic hope (2:20-23). While "the shaking of the nations" (2:6,7,21-23) no doubt reflects the turmoil of the Persian revolts surrounding the first years of Darius' accession, we have no right

ⁱ See Section IV.

to see here any definite predictions of Judaeen revolt under Zerubbabel. That is quite below the level of the prophet's thought. What we have here is the pictorial vision of the restored Community, replete with all the prosperity of which the older prophets had dreamed, the spiritual magnet of all the ends of the earth. (2: 7-9).

This sidelight on the times does not support the Chronicler's view that an elaborate resuscitation of the Judaeen Community took place under Cyrus; but neither does it imply that no return took place at all. Haggai's summons to all, without any distinction between the returned exiles and the rest of the people, does not imply that these exiles are not in the land. If exiles were returning at infrequent intervals without any mass movement at any one time, and if Ezra's activity half a century later marks the first serious protest against contaminating forces from the outside, it is quite reasonable for Haggai to make this general summons to all. Indeed Haggai and Zechariah afford strong evidence that this exclusivism so strongly marked in the Chronicler, did not exist seriously in their day. No attempt to relate the oracle of Hag. 2: 10-14 to a concrete historical situation has been conclusive.ⁱ The import of the passage is simply that it is easier to become defiled than to be made holy. The prophet applied the

i In various attempts at this see B. EJ. ch. 5 which relates it to the temple; and W. PJ. Ch. 9 which relates it to a feud between remanent Judaeans and returned exiles; and S. Gesc., which refers it to Samaritan influence following R. JS.

idea to the life of the people as he knew them, but there is not the slightest indication that he regarded the spiritual lethargy of the people as due to Samaritan influence or to anything else except those degenerating influences of selfishness and despair already mentioned. On the other hand, the repeated use of the term, רֵשִׁיטִּים (the remnant 1:12,14; 2:2), which habitually denotes the returned exiles in Ezz.-Neh.;ⁱ the implication that interest in their own ceiled houses left empty all excuses for their lack of interest in the house which lies 'waste' (1:4,9); the repeated deference paid to Zerubbabel as Governor and Joshua as High priest, whom the Chronicler regards also as the heads of the returned exiles:- all definitely imply that some return did take place prior to the time of Haggai and Zechariah. The claim that Haggai implies no return under Cyrus cannot be sustained, and if the situation was really as he described it, he had very little reason to mention such a return. The fact is that the return was insignificant, at least in result if not in size, so insignificant that it had failed to effect even the rebuilding of the temple, a fact which not even the Chronicler could deny. The whole burden of Haggai's message is that nothing had been accomplished in the time of Cyrus to earn the favour of God. The people had allowed material distress and personal ends to blind their eyes to the real task for which the return had been made, namely the rebuilding of the temple as the visible symbol of the resuscitated nation. The omission of any mention of the return

ⁱ Ezz. 9: 8,14,15; Neh. 1:3; cf. Ezz. 1:4.

is not a denial of its occurrence; it is an assumption of its occurrence, in the form of an accusation that it had failed in its purpose.

When we turn to the relevant portion of Zechariah (chs. 1-8) we find ourselves on even less substantial ground than Haggai for the view that no exiles had returned to Jerusalem before the reign of Darius, for here we are transported into the realm of ecstatic vision. But in so far as we can see the dim background of concrete facts, the picture of the times is in complete harmony with that painted by Haggai. Judah and Jerusalem are desolate and bare, the population is meagre, the people are bowed beneath want and oppression and the whole situation seems to indicate that God's wrath rather than His favour lies like devastation upon the land (1:12,17; 2:4; 8:4,5,10). The stigma of Exile, now some 70 years old, still refuses to ^{be} erased and many have yet to return from the places afar off (2:6; 8:7). The temple, though under way, is not yet completed (1:16; 4:9; 6:12; 8:9-10). Amid these conditions Zechariah, mystic and visionary, supplements the practical challenge of Haggai by calling upon the people to return from their "evil ways" and renew their confidence in God (1:1-6). In a series of ecstatic visions he summons the people to calm their fears and to shake off their despair of the world (1:7-21) by confidence in their leaders, Zerubbabel and Joshua (4:6 ff. and chs. 3 and 4), and in the certain knowledge of God's renewed favour (1:16 and ch. 5). In Zechariah, the Messianic hope flares up in a new brilliance. Jerusalem is to enjoy unparalleled prosperity and prestige based on righteousness

and peace (8:11-13). Her glory as the fountain of divine revelation is to cast its irresistible power over all the nations of the earth, so that men of every clime shall flock to her citidel in peace (8:20-23). The fact that the prophet sees in his vision no alleviation of the exile's disgrace, now 70 years old, does not nullify the evidence that some return took place under Cyrus, but it does indicate that whatever return did take place, it failed to change the deplorable condition in which the exiles had left Jerusalem. The mention of 70 years (1:12; 7:5) is a stereotyped way of expressing a lifetime of affliction, and cannot be taken literally. It was the habitual way of referring to the scourge of exile. But its mention in these visions is not a denial that some return had taken place, but that the real restoration of the people to prosperity and national pride was still to be achieved. The fact that the 70 year period was up gave the prophet's promise extra weight. The summons to flee from Babylon (2:6-7) is the passionate call of the prophet to those who had not as yet embraced the permission granted by Cyrus. Behind the imagery we feel the political unrest of the tumults surrounding the first years of the reign of Darius, and from these new upheavals, when Babylon seemed "to be a spoil to those that serve them", Zechariah beckons home those whose souls and consciences had not as yet awakened to the opportunity that was theirs. If, as these prophets indicate, the return was insignificant and gradual and for many reasons had

i cf. Ps. 90:10; Is. 23:15; Jer. 25:11; 29:10; Dan. 9:2.

failed to resuscitate the nation and the cultus, this new challenge is another attempt to rally the people to their great destiny. It does not indicate that the exiles are not at liberty to return, or that none had embraced that liberty. The mention of a recent caravan from Babylonia (6:9 ff.) does not exclude the possibility of earlier ones; indeed, it is mentioned casually, as though returning caravans from Babylonia were not unusual events, and no comment here is made which would indicate that so far the Persians had not permitted such incidents. The passage rather assumes that caravans from Babylonia were perfectly normal and ordinary events. The technical term for returned exiles is used (golah), and Zechariah, as Haggai, used another common word for the returned exiles no less than three times (the remnant, 8:6, 11, 12). But to dwell upon these concrete facts so literally is to misread Zechariah. What we have here is not a photographic impression of his times, but the dreamy mists of vision full of imagery and symbolism as the garb of a spiritual message. Through the mist we can discern faintly the outlines of his day and age, and in so far as that is possible we get an authentic corroboration of Haggai's picture, but for the most part we are wrapped in vision. Behind the darkness of his own days the dreamer points to a glorious future of bright hopes when Jerusalem shall be the pivot of men's loyalties, and the realisation of their deepest aspirations. But these things are not among the concrete events of history; they are veiled in the mysterious providence of God; the overthrow of the heathen and the establishment of the righteous are not dependent upon military operations, but on supernatural

forces no human obstructions can withstand. Zechariah stands at the headstreams of Jewish apocalyptic literature, which was later to carry these hopes to ever more varied and extravagant applications.ⁱ

It is obvious that the accounts of Haggai and Zechariah demand a considerable modification of the Chronicler's view of the size and effectiveness of the Return in the time of Cyrus, but they nowhere afford a proof that no such return took place, for which return there is abundance of evidence that cannot be lightly cast aside,ⁱⁱ and which most competent scholars in the subject accept.ⁱⁱⁱ

Another point on which the authenticity of a return in the time of Cyrus has been challenged, is the question of the sacred vessels.^{iv} It has already been shown that the return of the sacred vessels taken away by Nebuchadnezzar was in complete harmony with the methods Cyrus used to restore order and gain the favour of his subjects.^v The internal evidence on the subject, while contradictory and inconclusive, leans in favour of their return. Every time the Cyrus decree is quoted or referred to, the return of the vessels is mentioned, and the mere inconsistency between the

- i S.Stud. is most probably right in finding these visions as history in retrospect written as from the standpoint of a day earlier than the prophet's own, even prior to 537. Some visions seem to depict a time prior to resumption of the temple building (1:16; 6:13,15); some prior to Persian ascendancy (2:7 ff.); some prior to Jerubbabel's coming to Judah (ch. 3 and 4) etc. etc.
- ii e.g. Ezr. 4:12; 9:4; 10:6; Neh. 8:17 which imply returned exiles in Jerusalem prior to 520 B.C.
- iii Well. RJE.; Mey; Ent.; R.JS.; K. Gesc.; S. Gesc.; L. PRJ.; Oest. H. Vol.11; W. PJ. etc. etc.
- iv Oest. H. Vol. 11 Pg. 78 ff.
- v See Pgs. 95 ff.

total and the sum of the list cannot prove that no returns
 took place.ⁱ That sacred vessels were removed from Jerusalem
 in the final destruction of 586 B.C. all accounts agree.ⁱⁱ The
 only real contradiction exists in the case of the earlier catastrophe
 of 597 B.C., when the writer of 2 Kgs. 24:13-16 declares that
 Nebuchadrezzar "cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which
 Solomon, King of Israel, had made in the temple of the Lord".
 But the exaggeration and inconsistencies of this account have
 often been noticed,ⁱⁱⁱ and over against it must be set contemporary
 and other evidence which leave no doubt that some vessels were
 certainly taken away in 597 B.C.^{iv} Hence it is quite impossible to
 claim that no vessels were returned because they had all been
 destroyed,^v since such a view rests solely upon one witness which
 is itself highly questionable and over against which stands
 abundant evidence to the contrary; and moreover, this evidence is
 both internal and contemporaneous and is supported by the concrete
 acts of the Persian Kings.

- i cf. Ezr. 1:7; 5:13-17; 6:5 and Esdras A. 2:10-15. where no inconsistency exists.
- ii 2 Kgs. 25:13-15; and 2 Chr. 36:18-19; in vs. 19 the "goodly vessels" destroyed cannot be the vessels of the house of the Lord. The Fem. Suff. indicates merely treasures etc. of Jerusalem as a whole, and the counterpart of this verse, 2 Kgs. 25:9, omits the item about the vessels, cf. also Jer. 52: 18-20.
- iii See W. PJ. for instance ch. 5.
- iv Jer. 27:16; 28:3; 2nd Chr. 36: 7-10.
- v As Oesterley claims - Cest. H. Vol.11 Pg. 78 ff.

It has been admitted already that the inclusion of the specifications for the temple building in the Cyrus Edict presents a problem, but this problem is not created by any conflict with the Persian practice. We have shown ample evidence for the fact that the Persian monarchs took a careful interest in the edification and reconstruction of the shrines of their subject peoples.ⁱ But the problem of this particular case lies in the accumulation of difficulties concerning which there has been no agreement. Of the three references to the decree, the specifications and financial assistance of the State are mentioned only in one (Ezr. 6:3-5). In this one reference, the language affords a difficulty, though a very reasonable interpretation of this has been given,ⁱ and finally it is noticeable that the length has been omitted, and the whole differs from the older structure of pre-exilic days (cf. 1 Kgs. 6:2). But to rule the section out because of the difficulties has no justification whatsoever. If, as we have had reason to believe, these Aramaic documents are genuine, it is difficult indeed to assume that a section which presents a difficulty must be declared spurious. The very presence of the difficulties may well be convincing evidence of authenticity. It has ever been unjustifiable arrogance in O.T. studies to question the genuineness of a passage simply because it does not conform to the sense of orderly completeness and present knowledge of a twentieth-century scholar. That the length of the structure is omitted is most probably the result of a copyist's error.

ⁱ See Pg. 97 ff.

The fact that the specifications do not conform to those in Kings is no reason to suspect the passage in Ezra. Indeed if the two passages were identical it would, for that very reason, have been seized upon long ago as proof of the Chronicler's plagiarism. Even those who deny its authenticity do so not on the basis of these difficulties, but upon the characteristic fallacy that such details are "unlikely" in a Persian decree;ⁱ a view which has ample evidence against it.ⁱⁱ Besides it is hard to deny the weight of Welch's argument that if the royal exchequer were to defray the expenses, it is only reasonable that the limits to such expenses should be specified.ⁱⁱⁱ At least there are no valid reasons for denying the authenticity of the passage on internal grounds, and there is abundant evidence in Persian history that such details were not overlooked by Achaemenian monarchs.

The fact that the search for the decree in the time of Darius resulted in the discovery of a "roll" instead of a tablet may mean that the Chronicler used a copy recorded upon a roll and not the original recorded upon a 'tablet', as Oesterley asserts,^{iv} but this surely cannot in any sense imply that no original existed. It would be quite unreasonable to expect the Chronicler to have anything but a copy. To maintain that, since the Jews did not

i Oest. H. Vol. 11. Pg. 76
 ii See Chap. 4.
 iii W. P.J. Ch. 5.
 iv Oest. H. Vol. 11 Pg. 76.

produce this copy to Tattenai when he questioned their work, some 18 years after it was issued, therefore no copy existed, or indeed no decree existed, amounts to splitting hairs. Anyone who has had experience with civil administration even in these modern days of efficiency, would know something of the difficulty of producing official evidence on every occasion it was demanded.ⁱ

The list of returning exiles given in Ezra 2 presents an unresolved problem. It is introduced by the statement that it comprises those exiles carried away by Nebuchadrezzar, King of Babylon, who returned to Jerusalem and Judah along with Zerubbabel, Joshua and others (2:1-2). The list records a series of families each represented by a definite number of persons. After the laity come the Priests, the Levites, the Singers, the Porters, and the Nethinim. Now is added a group whose family genealogy could not be established, of whom some, being priests, had lost their priestly status. The total of the whole company is given as 42,360, besides some 7,337 servants and 200 singing men and women. The list concludes with the enumeration of horses, camels and asses, and gifts for "the treasury of the work". The list has been the subject of thorough and careful investigation by very competent

ⁱ In 1936 I was delayed at the border between Canada and U.S. because the Immigration office could not find evidence of my legal entry only a year before. Two weeks later the missing document was discovered, in some place where it ought not to have been, and due apology was made.

scholars, and many still hold it as an authentic record of those who returned in the time of Cyrus.ⁱ But in spite of their efforts, the evidence is unconvincing. Even Smend had to admit that the carelessness of its preservation has largely robbed the list of historical worth. One of the first difficulties arises out of its numbers. The addition of its separate items amounts to 28,018, whereas the total given in its conclusion is 42,360. The suggestions that the numbers may have originally been written in cipher like the Phoenician instead of alphabetically,ⁱⁱ or that some 12,000 wives and children not listedⁱⁱⁱ might account for the discrepancies, are interesting, but they remain conjectural. The fact that we have the same list with minor variations in Neh. 7:6ff, and in Esdras A. 5:7ff, presents fresh problems. The three lists are similar in that the sum of their items is far less than the total given. The items of Neh. 7 amount to 31,089, those in Esdras A. 5 to 32,200, but in spite of minor differences their many similarities establish beyond doubt that they are variations of the same essential list. They are all lists of returned exiles taken away by Nebuchadrezzar; they all have many items and names in common; they all show very close identity in the order and number of the Priests, Levites and temple servants; they all give the same

i e.g. Sm. LEN.; Mey. Ent.; Hoo. NE.; N. Wied.; J. Wied.; Well, Bespr.; Gabriel, "Zorobabel" in TSOG. 1927.; K. Gesc.; S. Gesc.

ii Mey. Ent.

iii S. Gesc.

total of 42,360, and end up with a list of animals and gifts for the cultus. But apart from these striking similarities the evidence they produce does not substantiate the claim that they are variant records of those who returned to Jerusalem under Cyrus. In Ezra 2 the list is inserted between the episodes of Sheshbazzar's return of the vessels to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the altar. The Chronicler clearly indicates that this list comprises those who returned at that time. But in Neh. 7, the list is inserted after the statement that God had prompted Nehemiah to make a census of the people owing to the scarcity of population in Jerusalem. At this point Nehemiah claims he discovered "the book of the genealogy of them that came up at the first, and I found written therein:" Now follows the list. Just what "at the first" implies is not stated, but the Chronicler obviously regarded it as meaning those who returned in the time of Cyrus, i.e. about 100 years before Neh.'s time. Again in Esdras A 5 the list is given as comprising those who returned under Darius. At least there is no agreement as to what particular caravan this list refers to, or as to when it actually returned. It is interesting to note that the list is followed in each context by an assembly which took place in the seventh month. In Ezra the assembly meets "as one man to Jerusalem" for the purpose of erecting the temple altar (3:1); in Neh., the assembly meets "as one man into the broad place that was before the watergate", and the purpose was the reading of the Law (8:1); in Esdras A the assembly meets "with one consent into the broad place before the first porch which is

towards the East", and the purpose is the erection of the altar as in the case of Ezra (5:47). Of course, there is no particular reason for following the suggestion of Welchⁱ that these statements must have been original parts of the list simply because they follow the lists, but the mention of the 7th month and an assembly in each case would suggest that the Chronicler found the list with this conclusion, and if he did, he undertook to alter the place of meeting to suit the conditions of each context. In Ezra no gate is mentioned since the place is still in ruins, but in Neh. the walls have now been completed. In Ezra the assembly met to erect the altar, in Neh. to read the law. These differences strongly support Kittel'sⁱⁱ painstaking study, which shows the Nehemiah context to be more original than that of Ezra. According to Kittel the Chronicler lifted the list out of its Nehemiah context and inserted it in the Ezra text. If we compare the number of those who are alleged to have returned with the various numbers of those who were taken away by Nebuchadrezzar we see at once how impossible is their reconciliation.ⁱⁱⁱ No attempt to explain away the figures^{iv} in Kings and Jeremiah as interpolations, or to reduce the number of the list by assuming extraneous additions,^v can be other than pure conjecture. The list claims the names are "the children of the province", and no outlying districts are included. It would be

i W. PJ.

ii K. FEJ.

iii cf. 11 Kgs. 24: 14 and 16 - 10,000 or 8,000 in 597
Jer. 52: 28-30 - 4,600 also cf. L.PRJ.

iv As Hoo. NE.

v As Well. Bespr.

very strange if among so great a number none was listed as belonging to districts outside the immediate environments of Jerusalem, or if the list really dated from the time of Cyrus, that Judah should be styled as a Persian Province. It would appear that the list belongs to a period considerably later than Cyrus. In support of the idea that the Chronicler borrowed the list from its context in Nehemiah, Welchⁱ rightly points out that the omission in Ezra 2:68 ff of the Tirshatha and "the rest of the people" in connection with the gifts to the treasury of the temple, may well be deliberate. We shall see later how jealous the Chronicler was of the glory of the Priests and the "heads of the fathers", and these omissions may be his attempt to diminish the lustre of the secular authorities. If the Tirshatha in question was indeed Sheshbazzar, the omission here may not be unrelated to the other strange omission of Sheshbazzar's laying of the cornerstone of the temple. Whether any such stone was laid in the time of Cyrus will be discussed in the next chapter, but that discussion is irrelevant to the point in hand. Since the Chronicler definitely believed the cornerstone was laid in the time of Cyrus, (Ezr. 3:8-13), it is significant that he does not name Sheshbazzar as the one who laid it, although his Persian sources supplied him ample evidence for it if he cared to use it (cf. Ezr. 5:16). Now when we couple with these facts what was discovered to be the nature of the return

i W. PJ.

under Cyrus, as reflected in the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah given only some 18 years later, it is impossible to imagine this list in Ezra 2 to be an accurate record of those who returned. These prophets show clearly that the return under Cyrus was both insignificant and ineffective, yet the Chronicler held quite a different view, and to back it up he inserts this list of some thirty to forty thousand people belonging to the environment of Jerusalem laden with gifts to establish the temple worship, supported by priests and lower clergy, and all actuated with one all-absorbing purpose - the rebuilding of the temple and the resuscitation of the national life. Whatever conclusions we adopt with respect to this list, its imposing character does not agree with what we know to be the facts of the case, and as we shall later see, the Chronicler was hard-pressed himself to square it with the facts.ⁱ

Of course, all this does not deny the antiquity of the list. That the order (laity, priests, Levites etc.) shows an early stage in post-exilic development;ⁱⁱ that genealogies go back to pre-exilic times; and the failure of certain families to possess the required documents indicates the disruption caused by the exile;ⁱⁱⁱ that the extreme fewness of the Levites, in spite of the Chronicler's unblushing efforts always to cover them with glory, suggests an early date;^{iv} that Persian names, court Jugglers (singing men and women), camels, asses etc. suggests a caravan from Babylon;^v all these are to be admitted. But whether we regard the list as that

- ⁱ See Ch. 6 and Sect. 4
- ⁱⁱ Sm. LEN.; Mey. Ent.; L. PRJ.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Mey. Ent; and N. Wied.
- ^{iv} Mey. Ent.
- ^v J. Wied.; K. Gesc.; N. Wied; L. PRJ.

of the restored Israel,ⁱ or as that of pure-blooded Jews in the
time of Nehemiah,ⁱⁱ or as that of a series of caravans stretching
over a long period,ⁱⁱⁱ or as that of the Chronicler's own time,^{iv}
the evidence does not permit us to regard it as an authentic
record of returning exiles in the time of Cyrus as the Chronicler
would have us believe. Indeed the evidence does not lead to any
results which can be regarded as conclusive.

Another difficulty in the Chronicler's account of the
return under Cyrus is the question of the leader or leaders of
the expedition. We are told that the sacred vessels were delivered
to a certain Sheshbazzar "the prince of Judah" (1:8) who was
commissioned to carry them to Jerusalem along with the returning
exiles (1:11). We have already noticed that in the list of Ezra
2 Sheshbazzar is not named, though Zerubbabel, Joshua, Nehemiah and
eight others are named as heading the expedition (2:2). In the
erection of the altar, which was the first task of the exiles on
their return, we are told that Joshua the priest and Zerubbabel led
the undertaking (3:2). Furthermore, in the preparation for the
building of the temple in the second year of this return, these
two men, Joshua the priest, and Zerubbabel, took the lead (3:8).
In the alleged interruption of the temple building mentioned in
chap. 4, "the adversaries" approached Zerubbabel as leader of the

i K. En. Bib.
ii L. PRJ.
iii W. PJ.
iv Oest. H. Vol.11.

enterprise, and the reply to the petition was made by him and Joshua and the heads of the fathers. When the work was resumed in the 2nd year of Darius, some 18 years later, under the inspiration of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, these two men, Zerubbabel and Joshua, are again mentioned as the leaders (5:ff) - a fact which both prophets corroborate, giving to Zerubbabel the title of governor, and to Joshua the title of high priest. But in the reply of the Jews to Tattenai, who questioned their rebuilding of the temple in the time of Darius, it is stated that the leader of the return under Cyrus was Sheshbazzar, who was appointed governor and who also, at that time, laid the foundation of the temple (5:14-16). Thus, quite apart from the thorny question of when the foundation of the temple was laid, which we shall consider in the next chapter, the Chronicler has failed completely to make it clear who was the leader or leaders of the return in the reign of Cyrus, and the relation between this Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel. An expedient of desperation in order to preserve the accuracy of the Chronicler's account has been to identify Sheshbazzar with Zerubbabel.ⁱⁱ This would take care of the fact that both are called governor, both laid the foundation of the temple, the one is never mentioned in connection with the other, and the obvious improbability of two leaders of one expedition. But at least this is a pure conjecture and one which leaves the discrepancy in the narrative unresolved. It does not explain why, without any explanation, the

i Cf. Hag. I;1,12,14; 2:2,4,21,23. Zech. 3:1,8; 4:6,9.
 ii Hoo. NE.; F. Chr. Frag.; K. MP.; Gabriel, "Zorobabel" in TSOG. 1927.

Chronicler uses two names for one man which could never lead to anything but confusion. The suggestion of Hoonacker that Sheshbazzar was an official courtname and Zerubbabel a Jewish appellation, and the view of Gabriel that Zerubbabel has fallen out of the text in 1 Chr. 3:18, which should read "and Zerubbabel, whose name was Shenassar", can only serve to show the conjectural necessities of their position. There are no valid grounds for the belief that Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel were one and the same person. The Chronicler himself bears indisputable testimony to the separate existence of these two men, although for reasons not altogether clear, he has badly confused them in his narrative. There is no reason to object to the fact that they are contemporaries, but that both were leaders of the same group, both were governors at the same time and both laid the same foundation-stone, is quite beyond all reasonable probability. The only reasonable conclusion is that Sheshbazzar held the reins of office first and later on Zerubbabel succeeded him. For this view there is a reasonable amount of evidence even amid the confusion of the Chronicler's account. We are definitely told that Sheshbazzar, a prince of Judah, was to accompany the exiles from Babylonia to Jerusalem as the official custodian of the sacred vessels, and in the official Aramaic documents relating to the rebuilding of the temple, which we have seen every reason to regard as an authentic source, he is invoked in the same capacity, and as the governor who laid the foundation-stone of the temple (Ezr.1:8; 5:14-16). That he was the leader of this first expedition and was the first governor of the rehabilitated Hebrew state as a Persian province

there is no cause to deny. We have seen that the list in Ezra 2 does not, in its present form, represent the exiles who returned under Sheshbazzar, although it may retain some partial account of that return. In all probability it represents a list composed at a much later date, and this may well be why Sheshbazzar finds no place in it as the leader. This fact would encourage the Chronicler to omit the mention of the "Tirshatha", or governor, in connection with the religious offerings when he used the list in connection with this first return, since it excellently suited his view of the unshared glory of the purely priestly nature of the renewed community. In the list (Neh. 7) where the "Tirshatha" is retained as having part in the original gifts for the temple, it would be peculiar if this were just another reference to Zerubbabel, who has already been named at the beginning of the list. It would appear, at any rate, that the mention of the "Tirshatha" in Neh. 7 definitely refers to Sheshbazzar as the governor who first took office when the exiles returned, whereas the omission of it in the same list in Ezra 2 is the deliberate work of the Chronicler for reasons suggested above, which will be expanded later in their proper place. ¹ Again, when we examine the reference to Sheshbazzar in the reply of the Jews preserved in Tattenai's letter to Darius (5:14-16), we find that they referred Tattenai to an event that took place 18 years before. It is sufficiently remote for the matter to need referring to the archives of Babylonia for verification. No indication is given that Sheshbazzar is still governor, or that he

is present at all to vindicate his act. The situation implies that Sheshbazzar belongs to the past, just as the decree does to which reference is made. And finally no satisfactory solution has ever been possible to the problem, that if Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel are one person, we are still left with two irreconcilable names. The only reasonable explanation of the Chronicler's confusion lies in his effort to throw back the work of Zerubbabel and the temple building to the initial days of the first return, and this question must in the next chapter be fully discussed. To this conclusion all the evidence leads us. Sheshbazzar is most probably the royal grandson of the exiled king Jeconiah, called in 1 Chr. 3:18, Shenazzar, and styled in the Chronicler as "the Prince of Judah" (1:8).ⁱ But while this identification remains conjectural,ⁱⁱ it is wholly probable, and the setting up of a Jewish prince as Persian satrap over the rehabilitated Jewish State is quite in keeping with Persian practice. That his function among the Jews was leader of the first return in the time of Cyrus and first^t governor of the new Jewish state can hardly any longer be doubtedⁱⁱⁱ in view of the evidence that exists.

Ezra 3 has been often regarded as the pure fabrication^{iv} of the Chronicler's mind. But we shall later show how unfounded is the assumption that where the Chronicler has no external^v corroboration he is necessarily unhistorical. Of course one

- i See Pg. 96 and cf. Mey. Ent.
- ii See W. PJ. and K. Gesc. for other suggestions such as *ψδδ*
'Sun God' see also Hoo. NE. & Well. Bespr.
- iii A conclusion reached also by Welch, Meyer, Torrey, Oesterley.
- iv e.g. Comp. ES. Pg. 208 ff. 239ff. and K. Wied. Sch. ES.
- v Section 4.

cannot help seeing in this chapter an elaboration of the priestly atmosphere in the light of the Chronicler's own day, but it would be a mistake to allow this characteristic elaboration of detail and this priestly interest to blind our eyes to the main historical facts which they enshrine. These facts are that the altar was set up and the cultic ritual established. That this involved a major operation which only a gigantic return could establish, such as the Chronicler envisaged, is quite wrong. The events of 597 and 586 B.C. were devastating blows to the continuance of the national life on the old monarchical lines, as, indeed, they were to the national shrine at Jerusalem. But it cannot be maintained that Judah was left a barren waste devoid of life and worship until Cyrus allowed a caravan of exiles to return. The numbers taken into exileⁱ did not depopulate the country. We are told the poorest of the land, who could hardly be a minority, were left (2 Kgs. 25:12), and they are exhorted to "gather wine and summer-fruits and oil". (Jer. 40:10). In addition, even many persons of prominence remained behind such as Gedaliah, Jeremiah, and "the king's daughters" (Jer. 41:10; 43:6), and the country was made a Babylonian province. Many who fled during the crisis (2 Kgs. 25:4,26) no doubt lived to return, and in spite of all the damage and disruption, there is no indication that life in Judah did not go on very much as usual.ⁱⁱ This would mean also that the worship in some form would be resumed at the ruined temple. At least, not long after the tragedy some 80 devotees in the garb of mourning repaired with offerings "to

ⁱ 11 Kgs. 24:14 (10,000); 24:16 (8,000) and Jer. 52:28,30 (4,600)
ⁱⁱ See L. PRJ. ch.1; Oest. H. Vol.ii ch.5; W.PJ.; K. Gesc.; ES ch.9

the house of the Lord" (Jer. 41:5ff.). Even the lament that few attended the services implies that priestly functions were regularly performed at the ruined site (Lam. 1:4ff). Even before the second temple was built we know that portions of the old temple remained and services were carried on there.ⁱ All this serves to show that the erection of a new altar or the repair of the old one would not mean an enterprise beyond the power or interest of those who returned with Sheshbazzar. Indeed it would be the immediate task of the new company upon arrival, as a token of what was intended - namely the complete restoration of the national shrine. It would be but the added stimulus of the new arrivals to the old worship which had been perpetuated in some form for a generation,ⁱⁱ nor is there any reason to doubt either the initial preparation for the rebuilding of the temple at that time, but it is unlikely that these first tasks were accompanied by that elaborateness of priestly ritual and observance with which the Chronicler invests them, and which were normal in his own day.

From the preceding discussion we are now in a position to summarise the conclusions to which the evidence leads us about what actually happened at this time. On the accession of Cyrus to the sovereignty of the Babylonian Empire, he gave to the Jewish Exiles, along with his other subjects, the right to return to their native homes to re-establish their national life in accordance with

ⁱ cf. Hag. 1:4,9; 2:3,14; Zech. 7:1-7.
ⁱⁱ See W. PJ.; K. Gesc.; N. Wied.

their own traditions. This right carried with it provision for the rebuilding of the ruined temple and the resuscitation of the cultus. In all probability the details of the temple building and the financial assistance by which it was to be erected were clearly specified in a royal Edict, and as a concrete token of his sincerity Cyrus returned the sacred vessels which Nebuchadrezzar had taken from the Jewish Shrine. An official leader of the expedition was appointed in the person of Sheshbazzar of the Davidic royal house. As such he enjoyed the prestige of a Persian governor and also the confidence and loyalty of the Jewish people. Under him, no doubt, there were other^s of national and religious importance such as Zerubbabel and Joshua, the priest, but who at this time held no official status of a political kind. How large this body of exiles was, or whether they returned all in one group or only gradually over a considerable period of time is impossible to say. At any rate it could not have been on the extensive lines the Chronicler imagined. His list of Sheshbazzar's initial group obviously does not reflect the actual facts. It belongs to a later date and perhaps includes a far larger number and many more caravans than accompanied Sheshbazzar. We know this by the fact that this first return, while tremendously important as an actual event, failed completely in accomplishing its primary purpose. The fact that the temple was not built for some 18 years, which both the Chronicler and the prophets admit, is sufficient evidence that Sheshbazzar's enterprise was small and ineffective. To attempt an explanation of this failure in detail carries us into the interesting realms of imagination and conjecture which lie

beyond our purpose, and which have been ably trodden already by leading historians. It is sufficient for us to note simply what the evidence implies. Nevertheless, this return is by no means to be disparaged as unimportant. The facts of its occurrence and the establishment of the cultic ritual at the old shrine, symbolised by the rebuilding of the altar, are momentous in themselves, in that they marked the end of that black cloud of exile which had 'cast its grim shadow over the people's life and hope'. Because the facts do not shine with the full brilliance with which the Chronicler embellished those first hard days under the leadership of Sheshbazzar, we must not despise the true greatness of the events he records.

Chapter 6.

The Rebuilding of the Temple.

As we have seen in the summary of the Chronicler's account given in the last chapter, the foundation-stone of the temple was laid by the returning exiles in the time of Cyrus, under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, and this work was interrupted by certain "adversaries" (Ezr. 4:1ff.), and was only resumed in the 2nd year of Darius. The first problem to be faced here is the date of this event, which the Chronicler places in the early days of the return in the reign of Cyrus. The problem is raised by the inconsistency between the Chronicler's account and that of Haggai and Zechariah. According to the Chronicler, the work on the temple began "in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month" (3:8), which would be in the second year of the reign of Cyrus (i.e. 537 B.C.), and we are told that "the builders laid the foundation of the temple" (3:10), although Zerubbabel and Joshua are the recognised leaders of the undertaking (3:8). But the syntax of this section is very bad and gives evidence of confusion.ⁱ Furthermore, in the Aramaic letter sent by Tattenai to Darius concerning the authority for rebuilding the temple, the Jews are themselves quoted as claiming that the foundation was laid by Sheshbazzar, and that the structure had been in process of building since then to the present (i.e. 537-520 B.C. cf. Ezr. 5:16). In Ezra 4 we are told about the "Adversaries" of Judah and Benjamin,

ⁱ cf. Batten ICC. Pgs. 117 ff. e.g. unfinished sentences, duplicated statements of the superintendents etc. etc.

who "hired counsellors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus King of Persia" (4:5), and the letter in Aramaic written to Artaxerxes, charging the Jews with disguised revolt, is inserted as additional evidence (4:7-23) which the Chronicler concludes with his own statement, "Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem; and it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius King of Persia". (4:24). Even within the Chronicler's own account we cannot fail to feel a certain amount of confusion. His own account (3:8ff) suffers from syntactical difficulties which render the text "scarcely intelligible".ⁱ In one place, while Jerubbabel and Joshua are the leaders, certain "builders" laid the foundation; in another place, 18 years later, Zerubbabel and Joshua are still leaders of the resumed building, but Sheshbazzar is alleged to have laid the foundation. Again, in Ezz. 5:16 we are told the building has "been in building" since 537 to 520 B.C., whereas in Ezz. 4:24 we are informed that the building had altogether ceased. Finally, when we examine carefully the letter in Ezra 4 we find that it does not refer to temple building at all.ⁱⁱ Of course this examination does not imply any disparagement of the historical value of the essential contents of the chapter. It has already been shown that the Aramaic section of the chapter faithfully reflects the conditions

i Batten ICC. Pg. 117

ii See W. P.J. ch. 6; Br. E.J. ch. 3; Dr. IOT.; K. Gesc. Oest. H. Vol. ii Pg. 119.

of the Persian administrative system. It was also shown that the lack of external corroboration for the references to Esar-haddon and Osnappar (v.2 and 9), and the uncertainty about the identity of the latter, do not prove that these references do not rest on historical facts.ⁱ What is here attempted is an exposure of this section's irrelevance to the situation to which the Chronicler relates it. The introductory verses written in Aramaic show considerable confusion and unintelligible repetition (8-11a). But it can be gathered that certain officials of the Persian western satrapy, who represented a large number of people, lodged a complaint against the Jews in Jerusalem and dispatched it to King Artaxerxes. The complaint is that certain Jews who had returned from Babylonia to Jerusalem, "a rebellious and wicked city", were engaged in certain building operations, which are more definitely explained by the expansion, "they are completing the wallsⁱⁱ and are repairing the foundations" (?). It is now charged, that if "this city is built and the walls are completed, they will not pay tribute, custom or toll and the --? of the kings will suffer harm". The king is further requested to search the royal annals for substantiation of the claim that Jerusalem has been rebellious and seditious and as a result was laid waste. The letter closes with the repeated warning that "if this city is built and the walls are completed, as a result thou shalt have no portion 'beyond the River' ". The reply of the king

ⁱ See Ch. 4.

ⁱⁱ Qere is 'have completed'.

asserts that these charges have been found to be correct and the order is given to stop these men, "and that city shall not be built", and they are warned not to be negligent in carrying out the command. The Aramaic portion ends with the statement that Rehum and Shimshai the scribe went hastily to Jerusalem and made the Jews stop their enterprise "with force and power". After all allowance is made for the difficulties of the text, there can be no reasonable doubt that this section of chapter 4 (vs.11b-23) refers not to the temple building, but to certain repairs to the city and walls, which are construed as menacing fortifications preparatory to Jewish revolt against the Persian regime.ⁱ The Hebrew sections of this chapter (vs. 1-7 and 24) form the Chronicler's attempt to relate the Aramaic documents to the temple building, but even these sections are full of confusion and are of a composite character. There is no certainty that vs.1-3 have any relation to vs. 4-6, and it is clear that the reference to a letter in the reign of Xerxes (v.6) cannot be the same as the one in the reign of Artaxerxes (v.7). Of course these difficulties do not mean the section is worthless. All that we are seeking to make clear here is that this chapter does not refer to the temple building, and the confusions within it betray the Chronicler's misunderstanding of his sources, or his inability to make the sources he found homogeneous.

Let us now turn from this awkward and confused picture concerning the beginning of the temple building presented by the Chronicler, to the deliberate statements of Haggai and Zechariah.

ⁱ Even those authorities who hold to the view that it refers to events in the reign of Cyrus admit this. cf. S. Stud. & Gabriel 'Zorobabel'

We have already seen that the burden of Haggai's message was an impassioned challenge to rebuild the temple.ⁱ According to this prophet no work on the temple was in process at the time of his first prophecy in the 2nd year of Darius (i.e. 520 B.C. 1:2). The leaders at that time to whom he appealed, and who responded to his challenge, were Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, and Joshua the High Priest (1:1,12). As a result of this summons, work was commenced on the temple twenty-four days after the appeal was made (1:15). A further encouragement, approximately a month later, was given to these same leaders to persist in their undertaking (2:1-9). Finally, two months after this, the prophet makes the statement, "Consider, I pray you, from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month since the day that the foundation of the temple of the Lord was laid, consider it". (2:18). Now these facts are not without their own problems. For instance, Haggai does not completely exclude the possibility of some former beginning in the time of Cyrus, and we have seen already that his omissions must not be forced as proofs against the Chronicler's narrative.ⁱ But when his main theme is the call to rebuild the temple, and that call is based on the accusation that their present woes are due to the fact that, while busy in increasing their own comforts, they made no effort to build the house "that lieth waste", it is hard to believe that this summons is merely to resume a task already begun, but which, for some reason, had been abandoned. This becomes doubly hard when the prophet calls

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 future and only the necessity of harmonising this account with that of the Chronicler could have given rise to the very opposite interpretation. As for the question why three months' work on the temple should have been carried on before the foundation was laid there is no adequate answer. Rothstein's ⁱⁱ emendation of the text to read, "the sixth month", instead of "the ninth", would remove all difficulties, but it can only be regarded as a conjecture. Nevertheless this difficulty is one of chronology and not fundamental to the main question of authenticity with which we are concerned. Whether the foundation was laid in the sixth, seventh or ninth months of the second year of Darius is largely irrelevant. The fact of importance is, that according to Haggai the temple was begun and the foundation laid in 520 B.C., and not ⁱⁱⁱ in 537 B.C.

In the contemporary prophecy of Zechariah we find corroboration of the salient facts of Haggai. According to him Zerubbabel and Joshua were the recognised leaders of the people, associated with the contemporary Messianic hopes (3:1ff; 4:6ff; 6:11ff), and Zerubbabel is claimed to have laid the foundation-stone of the temple, and is promised that he shall see the completion of his task (4:9; 6:12-13). It is stated that in the second year of Darius the temple has not as yet been built (1:7,16), but by the fourth year of Darius, Zechariah, like Haggai, could

- ⁱ cf. Batten ICC. Pg. 73 for detailed discussion.
- ⁱⁱ See note ii Page 156
- ⁱⁱⁱ A fact which many scholars now accept: e.g. F. Chr. Frag.; Well. RJE.; K. Wied.; Schrader "Die Dauer des Zweiten Tempelbaues"; Oest.H. Vol. ii Pgs. 84 ff.; B. EJ. chs. 3-4 L. PRJ.

call upon the people to regard the laying of the foundation-stone of the temple as the turning-point in their economic fortunes (7:1 & 8:9ff). In the evidence before us three important facts emerge on the basis of which a conclusion can be drawn:

- i) That on the main essentials all our evidence agrees. The Chronicler and the two prophets concur in the three important facts, that a) Zerubbabel and Joshua were the leaders of the enterprise of rebuilding the temple: b) this enterprise was inspired by the enthusiasm of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah; c) the actual building and completion of the temple took place in the time of Darius.
- ii) That Haggai and Zechariah, contemporary with the rebuilding of the temple, both agree against the Chronicler on the two facts that, a) they recognise no beginning of the enterprise before the second year of Darius, and b) the foundation-stone was laid in that same year.
- iii) Finally, whereas the textual and chronological problems of Haggai do not affect the date of 520 B.C., but simply the month in which the foundation-stone was laid, the syntactical difficulties, inconsistencies and misunderstandings of the Chronicler's date of 537 B.C. are beyond any satisfactory interpretation. It is impossible, in view of these facts, to avoid the conclusion that while the Chronicler's account is substantially sound, his idea that the temple was begun in the reign of Cyrus is without

support, except for the claim made by the Jews that Sheshbazzar laid the foundation-stone (5:16), for which there is no corroboration and against which ^{there} is substantial evidence. Here again we find the Chronicler's effort to throw back an event to the days of the first return to Jerusalem for whose glory he had limitless admiration. The contents of Ezra 4 are his ingenious but unsatisfactory attempt to account for the long interval of 18 years between the beginning and the culmination of the great task.

As we have seen above, the task of temple-building was the practical result of the prophetic activity of Haggai and Zechariah, which has already been described in so far as it affects our subject. ⁱ The leadership of the task is attributed to Zerubbabel and Joshua, who were obviously the civil and religious leaders of the restored community at that time. The Chronicler mentions these two leaders of the first caravan which returned to Jerusalem in the list of Ezra 2, but since we have found reason to regard this ⁱ list as embracing numerous caravans of a later date, and since in Ezra 1:5ff these two men are not named as forming part of the first return, it may be doubted whether they were among those who returned in the time of Cyrus or not. But when the first caravan had arrived in Jerusalem, the Chronicler clearly states that these two men led in the rebuilding of the Altar (3:2ff) and in arranging the necessary preparations for rebuilding the temple (3:8ff).

This shows them to be active in Jerusalem from the very beginning of the return, and there is no serious objection to the belief of the Chronicler that they were part of that return. But the Chronicler does not give to Zerubbabel any political title such as "Governor", or to Joshua any priestly title such as "High Priest". Now it has been shown that the governor and leader of the first return in the time of Cyrus was Sheshbazzar, and that he cannot be identified with Zerubbabel.ⁱ Furthermore Haggai and Zechariah definitely give to Zerubbabel in 520 B.C. the same official title "governor" ($\overline{\text{ר}} \overline{\text{נ}} \overline{\text{ב}}$), which was formerly held by Sheshbazzarⁱⁱ in 537 B.C., and to Joshua the priestly title "High Priest". These facts support the claim made in our discussion of the status and function of Sheshbazzar, that these men, while most probably his contemporaries, did not assume official status until after his term of office expired. By 520 B.C. Zerubbabel was governor of Judah in succession to Sheshbazzar, and Joshua was the ecclesiastical head of the priestly hierarchy. As to how and why these changes were made or who precisely these men were, cannot be answered with certainty. The exact meaning of the name Zerubbabel is clouded in mystery,ⁱⁱⁱ but the usually accepted one is "offspring of Babylon", which is congruent with the most probable conjecture about his birth and origin. According to the Chronicler (in Ezer.-Neh.) and Haggai,

ⁱ See Ch. 5.

ⁱⁱ Cf. Ezer. 5:14 and Hag. 1:1,12,14; 2:2,4,21. Zec. 3:1,8.

ⁱⁱⁱ e.g. Gab. "Zerobabel" - 'offspring of Babylon'; Gelbhaus "Esra und seine reformatorischen Bestrebungen" 1903 - "Crown of Babylon"; Hoo. NE. - 'Smash Babylon'.

he is the son of Shealtiel,ⁱ while 1 Chr. 3:19 claims him to be the son of Pedaiah, but both Pedaiah and Shealtiel are sons of the captive king Jeconiah (1 Chr. 3:17), and in either case his appointment conforms to the Persian practice of honouring the prince of a subject people.ⁱⁱ If this identification be correct, and also the conjecture that Sheshbazzar is the Shenazzar of 1 Chr. 3:18, which we saw to be likely, then Zerubbabel is the royal grandson of the captive king Jeconiah and the nephew of Sheshbazzar whom he succeeded as Governor of Judah.ⁱⁱⁱ Kugler has ably shown that there are no valid grounds for the belief that Jeconiah had no sons before his release in 561 B.C., and so a grandson in 537 B.C. must have been only a few years old. But even if we admit that in 537 B.C. Zerubbabel was a mere youth, it cannot be denied that in 520 B.C. he would be quite old enough to be governor of Judah.

Of the origin of Joshua the High Priest, we know nothing beyond the statement that he is the son of Jehozadak, the priest who was carried into exile,^{iv} and was therefore probably considerably older than Zerubbabel.

But no sooner did this great task begin in the second year of Darius than a serious interruption threatened. Tattenai, satrap of "beyond the River", accompanied by certain officials, approached the Jews in Jerusalem with an enquiry concerning their

- i Ezr. 3:2,8; 5:2; Neh. 12:1. Hag. 1:1,12,14; 2:2,23. cf. also Mtt. 1:12 and Lk. 3:27 (where Shealtiel is son of Neri)
- ii See Pgs. 96ff and also Ch. 5.
- iii K. MP. cf. 11 Kgs. 24:15 (wives) and Jer. 52:28. cf. also Gabriel "Zorobabel".
- iv Spelt in Chr. (Ezr.) as Jozadak, but in Hag. and 1 Chr. 6:15 Jehozadak.

authority for the undertaking. At this point the Chronicler inserts the Aramaic documents consisting of Tattenai's letter to Darius, requesting a search for the decree of Cyrus which the Jews invoked, and the reply of Darius honouring and supplementing this decree. (Ezr. 5-6). It has already been shown that we have no valid reason for doubting the authenticity of these Aramaic sections on linguistic grounds. ⁱ In other chapters ⁱⁱ there was produced ample evidence to prove that this particular section dealing with the reign of Darius is substantiated by the facts of Persian history. That Darius took a keen interest in the restoration and maintenance of the religious shrines of his subject peoples is attested by the Uza-hor-res-neit and Gadatos inscriptions. ⁱⁱⁱ This Aramaic section also reflects accurately that vast system of Persian administration composed of well-ordered satrapies, governed by responsible officials, and welded together under a strong central government by means of efficient communication, by which was maintained the right of personal appeal to the king. There is no need to reiterate what has been shown already in full detail, namely that both in form and in facts, the authenticity of Ezra 5-6 has the amplest vindication in ^{iv} Persian history.

Of course, in the Chronicler's text as it stands there are minor difficulties which are obvious. In Tattenai's question,

- i Ch. 1.
- ii Chs. 3 and 4.
- iii Pgs. 75 ff.
- iv Ch. 4

"Who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish this wall?" (5:3), there is no certainty about the meaning of the last word, 'wall', but in all probability it refers to some portion of the temple building.ⁱ A worse confusion is found in verse 4, where what the Jews said is left out, and the question about the names of the leaders, evidently asked by Tattenai and his followers, has no suitable introduction and no answer,ⁱⁱ although the answer is given in full in the letter itself (5:11-16). Another difficulty which might be urged against the document is this answer to the enquiry. The Jews, in the course of their reply to Tattenai, declare,

"Then came the same Sheshbazzar and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem, and since that time even until now hath it been in building and yet it is not completed". (5:16).

Batten rightly claims, "It would be difficult to get more mis-statements into a short space".ⁱⁱⁱ Why the Jews claimed Sheshbazzar laid the foundation in the time of Cyrus and that the building operations had been going on ever since, must necessarily lie in the realm of conjecture. We have seen already in this chapter that such was not the case according to all the rest of the evidence both in the Chronicler and the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Whether the Jews' reply was deliberate perjury or an honest statement of what they believed to be true is uncertain, and one should be wary of incrimination where so much uncertainty exists. It is

- i Cf. BDB. Pg. 1083 and Batten ICC. Pgs. 131 and 134; Eleph. Pap. I. ix.
- ii For variations in this verse cf. LXX; Esdras A; Batten ICC Pg. 132; Mey. Ent. thinks some of the document has dropped out.
- iii Batten ICC. Pg. 138.

obvious that they were placed in an embarrassing situation, and while there is no evidence that Tattenai represented a hostile mission, yet, as we shall see in the following pages, his visit no doubt had serious implications in view of the Messianic nuance of the prophetic fervour by which the work was inspired. In addition the results might have been very serious had the appeal to the Cyrus Edict failed. Of the gravity of the situation these Jews must have been aware, and therefore they would have been at no little pains to present their case in the most favourable light. This is why their reply is so long and full - a fact to which some scholars have taken unwarranted exception.¹ Now if they could show that what they were doing was but the belated fulfilment of work authorized by Cyrus and begun under his first officially appointed governor Sheshbazzar, their case would strengthen their right of appeal to Darius, the King. After all, Sheshbazzar did return the sacred vessels, and it was under him that the Altar was rebuilt and preparations made for the temple building. It would be more than reasonable to assume that there persisted a tradition that he also had laid the foundation. The fact that the Altar was built in the time of Cyrus would lend colour to the conviction that the temple was in 'process of building'. It is doubtless this tradition that was seized upon in this crisis and used to meet a serious situation. At any rate the difference between this reply and what we have found reason to believe to be the true facts is largely a difference of

¹ Oest. H. Vol. ii, Ch. 8.

interpretation of the same events. It is worth noting here that this reply of the Jews is no doubt what led the Chronicler to ante-date the beginning of the temple building, since it substantiated his own desire to shed glory upon the first great return in the time of Cyrus.

Oesterley would further question the authenticity of this episode on the grounds that Haggai and Zechariah do not refer to it.ⁱ We have sufficiently remarked on the thinness of arguments 'ex ⁱⁱ silentio' and on the nature of the prophets' message as being of a non-political nature. The brevity of Haggai would sufficiently explain this omission, and the necessity of his repeated encouragement might well imply a temporary interruption of the kind we are considering. Zechariah was even less concerned with the practical issues of temple building, and such an episode as Tattenai's enquiry would not normally form a part of his interest. Nevertheless, Oesterley may be right in finding in this section (Ezr. 5-6) an alternative account of the temple building, but this certainly does not imply that the Aramaic section is necessarily spurious. That the contents of the Darius Decree (ch. 6) find complete corroboration in similar documents of the same period dealing with precisely ⁱⁱⁱ similar events has been already fully demonstrated. There is no reason to doubt that Darius, on finding the copy of the Cyrus Edict,

ⁱ Oest. H. Vol. ii Pgs. 80 ff.
ⁱⁱ Ch. 5
ⁱⁱⁱ Section 2.

ordered Tattenai to see that the Jewish enterprise in Jerusalem was brought to a successful conclusion, which the Chronicler dates in the 6th year of Darius (i.e. 515 B.C.).

A fact recognised by most scholarsⁱ which, however exaggerated, cannot be overlooked, is that the tumult in Persia surrounding the initial years of Darius may have some direct connection with the events in Jerusalem with which we are concerned. At the death of Cambyses, a pretender, Gautama, seized the throne claiming to be Bardiya, the slain brother of Cambyses. This event was the initial episode of a long series of revolts throughout the Persian Empire with which Darius had to deal before he could be secure upon the throne. The precision and effectiveness with which these revolts were put down form the subject of the famous Behistun Inscription to which frequent references have already been made.ⁱⁱ In this inscription Darius boasts that he overwhelmed nine kings in nineteen battles, declaring also, "there is also much else that hath been done by me which is not graven in this inscription".ⁱⁱⁱ The breathtaking events of the early years of the reign of Darius I do not directly concern our present subject and can be found already ably recorded in the standard works on Persian history,^{iv} but the problem of their chronology and their possible repercussions in Jerusalem are fundamental to our study

ⁱ Mey. Ent.; Gray. CAH. Vol. iv.; Driver, "Minor Prophets" Cent. Bible; S. Gesc.; L. PRJ.; Oest. H. vol. ii Pg. 84

ⁱⁱ See Section 2.

ⁱⁱⁱ Behistun Inscription Col. IV 58.

^{iv} e.g. CAH Vol. IV; and P. Gesc.

at this point. This subject is at present evoking fresh interest and demanding a new investigation by the current Poebel-Olmstead controversy in the American Journal of Semitic Languages.¹ By means of the newly discovered Elamite tablets from Persepolis, Prof. Poebel of Chicago has established the correct order of the months in the Behistun Inscription, and on this basis has produced a revolutionary chronology of the events recorded. His results are briefly as follows: Gautama, the pretender, seized power in the 12th month of the year 523-22 B.C. and was slain by Darius in the 7th month of 522-21 B.C., thus reigning for only 7 months. Darius occupied exactly 1 year, 1 month and 13 days in completing the subjugation of his empire after the death of Gautama; i.e. from the 10th of the 7th month 522-1 B.C. when Gautama was killed, to the 22nd of the 8th month 521-20 B.C. when Babylon was subdued and Araka captured. The discrepancy of 1-month and 13 days between this result and the solemn declaration of Darius that the undertakings were accomplished within one year, Poebel explained by the conjecture that the last two kings in the relief, Araka and Frada, formed no part of the original, and that the inscription ended with the capture of Uahiandata in the 4th month of 521-20 B.C. Poebel asserts that these two kings were later added and the numbers of kings and battles, which were originally 7 and 17 respectively, were subsequently amended to 9 and 19. This radical result was immediately challenged by Prof. Olmstead, also of Chicago,

¹ See *AJSL* Vol. LV No. 2 1938 and Vol. LVI 1939 and issues of 1941 ff

who championed the more conservative view that Gautama reigned not for 7 months but for 1 year and 7 months, thus dropping the date of the accession of Darius to 521⁻²⁰₁ B.C. He further differed from Poebel in his sequence of events by making the defeat of Nidintu-Bel take place not two months after the death of Gautama but one year and two months afterwards, i.e. in the 10th month of 520-19 B.C., thus dropping Poebel's dates by another year. According to Olmstead, the final defeat of Babylon under Araka did not take place until the 8th month of 519-18 B.C. This view, of course, suited well the attempt to fit into these Persian uprisings the dated oracles and events of Haggai, Zechariah and Ezra.ⁱ But while the controversy is not finally settled, the whole subject has been put to a most painstaking scrutiny by the scholars at Chicago, and some definite results have been made known. Olmstead now admits that his chronology is wrong and that Poebel is essentially right in his conclusions, although the latter has been shown to be wrong in his handling of some of the facts from which he arrived at these conclusions,ⁱⁱ and from personal correspondence I am given to understand that a new study is shortly to be produced under the guidance of Prof. Dubberstein of Chicago, dealing with the whole question of Chronology in the Persian period, in which the dispute will finally be settled.

This subject of the Chronology of the Behistun Inscription

ⁱ See *AJSL* Vol. LVI 1939 - Olmstead.
ⁱⁱ " " issues 1941 ff.

is relevant to our subject, not only because of the revision of prevailing conceptions it necessitates in respect of Persian events, but because it completely undermines the effort to harness the events in Jerusalem to the varying fortunes of Darius during this period of revolt. Olmstead has had to admit that his effort to subordinate the oracles of Haggai and Zechariah to the fluctuations of Persia in the initial years of the reign of Darius has failed in that it rested on a false chronology. If the forthcoming study on Persian chronology substantiates the results of Poebel - and there is no reason to suspect it will not - then these rebellions were either completely past or within two months of their conclusion when Haggai began to prophecy.¹ Therefore, while these world-shaking events of the first year of the reign of Darius doubtless stand behind the prophetic fervour and imagery of Haggai and Zechariah, it is impossible to claim any longer that their Messianic hopes depended upon the political vicissitudes of the hour.

This conclusion, of course, does not in itself preclude the Messianic strain of the prophets from having a definite political element of its own, but it does lend weight to the view taken in the preceding chapter that the prophetic thought of Haggai and Zechariah transcends political developments. There can be no doubt that the political elements in these prophets have been greatly

1. If 6th month of the 2nd year be the 2nd "Official year" of Darius it would be 520-19 i.e. almost a year after the defeat of Araka in the 8th month of 521-20. But if reference is made to the year following the actual accession of Darius, then Haggai began in 6th month of 521-20, and Araka was defeated just 2 months later.

over-emphasised, because the older chronology made the events of the Behistun Inscription parallel with their activity. The extent to which this tendency had gone is illustrated by the extreme thesis of Sellin, which claimed that Zerubbabel, under the encouragement of the prophets who in turn were stimulated by the disruptions of the Persian Empire, actually claimed kingship, rebelled against Darius and was subsequently martyred for his action, and the temple and city suffered military damage as depicted in the document of Ezra 4:7ff. Sellin'sⁱ hypothesis is based on the following data:

- a) That Zerubbabel was a Davidic heir and governor of Judah.
- b) That Zerubbabel is the focus of the Messianic fervour and predictions of Haggai and Zechariah.
- c) That this Messianic activity is but the continuation of pre-exilic prophecy along the same lines.
- d) That 2nd Isaiah is written about this same time as a consolatory document to comfort the people. The predictions about Cyrus are but past history written up after the events had taken place, and the "servant" passages refer to Zerubbabel.
- e) That Ezra 4:7-23 afford evidence of the rebellion led by Zerubbabel.

Even he himself admits the questionable basis of his arguments in his repeated modifications of this thesis,ⁱⁱ although he holds to the view that Zerubbabel must have been at least relieved of his office by Darius, since no other Davidic heir held office in Jerusalem, and from this time on the Messianic aspirationsⁱⁱⁱ of the Jews were completely silenced. While other scholars do

i See "Serubbabel", 1898, for the evidence in detail.
 ii In S. Stud. 1901 Pgs. 187 ff and S. Gesc. 1932. For a good criticism of the whole question see N. Wied 1900.
 iii A view shared by K. Gesc. 1929.

not go to the extremes of Sellin's views, it has been generally agreed that the tumults in Persia were responsible for the prophetic enthusiasm in Jerusalem.ⁱ Just how far this was true and in what sense, we have no certain knowledge. It is true that both prophets took up the Messianic hope and associated it with Zerubbabel, the Davidic heir and governor of Judah. The nations are to be thrown into confusion and to destroy one another (Hag. 2:21ff); the oppressors are to be punished (Zech. 1:18 ff); Jerusalem is to be restored to prosperity and peace (Zech. 1:14ff; 8:12, 20ff); Joshua and Zerubbabel are to be the divinely appointed leaders of the new regime (Hag. 2:23, Zech 6:9-14; 4:4ff). In this visionary rapture of the prophets Zerubbabel is told that Jehovah will make him as a "signet", the visible symbol of Divine authority, (Hag. 2:23- cf. 1 Kgs. 21:8). The term "Branch" is similarly applied to him, denoting his Messianic role (Zech. 6:12 - cf Jer. 33:15). He is coupled with Joshua in the symbolism of the two olive trees (Zech. 4:3ff), which implies that they together constitute the "annointed ones". Finally Zechariah, carried away in the passion of his hopes, proclaims Zerubbabel a king in the true Messianic sense, of which fact the "crown" is kept as a living symbol (Zech. 6:9ff).ⁱⁱ But that this implies that Zerubbabel literally made a bid for royal prerogatives and spurned the Persian

i e.g. Mey. Ent. 1; K. Gesc.; J. Wied.; R. JS.; L. PnJ. Oest. H. vol. ii Ch.8; Batten ICC. & Hag. & Zec. in ICC.

ii Obviously 1 crown is meant, the plural being due to a wrong pointing - e.g. ICC PG. 186 ff. and cf. v.14 where verb is sing.

authority by which he was appointed governor cannot seriously be maintained. Such a view is a complete misunderstanding of the prophets' Messianic aspirations. For, however much they may be coloured by political events, and however concrete may have been the substance of their hopes, these prophecies do not fall to the level of political propaganda. They are the proclamations of spiritual insight, clothed though they are in the imagery and thought-forms of popular Messianic ideas. As to what happened to Zerubbabel after this period and why no other Davidic heir was appointed no evidence exists. The period between the completion of the temple and Ezra and Nehemiah remains a blank. It cannot be proved with certainty that Zerubbabel did not lead a revolt and perish as a result of it, but if he did, it was certainly an utterly senseless act in view of the facts now established, that he must have known about the complete subjugation of the whole of the Persian Empire by Darius at least a year before his own act of rebellion took place. As long as Zerubbabel's alleged revolt could be synchronised with those of other parts of the Empire, Sellin's hypothesis was at least a permissible conjecture, but with the new conception of the chronology of the Behistun Inscription, a revolt in Jerusalem a year or more after Darius had consolidated his vast empire, led by a petty governor, inspired by prophetic dreams, is a fantasy hard to entertain, and especially so since not a tangible shred of evidence exists to support it.

Let us draw together briefly the results of this examination. The Chronicler's desire to glorify the first return in the time of Cyrus led him to regard the beginning of the temple

building and the laying of the foundation-stone as taking place at that time. To support this view he had the reply of the Jews to Tattenai in 520 B.C., which clearly indicated that Sheshbazzar had laid the foundation and that the work had been in process ever since. To account for the long delay in completion of the task, he had the Aramaic document of Ezra 4:7ff, which bore witness to a royal order to cease building operations in Jerusalem as the result of vicious misrepresentations to the king. But the confusion and inconsistencies which this view of things caused in the Chronicler's narrative are removed when they are examined by the side of the contemporary witness of the prophets. The result of this examination leads to the conclusion that, although preparation for the temple building may have been begun in the time of Cyrus, no real attempt at the work was made before the second year of Darius. By this time the menacing disintegration of the Empire which threatened in the first year of the reign of Darius had been averted, thanks to the energetic and effective campaigns depicted in the Behistun Inscription. The promise of ordered peace seemed on the point of fulfilment. In Jerusalem the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah challenged the lethargy of the people, brought about by a natural surrender to the hardness of the times, and called them to the great task of rebuilding the temple. Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel, governor of Judah and grandson of King Jeconiah, representing the ecclesiastical and civil administration of the new community, were jointly summoned to lead the people in the undertaking. To this call they responded, and so ably were they fitted for the duty that they filled the Messianic dreams of the

prophets with concrete realism. But the task did not go unquestioned. Tattenai, satrap of Syria, arrived with a deputation to question their authority. The Empire which had been so recently composed was not to be governed loosely. The Jews claimed that their authority rested on the Cyrus Edict by virtue of which they had been allowed to return to Jerusalem, and that they were simply completing what they had returned to do and what indeed had already been inaugurated by Sheshbazzar, their first governor. Tattenai, without betraying any element of hostility, honoured their appeal to Darius. In due course a reply was received which vindicated their claims and ordered Tattenai to aid them in supplying their needs. Thus the task was completed in the 6th year of Darius (515 B.C. Ezz. 6:15), after a period of roughly four years, and fittingly celebrated by a solemn dedication and the Passover (Ezz. 6:13-22).

Chapter 7.

The Date of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The important problems with which the story of Ezra faces us, can best be emphasised if we set forth briefly the sequence of the Chronicler's narrative.

In the first month of the seventh year of Artaxerxes, King of Persia, Ezra, "a ready scribe in the Law of Moses" and a descendant of Aaron, the priest, set forth from Babylon for Jerusalem, accompanied by a group of Jewish exiles (8:1-14), with the express purpose of "seeking and practising the law of the Lord and teaching in Israel statutes and judgements". (7:10). Ezra was given a written decree by Artaxerxes sanctioning this mission and providing for its financial requirements (7:12-26). This decree expressed:-

The sanction of the king and his "seven counsellors" for the return of Ezra and all other Jewish exiles who cared to accompany him; permission to organise the Judaeian community on the basis of "the Law of thy God" and to carry to Jerusalem royal gifts, free-will offerings for the sanctuary, and certain "vessels" for the temple service; permission to use royal revenues to meet any additional needs that were otherwise overlooked together with orders for the treasurers "beyond the river" to carry this permission into effect; exemption of Priests, Levites, Singers, Porters, Nethinim and all other temple-servants from taxation; and finally authority for Ezra to impose the penalties of death, banishment, confiscation of goods or imprisonment on all who refused obedience to his regime. Armed with such lavish powers, Ezra and his caravan set forth, but at the stream Ahava where he reviewed the people, he discovered the

absence of any Levites. To meet the situation he sent a deputation to Iddo, head of the Jewish colony at Cassiphia, in all probability a Jewish shrine.¹ The call met with a ready response. Two outstanding Levites came, Sherebiah with 18 of his clan and Hashabiah with 20, besides some 220 Nethinim. After a fast in supplication for divine protection, and weighing out the temple gifts etc. for the priests' custody, the caravan left Ahava on the 12th. of the 1st. month, and without further interruption arrived at Jerusalem on the 1st. of the 5th. month (7:9). Upon arrival burnt-offerings were made to God, and the royal orders to the treasurers "beyond the River" were duly delivered. But Ezra was soon horrified by the news that "the people of Israel and the priests and the Levites" had not separated from their foreign wives. In abject humiliation, with garments rent, and beard plucked off, Ezra sat covered with amazement and poured forth his heart in prayer to God (Ch. 9). The sight of this great man thus humiliated and the unmitigated guilt of the people to which his prayer bore telling witness, convicted the people of their sins, and they agreed to put away all foreign wives and offspring. Accordingly, on the 20th. of the 9th. month the people assembled to ratify the agreement, but the large numbers and the ceaseless rain made the task at that time impracticable. Hence it was left to specially appointed officials who completed it by the 1st. of the 1st. month. With the list of those who were found guilty of mixed marriage the book of Ezra abruptly ends (Ch. 10). The Chronicler's account of the Restoration reopens with the 20th. year of Artaxerxes, when Nehemiah's career is introduced, with which we

¹ See L.E. Browne, JBL. vol. xvii, 1916, Pg. 400.

shall later be concerned. In the story of Nehemiah's regime Ezra is regarded as a contemporary of Nehemiah, governor of Judah (Neh. 12:26), but he is only mentioned in connection with two important events. The first is the reading of the law (Neh. 8). The people having gathered together before the water-gate, requested Ezra to produce "the book of the law of Moses", which he did on the first day of the 7th. month (8:2). Ezra, from a platform of wood and attended by a group of helpers, read out of the book from morning until noon while the people attentively stood. Interpreters were present who rendered the meaning intelligible to the people (8:8). The people were moved to tears, but Nehemiah "the Tirshatha", and Ezra "the priest, the scribe", and the Levites explained that the occasion was one not for tears but for joy. On the following day the instruction was continued, and coming to the injunction about the Feast of Booths which should be observed in the 7th. month, they inaugurated its celebration for seven days (8:13-18). The second occasion during the regime of Nehemiah when Ezra is mentioned is that of the Dedication of the walls (Neh. 12:27-43). In this great event, which must have taken place soon after the walls were completed on the 25th. of the 6th. month of the 20th. year of Artaxerxes (Neh. 6:15), Ezra is said to have led a section of the procession (12:36). Here the Chronicler's account of Ezra ends.

This account which has been summarised above has never been satisfactory to the majority of scholars, and to an examination of its problems we must now turn. One of the foremost of these has always been the question of date and chronology.

Who was the Artaxerxes under whom Ezra's career took place? Was this Artaxerxes the same as the one who authorised also the work of Nehemiah? What connection, if any, had Ezra with Nehemiah? Upon the answers to these questions must rest our whole conception of the careers of these two men, Ezra and Nehemiah. Therefore, in this chapter, let us confine our attention to the subject of their respective dates. In our discussion of these questions it must be frankly admitted that no final certainty can be assumed; all we can hope to do is to disentangle the threads of evidence at our disposal and indicate the most probable conclusions to which they lead. The discussion can best begin with the date of Nehemiah, since this date has given rise to less dispute than that of Ezra. According to the personal record of Nehemiah, he "was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king" (Neh. 5:14 - cf. 1:1 and 2:1). Of the three kings who bore this name only the first two need be reckoned with, since the third reigned less than thirty-two years (358-337 B. C.). The question at issue is whether this date refers to the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I, i.e., 444 B.C., or to the twentieth year of Artaxerxes II, i.e., 384 B.C. In addition to this date, the Nehemiah record informs us that at this period a certain Sanballat formed a dangerous opposition to Nehemiah's undertaking and was an implacable enemy of Nehemiah personally (Neh. 2:19; 4:1,7; 6:1,2,5,12,14; 13:28). His epithet, "the Horonite", most probably indicates that he came from Beth-horon in Ephraim; at least, the facts seem to support this view. He

came with "the army of Samaria" (4:2) to oppose what he described as the fortification of Jerusalem. But this show of force having failed to intimidate Nehemiah, he resorted to treachery and proposed a conference with Nehemiah at Ono (6:2), a village between Jerusalem and Samaria. While he is given no official title, the nature of his jealousy, the alleged charges he laid against the wall-building in Jerusalem, the magnitude of his opposition and the far-reaching effects of his influence: all bear witness to the fact that Sanballat is no ordinary private individual, but a man who held, or at least aspired to, political status in the realm, and who saw in Nehemiah a barrier to his personal ambitions. Finally we are told that a certain Eliashib was High Priest when Nehemiah was governor of Judah (3:1,20,21, etc.), and that he was the grandson of Joshua, the priest, a contemporary of Zerubbabel in 520 B.C. (12:10). From this last piece of information it is more reasonable to assume that the grandson of Joshua was High Priest in 444 B.C. than in 384 B.C., because the first date would mean that during some eighty years there had been three High Priest., namely Joshua, Joiakim and Eliashib, whereas the second date would mean that these same three men covered a span of at least a hundred and fifty years. That the Chronicler himself understood Nehemiah's career to fall in the reign of Artaxerxes I would seem obvious from the order in which he mentions the Persian Kings, and there

is no indication that Artaxerxes II comes into the story at all. ⁱ The conclusion to which this internal evidence points is corroborated by external evidence, especially that of the Elephantine Papyri. In the letter written by the Jews of Elephantine to the governor of Judah requesting help in the rebuilding of their ruined temple in 408 B.C., we are told that a similar appeal had been sent also to Delayah and Shelemyah, the two sons of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, and to Jehohanan the High Priest in Jerusalem. ⁱⁱ It is fairly obvious that this Jehohanan of the papyrus is none other than the Jonathan of Neh. 12:11 and the Johanan of Neh. 12:22, the grandson of Eliashib. It is quite possible for Eliashib to have his grandson succeed to the office of High Priest by 408 B.C., some 36 years later, but it is quite impossible for Johanan to have his grandfather succeed him, which would be the case if Nehemiah's career opened in 384 B.C. From the papyrus it would appear that Sanballat is still governor of Samaria in 408 B.C., although the letter's being addressed to his sons indicates that they are acting for their

- i Oesterley's note (Oest. H. Vol. ii Pg. 96) that a difference in spelling denotes a deliberate attempt to distinguish the two kings falls to the ground, since the differences in form do not correspond to events of different dates. The form which occurs in the Ezra Edict, which Oesterley dates in Artaxerxes II's reign, is precisely the form used in the Neh. memoirs, which he dates in the reign of Artaxerxes I. Similarly the other form occurs in the document of Ezra 4, which Oesterley dates also in the reign of Artaxerxes I. If the one form occurred only in the Ezra memoirs and the other only in those of Nehemiah, there would be some grounds for Oesterley's contention, but this is not the case.
- ii Cow. Aram. No. 30.

father. From the record of Nehemiah it is clear that the enemy Sanballat is a person of some political importance, and the title given him in the Papyrus is wholly consistent with the nature of his activities as described in the Neh. record, though by 408 B.C. he seems to have retired from active life. These observations are further reinforced by two other facts of less importance. This same papyrus mentions a certain Bagohi as governor of Judah in 408 B.C. This is in all probability the same person referred to as Bagoses by Josephus,ⁱ where he is a general under Artaxerxes II and also perhaps still governor of Judah.ⁱⁱ Secondly, in another papyrus from Elephantine, mention is made of a certain Hananyah who is considered a person of real importance whose favour is worth winning. This same person is entitled to despatch an order to the garrison at Elephantine in the king's name with instructions about the Feast of Unleavened Bread, during the reign of Darius IIⁱⁱⁱ (i.e. 424-404). In all probability this Persian official is Nehemiah's brother who, as a young man in 445-4 B.C., brought sad news to Babylonia (Neh. 1:1ff).^{iv} It is difficult to understand how anyone can face the cumulative force of these facts and seriously doubt^{that} the Chronicler is right in understanding the date of Nehemiah's advent into

i J. Ant. xi, 7.

ii Cow. Aram. No. 38

iii Cow. Aram. No. 21 cf. also Ch. 3 Pgs. 82.

iv cf. Arnold in JBL. Vol. xxxi Pg. 1ff. 1912.

history as 444 B.C., the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I.ⁱ
 This date also accords with conditions in the Persian Empire at the time. In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes II (384 B.C.), Persia had just recently emerged from continuous conflict with Greece, which ended with the "King's Peace" 387 B.C., only to gird her weakened resources to the subjugation of Egypt and Cyprus, which, under the allied leadership of Hakori and Evagoras respectively, formed a combination with which Artaxerxes was never able to deal decisively. Repeated attempts to put down the rebels between 385 and 374 B.C. failed owing to divided loyalties and growing suspicion among the leaders, which gradually sapped the life-blood of the Persian regime. It is difficult to see how, in these conditions, when the whole of the west was in revolt and Persia was meeting with repeated defeat, when Evagoras of Cyprus was actually carrying the war to the coasts

ⁱ One exception is C.C. Torrey (JBL. 1928 Pg. 380 ff), who believes the date of Nehemiah to be 384 B.C., in the reign of Artaxerxes II, on the supposition that there were two Sanballats, because the hostility between the Samaritans and the Jews in the Neh. record is absent from the Eleph. pap. But this discrepancy ought not to be exaggerated. The hostility in the Neh. record, as we shall later see, was purely political and not religious, and certainly did not imply any open breach such as occurred later. The pap. deals with religious matters; and besides it has already been noted that the development of Jewish exclusivism which characterised the Jerusalem cult did not apparently penetrate Egypt - see Pg. 17 ff. For further discussions see:
 Hoo. NE. 1896.
 N. Wied. 1900
 T. Gesc. 1910
 K. MP. 1922.
 K. Gesc. 1929 etc.

of Phoenicia, the work and career of Nehemiah in Jerusalem could have been satisfactorily conducted. On the other hand in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I (444 B.C.), the realm was comparatively at peace. Egypt and Inaros had been brought decisively to heel by Megabyxus in 454 B.C. The Syrian campaigns of Megabyxus against his overlord as the result of the murder of Inaros, whose life the king had formerly guaranteed, and the war with Athens, were over by 448 B.C. The Peace of Callias (449 B.C.) and the banishment of Megabyxus for 5 years left the west in peace, and provided just the opportunity for Nehemiah's mission.ⁱ

But while there has been general agreement among the scholars that Nehemiah's career fell in the reign of Artaxerxes I, there has been no general agreement about the date of Ezra, and this disagreement is due to the fact that the Chronicler's account itself presents problems to which it gives no satisfactory answer. Ezra arrives in Jerusalem in the 7th year of Artaxerxes, but no mention is made of his reading of the law until after Nehemiah arrives thirteen years later (Neh. 8), although this was the express purpose of his mission and for it he held the most valid authority from the king. No explanation of this strange

ⁱ For History of Period and chronology etc. see W.W. Tarn and S. A. Cook CAH. Vol. vi
E.M. Walker CAH, Vol. v.
J. Wells "The Persian Friends of Herodotus" in JHS. xxvii
1907 Pg. 37ff.

delay is given. The conclusion that the Chronicler has misplaced Neh. 8, which belongs to Ezra's memoirs and not to Nehemiah's, is substantiated by the fact that Esdras A in the Apocrypha puts this section (Neh. 8) just after Ezra chap. 10. In this way no serious delay is involved. Again, the Chronicler's view that Ezra and Nehemiah are contemporary leaders in Jerusalem, both holding official status of similar authority, both acting in the matter of mixed marriages and yet in divergent ways, with hardly any mention of the one in the other's memoirs, leads to the suspicion that the Chronicler's account has failed to preserve an accurate sequence of these events. These problems, which the record itself presents, have given rise to a wide variety of conclusions, and in order to do justice to all the facts, it will be necessary to summarize the evidence for the various positions before we can draw our conclusions. Hoonackerⁱ holds the view that Ezra did read the law in the time of Nehemiah's administration according to the record of Neh. 8, but that he did so only as a 'reader' who was quite young at the time and without any official status. The official career of Ezra as recorded in the Ezra memoirs (Ezr. 7-10) began, not in the time of Artaxerxes I, but in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II (i.e. 397 B.C.). According to this view the Chronicler's sequence is reversed; instead of Ezra's mission preceding and overlapping with Nehemiah's Nehemiah preceded the mission of Ezra by some forty years, although

ⁱ Hoo. NE 1896 and in *Révue biblique* Jan. and Ap. 1901.

as a youth, Ezra played a minor part in the time of Nehemiah as a 'reader' of the law. This general view of Hoonacker gave rise to the more extreme and logical view that Nehemiah and Ezra are after all not contemporaries, but that Nehemiah's work began and ended in the reign of Artaxerxes I, whereas Ezra did not come upon the scene until 397 B.C., in the time of Artaxerxes II. This view, which has been the prevailing one among most English scholars,¹ is based on the following considerations which we now proceed to state and examine.

i. The arguments against the Chronicler's view that Ezra and Nehemiah are contemporaries working in Jerusalem at the same time, are extremely strong. Oesterley's contention that two sole leaders can hardly be a practical system of government cannot be denied. Ezra and Nehemiah do not conform to the older system under Zerubbabel and Joshua who represented the civil and priestly authority respectively, because, while Ezra is not styled as 'governor', his authority certainly went far beyond any priestly function. Indeed no governor could have been given wider civil powers than Ezra possessed according to the royal decree (Ezr. 7:12ff.). Moreover, the interests of the two men and their difficulties were so similar that it is hardly conceivable that they could leave memoirs in which each man avoided mentioning the other. Neh. 10-13 shows how great

¹ Br. EJ.; Batten ICC. Pg. 28 ff.; Oest. H. Vol. II Ch. 10; L. PRJ.

were the activities of Nehemiah in the religious realm, where one would expect Ezra to be prominent if he were present and possessed of the authority he is alleged to have held. Furthermore, in the one great problem in which both Ezra and Nehemiah were concerned, namely that of mixed marriages, each acts independently of the other and in a different way. While under Ezra those guilty were constrained to divorce their foreign wives (Ezr. 10), under Nehemiah the practice is condemned and a promise made to abandon it in future, but nothing is said of actually dissolving such unions as already existed (Neh. 10:30 13:25). Nehemiah's cleansing of the chamber of Tobiah (Neh. 13:4ff) was not so much a case of racial exclusivism, as natural indignation at the desecration of a sacred chamber which had been set apart for a holy use, and the fact that Tobiah was his personal enemy simply added insult to injury. The exclusion of a grandson of Eliashib because he had married a daughter of Sanballat was a further attempt to purify the Priesthood on the basis of the Levitical lawⁱ (Neh. 13:28), and to rid the ecclesiastical aristocracy of dangerous elements, but none of these acts amounted to a demand for the divorce of existingⁱⁱ marriages which was the case with Ezra. It is not at all necessary to argue that Nehemiah acquiesced in the practice. It is quite obvious that he most strongly deprecated it.

ⁱ Lev. 21:14.

ⁱⁱ cf. Neh. 6:18; 3:4,30. where among Neh.'s helpers is Meshullum a relative of Tobiah.

Whether his milder attitude to those already married to foreign
 wives indicates a milder nature ⁱ is beside the point. The fact
 that his attitude shows a difference from that of Ezra's would
 indicate how impossible would have been the situation for both,
 had they been acting together with equal authority on the same
 matter at the same time. Hoonacker and Oesterley stress the
 difference of the conditions met by Ezra and Nehemiah respectively
 in Jerusalem as an indication that they could not have been
 there at the same time. ⁱⁱ But Fischer ⁱⁱⁱ and Kugler ⁱ have rightly
 shown that the crowds of whom Ezra speaks are people assembled
 for a special purpose and do not even need to be drawn solely
 from the city's inhabitants. On the other hand it is impossible
 to base anything on the mention of a wall in Ezra's (?)
 prayer (Ezr. 9), because here we have the liturgical language
 of devotion which cannot be used for definite historical
 reference. The suggestion that Ezra's mention of a wall in
 his prayer proves he must have lived after Nehemiah is thin
 evidence unless there is much besides to support it. In the
 language of devotion it is difficult to know where concrete
 facts are meant and where metaphor begins, but the word here
 used would not suggest the former. ^{iv} Nor can anything definite be

i K. MP. 1922

ii cf. Neh. 7:4 where city is sparsely populated and
 having few houses, with Ezr. 10:1,13 where city is
 full of people; and Ezr. 9:9 where a wall is mentioned.

iii F. Chr. Frag. 1903.

iv The usual word for city wall $\pi\upsilon\lambda\iota\varsigma$ is not used, but
 $\gamma\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\eta$, fence or protection; cf. BDB. Pgs. 154 and 327.

based upon the fact that Ezra appeared to meet no opposition in Jerusalem while Nehemiah was never free from it. At a later stage it will be shown that Nehemiah's troubles were of a political, and not a religious, nature. It is quite conceivable that the religious side of life could have gone on without serious interference even though Nehemiah's wall-building aroused the fiercest hatred and envy of a rival governor, Sanballat. Nevertheless the strange fact is that Ezra with his wide powers and close association with Nehemiah, according to the Chronicler's view, never seemed drawn into the political trials with which Nehemiah had to contend, or into the labours of wall-building (Neh. 3), which were the main source of those trials. Finally, we must face the fact that in the Chronicler's account Ezra and Nehemiah are occasionally mentioned together. On the whole Ezra and Nehemiah do not refer to one another in their memoirs; a fact before which we can only stand in utter amazement if, in reality, they were associated together in the way the Chronicler would suggest. In Neh. 8:9 Nehemiah is mentioned in connection with Ezra's reading of the law, but as Oesterley points out the text is gravely open to suspicion.¹ The only other case which

¹ Neh. 8 is generally attributed to the Ezra memoirs; it gives no function to Neh., who would surely have been prominent on so momentous an occasion had he been present; he would surely also have mentioned this fact in his own memoirs; Ezra is mentioned 7 times and Neh. only this once; in the corresponding verse in Esdras A (9:49) Nehemiah's name is omitted.

need be consideredⁱ is Neh. 12:36 (where Ezra is mentioned as having a part in the dedication of the walls), which belongs to the Nehemiah memoirs. But here again it is remarkable how small a part an important ecclesiastical potentate like Ezra takes in this great celebration, and the text has been often regarded as the Chronicler's attempt to justify his opinion that Ezra and Nehemiah were contemporaries.ⁱⁱ These facts undeniably point to the conclusion that Ezra and Nehemiah are not contemporaries. Even if we discount the arguments, admittedly weak, based on the difference in conditions in Jerusalem which each seemed to meet, there can be no doubt that the rest of the evidence is very strong. Only in one sense can they be regarded as contemporaries; that is that they lived about the same time, and since only a brief space of thirteen years separated their activities in Jerusalem, there is no point in denying that they are contemporaries in that sense. But that they were contemporaries working together in Jerusalem as officials of the Persian government seems wholly incredible. The fact that these two men act and rule independently of each other, with similarly wide authority, that in the same issues they act in irreconcilably different ways, that in the memoirs of each the other is nowhere mentioned except once, and that these two passages are just where the text is strongly open to question: all point to the fact that they are not contemporaneous officials as the Chronicler believed.

ii. But that this conclusion necessitates the further conclusion that Ezra followed Nehemiah cannot be supported. Oesterley appears to regard all the foregoing arguments as arguments for the date of Ezra

i. Neh. 10:1; and 12:26 mentioned by Oest. are irrelevant because there is no reason to regard these as part of Ezra's memoirs - ICC. 372 ff. Batten.

ii Oest. H. Vol. ii & Batten ICC. Pg. 282.

being in the reign of Artaxerxes II, whereas they are nothing of the kind. They form solid reasons for the belief that Ezra and Nehemiah were not contemporaneous officials in Jerusalem, as we have seen, but they have no basis whatever for arriving at a conclusion as to which man followed the other. Nevertheless there remains what might appear to be one very strong piece of evidence for the Hoonacker-Oesterley position. We know that Nehemiah was a contemporary of the High Priest Eliashib whose son and grandson respectively were Joiada and Jonathan or Johanan (Neh. 3:1; 12:10-11, 22). But we are also told that Ezra, grieved and dejected over mixed marriages, "rose up from before the house of God and went into the chamber of Jehohanan, the son of Eliashib ..." (Ezr. 10:6). We have already seen that the Elephantine papyri bear witness to the fact that Jehohanan was High Priest in 408 B.C.ⁱ The fact that in the memoirs of Ezra he is called 'son', and not grandson, of Eliashib need not invalidate this evidence, since 'son' sometimes means grandson.ⁱⁱ If this Johanan or Jehohanan was actually High Priest when Ezra entered his chamber, there would remain little doubt that Ezra's date must be 397 B.C., and certainly not in the time of Artaxerxes I. But this is precisely what we do not know. Too little weight has been given to this omission, and to the suggestions that this Johanan need not be the High Priest,

ⁱ Pg. 180

ⁱⁱ cf. Gen. 29:5; 31:28, 43; Ruth 4:17.

grandson of Eliashib.ⁱ The matter must remain an open question until more definite data exist upon which to base a more certain conclusion. It is necessary only to stress the fact that it is dangerous to jump too quickly to tempting conclusions. The facts that, i) 'son' and not grandson is the term used; ii) 'son' is not the usual or prevalent way of expressing 'grandson'; iii) no title of High Priest is used of either Johanan or Eliashib in this verse, contrary to the usual custom (Neh. 3:1), and that, iv) Eliashib the High Priest was not the only Eliashib of whom we hear in Ezz.-Neh. (Ezr. 10:27, 36), - these facts must be given their full weight and evaluated in the light of all the evidence as a whole.

Before a conclusion is reached, we should allow the situation which obtained in the Persian Empire to shed its light on the events we are discussing. It has been shown that the time of Artaxerxes II did not particularly favour dating the career of Nehemiah in 384 B.C. The twentieth year of Artaxerxes I (i.e. 444 B.C.) was much more favourable. It can be shown that the same is true in respect of the date of Ezra. The seventh year of Artaxerxes II would be 397 B.C., of Artaxerxes I, 457 B.C., and the question is which, from the point of view of Persian history, is

i See K. MP. and F. Chr. Frag. where it is suggested that he may be son after all and not grandson, or son of some unknown Eliashib and not the one who was H. B., or that the reference is merely to the name of a certain place without any indication that Johanan was at the time H.P.

more suitable to the career of Ezra. Artaxerxes II ascended the throne amid sordid family intrigue. He was the eldest son and claimed the crown, but Cyrus, his brother, satrap of Lydia, Phrygia and Cappadocia, commander of all Asia Minor, was the favourite of their mother, Parysatis, who schemed on his behalf. This jealousy resulted in the famous revolt led by Cyrus. After great preparation and with large forces from his western allies, Cyrus joined in battle with Artaxerxes at Cunaxa before the latter's reinforcements from Susa and Syria had arrived. But in spite of the odds, Artaxerxes won the day, largely because of the resourcefulness of his brother-in-law, Tissaphernes, and the inefficiency of Cyrus. But the defeat of Cyrus was only the beginning of trouble. At the beginning of his reign Egypt also rebelled under Amyrtaeus, who declared himself king, but Artaxerxes could do nothing about it, for he was occupied with Cyrus until 401 B.C., and no sooner was Cyrus defeated than Tissaphernes, who had been rewarded with command in Asia, was at war with Sparta in 399 B. C. By 396 B. C. Tissaphernes was defeated by the Spartan general Agesilaus, who proceeded to overrun Asia Minor. It was not till 394 B.C. that Persia gained her command of the sea with a newly-organised fleet under Pharnabazus and Conon, and not till 387 B.C. that the "King's Peace" settled accounts in the West sufficiently for Artaxerxes to turn his attention to Egypt. In the meantime Evagoras had established himself as King of Cyprus (399 B. C.) and openly rebelled against Artaxerxes in 389 B.C. It was this combination of Egypt and Cyprus that finally led Artaxerxes

to agree to the "King's Peace" so as to enable him to deal with these rebels. It is impossible to arrive at absolute certainty with respect to the exact sequence of these events but the picture is sufficiently clear to show that the first decade, at least, of the reign of Artaxerxes II was one of unrelieved rebellion and intrigue, during which he lost all firm hold on the western states of his empire. Indeed it was the beginning of a gradually increasing dissolution of the empire of Darius the Great. Just what rôle the little Hebrew State played in this tumultuous sea of troubles we do not know, but it is, at least, most improbable that in 397 B.C., when Artaxerxes was completely embroiled in a life and death struggle in the West, and when Egypt and Cyprus, unchecked, were flouting the Persian authority, he could have despatched Ezra to Jerusalem with such wide and authoritative powers, or that, even if he had, such a career as Ezra's would have been possible. Let us turn from this scene of confusion and strife to the corresponding period in the reign of Artaxerxes I. He ascended the throne in 464 B.C. amid a similar, though not quite so sordid, a family feud. After Artabanus, a courtier of Xerxes his father, had removed all dangerous family rivals, Artaxerxes turned upon this ambitious murderer, killed him and took the crown. This reign also began with a revolt in Egypt, led by a certain Inaros, who drove out the Persian authorities. But this situation was not beyond hope, since the Persian forces driven to Memphis by Inaros were a barrier to the southern section of the country joining the rebels, and Achaemenes, the satrap of Egypt, was promptly despatched with an

army to deal with the situation (circa 460 B. C.). Unfortunately this mission failed, owing to the assistance of the Athenian fleet which came to the help of Inaros. It is not exactly known just when this defeat took place, or how crushing it was, although Thucydides claims that the Athenians remained as masters of Egypt for a time.ⁱ But that it was not considered as final by Artaxerxes or as complete, is shown by the fact that he soon despatched Megabyzus (circa 457-6 B.C.) son of Zopyrus, to Egypt with a tremendous force to deal with the situation. Megabyzus marched through Syria to Egypt and crushed the Egyptian opposition, perhaps aided also by the Phoenician fleet. The Persian forces shut up at Memphis were relieved, and the Athenians driven to the island of Prosopitis. By draining the canals Megabyzus deprived the island of its isolation, caused the Athenian ships to be left high and dry upon the sands, and so completely subjugated the country. An additional Athenian fleet fell into a trap at the mouth of the Nile and was captured by the Phoenicians. One of the conditions of peace was that the life of Inaros was to be spared. To this Artaxerxes agreed. Of course, it is impossible to be certain of the precise dating of each separate event, and we have already seen the danger of basing too much on the system of fitting definite events of the Hebrew history into the fluctuations of the Persian regime.ⁱⁱ Nevertheless, one cannot fail to realise that

ⁱ I, 109 ff.

ⁱⁱ Ch. 6.

the first decade of Artaxerxes I is far more likely to be the time of Ezra's mission than that of Artaxerxes II. Although both are periods of revolt, the trouble with Egypt in the time of Artaxerxes I represents only one section of his empire in a state of rebellion, and in spite of a temporary set back due to Athenian aid, the situation never got out of hand, and was sternly settled just about the time when Ezra's mission is supposed to have begun. The empire was not in a state of dissolution, and there is no indication that the king's grip upon the western states had in any degree slackened. It is highly conceivable that the mission of Ezra, with his ample powers, was one phase of the king's western defences, of which the march through Syria and the successful expedition into Egypt of Megabyzus (circa 457-6 B.C.) were its military counterpart. Whether Ezra's mission preceded the march of Megabyzus does not really matter. They were at least within a year of one another and the conditions in Palestine and Syria were in no way incompatible with the possibility of Ezra's career.

Let us now draw together these threads of evidence. It has been shown that no valid reason exists for doubting the Chronicler's date for Nehemiah's mission as being the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I (i.e. 444 B.C.). On the other hand there is much to support this date. The Nehemiah memoirs, the Elephantine papyri, Josephus, and the events of the Persian history itself, all tend to support the Chronicler's date of 444 B.C. as the more suitable one of the two possibilities for Nehemiah. The difficulty of arriving at agreement over Ezra's date is due in a large measure to the problems of the Chronicler's own account. The fact that he

regards Ezra and Nehemiah as contemporaries, and yet that their careers, acts and procedures seem so completely separate, distinct and different, and the long delay of thirteen years before the reading of the law for which Ezra's mission was authorised, all seem to indicate that the Chronicler's chronology has suffered dislocation. But most of these difficulties disappear if these men were not contemporaries, and the two links that bind them together are unquestionably weak.ⁱ The delay in reading the law is removed, if, on the basis of Esdras A and in agreement with most scholars, we attribute Neh. 8 to the Ezra memoirs which the Chronicler misplaced. Hoonacker's view that Ezra was, in the time of Nehemiah, a mere youth, whose function was that of a 'reader', is a pure hypothesis, endeavouring to preserve to some extent the Chronicler's sequence, but the evidence that they did not work together in Jerusalem at the same time is sufficiently strong to break the slender bonds by which the Chronicler sought to weld them together.ⁱ But this conclusion still leaves the actual date of Ezra in the balance. The only existing evidence on this subject is the statement that Ezra entered "the chamber of Jehohanan, the son of Eliashib" (Ezr. 10:6). But for reasons already stated this statement is indecisive. While it is tempting to suggest that these men were the High Priests who bore these names, and if so Ezra's date could be 397 B.C., yet no certainty of that fact can be given. Even if Eliashib and Jehohanan here mentioned, were the High Priests who bore these names, there is still nothing in the verse to suggest that Ezra is the contemporary

ⁱ See Pg. 188 on Neh. 8:9 and 12:36.

of the second and not of the first, or that the second is the High Priest at this time. Why should it be regarded as impossible for Ezra to repair to the chamber of Jehohanan, grandson of Eliashib, for solace and comfort while Eliashib is still the reigning High Priest? Why must we believe that this verse implies that Jehohanan is High Priest at the time when Ezra paid him a visit? The verse affords an interesting suggestion of chronology, but it provides absolutely no decisive evidence. Over against this indecisive statement must be put the solid facts of Persian history. These facts show us in 397 B.C. an empire tottering upon its foundations. The king floundered upon a throne menaced by internal rebellion. All his western provinces were in revolt; Egypt had to be ignored altogether, because in addition to rebellion, Persia had to contend with Sparta. Even the temporary respite afforded by "The King's Peace" of 387 B.C. could not avail to bring Egypt to submission. But in 457 B.C., in spite of rebellion in Egypt, Artaxerxes I still held in a firm grasp the reins of empire. The advent of Megabyzus in Egypt meant the re-establishment of Persian authority. The situation provided Artaxerxes with the masterly opportunity of ensuring peace in Palestine and unhampered passage of his armed forces to Egypt, by despatching to Jerusalem Ezra the Scribe in 457 B.C., to integrate the loyalties of the Hebrew people by the enforcement of their own Law, upheld by the imperial authority. At least the historical situation favours the Chronicler's conception of the sequence of events.

Chapter 8

The Career of Ezra.

In the previous chapter it was shown that Ezra's career began in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes I, i.e. 457 B.C. At least, all the evidence points to this conclusion. It was further shown, that while Ezra and Nehemiah lived about the same time and may even have been present together in Jerusalem, it was wholly improbable that they were officially associated together as servants of the Persian government, in the way the Chronicler implied. Let us now turn to examine some of those aspects of Ezra's career which have drawn suspicion upon the Chronicler's record.

In the last chapter it was noticed how the Chronicler's arrangement of the material led to certain confusions in the narrative. By making Ezra and Nehemiah contemporaneous officials in Jerusalem, the Chronicler's narrative resulted in a thirteen year's interval between Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem and his reading of the Law. But since this was the primary purpose of his mission and no explanation for this delay is given, and since Esdras A avoids this interval by placing Nehemiah 8 after Ezra 10, it has long been recognized that the Chronicler's narrative has suffered some kind of dislocation in the sequence of events. The question at issue is just what kind of dislocation has taken place. There can be little doubt that Nehemiah 8 is a misplaced part of the Ezra Memoirs. Nehemiah 8 is closely attached to the list in Nehemiah 7 in the same way as Ezra 3 follows the duplicate list in Ezra 2. Whether this fact has anything to do with this section of Ezra's Memoirs' finding its way into Nehemiah's is uncertain, but it is one

plausible explanation.ⁱ In Nehemiah 8 the reading of the Law, concluding with the Feast of Booths, is the all-absorbing theme. The chapter deals exclusively with Ezra's primary interest and function; it describes the fulfilment of his great mission; it throbs with the priestly and levitical fervour of religious interest; Ezra, mentioned some seven times, is the outstanding figure amid the ecclesiastical assembly. The mention of Nehemiah once, (8:9) who takes no part on an occasion when, as governor, he should have been prominent, has already been shown to be the Chronicler's addition.ⁱⁱ The language, subject-matter, and religious interest stamp Nehemiah 8 as unquestionably part of the Ezra narrative. The question not so easy to decide is just where this section belongs in the sequence of the Ezra story. The most logical and widely accepted suggestion is that of Torrey,ⁱⁱⁱ who would place Nehemiah 7:70 - 8:18 between Ezra 8 and 9. According to this arrangement the reading of the law takes place soon after Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem. Whether this sequence is right or that implied by Esdras A,^{iv} which places Nehemiah 8 after Ezra 10, is uncertain, but from a logical point of view Torrey's sequence is certainly preferable.^v Torrey further improves the sequence by placing Nehemiah 9 and 10 after Ezra 10. In this way we get a perfectly logical sequence of events. Ezra first arrives in Jerusalem and proceeds to read the Law (Ezr. 7-8; Neh. 7:70 - 8:18).

i Comp. HV. Pg. 34.

ii See Pg. 188 footnote

iii Comp. HV. followed by K. Zur Frage 1918; K. Gesc. 1929; Sch. ES/93

iv Followed by Batten ICC

v For other suggestions see K. Wied. whose sequence is Ezr. 7-10, Neh. 9-10; Neh. 8; Neh. 13 placing Ezra's mission in the 2nd administration of Nehemiah; Sch. ES - Ezr. 7-8; Neh. 8-9 etc. Mitchell JBL 1903 and J. Wied. both retain the Chronicler's sequence.

Then the discovery of mixed marriages leads to Ezra's prayer, in which the sin is rebuked and the wrong is finally righted in the separation from foreign wives (Ezr. 9-10). Now follows the long litany concluded by the pact to adhere to the Law (Neh.9-10). This is an attractive way of rounding off the events of the career of Ezra, which Torrey regards, in any case, as pure fiction. But the objection to it for those who regard Ezra as an historical figure, is that it necessitates making Nehemiah 9-10 part of the Ezra Memoirs. But for this we have no valid grounds. As far as the evidence goes it seems certain that Nehemiah 8, Ezra's reading of the Law, forms part of the Ezra story. As to just where in that story this incident is to be placed is quite uncertain, although in view of its being Ezra's primary task there is every reason to agree with Torrey that it closely followed his arrival in Jerusalem. Whether the Chronicler's confusion was accidental, as Torrey suggests, or deliberate, as Schäder believes, is difficult to decide on the basis of their evidence. Torrey claims the Chronicler mistook Nehemiah 7:70 - 8:1 for a duplicate of Ezra 2:68 - 3:1, and since Nehemiah 8 was attached to Nehemiah 7:70 ff, the whole was placed after the list of Nehemiah 7:6-69, which was a duplicate of Ezra 2:1-67. Schäder claims that the Chronicler, seeking to make the Covenant of Nehemiah 10 intelligible, deliberately put the reading of the Law before it. But both these reasons, while interesting and plausible, are wholly conjectural. It is quite possible that the reason for the dislocation goes far deeper. It is highly probable that it is the result of an historical and religious

ⁱ See Batten ICC. Pg. 352-380.

interest, which also caused the Chronicler to regard Ezra and Nehemiah as contemporaneous officials, since it would be wholly abhorrent to him to regard Ezra the Priest and Scribe as having no part in the great activities of Nehemiah's time.ⁱ

Another vexing problem which has never ceased to exercise the minds of scholars in this subject is the nature of this Law which Ezra brought to the rehabilitated community in Jerusalem. The question is of paramount importance, since the establishment of the Law formed the central fact in the career of Ezra, but it cannot be denied that the evidence at our disposal is too meagre and indecisive for any dogmatic conclusions. According to Nehemiah 8, Ezra is asked by a great assembly of the people in Jerusalem "to bring the book of the Law of Moses", and on the first of the seventh month, about two months after his arrival (cf. Ezer. 7:8-9 and Neh. 8:2), Ezra complied with this request. He read out of the book ($\dot{\iota}\dot{\iota}\dot{\nu}\dot{\rho}\dot{\rho}$) from early morning until noon, while the whole assembly, at least all who could understand, stood in wrapt attention. Ezra, surrounded by a group of official aids, stood on a wooden platform especially erected for the purpose. The whole procedure partook of two elements, instruction based on the reading, and worship (8:6, 8-9). The word $\psi\dot{\rho}\dot{\rho}$ (8:8)ⁱⁱ need not mean, 'in translation', but rather, 'interpretation'. As the Law was read its meaning was made clear. We see here the early beginnings of the synagogical exposition of the Law, which in turn was the basis of the expository sermon of modern times. This reading and interpretation

ⁱ See Section 4.

ⁱⁱ See Page 116.

was accompanied by prayer and liturgical responses at certain intervals (8:6). The emotional effect on the people was visible, since they had to be reminded that the occasion was one of joy and not of tears (8:9). The day is declared 'holy', and the assembly is dismissed with the injunction to rejoice and send gifts to the poor. Instead of a day of mourning it was to be a day of festival and mirth (8:10-12). On the next day another convocation is held, consisting of "the heads of the fathers of all the people, the priests and the levites", for the purpose of continuing a study of the Law. Whether this was a select group for close study under Ezra's direction or whether it was just another assembly such as the one on the previous day for general instruction remains uncertain. However, in the course of this study instructions were found for the celebration of the Feast of Booths in the seventh month. In obedience to these injunctions the people went out and gathered "olive branches, and branches of wild olive, and palm branches and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written" (8:15). The statement is made that no such celebration had been carried out since the days of Joshua (8:17). The Feast was celebrated for seven days, and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly "according unto the ordinance" (8:18). To investigate all the varied questions to which these facts give rise would demand a separate treatise. It is our purpose simply to establish the salient facts to which the evidence bears witness. It is obvious that nothing definite about the nature of Ezra's Law can be gleaned from the Assembly of the first day (8:1-12), since, although we have ample evidence for the early origins of the

synagogue service, we are not told either what was read or the content of the instructions. Our evidence rests on the proceedings of the second day where we get fragmentary instructions concerning the Feast of Booths. But that the evidence is quite inconclusive can be seen by the wide variety of conclusions which have been drawn from it. Ezra's Law has been identified with various strata of the Pentateuch as well as with the Pentateuch itself. Some would identify it solely with D,ⁱ others with H & P,ⁱⁱ Schäder with the whole Pentateuch,ⁱⁱⁱ while others^{iv} agree that the data are insufficient for accurate conclusions. Let us compare the Ezra Law (EL - Neh. 8: 13-18) with H & P (Lev. 23: 34-43, Nu. 29:12) and D (Deut. 16: 13-17; 31: 10-13) respectively, in order to show how inconclusive the evidence really is.

I Two features are common to all three:

- a) Duration of the Feast - 7 days (Neh. 8:18; Lev. 23: 39, 41; Deut. 16: 13, 15);
- b) a Period of rejoicing (Neh. 8:17; Lev. 23:40; Deut. 16:14).

II In addition to these common features, EL agrees with H & P on three more points:

- a) Palms and thick trees (Neh. 8:15; Lev. 23:40).
- b) 'Solemn Assembly' on 8th day (Neh. 8:18; Lev. 23:36).
- c) Command to dwell in booths (Neh. 8:14; Lev. 23:42).

i eg. Kegel KE. & Br. EJ.
 ii e.g. Bert. SIJF.; G. Gesc.; Geiss.; S. Gesc.; and L. PRJ.
 iii Sch. ES.
 iv Loft. IE.; K. Gesc.; Cest. H. Vol. ii.

III EL differs from H & P on at least three points:

- a) Participants: In EL it is the returned exiles who are especially regarded as participants (Neh. 8:14,16, 17), whereas in H & P all that are 'homeborn in Israel' are eligible (Lev. 23:42) These terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but the phraseology is sufficiently different to show that the one is not a mere replica of the other.
- b) Date: In EL no specific date is named, although it is implied by the narrative that the Feast began on this 2nd day of the 7th month (Neh. 8:14), whereas in H & P the 15th day of the 7th month is definitely stated as the beginning of the Feast (Lev. 23: 39, 41 cf. Nu. 29:12).
- c) Trees. While in EL and H & P two kinds of trees are common to both, palms and thick trees, yet in EL we have olive and myrtle, and in H & P we have goodly trees and willows in addition (cf. Neh. 8:15 and Lev. 23:40).

IV Besides these differences, EL adds the two facts about the reading of the Law (Neh. 8:18) and the gifts for the poor (Neh.8:12) which are omitted by H & P, and H & P adds the two facts about the feast being a memorial of the Exodus from Egypt (Lev. 23:43) and a 'solemn rest', with the blowing of trumpets on the 1st day of the month (Lev. 23:24), which EL omits.

V In addition to the two features common to all three, EL agrees with D on four more points:

- a) All the true Israel are to celebrate the feast (Neh. 8:14, 16, 17; Deut. 16: 14; 31:12).

- b) Date is indefinite (Neh. 8:14; Deut. 16:13).
- c) Reading the Law as part of the celebration
(Neh. 8:18; Deut. 31:11).
- d) Gifts for the poor (Neh. 8:12; Deut. 16:17).

VI EL differs from D slightly on two points:

- a) its omission of the expansion: men, women, children, servants, strangers, orphans and widows (Neh. 8:14, 16, 17 and Deut. 16: 14; 31:12).
- b) its omission of any mention of harvest as the time of celebration (Neh. 8:14; Deut. 16:13).

VII Besides these differences, EL adds the three facts about the trees to be gathered (8:15), the solemn assembly on the 8th day (8:18), and the command to dwell in booths (8:14), which are omitted in D.

From this analysis we arrive at these facts:

i) Ezra's celebration agrees with H & P altogether on five points, differs from it on three points, and each adds two points which the other omits.

ii) Ezra's celebration agrees with D altogether on six points, differs from it slightly on two points, and adds three points omitted by D.

From this analysis it is obvious that it is quite impossible to identify EL with either stratum exclusively, since the odds are equally divided. From a purely mathematical calculation EL might appear slightly more in line with D than with H & P, but absolutely nothing can be based on this when we take into consideration the nature of the evidence in Neh. 8 on which this analysis has been based. If Neh. 8: 13-18 were a definite piece of legislation culled

from Ezra's Law-book it would have more right to be placed alongside the evidence of H & P and D for purposes of examination. But Neh. 8: 13-18 cannot be regarded as an excerpt from a Law-book. It is a brief description of certain events that happened on the second day's reading of the Law. It doubtless contains authentic data from Ezra's Law-book, but these data are fragmentary and incomplete. It might reflect H & P, or D, or both; its facts are too meagre to identify it exclusively with either, and the descriptive setting in which these facts are enshrined prohibit its use as evidence. In other words Ezra's Memoirs contain elusive reflections of the Law he introduced, but they do not contain definite excerpts from that Law, which would alone merit serious comparison with the legal material of the Pentateuch on which an identification could be based.

Ezra's action in respect of mixed marriages does not afford any additional evidence which can help us in identifying his Law-book. According to the record, soon after his arrival, certain "princes" complained to Ezra that "the people of Israel and the priests and the levites" had failed to preserve the purity of the racial stock by marrying foreign women. Indeed, the "princes and rulers" had been the chief offenders (Ezr. 9: 1-2). The news shocked Ezra into a state of humiliation and mourning, and at the evening oblation, with clothes rent and on his knees, he poured forth his feelings in prayer (19: 3-15). In this prayer Ezra reviews their past history as an unrelieved record of rebelliousness against God, who in His mercy had shown unfailing grace in their present relief from bondage. But this favour had been spurned by a

new disobedience against the divine command to keep themselves pure by rejecting all alliances with pagan neighbours. The prayer had the desired effect. It stabbed the hearts of the people who had assembled to hear this holy man pour out his impassioned appeal directed more to them than to God, and they agreed to divorce their alien wives, and this was carried out in the manner described in our summary of the Chronicler's account.ⁱ Ezra's action was a stern application of an old law (Ex. 34: 12-16, Deut. 7: 2-4) of J & D which was invoked in order to meet a concrete situation. But this cannot contribute anything to the view that Ezra's Law-book represented D and not P, since there is no specific legislation in P on this subject. That P supported the ideas of D on this question is clear from its general dislike of mixed marriages,ⁱⁱ but it contains no definite legal prescriptions on the subject with which Ezra's actions can be compared. Hence it is impossible to claimⁱⁱⁱ that because Ezer. 9-10 reflects JD, Ezra's Law-book did not also embrace P, since Ezer. 9-10 is dealing with a subject which, though treated in JD, found no place in P.^{iv}

^v Welch has pointed out that the crime of mixed marriages was committed by the returned exiles and reported to Ezra by the local community, which took exception to the laxity of these newcomers. He further criticises Oesterley to whom he attributes the opposite view. But Oesterley does not claim that the guilty parties were those who had never been in exile; they were exiles

- i Pg. 176; cf. Ezer. 10
- ii cf. Gen. 26: 34ff; 27:46; 28:6; Nu. 33:51ff etc.
- iii as eg. Br. EJ.; Kegel KE.;
- iv Geis. believes this is due to P's origin in Babylonia where mixed marriage was not a living issue.
- v W. PJ.

who had returned prior to the time of Ezra and who, in difficult conditions, had not strictly observed the tenets of racial purity. It must also be noted that there is nothing to imply that the "princes" who made the complaint were 'remanent Judaeans' as Welch contends. In all probability Welch and Oesterley are both right. The strict Jews in Palestine who had previously returned, as well as the Ezra party recently returned, both shared a common abhorrence of mixed marriages, and took common action against them.

A related question of interest is whether this Law of Ezra was something new which the people heard for the first time, or whether it was an old tradition long since neglected. From what has already been said it is clear that no final answer can be given to that question, since there is no final verdict about the nature of Ezra's Law. That it could not have been entirely new to the people is certain from the fact that its description of the Feast of Booths and its data about mixed marriages go back, in part at least, to the book of Deuteronomy. It is nevertheless clear that the Ezra Memoirs believed it to be, in some sense, new to the people, since the effect of the reading was to reduce the hearers to tears, and the celebration of the Feast of Booths is regarded as a novel event (Neh. 8: 9 and 17). It is, indeed, this effect upon the people that led some scholars to identify Ezra's Law with P. On the other hand Welch, following out his thesis that the demand for racial purity arose from the local community who had remained in the land, claims that the Law in question was new

i Geis.; L. PRJ.
 ii W. PJ.

only to the Ezra party which had recently returned from Babylonia. This is precisely the reverse of the Chronicler's record and rests on no valid evidence. The "princes" who made the complaint are not specified as representatives of merely remanent Judaeans. The novelty of the Feast of Booths is not felt solely by Ezra's returned exiles (Neh. 9: 17), and the removal of "unto Ezra, the Scribe", in Neh. 8:13, has no justification. The truth in Welch's hypothesis is merely that to those in Jerusalem, whether returned exiles or not, the Law could not have been wholly unknown.ⁱ

Dogmatic conclusions based on incomplete evidence has lain like a blight on Old Testament studies. The present question is a case in point. Since it is impossible definitely to identify Ezra's Law with any one strand of Jewish legislation, and yet since it reflects in part several strands (JD & P), including some of the oldest (J & D), it is clear that the exact nature of the novelty with which Ezra's reading affected the people in 457 B.C., cannot be precisely determined. Since Ezra's Law definitely reflects JD to some extent, it cannot be claimed 'new' in the sense of a new publication unheard of by anyone before. It certainly enshrined, at least partially, some pre-exilic legislation. But this fact does not contradict the impression given by the Ezra memoirs that Ezra's promulgation appeared to the people as 'new'. Any book, however old, must appear new to the one who hears it read for the first time, or whose indifference to an oft-repeated custom is suddenly banished by a new experience which unfolds to his mind a redeeming newness in the old. It would be interesting to have

ⁱ A fact accepted by N. Wied; Kegel KE.; ES.

statistics on the effects on the average Presbyterian congregation of the reading of the Westminster Confession. To how many would it appear as 'new'? But apart from this, it can hardly be seriously denied that the Chronicler has here preserved psychologically a correct report. The occasion was one of momentous importance. The return in the time of Cyrus, the notable achievement of the rebuilding of the temple in the reign of Darius, all were preliminary episodes to this event when the restored community became formally established on the supreme oracles of God. The religious interest which had inspired and sustained the whole Restoration movement reached its fulfilment in making the Law the basis of the people's life. The emotional feeling which accompanied the witnessing of this great day, for which generations had yearned, can better be imagined than described, and by all who can enter imaginatively into that experience it can be readily understood that the people wept.

A further question that faces us in the Chronicler's account of the career of Ezra is the abruptness with which the narrative ends. Even if we accept the complete re-arrangement of Torreyⁱ we have only a logical and neat sequence of events, but no satisfactory conclusion to Ezra's career. He simply disappears from the scene mysteriously, and in view of the immense importance with which the Chronicler invests him, it is hard to accept this mysterious disappearance as a mere accident. If it were possible to accept the view that Ezra came after Nehemiah and brought to the Restoration the climax of its development in the establishment

of the Law, then the absence of any mention of Ezra's end might be pardoned. The man would have simply faded out, eclipsed by the brilliance of his achievement. But since this view cannot be confidently maintained, this silence which surrounds the climax of Ezra's great task becomes much more conspicuous. That the Chronicler is in the habit of losing sight of his heroes when their tasks are done is quite true, and must be emphasised before rash conclusions are drawn about the possible fate of Ezra. Nevertheless, it has been conjectured by many, especially those who have accepted the sequence of the Chronicler's narrative, that Ezra's drastic measures in regard to mixed marriages led to serious unrest and opposition, culminating in the complete failure of his mission.ⁱ This failure is further interpreted by some as nothing less than an armed clash which the document Ezr. 4: 7-23 reflects, and which soon after gave rise to the career of Nehemiah.ⁱⁱ We have already seen that Ezr. 4: 7-23 does not refer to the temple, but to certain fortifications which certain opponents interpreted as preparatory to rebellion against Persia.ⁱⁱⁱ It is certain that for some reason the Chronicler has misplaced this section and wrongly interpreted it. The protest is said to come from people in Samaria (4:17), where Ezra's action on mixed marriages would evoke most serious resentment. It is sent to Artaxerxes in protest against

i Holz. EN.; F. Chr. Frag.; K. Gesc.; S. Gesc; Sch. ES

ii Hoo. NE; Stade Gesc.; Holz. EN.; N. Wied.; J. Wied.; Mey. Ent.; Kegel KE.; K. Gesc.; Batten ICC. Pg. 160ff.; and S. Gesc. where he rejects his former view (Stud.) that Ezr. 4: 7-23 referred to the reign of Cyrus: a view held also by Gab. 'Zorobabel'.

iii Pgs. 100ff and 153ff.

the building of the city and walls (4: 12, 13, 16), and therefore, could hardly be dated later than the time of Nehemiah. Thus the Artaxerxes in question is most probably Artaxerxes I. It would be most unlikely for such a document to refer to Artaxerxes II or III, subsequent to the wall-building of Nehemiah. These facts do indicate that the reference to "the Jews which came up from thee" (4:12) obviously refers to Ezra's caravan. All these facts are strongly in favour of a deep cleavage between the Samaritans and their sympathizers and the returned exiles in Jerusalem during some part of the reign of Artaxerxes I, prior to the advent of Nehemiah. The opposition was sufficiently serious as to lead to a protest to the King. The grounds of complaint were purely political. Whether this was merely a cloak for the bitterness occasioned by Ezra's actions is uncertain, because there is ~~not~~ nothing to indicate that it is. When we examine the news which Hanani brought to Nehemiah (Neh. 1:3; 2:3) in 445-4 B.C., there can be no doubt that this document faithfully reflects a situation identical with what Hanani describes. The walls are broken, the gates are burned with fire. We have here a grim but concrete expansion of the terse statement, "they went in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power" (Ezr. 4:23). It is wholly logical to conclude, with the majority of German scholars, that Ezra's actions led to such fierce resentment that he was forced to abandon his spiritual rôle for a military and political one, in an attempt to build the walls as a defensive measure against possible attacks. What was meant to be defence

was subtly interpreted by his bitter enemies in Samaria as treasonable preparations, and on this basis they appealed to the king. It is regrettable that we are unable to date more exactly when this situation arose in the reign of Artaxerxes I, because it might throw enormous light on his decision. We have seen already that Ezra's career began as one phase of the pacification of the West and Egypt under Megabyxus.ⁱ It may well be that Ezr. 4: 7-23 reflects some Palestinian phase of the revolt of Megabyxus in Syria (circa 450-49 B.C.), owing to the failure of Artaxerxes to honour his promise of sparing the life of the Egyptian rebel Inaros. At least the presence of revolt in Syria would account for the promptness with which Artaxerxes complied to the Samaritans' request. Instead of the inconsistency of forbidding the wall building one minute and the next allowing it, of which Artaxerxes has been so often accused, he is really quite consistent. To bolster his western flank Ezra is sent to Jerusalem with large powers in 457 B.C., while Megabyxus marched to Egypt. To avoid unrest spreading to Palestine while Megabyxus led revolt in Syria, questionable operations in Jerusalem are promptly halted in 450 B.C. Later, to remove unrest occasioned by the Samaritans' false use of authority, Nehemiah is despatched to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and restore order in 444 B.C.

These conclusions are logical and interesting, but the missing links in the chain must be clearly recognized and given their full weight. There is no concrete evidence for connecting Ezra with these political events.ⁱⁱ We cannot be certain that

ⁱ Pg. 194-197.

ⁱⁱ eg. F. Chr. Frag.

Ezr. 4:12 refers to his caravan. There is nothing to show that the resentment of the opponents was actually due to Ezra's action, or that Ezra had anything to do with the series of events that led to Nehemiah's mission. All we know is that soon after Ezra had effected the dissolution of mixed marriages, his part in the story ends abruptly, without any explanation as in the case of most of the Chronicler's heroes. We know further that prior to Nehemiah's arrival in Jerusalem, serious trouble had broken out which was strikingly similar to what is reflected in the document of Ezr. 4: 7-23. That Ezra's disappearance from official and public life had some connection with the events of Ezr. 4: 7-23, and that these events were those which led to Nehemiah's mission, are most probable, but all the same conjectural conclusions.

Finally it must be recognized that the Memoirs and the whole career of Ezra have, for a long time, lain under the gravest suspicion. It has been stated already that Torrey regards most of the Ezra-Nehemiah history as a pure legend, and especially the career of Ezra, whom he regards as merely a legendary figure created by the mind of the Chronicler; "there is not a garment in all Ezra's wardrobe that does not fit the Chronicler exactly"ⁱ. Hölscher reiterates precisely the same opinion. "Vielmehr wird Torrey recht haben, wenn er die Esra-Geschichte ganz und gar für chronistisch erklärt. Der Allgemeine Ton der Esraerzählung ist durchaus romanhaft, und auch ihr geschichtlicher Wert ist so zweifelhaft, dass man ein Recht hat, von einer Ezralegende zu sprechen"ⁱⁱ.

ⁱ ES Pg. 243.

ⁱⁱ G. Hölscher "Die Bücher Esra u. Nehemia" in Die heilige Schrift des AT. Kautsch ii 1920.

But it has been shown already that these dogmatic conclusions have been built up on inadequate evidence of at least three kinds: ⁱ

- 1) The lateness of the Aramaic of the Ezra Edict.
- 2) The identity of the style of the Ezra Memoirs with that of the Chronicler.
- 3) The impossibility of a Persian king's issuing an Edict such as the one in Ezer. 7.

Even if the linguistic evidence for 1 and 2 did prove their points, these facts alone cannot support the claim that Ezra never existed, unless evidence of an historical kind led to the same conclusion.

But in the examination of the Ezra Edict we found that there was no reason to doubt its authenticity on the basis that it was incompatible with Persian practice. Indeed it could not have more closely conformed to similar documents of the Achaemenian regime both in form and content. ⁱⁱ Torrey and Hölscher make much of the fact that in Ben Sirach's list of heroes (49:11ff.), while Zerubbabel, Joshua and Nehemiah are mentioned as the outstanding figures of the Restoration, the name of Ezra is conspicuously absent. They conclude that Ben Sirach did not mention him because he did not exist and he had never heard of him. ⁱⁱⁱ Lods and Oesterley have answered this with the conviction that the omission was the deliberate prejudice of an incipient Sadduceeism against Ezra and his Law as the basis of what was later to become Pharisaism. ^{iv} In any case it cannot be maintained that Ben Sirach had never heard of Ezra. This would mean the necessity of dating the Chronicler's work later than Ben Sirach. On the other hand it is quite unreasonable to regard Ezra's life and work as a piece of fiction, simply because a writer belonging to a

ⁱ See chaps. 1-4, especially Pgs. 22 ff., 57ff., 111ff.
ⁱⁱ Chap. 4.
ⁱⁱⁱ Hoo. *Révue biblique*, 1901, uses this fact as evidence for Ezra's coming after Nehemiah.
^{iv} L. PRJ; *Oest. H.* vol. ii and his "Intro. to the Apoc."

rival sect omitted his name from his roll of honour, even though the omission finds no satisfactory explanation.

The fact that the Ezra Memoirs alternate between the 1st and 3rd persons is no evidence for or against their authenticity. If it is urged that the alternation proves their lack of genuineness, surely it could be pressed with equal right that a fabricator would not have allowed such inconsistencies to betray his fraud.ⁱ Furthermore, insufficient recognition has been given to other contradictions and inconsistencies in the narrative which support the view that in the Ezra Memoirs the Chronicler has preserved genuine sources. Geissler's painstaking linguistic analysis of the Ezra Memoirs has shown a definite difference between the Chronicler and Ezra.ⁱⁱ Brownⁱⁱⁱ finds that while Ezra's Memoirs closely reflect D, the Chronicler prefers P. It is hardly likely that the Chronicler would have made so glaring a contradiction as between Ezr. 3:4ff and Neh. 8:17 about the observance of the Feast of Booths, if he were really the author of both passages.^{iv} At any rate, in spite of the lurking suspicion which the Torrey-Hölscher school has spread over the Restoration history of the Chronicler, it has failed to convince the large majority of scholars. From what we have seen of the facts it can be stated without reserve that no conclusive evidence, linguistic or historical, exists to support the view that the career and work of Ezra the Scribe is the imaginative creation of an ecclesiastical mind.

ⁱ K. Gesc. has ably given evidence of this alternation in other works known to be genuine - e.g. Memoirs of Catherine II; Narrative of Wen Amen in Palestine; Thucydides etc. also Is. chs. 1-5, 6-8; Hos. 2: 1-9 and 3:1ff.

ⁱⁱ Geiss.

ⁱⁱⁱ Br. EJ. ch. 10.

^{iv} cf. Meinhold ES; S. Gesc.

The only sane verdict on the question can be expressed in the words of Oesterley,ⁱ who is himself a fairly stern critic of the Chronicler, "to maintain that Ezra never existed seems to betray a lack of the historic sense".

Let us now draw together the threads of Ezra's career as they have become disentangled in the course of our criticism.ⁱⁱ In the seventh year of Artaxerxes I (457 B.C.), Ezra, the priest and scribe, a man skilled in the religious law and life of the Jewish people, was officially commissioned by the king and his seven counsellors, to go to Jerusalem and consolidate the Jewish community there on the basis of their ancestral faith. To implement his task with the proper authority and powers, Artaxerxes gave Ezra a royal Edict providing lavish gifts and grants and making Ezra virtually a Judaeen satrap. After a journey of about four months, interrupted only once by the necessities of securing a proper quota of Levites,ⁱⁱⁱ Ezra and his party arrived in Jerusalem. During his ministrations in Jerusalem two outstanding events took place. Soon after Ezra's arrival amid a great public assembly, Ezra produced the Law-book which he had brought from Babylonia and read from it to the people. The occasion was one of great significance and emotional excitement. From a pulpit of wood surrounded by helpers Ezra read the Law and had its meaning interpreted for the people to understand. The people made liturgical responses at certain intervals and wept in unrestrained emotion. This assembly, which undoubtedly partook of the essential elements of the later synagogue services, lasted from early morning to midday. On the next day another assembly was held, apparently for the purpose of more intensive study of the Law. This

i Oest. H. vol. ii Pg. 139

ii See Chap. 4 Pgs. 111ff. and chap. 7 in addition to this chap.

iii See pgs. 175-177 for a detailed statement.

led to the celebration of the Feast of Booths which lasted seven days. As to the exact nature of Ezra's Law-book we have no certain knowledge. The passages that reflect it are fragmentary data contained in a brief memoir of the celebration of the Feast of Booths and do not afford any real basis of comparison. In so far as a comparison is possible, these data reflect both D and H & P, as well as details peculiar to themselves. While in part the Law undoubtedly contained some pre-exilic material which must have been known to some, the uniqueness of the occasion and the thrill of discovering afresh the deeper meanings of the content left on the people the effect of novelty.

The second event that distinguished Ezra's work was the dissolution of mixed marriages. In response to a deputation complaining that many had failed to separate themselves from foreign wives, and that the Levites and Priests had been the chief offenders, Ezra effected stern measures of divorce. After fervent prayer in the sight of all, which convicted the guilty of their sin, arrangements were made to rid the land of this offence. An oath was taken to assemble within three days to accomplish this end. This assembly took place and the people agreed to the requirement of divorce, but the magnitude of the crowd and the heavy rains made impracticable any further proceedings. Hence certain men were appointed to carry the measure into effect, which was done between the tenth and the first months.

The exact order of these two events, or the time Ezra took in accomplishing them, is uncertain. All we can be fairly sure of is that the reading of the Law was not delayed until the arrival of Nehemiah. There is every reason to believe that for reasons of his

own the Chronicler misinterpreted the sequence of events in making Ezra and Nehemiah contemporary officials in Jerusalem. After the two incidents of the Law-reading and mixed marriages, Ezra fades out of the story, and all the evidence points to the conclusion that this happened before Nehemiah's mission began. As to the nature of Ezra's disappearance and the reasons behind it, we are left in ignorance. The association of Ezra with the calamities of *Ezr.* 4:7-23, already discussed, is a very probable conjecture, and the presence of rebellion in Syria under Megabyxus about 450 B.C. would lend colour to this suggestion. Perhaps the ignominious results which thus engulfed his hero are the reason for the Chronicler's silence on the question and his later association of Ezra with the great task of Nehemiah. But whatever caused Ezra's disappearance from the scene, it cannot efface the real value of his life and work, which was to rivet his people's life to the supreme revelation of God as he knew it in the Law, and so to set the stage for the whole structure of Judaism and Christianity. There is no reason to question that in his estimate of Ezra's mission the Chronicler has given a faithful witness.

Chapter 9.

The Career of Nehemiah.

With the career of Nehemiah we emerge from the labyrinth of intricate controversy which has clouded the Chronicler's narrative thus far. Even the most radical critics have admitted the authenticity of the Nehemiah memoirs, however much may be their differences on points of interpretation.ⁱ According to the narrative, Nehemiah was a man of Jewish descent whose ancestors were buried in Jerusalem (2:3,5). Whether he was of royal descent also is unknown,ⁱⁱ but at least he cherished the strongest bonds of loyalty to, and affection for, his ancestral home. This however did not interfere with his acceptance of the land of his adoption where he rose in the King's esteem and service to the post of cup-bearer to Artaxerxes I, (1:11; 2:1). Either at the close of the 19th or at the beginning of the 20th year of Artaxerxes I (445-4 cf. 1:1; 2:1; and 5:14), a small band of Hebrews led by Hanani, his brother, arrived in Babylonia from Jerusalem and brought to Nehemiah the grievous news of recent unrest which had broken down the wall of Jerusalem and burned the gates with fire (1:2-3). Whether Hanani had himself come from Jerusalem, or was simply instrumental in bringing the newly-arrived party to Nehemiah, remains uncertain. At any rate, the news reduced Nehemiah to abject depression. It brought tears to his eyes and forced him to a period of prayer and fasting (1:4-11). The prayer has been regarded as the Chronicler's concoction,ⁱⁱⁱ but why a prayer

- i. eg. G. Hölscher "Die Bücher Esra und Nehemiah" in die heilige Schrift des AT. and C.C. Torrey Comp. & ES. etc.
ii Br. EJ. ch. 8.
iii Batten ICC. Pg. 188.

full of stereotyped devotional phraseology should be a peculiar habit of the Chronicler and one not also peculiar to Nehemiah is a question no one has ever answered. Certainly there is no valid reason for suspecting the authenticity of the prayer. But the important fact is that the effect of this news on Nehemiah was so great that it must relate to events which were both recent and unexpected. No attempt to refer the events back to 586 B.C. can meet the case. It is obvious that some wall-construction and some re-establishment of the city had been attempted since the time of Cyrus, and Nehemiah did not appear to expect these grievous reverses. Without doubt he expected glowing accounts of the new regime which Ezra had set out to establish some dozen years before. But instead of this he received the bitter disappointment of hearing that his people were as badly off as ever. No doubt the events surrounding the Syrian rebellion of Megabyxus had filled the pious Jews in Babylonia with grave apprehension for the mission of Ezra, and now that fear had been substantiated by Hanani's news. In the last chapter we saw that the misplaced document of Ezer. 4:7-23 presents a picture which fits perfectly the conditions which Hanani depicted to Nehemiah.ⁱ That there is no indication that the two are connected in the Chronicler's account is perfectly understandable, since the Chronicler laboured to connect the document with the Temple building in the time of Darius. But it has been shown that this connection is artificial and unsatisfactory, that the content of the document concerns wall-building and fortifications, that it belongs to the period of Artaxerxes I, and fits precisely the background of Neh. 1 & 2.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ Pg. 211 ff.

ⁱⁱ Pgs. 100 ff., 153 ff., and Pgs. 211 ff.

There can be little doubt that the vast majority of scholars have been right in finding Ezz. 4:7-23 to be a passage concerned with the series of events which led Hanani and his friends to Nehemiah, the King's cup-bearer.

If the dates are correct, Nehemiah brooded over the sad fate of Jerusalem for about three months, perhaps awaiting and hoping for some opportunity to arise when he might learn the King's mind on the subject, or even perhaps to seek to lead the King to a more sympathetic attitude. This opportunity came when he was giving the King his wine in the first month of his twentieth year (i.e. 444 B.C.). Although Nehemiah did his best to conceal his spiritual distress,ⁱ the King could not help noting that his servant was far from his normal self. The question "Why are you crestfallen?" proved to Nehemiah that the sorrow which tugged at his heart had been revealed in his face and manner. The revelation added fear to his depression, since a brooding unrest was not long tolerated among royal servants. But it also provided an opportunity not to be lost, and Nehemiah, a man of action and resource, was equal to the occasion. He informed the King of the plight of his people, and finding him favourably inclined to meet his desires, Nehemiah, with prayer in his heart to One above, asked the King for permission to go to Judah and build Jerusalem. He tactfully avoided mentioning the walls, a subject which had once before been so maliciously misunderstood. The request was granted after a time had been set for his leave of absence. Royal letters were also given him to the officials "beyond the River", authorising his passage and the obtaining of materials for the work.

ⁱ The English has wrongly translated Neh. 2:1 by inserting "beforehand".

i

Nehemiah mentions parenthetically that the Queen was sitting at the King's side. No doubt the sympathetic interest of this court-favourite had some effect on the King's decision. This weakness of the King has been suggested as the reason why he reversed the orders of Ezr. 4:7-23 in the permission given to Nehemiah to rebuild the city. But, as was indicated in the last chapter, this reversal need not depend on any caprice of character; it might easily be simply the particularised application of a consistent purpose. The Syrian revolt had threatened the peace of the western states. In the midst of these upheavals, Artaxerxes received an urgent note from certain officials of Samaria that building operations in Jerusalem were taking the form of treasonable activities detrimental to the King's interests. On the receipt of this news Artaxerxes could afford to take no chances and ordered these operations immediately to cease. The Samaritan officials who had misconstrued the whole situation now turned the King's authority to their own ends and made a complete havoc of the work, which was in reality a menace to their own ambitions rather than to the King's dominion. But in the interval Megabyxus had been brought to heel and the western states were once again at peace. Therefore, it is wholly consistent with his action in sending Ezra to Jerusalem in 457 B.C. that Artaxerxes, on hearing of the dissatisfaction in Jerusalem, should despatch a court-favourite,

- i Or some favourite of the Harem - Batten ICC. Pg. 193.
- ii Artaxerxes I was noted for his susceptibility to feminine influence - eg. he sacrificed Inaros, whose life he had guaranteed, to Amestris, his mother, and thus precipitated the Syrian rebellion under Megabyxus.
- iii Mey. Ent.; Oest. H. Vol ii Pg. 121. - Note Herod. Bk. 1. 133 who declares it is a Persian custom to deliberate on affairs of weight when drunk and on the morrow revise the judgement when sober. Similarly decisions taken when sober are revised in the glow of drink. Can it be that Nehemiah's mission was the result of an intoxicated reconsideration? cf. Neh. 2:1 where it states "wine was before him".

Nehemiah, with authority to pacify his people and so build up a bulwark of strength and loyalty in Judah.ⁱ

That Nehemiah realised his task would not meet with the approval of the Samaritan neighbours and their friends who were responsible for terminating a former attempt, is obvious from the speed and secrecy with which he began his work. Three days after his arrival in Jerusalem, Nehemiah with a few picked men, made a rapid survey of the walls by night (2:11-16). He then appealed to the people to build the walls; and to encourage them, he informed them of how God had guided and the King aided him to assume the leadership of the task (2:17-18). The appeal met with an immediate and ready response.

Neh. 3 gives us a list of persons and groups who took part in the work. Some forty one sections of work are mentioned divided among various groups of workers. Many of these are mentioned as individuals, some as inhabitants of certain towns (vs. 2,3,5,7,13), some as rulers of districts (vs. 9,12,14-19), and others as belonging to certain guilds (vs. 8,32).ⁱⁱ Priests and Levites are prominent among them (vs. 1,17,22,28), and many work on a section opposite their homes, which would add zest to their labour (vs.23,24, 28-30). The order in which the groups are mentioned indicates that the whole circumference of the wall was under repair. The word 'build' (בָּנִי) is used some 7 times (vs. 1, 2bis, 3, 13-15), of which 4 carry the object 'gate'. The words 'lay beams' (בָּנִי בָּנִי), 'erect' (בָּנִי בָּנִי), and 'repair' (בָּנִי בָּנִי) are far more frequent. This would indicate that while some portions required repair, others

i cf. K. Gesc.; S. Gesc.

ii Institutions corroborated by the Ras Shamra tablets - J.W. Jack. Exp. T. June 1941 pg. 356.

needed complete rebuilding. The Sheep-gate and Fish-gate (vs. 1-3), i.e., the northern sectors, needed to be rebuilt, indicating that here most of the damage was done, and this would be the part most exposed to a Samaritan attack.ⁱ But this chapter has been seriously questioned by some scholars.ⁱⁱ It is true that Nehemiah takes no part in it, that the prominence of Priests and Levites denotes the Chronicler's rather than Nehemiah's interests, and that Meshullam, presumably a friend of Tobiah, Nehemiah's enemy (6:18), had a part in the work (3:4, 30). Furthermore, the chapter displays slight inconsistencies (cf. 3:3, 6, 13, 15 and 6:1; 7:1), and possible omissions (v. 11, 20 - no 1st. portion mentioned; no 2nd ruler for 2 districts vs. 14, 16;), and repetitions (vs. 4, 21, 30; 11, 14, 31; 11, 23). But none of these factors can prove that the passage is spurious. Both Kittel and Sellin, while repudiating the Nehemiah authorship, maintain that it preserves a genuine record of the task.ⁱⁱⁱ If the list were composed by Nehemiah, there would be no necessity for him to insert his own name periodically. He was not so much a workman as a superintendent. It is only natural that the Priests and Levites would figure prominently in any undertaking of national importance, and their presence among the workmen cannot stamp the list as the Chronicler's fabrication. In any case Batten (ICC.) has shown its composite character. Meshullam need not be a friend of Tobiah's. He was simply the father of Tobiah's daughter-in-law (6:18). The connection is too

- i cf. Batten ICC.; K. Gesc.; S. Gesc. Gest. II. Vol. ii
- ii eg. Comp. HV.; H.G. Mitchell JBL. 1903 Pgs. 85 ff.; Batten ICC. Pg. 206-224; K. Gesc.; S. Gesc. etc.
- iii K. Gesc.; S. Gesc.; it is remarkable to find that Hölischer "Die Bücher Esra u. Nehemia" holds ch. 3 as part of Neh. Memoirs and not the Chronicler's as held by Torrey (Com. HV.).

loose to have any significance. Besides there is nothing to indicate that he shared Tobiah's opposition to Nehemiah. Hence there is no valid reason why he should not be a perfectly loyal workman. But even if he were an enemy in the camp, his presence in the list could not be a mark against its genuineness, since much of Nehemiah's trouble came from elements within the Judaeen state itself. Finally it should be noted that it would be quite unreasonable to discard the Nehemianic authorship on the basis of style. Style has ever been a flimsy basis of proof as we have seen, but its flimsiness reaches its extreme in the case of a list or catalogue of workmen. A man's style would have to be odd in the extreme in order to be detected in the orderly record of the distribution of labour-gangs under his management.

But the ready and immediate response with which the Chronicler credits Nehemiah's appeal to begin the work of the walls was not unattended by a serious and persistent opposition which threatened disaster from the very start. It was headed by no less a person than Sanballat of Samaria and his two friends, Tobiah, the Ammonite slave, and Geshum, the Arabian. As has been shown already, there is no reason to doubt that this Sanballat was the governor of Samaria of whom the Elephantine Papyrus speaks, and a native of Beth-horon from whence he is called "The Horonite".ⁱ The fact that in 408 B.C., although still holding the title 'governor', he was at least an old man whose sons acted for him, and that the facts reported of him in Nehemiah's memoirs some 36 years earlier conform

ⁱ See Pgs. 178 and 180 - cf. also Batten ICC. Pg. 26; as against Winckler Alt. Forsch. 11 ii 1899-, Oest. H. Vol. ii Pg. 123, and S. Gesc. who regard him as a native of Horanaim in Moab.

to the actions of a person holding just such a status and in the prime of life, form extremely cogent proof that the enemy with whom Nehemiah had to deal was no less a person than the governor of Samaria, who regarded this new venture as another obstacle to his political ambitions. Of the other two men, Tobiah and Geshum, nothing definite is known. The story of subtle rivalry, bluff, intrigue and personal hatred on the part of Sanballat and his supporters is graphically told in Nehemiah's memoirs. The very fact that a man had been sent to aid the stricken people of Jerusalem stabbed their hearts with malice (2:10). It was a portent of serious disaster to their personal ambitions, which had only recently been narrowly averted (Ezr. 4:7-23). Now the old threat loomed again more sinisterly than ever. Their first reaction was to mock and ridicule the whole attempt, accompanying their scorn with a barrage of vicious propaganda to the effect that the Jews were rebelling against the King (2:19; 4:1-3). It has always been easy to ridicule and to insinuate wrong motives for actions that are disliked. On the other hand, it has always been hard to persist in a duty which is interpreted so as to make one look ridiculous. But to these shows of weakness and malicious bluff, Nehemiah turned blind eyes. His only reply was a more fervent appeal to God and an unshaken persistence in the work. (4:4-6). But this only made Sanballat and his friends

- i For conjectures - see Batten ICC. Pgs. 198, 203; also Oest. H. Vol. ii Pg. 124 who regards Tobiah as ancestor of the famous house of Tobias; and S. Gesc. who regards him of probably Negro origin.
- ii The general attitude is clear in spite of the great difficulties of the text. For suggested reconstructions, see Batten ICC, Pg. 255 ff.

more outraged and indignant. They decided to abandon scorn and propaganda and confront the Jews with a display for force, the power of which they had only recently felt (Ezr. 4:23). Sanballat and Tobiah, with Arabians, Ammonites and Ashdodites assembled in battle array against Jerusalem (4:7-8). They let it be known that their plan was a sudden unexpected attack which would end in massacre and destruction (4:11).ⁱ But to this Nehemiah replied by mobilisation, a brave act which usually robs an enemy's bluff of its potency. In spite of the corruption of the text (4:9,13-23), it is clear that Nehemiah organised his own picked body-guard as the spear-head of his defence and supported them by arming, at least partially, all able-bodied workmen who were occupied on the walls. The rapidity of Nehemiah's action, which immediately turned Jerusalem into an armed fortress, completely unmanned the enemy. Whether Sanballat's display of force was purely a bluffⁱⁱ or not it is impossible to say, but since no attack was launched it is obvious he was not prepared to carry out his purpose in the face of Nehemiah's defence. The breathing-spell thus afforded allowed the workmen to resume operations on the walls, but not at the expense of vigilance and readiness. They worked, "everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work and with the other held his weapon" (4:17). There is no need to take this passage literally. It is a graphic picture of unremitting zeal in a great task coupled with the caution necessary to see it through. So complete were the precautions that those who lived outside the city were required to remain inside by night. In this way, even by night Jerusalem had at

i Neh. 4:12 has never been satisfactorily explained. Conjectures are, i) Batten ICC. Pg. 230 accepts the LXX, "They are coming up against us from all places"; ii) Oest. H. Vol. ii Pg. 125, regards it as a request for loyalists to be placed near pockets of discontent in order to sustain morale.

ii K. Gesc.

her command an army equipped and ready for any eventuality. The guards were on duty throughout the night, and by day the workmen laboured on the walls from early morning "till the stars appeared". Sanballat had ample reason to hesitate in the face of such dogged determination.

The third phase of Sanballat's opposition took the form of treachery and intrigue. The failure of his battle-array, thanks to the prompt action of Nehemiah, and the fact that the walls were nearing completion (6:1), led Sanballat to send repeated requests to Nehemiah for a conference, presumably to settle their differences, at an intermediate place Ono. (6:2). But Nehemiah was too shrewd to fall into this snare, and replied with the noble words, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down". (6:3). Finally hoping to frighten him into the trap, Sanballat despatched an 'open' note to Nehemiah informing him of the rumour circulating "among the nations" that his wall-building was the initial stage of revolt against the king and the assumption of kingship for himself (6:5ff.). Such rumours were dangerous in the extreme. Any man with less courage than Nehemiah would have fallen for this bait. But Nehemiah lived for a cause. What happened to him did not matter so long as the purpose he served was accomplished. Hence he could repudiate the charges as the fabrication of Sanballat's own evil heart, and throw himself again on the mercy and strength of God (6:8-9).

Finally Sanballat's treachery took the subtlest of forms - a form exploited so effectively in modern times. He sought to turn the tide of internal weakness, deceit and dissatisfaction against his enemy. He hired a certain Shemaiah to suggest to Nehemiah that he

seek sanctuary in the temple lest some enemy slay him by night. (6:10-14). In this way Nehemiah would be discredited as a coward protecting himself in the holy place of God. The very suggestion smacked of Sanballat, and Nehemiah's reply reveals the true quality of his nature, "Should such a man as I flee?" But this is only one incident of Sanballat's use of 'fifth columnists' in Jerusalem. Tobiah had had secretive correspondence with many nobles in Judah with a view to undermining Nehemiah (6: 17-19). Tobiah's influence in Jerusalem was great and dangerous. He was son-in-law to Shechaniah (6:18), a man unknown, but, from the context, obviously a person of considerable importance. Tobiah's son was also well married to the daughter of Meshullum, one of the workers on the wall.ⁱ Tobiah was, at least friendly with, if not related to, the High Priest Eliashib (13:4), and Sanballat's own daughter had married Eliashib's son, Joiada (13:28). These connections were undoubtedly exploited to the full in Sanballat's attempts to destroy the work and career of Nehemiah. That Nehemiah was afflicted with internal labour trouble which Sanballat would naturally try to capitalise, is shown by Neh. 4:10 (Eng.), although the exact nature of the trouble cannot be ascertained owing to the extraordinary difficulty of the text.ⁱⁱ

There can be no doubt that Nehemiah met in Jerusalem a very delicate situation. No man had had greater powers conferred upon him by Artaxerxes than Ezra, and yet Ezra, even though he may have had no direct connection with the calamities of which Hanani spoke, had failed to avert those calamities. Indeed, if Artaxerxes had authorised the Samaritan opposition to stop operations in

ⁱ See Pg. 225.

ⁱⁱ See Batten ICC Pg. 229; also Br. EJ. who regards the trouble as physical weakness; Oest. H. Vol. ii Pg. 124 regards the trouble as an internal revolt against Nehemiah.

Jerusalem, it is unlikely his authority given to Nehemiah would evoke much confidence among many who had been so sorely disappointed and afflicted. Besides these misgivings there still smouldered the glowing embers of opposition to any attempt to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem on the part of the Samaritans, who had successfully thwarted the first attempt. As we have seen, it needed only a breath to fan these embers into a fierce blaze, and with it mingled the fires of internal opposition in Jerusalem itself. The whole character of Nehemiah's work bears vivid testimony to the dangerous antagonism with which the whole task was carried through.ⁱ

Oesterley, in his excellent study "The Samaritans and the Jews",ⁱⁱ has shown that the political rivalry which divided Samaria and Judah in the time of Nehemiah had its roots in the early origins of the Hebrew people. Here in Sanballat and Nehemiah this underlying political tension took concrete form. Oesterley is right also in emphasizing that the rivalry between Sanballat and Nehemiah was purely political and not religious. There is no valid reason to believe that the tumults of this period were due to the recognition of an acute racial and religious difference which was to characterise a later period, and in the light of which the Chronicler wrote. But while this distinction is true according to modern modes of thought, it is extremely unlikely that in the time of Nehemiah such a distinction was made. The sharp line of demarcation with us today, between what is religious and what is political did not exist then. In those days every political act was clothed in religious garb, and

ⁱ See Oest. H. Vol. ii Pgs. 121 ff.

ⁱⁱ Oest. H. Vol. ii ch. 11; - N. Wied.; R. JS; S.R. Driver "Minor Prophets"; Br. EJ; - all agree that Ezr. 4:1-5 may bear historic witness to this rivalry of a political kind. On the contrary Mey. Ent. regards the returned Exiles as rejected by the Samaritans and Ezr. 4:1-5 as the reverse of the truth.

every religious act had conscious or unconscious political implications. It is certain that from our modern standpoint the friction between Sanballat and Nehemiah was of a personal political rivalry. But in the time when it took place it would hardly be viewed as divorced from its religious associations.

This fact brings to the front the difficult question as to whether the career and work of Nehemiah were the true sources of the Samaritan schism which was later to establish a rival cult. As far as we know there is no reason to believe that the Samaritan differed in any essential degree from the Judaeans either in race or religion.

"Even as the Samaritans are shown by anthropology to be Hebrews of the Hebrews, so the study of their religion and manners demonstrates them to be nothing else than a Jewish sect". i

Gaster voices the same conviction "that the Samaritans are none other than a purely Jewish sect".ⁱⁱ Nevertheless the fact cannot be denied that, while no racial or religious differences existed in reality, the Jews and Samaritans came to feel that such differences did exist. In the time of the Chronicler these differences were felt to be very real. It is very hard to say to what extent he has reflected these differences in his record of Ezra and Nehemiah. But the possibility remains that, since these differences were felt to be acute in the Chronicler's day, such feelings also existed in the time of Nehemiah. Even if we discard the references in 2nd Kings 17 and Ezr. 3:3; 4:1-5, we are still faced with the fact of Ezra's demand for the divorce of foreign wives and the disastrous events that led to Nehemiah's mission. It is true that these events may not have been recognised at the time as a distinct

i Mont. Sam. Pg. 27.
ii Gaster Sam. Pg. 41.

cleavage between Jew and Samaritan, characteristic of later Judaism, but they certainly did form some cleavage between the strict Puritan elements either within or without the state, regarded as decidedly alien. While in the case of Nehemiah and from modern notions this cleavage was strictly personal and political, in the case of Ezra and from the standpoint of the age, it could not be divorced from its religious and racial roots.

According to Neh. 13:28 a grandson of Eliashib the High Priest married the daughter of Sanballat, and in Nehemiah's attempt to clear Jerusalem of potential enemies, he states, "I chased him from me"ⁱ. Josephus built upon this incident a story to the effect that Sanballat promised his son-in-law the High Priesthood over a rival cult at Mt. Gerizim. The son-in-law's name is given as Manasseh, and we are told he was joined by many others whose marriage with foreign wives had caused trouble in Jerusalem. But Josephus places the incident in the time of Alexander the Great, with whose help the promise was carried out. This places the incident recorded in Neh. 13:28 about a hundred years later. The first historic date regarding this shrine at Gerizim is 128 B.C. when John Hyrcanus destroyed it,ⁱⁱ but no one knows how long it had been in existence. From these data nothing very definite can be drawn about the exact origin of the cult at Gerizim. Certainly there is nothing to imply that it was established as a direct result of Nehemiah's action. The fact that it cherished the whole Pentateuch but not the rest of the Jewish Bible

ⁱ Ant. XI, 7-8.

ⁱⁱ See Oest. H. Vol. ii Pg. 156 - note for references. Oesterley accepts the date of Josephus, i.e. about 330 B.C., although he rejects the story which is drawn from Neh. Torrey ES gives good reasons for its taking place not earlier than 400 B.C. Kennett dates it in time of Neh.

speaks strongly in favour of the view that the final break took place after the Pentateuch (but before the Prophets and Writings) were accepted and closed. This does not lead us far, but it does force us to date the final break later than the time of Nehemiah. The narrative in Josephus is largely responsible for bringing the action of Nehemiah into an exaggerated prominence as the origin of the Samaritan rift. Had that story not existed, it is quite incredible that Nehemiah's incidents with Tobiah and Sanballat's son-in-law would have been regarded as of greater import than the activity of Ezra in accounting for the Jewish-Samaritan antagonism. At any rate it is quite clear that, whatever part Nehemiah may have played in widening the rift, he did not create it. His whole work in Jerusalem was harassed and threatened by a deep-seated antagonism between certain Samaritan elements and the loyal Jews in Jerusalem. The most that the evidence admits is that Nehemiah's political feud with Sanballat was but one important episode in that long cycle of events whose roots lay buried in the past, and which was soon to lead to a complete break between the Jews and Samaritans such as Josephus describes.

In spite of all the difficulties encountered, the walls were duly completed in 52 days (6:15). Since there is no reason to believe that the walls were completely demolished either in 586 B.C. or at any subsequent period, the work Nehemiah had to do was one of extensive repair. We have noted already, how the words 'build', 'repair' etc. implied differences of damage. Secondly the threats and antagonism with which the work was carried through, and the dauntless determination of Nehemiah, would ensure its completion in the very minimum of time. Indeed the speed with which the task was

accomplished was awe-inspiring even to their enemies (6:16).ⁱ

It is natural that so great an achievement should be crowned with a great religious Dedication. The fact that only a fragmentary account occurs at all, and that in another section of the Nehemiah narrative (12:27ff), indicates some serious dislocation in the text. According to the evidence we have, the Levites, Singers etc. were assembled from all outlying villages, and after adequate purification, they and the Priests and Princes were divided into two groups. They marched in opposite directions upon the top of the wall amid music and praise, until they met in the temple area. At the head of one company marched Nehemiah. In one group Ezra is mentioned (12:36),ⁱⁱ but we have already discussed the improbability of this fact. But even if Ezra were present at this time, there is nothing to indicate that he retains any of the glory formerly associated with him. He may have been in Jerusalem and, in view of his earlier dignity, was given an honorary part in the proceedings, but certainly not in the capacity of a Persian official of the same rank as Nehemiah. The Dedication was concluded with hymns of praise and sacrifices, "so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off". (12:43).

Nehemiah now placed two men over the affairs of Jerusalem, Hanani his own brother, and Hananiah, governor of the fortress, a man loyal and God-fearing (7:1-2). The gates of the city were closed during hours of darkness, and a system of guards was organised to maintain ceaseless vigilance (7:3). We are now informed that the population in the city was very sparse, and an effort was made to enlarge it. At this point the Chronicler inserts the list (Neh. 7:6ff)

ⁱ K. Gesc.; S. Gesc. & Oest. H. Vol. ii Pg. 126: - all reject the period of 2 yrs. 4 mos. as given by Josephus - Ant. XI 179.
ⁱⁱ Pg. 188 ff.

to which reference has already been made (Pgs. 136-142). The sequence to Neh. 7:5a appears to be Neh. 11:1ⁱff, where an effort was made to draft a tenth of the population of the environments to live inside the city. The implication is that only the official and wealthy classes lived in Jerusalem, while most of the peasant class resided on their farms and in villages round about. A special blessing was given to all who volunteered to live in Jerusalem (11:1-2). To this introduction is attached a list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the towns of the province of Judah (11:3-36). The list is a variant of 1st. Chr. 9, which also claims to be a list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The variations in the two lists might be explained as due to the passage of time which is supposed to separate them. But as we have found in other connections, there is nothing definite by which the origin of these lists in the Chronicler's history can be ascertained. To this list is appended another list of Priests and Levites covering the whole of the Persian period (Neh. 12:1-26), together with arrangements for the gathering of the revenues of the Priests and Levites. This section follows the dedication of the walls but has no integral connection with it.

We must now turn to another aspect of Nehemiah's career of which we get glimpses in his memoirs. The Chronicler interrupted the story of the wall-building to insert a memoir on the economic conditions with which Nehemiah's regime was afflicted (Ch. 5).ⁱⁱⁱ According to this record, the people are suffering from the same old complaint of economic depression and famine. The old cry for food to sustain life arose from the lips of the people. The hardness of

ⁱ cf. Mey. Ent.; Br. EA. & Batten ICC. Pgs. 266ff.

ⁱⁱ For a detailed discussion of their items, see Curtis ICC Pgs. 167ff, Batten ICC Pgs. 266 ff; Mey. Ent.; Sm. LEN

ⁱⁱⁱ For difficulties in the text, see Batten ICC. Pgs. 237-249.

the times had paved the way for the growth of those old injustices against which the prophets had rebelled.ⁱ Property had been lost through mortgage. Taxes had crippled many with debt and men's sons and daughters were reduced to slavery. Wealthy money-lenders and the upper classes had villainously exacted interest on loans,ⁱⁱ and enslaved those whom the Restoration had been at pains to free. To these conditions to which famine and affliction (e.g. Ezr. 4: 7-23) had reduced the people of Judah, Nehemiah addressed himself with indignation and effectiveness. His forceful rebuke to those who had made capital of the situation left them in silence (5:6-13). On the grounds of religion and patriotism (5:9), he appealed to the wrongdoers to abandon their oppressive acts and to make full restitution for wrongs already inflicted. With the Priests as witnesses and with symbolic action (5:12-13) to visualise^a the oath, Nehemiah ensured these conditions in the form of a solemn obligation. "And all the congregation said 'Amen' and praised the Lord". (5:13).

The rest of the chapter (vs. 14-19) is of particular interest in throwing light upon Nehemiah's term of office and the nature of his administration. He informed the people that he had been governor for twelve years, from the twentieth to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes (i.e. 444-432 B.C.), and that during that period he had not exercised the prerogative of exacting from the people financial maintainance for himself and his house. He reminded them of former governors who had not been so considerate, but who had burdened them with providing all sorts of luxuries to maintain their court (5:14-15). But instead of that he had thrown himself and all his servants into the all-absorbing task of building

i cf. Is. 5:8ff; Amos 2:6ff. Mic. 2:1ff etc.

ii In violation of Deut. 23:19ff.; Ex. 22:25; Lev.25:36ff.

the wall, and had extended to all newcomers from round about the sustenance of food and drink from his own resources (5: 16-19). All this he did, "because the bondage was heavy upon this people".

It is obvious from this passage that the conditions described could not have been due solely to the two months' interruption in the life of the community occasioned by the wall-building. It is also obvious that the despatch and determination with which the wall-building was carried out in spite of all opposition whether from within or without, left no opportunity for this matter of economic reform, although complaints were perhaps heard breaking the tension of the times (4:10). Finally Nehemiah makes reference to a twelve-year period of governorship, and uses his conduct during that period as an example of his interest in their welfare and his desire to aid them to reach a sounder economic basis. All this indicates clearly that the Chronicler has misplaced Ch. 5, which belongs rather to the latter part of Nehemiah's first period of administration, which concluded with his return to Babylonia in 432 B.C. (13:6).

Before we proceed to the final phase of Nehemiah's career, mention must be made of a section in the memoirs which is clouded with much uncertainty. This is the long prayer of confession in Ch. 9. Although usually coupled with Ch. 8 as part of the Ezra Memoirs we have already pointed out that there is no valid evidence for this conclusion. The scene is one of a great assembly in the act of fasting. The people wear sackcloth and have earth upon their heads, and having separated themselves from foreign contamination, they confess their sins before God. The Law is read for a fourth part of the day in the same way as in Ch. 8. The date is

fixed as the 24th day of "this month". All this is completely in keeping with the memoir of Ezra in Ch. 8 which precedes it, and it was natural for the Chronicler to regard Ch. 9 as a part of the same section as Ch. 8. But apart from the similarity of the occasion there is nothing to show that this forms any part of the Ezra memoirs. Ezra is not mentioned except in the Greek text, and it is due to this fact that the chapter has been associated with Ezra's reading of the Law. But in the Massoretic text the prayer is anonymous, and the whole religious service proceeds from the Levitical leaders whose names are given. It is certainly more probable that Ezra's name has been inserted in the Greek text than that it has fallen out of the Massoretic. The long prayer (9:6-38) is a characteristic recital of Israel's past history, from the days of the patriarchs up to the time when the prayer was uttered, which was certainly a long time after the exile. The theme of the prayer is the unmitigated disobedience of Israel in the face of God's abiding grace (cf. Acts Ch. 7). There have been various views of its origin. One of the most recent and radical is that of Prof. Welch,ⁱⁱ who regards Neh. 9 as a litany originating in the Northern Kingdom after the fall of Samaria in 722 B. C. His proof rests on the peculiarly Deuteronomic nature of the prayer. It cannot be denied that the prayer voices the ideas and uses the phraseology of Deuteronomy. That fact Prof. Welch has amply demonstrated. In addition the prayer, while referring to the distress caused by the Assyrian Kings, does not mention the exile or restoration, but speaks of the people as enslaved in their own land.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ S. Gesc. & Sch. ES accepts it as Ezra's; K. Gesc. regards it as an interpolation forming a preface to Neh. 10; Batten ICC Pgs. 371 regards it as from the Greek period.

ⁱⁱ W. PJ.

ⁱⁱⁱ A fact which might as easily imply origin in the Greek period - see Batten ICC. Pg. 371.

These facts are strongly in favour of this theory. But the proof rests on two main assumptions which themselves are none too strong, viz:-

- i) That Deuteronomy originated and remained in the Northern Kingdom.
- ii) That similarity of ideas and vocabulary proves identity of date and origin.

The first point Welch claims he has proved in his former work on Deuteronomy,ⁱ but this is a very questionable fact. The fact that Deuteronomy breathes the spirit and ideals of the 8th century prophets, and condemns the practices of idolatry, can hardly prove that it was the exclusive production and property of the Northern Kingdom. At any rate, Welch has failed to convince the majority of scholars that his theory of the date and origin of Deuteronomy is beyond question. It is rather an interesting possibility than a proved fact, and the scholars in that realm must give the final judgement. But the second point is the weakest link in the whole chain of argument. Even if it were certain that Welch's theory of the date and origin of Deuteronomy were right, that does not prove his contention that Neh. 9 also arose in the Northern Kingdom after 722 B.C. Identity of style in devotional literature is no proof of identity of authorship. There is no style quite so conventional as the style of devotion. Any prayer is apt to be expressed in the ideas and phraseology of the devotional literature on which the composer has been nourished. Indeed it would be unusually strange if this were not so. The devotional expressions, the ideas, the words in which prayer is cast, may go back centuries before the date of its composition. Let anyone examine, from the same standpoint, a modern ecclesiastical liturgy of the Christian

i "Deuteronomy - The Framework to the Code".

Church, and he will find its most beautiful phrases, its most moving ideas and its whole style and manner conform to the main stream of devotional literature whose roots are centuries old. Our only conclusion can be that Prof. Welch has shown the religious roots of Neh. 9 to be in Deuteronomic thought and style, but its origin and date remain unknown. It might be an authentic prayer of Ezra or of his time, but there is no positive proof of its connection with him. On the other hand Batten may be right in attributing it to some unknown author in the Greek period. There is certainly nothing in it which would indicate that it formed a part of Nehemiah's memoirs, among which the Chronicler has placed it.

Let us now turn to the closing phase of Nehemiah's career. As we have seen, Nehemiah's economic activities in Ch. 5 came towards the close of his first period of administration, which lasted for some twelve years (5: 14; 13:6). At the end of twelve years he returned to Persia. In Ch. 13, which records his second period of administration, we find him back in Jerusalem, but there is no indication how long he remained in Persia or when he returned to Jerusalem. In view of the journeys he had to make to Persia and back again, it is extremely unlikely that his return to Jerusalem took place within the short space of a year.ⁱ It is possible that several years elapsed before he could again obtain the King's permission to return, but when it was and why he came remains uncertain.

With this second visit to Jerusalem must be associated the reforms enacted in Chs. 10 and 13. The relationship of these

ⁱ cf. N. Wied.

two chapters is a matter of dispute. Ch. 10 begins with a list of those who signed a pact to obey the Law (10:1-28). The rest of the chapter details certain definite prescriptions to be observed, four of which are paralleled in Ch. 13. It may well be that the first part of the chapter, consisting of a list, forms no real part of it.ⁱ Prof. Welch extends his theory of Neh. 9 to Neh. 10, claiming that in this pact of Neh. 10 we have an agreement to keep the Law between the loyal Israelites of the Northern Kingdom and those of Judah after the fall of Jerusalem in 586. B.C.ⁱⁱ His proof of this rests first on the awkwardness of the list's connection with the rest of the chapter, and secondly on the nature of the prescriptions in vs. 29-39. The elimination of the list in vs. 1-28 can be granted. It makes no ultimate difference whether we regard it as part of the chapter or not. For Welch, who regards the pact as one the people who remained in the land entered into, the elimination of the list makes better sense. Thus the "we" of v. 1 (Heb.) corresponds to "the rest of the people" v.29 (Heb.) who remained in the land, and there is no mention of the exile or the restoration. But his proof that the prescriptions of the rest of the chapter are impossible in the period of Nehemiah's second administration is extremely thin. Before we examine this proof let us enumerate the prescription in question:-

- i cf. Sch. ES and W. PJ.; Batten ICC Pg. 372 ff. show Ch. 10 as composite and belonging to neither the memoirs of E & N nor the Chronicler.
- ii In his most recent work (WC) Welch advances the view that the Chronicler was a member of this group, and his work in 1st and 2nd Chronicles represents a tract in support of their position. This dates his work prior to the restoration, and implies he is not the author of Ezer-Neh.

- 1) The people promise not to marry foreign wives and not to allow their daughters to marry foreigners (10:30).
- 2) No buying of foreign wares is to take place on the Sabbath or on any holy day (10:31).
- 3) Every seventh year there is to be a cancellation of debts (10:31).
- 4) A yearly tax of 1/3 shekel is to be paid by all for the upkeep of the temple and sacrifices (10:32-33).
- 5) Lots are to be cast for the duties of supplying wood for the temple sacrifices (10:34).
- 6) The first fruits are to be brought each year to the temple (10:35-37).
- 7) Tithes are to be paid to the Levites in the presence of the Priests (10:37-9).

Welch claims that the action of Nehemiah in prohibiting mixed marriages and in ejecting Eliashib's grandson for marrying a foreign wife (13:28), and then promulgating a law to justify his act, is "Jeddart Justice" which hanged a man and then proved him guilty. Of course such things do happen, but there is no reason whatever to imply that Nehemiah was enforcing a law which was new. Welch is quite right in maintaining that Nehemiah is enforcing a law already in existence (cf. Deut. 7:3 and Ezra's Law in the last chapter). Where Welch appears to go astray is in implying that this agreement in Neh. 10 must be dated when that law first came into existence. Neh. 10 is not the promulgation of a new law; it is the voluntary promise to keep the Law. The third item about the release of debt every seventh year reflects Deut. 15:1ff. rather than Lev. 25:4, which makes it a year of rest for the land. But as we have seen already, this cannot make Neh. 10 necessarily the same date as Deuteronomy, even if the latter's date were what Welch would have it. The dating of the 1/3 shekel tax prior to 520 B.C., because the Darius decree (Ezr. 6:9ff) supplied the maintenance of the temple worship, is far-fetched. The history of

the Restoration provides enough evidence of how difficult it was to get the Persian decrees carried out. The Cyrus decree promised the costs of the erection of the temple (Ezr. 6:4), but eighteen years of economic depression elapsed before the people managed to accomplish the task, and Darius had to reinforce this aspect of the Cyrus decree before it could be done (6:6ff). Welch regards the question of casting lots in item 5 as a temporary, and therefore, preliminary expedient to the latter method of "wards" (Neh. 13:30ff) for supplying wood for the temple. But as Battenⁱ suggests, the discrepancy may not be so real, since the lots may have been used simply to determine the order in which certain ones were to supply the wood. The difference between the voluntary abstinence from buying on the Sabbath in Neh. 10:31 and the definite law prohibiting all trade in Neh. 13:15 ff. is not serious. In the first case we have a voluntary promise to abstain from a certain practice regarded as wrong; in the second we have definite steps taken to prevent the practice on the part of those who deliberately transgressed. Hence there is no reason to suggest that the prescriptions in Neh. 10 are to be dated prior to 520 B.C., or that they are in any vital sense inconsistent with the reforms of Nehemiah's time. Welch's hypothesis is an interesting conjecture, but it rests rather upon preconceived ideas about Deuteronomy and its relation to Neh. 9-10, than upon the intrinsic evidence of the passages themselves.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ Batten ICC. Pg. 377

ⁱⁱ Welch has also overlooked the facts of Mey. Ent. and Br. EJ which show that the legislation in Neh. 10 reflects to some extent P rather than D. cf. Neh. 10:33 and Lev. 24:5ff; Ex. 29:38-42; Lev. 7:37; cf. Neh. 10:37-9 and Nu. 15:20. Also the collection of Tithes in Neh. 10:37-9 follows P (Lev. 27:30-33 and Nu. 18:21-28) where tithes are given wholly to Levites, who in turn give a tithe to the priest; whereas in D (12:17-19; 14:22-27) the tithes were to be eaten by the people and the Levites etc.

In Ch. 13 we find the narrative portion of Nehemiah's memoirs on this second period of administration. The preface (vs. 1-3) gives the legal basis for the repudiation of aliens in the religious privileges of the restored community (Deut. 23:3-5). This may be the Chronicler's own introduction to the memoirs which follow and which describe Nehemiah's drastic actions. On his return to Jerusalem Nehemiah discovered that Eliashib, the priest, had allowed Tobiah, the Ammonite, his old enemy, to occupy certain quarters in the temple court (13:4-6). Whether Eliashib was related to Tobiah or simply bound to him in friendship is uncertain.ⁱ It is more than possible that Tobiah's influenceⁱⁱ in Jerusalem had so risen after Nehemiah's return to Persia that the High Priest was forced to recognise him and render him honour which he would otherwise have refused. This situation was wholly intolerable to Nehemiah. It meant the desecration of a holy place, and the nursing of a viper in his bosom. With the same unhesitating precision with which he had carried out other tasks, Nehemiah had Tobiah ejected bag and baggage, and the chamber purified and restored to its sacred use (13:7-9). We are not told how he dealt with Eliashib, who was responsible for the outrage, but that Nehemiah recognised his guilt in the situation is definitely stated (13:7). He next turned to the neglect of the tithes payable to the Levites (13:10-14). It appears that during his absence the non-payment of tithes had led to the Levites' departure from the sacred duties of the temple and their preoccupation with secular

ⁱ Neh. 13:4 - the word used is לִיָּבֵן = near.
ⁱⁱ See Pg. 230 ff.

pursuits. Thus those set apart for the religious duties of the shrine had to abandon their vocation in order to make their own living on the farm. Such a scandalous condition was beyond Nehemiah's patience. With prompt and efficient action the Levites were reinstated in their sacred office, wards were appointed for the supply of wood for the temple (13:30), and a contralised system of finance was set up with a picked body of trusted treasurers to see that the upkeep was maintained and justly administered. Another abuse was the desecration of the Sabbath by buying and selling (13:15-22). All kinds of business were conducted at the city gates by Jews as well as foreigners. To end this state of affairs Nehemiah ordered the gates to be closed on the eve of the Sabbath, and set a guard to see that all such practices ceased. To remove the merchants who continued to assemble outside the gates, Nehemiah threatened violent punishment. Finally Nehemiah was outraged at the prevalence of mixed marriages (13:23-30) which had been repudiated since the time of Ezra. The results were so manifest that many children could not even speak the Hebrew tongue. His rage went so far as to express itself in open violence. With tongue and hand he made them feel the heat of his wrath (13:25), and forced them to swear to abandon the practice in future, citing Solomon as the great example of this sin. To cleanse the priesthood of this evil, Nehemiah "chased out" a grandson of Eliashib who had married a daughter of Sanballat (13:28). No doubt the memory of the old enmity of Sanballat whetted his zeal in ridding Jerusalem of a hornet's nest of intrigue. With this culminating incident the record of Nehemiah ends.

In view of what has been said about the reforms in Neh. 10 there is no reason to suspect any inconsistency between them and

the contents of Neh. 13. Of the 7 prescriptions of Ch. 10 we have 4 parallels in Ch. 13:-

- i) Mixed marriage.
- ii) Sabbath desecration.
- iii) Tithes of the Levites.
- iv) Wood for the Temple.

Ch. 13 omits any mention of the 7th-year cancellation of debt, the 1/3 shekel tax and the promise of firstfruits. Just what the exact relationship is between the two chapters, 10 and 13, is unknown. The first is an agreement on the part of certain people to do certain things. The second is Nehemiah's record of certain reforms which he found it necessary to carry out with promptness and precision after his return to Jerusalem. From the parallels already mentioned it is obvious that the two chapters relate to the same things, at least in part. Where the parallels exist there is no vital disagreement. The superficial differences are simply the differences one would expect to find between the record of a voluntary agreement and the record of a reformer's commands.

Preoccupation with the controversies surrounding the Chronicler's record of the Restoration has been partly responsible for the failure of biblical scholarship to appreciate the greatness and effectiveness of the life and work of Nehemiah. When we shift our attention from the perplexities of criticism to the nature of the man whose record we have passed in review, we cannot fail to

i Of course, Torrey (Comp. HV. & ES.) regards all of Neh. 9-13 as the Chronicler's fabrication. For a refutation of this, on linguistic grounds, see Ch. 2.; on other grounds, see Mitchell JBL. 1903 and Schmidt in 'Bib. World' vol. 14, 1899, and Batten ICC. etc.

express an unbounded admiration for his sterling qualities and spiritual faith. As a man of action and resource, sustained by an unbroken courage regardless of the odds against him, he stands among the heroes of the race. Few men faced the difficulties, the treachery and disappointments to which he was constantly exposed, and few men possessed his singleness of purpose and that reckless abandon which belongs only to those who lose themselves in a great cause. Consumed with an undying love of his country and inspired by a faith in the Eternal reminiscent of the great prophets, Nehemiah could face whatever life brought with a victorious spirit. A man of action and a man of faith superbly fused in one vibrant personality was the gift of the Most High to a struggling community whose temporary success had seemed permanently destroyed in the failure of Ezra. Out of the ruins of broken hopes Nehemiah snatched the remnants of his people's life and faith, and set them up upon a sure foundation on which half a century later the Christian Church was built. For his courageous actions, his unwavering allegiance to his cause, and his faith and vision, Judaism and Christianity have cause to render thankfulness and praise.

S E C T I O N

IV

The Chronicler's Treatment of History.

Chapter 10

Some Characteristic Emphases
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of the Chronicler's Pre-Exilic History.

In the course of the preceding sections, it has been assumed that 1st. and 2nd. Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah comprise two parts of one historical work by a person commonly styled, 'The Chronicler'. That Ezer.-Neh. form one whole and not two separate books is attested by the arrangement in the Hebrew canon and the LXX, both of which regard them as one book. The Talmud declares "Ezra wrote his book", and leaves no room for a separate treatise by Nehemiah. We have already seen how the story of Ezra and Nehemiah overlap as though the story is one continuous whole. This is further supported by the fact that the Massoretes, who were in the habit of appending notes to the end of the Hebrew books, stating the number of verses etc., made their notes at the end of Nehemiah covering the whole, showing conclusively that in their opinion Ezra and Nehemiah represented one historical work. It has been generally accepted also that Ezra-Nehemiah is part of 1st. and 2nd. Chronicles, which together are basically one historical production. The conclusion of 2nd. Chr. 36:22-3, recording the Cyrus Edict, is repeated in Ezer. 1:1ff., as though the latter is a continuation of the former. In addition, the two parts exhibit the same general attitudes

i This chapter is largely a synopsis of a section of my B.D. thesis, 1938, Emmanuel College Library, Toronto, which in broad outlines anticipated much of the historical content in Prof. Welch's recent work, "The Work of the Chronicler", 1939.

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and interests and marked similarities of style. But, while it can be confidently asserted that the books, Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah, constitute one work, it is less easy to assert that it was produced by a single author whom we commonly call the Chronicler. Kittel regards the work as largely a compilation of at least four groups, two 'Levitical', a third 'Midrashic', and a fourth 'Editorial'. Others find only two hands in the work, one following the Priestly code and a later one following the Deuteronomic.ⁱⁱ But for our present purpose this critical question is largely irrelevant. Whether the term 'Chronicler' represents an individual or a group, his characteristics are sufficiently definite that, for practical purposes, we can regard him as an individual. No doubt, when we employ the term 'Chronicler', we shall have to admit that we mean more than one writer, since whoever the actual writer was, he represented a group who shared his interests. So definite are those interests that they not only afford a key to many of the problems which this history evokes, but they have led von Rad to the conclusion that the Chronicler's identity can be narrowed down to some member of the Levitical choir.

- i See Curtis ICC Pgs. 2ff. To this conclusion Welch (PJ. ch. 11; and WC. ch. 7) takes exception on the grounds, i) that he finds a difference of attitude between the Chronicler & Ezer-Neh. on the question of the Levites, and ii) because he dates the Chronicler's work prior to the Return. But before this theory of Welch can be seriously entertained, scholars of 1st. and 2nd. Chronicles must weigh his evidence for the relationship between the author (Chronicler) and Welch's supposed annotator, to whom he relegates all those sections which regard the Levites as inferior to Priests. (cf. W. WC. Pgs. 37ff; ch. 3; Pgs. 85 etc.) Would Welch also relegate to this supposed annotator those functions of the Levite in Neh. 8:7-9, where the Levites are performing the same duties which he attributes to the Chronicler's conception?
- ii The second view has been greatly strengthened by Von Rad ('Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes', 1930), who stresses the Chronicler's dependence on D, and by W. WC., who recognises the composite character of Chronicles.

For purposes of convenience and clarity let us summarise the Chronicler's treatment of history under the following three heads:-

- i) The Judaeae monarchy.
- ii) His Liturgical interest.
- iii) His Religious and Doctrinal basis.

This analysis does not imply that there is any clearly defined separation of the material under these heads. There will be much overlapping, since the Chronicler's work is more or less a unity corresponding to the unity of his own personality. For instance, the history which falls under head (i) embraces all that go to make up heads (ii) and (iii). It is precisely this mixture of the three that is the essence of the Chronicler's uniqueness. Nevertheless, this artificial separation will aid us in elucidating his distinctive interests, which provide the answers to so many of the problems in his post-exilic narrative in Ezra-Nehemiah. Secondly, it must not be assumed that in our present treatment there is any attempt to deal exhaustively with the Chronicler's work. Only those phases of his work are mentioned which throw light on his method, and even in treating of these phases no attempt is made to deal with the question fully. But considering the history of the books of Chronicles in relation to its main sources in Samuel and Kings, we are afforded a basis of evaluating the Chronicler's purpose and method, and this in turn will shed light upon those problems in Ezr.-Neh. with which we have all along been faced.

i. The Judaeae Monarchy.

While the Chronicler's history seeks to cover the whole

i For a full examination of these questions see Curtis ICC; my B.D. Thesis, 1938, Toronto; W. Wc., 1939.

realm of his nation's existence from Adam to post-exilic times, there are vast tracts dismissed in a few verses or omitted altogether. His reason for working over the sources already in existence, such as the earlier histories of Samuel and Kings, is not merely that they are incomplete; in many ways they were more complete. The reason lies rather in the fact that he regarded these histories as failing to give to the facts a correct perspective. It was to provide this new perspective, this correct balance and emphasis, that the Chronicler undertook his task. Nowhere is the emphasis more dominant than in his treatment of the history of the Judaeian Monarchy. Indeed, it would be correct to say that from an historical point of view the Chronicler's chief interest is exclusively the Judaeian Kingdom of the Davidic dynasty.ⁱ It is within the narrow limits of this small territory and of this section of the Hebrew people that, for him, the divine purpose is being worked out. All that he has to say of real significance is confined to the Southern Kingdom and to its capital, Jerusalem. It is the glory of the Holy City as the pulsing heart of his nation that he seeks to exhibit. It is the noble line of David with the divine seal of God upon it that he would let pass before our eyes, and the worship of the temple, which to him is the most impressive fact in the life of his people, becomes the focal point of this strange history. Any event that sheds light upon these things expands his heart with joy and lends strength to his imagination. Whatever touches Judah, its great city, Jerusalem, and its royal line of kings, is written up with a wealth of detail and so warm a sympathy that

ⁱ For a thorough treatment of this aspect see W.W.C. Ch.1.

when details fail, imagination fills the gaps.

Except in minor details, the history of the Northern Kingdom of Samaria is ignored. To the Chronicler the Northern Kingdom was an apostate state, since it had rebelled against the Davidic dynasty. Jeroboam, by repudiating the rights of the Priests and Levites (2nd. Chr. 11:13-16), had repudiated Yahweh Himself, so that the loyal, even among the people, "came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto the Lord, the God of their fathers". He does not contradict the view of Kings that this disruption is ordained by God (1st. Kgs. 12:24 = 2nd. Chr. 11:4), but he interprets the facts in a wholly new light. He obviously attempts to show that God meant this apostasy to cut off this northern section from the chosen stream of history. His tendency to call the Kingdom of Judah "Israel", without including the Northern State, just as if the latter had been abandoned by Yahweh, lends support to this view. (2nd. Chr. 12:6; 21:2-4; 28:19,27). Abijah's speech to Jeroboam I and his army clearly implies that the Chronicler did not regard the Northern Kingdom as forming part of the true worshippers of Israel. (2nd. Chr. 13:8-12).ⁱ This characteristic is particularly significant

i W. P. J. Pgs. 203 ff. rightly asserts that the Chronicler's condemnation of the Northern Kg. as such, did not stifle his deep sympathy for the people, in so far as they adhered to the essentials of their faith; e.g. the Josianic reform included Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon and Naphtali (2nd Chr. 34:6). They contributed to the temple funds (34:9); religious leaders were asked to embrace "them that are left in Israel" (34:21), and the Chronicler significantly omits the devastation of the Shrine of Bethel which Kings graphically describes (2nd. Kgs. 23:15ff.).

when we recall the fact that the Northern Kingdom was really the main scene of Israelitish history.ⁱ

The Chronicler's predominant interest in the Judaeen Kingdom is supremely illustrated in his treatment of the reigns of David and Solomon. According to the earlier history in Samuel, David was a poor shepherd-lad who became involved in a feud of jealousy with King Saul. As a hunted outlaw he gathers to himself a band of freebooters and continues a guerilla warfare in the wastes of Judah. Finally he passes over to Philistine territory under the protection of Israel's enemies. After Saul's death at Gilboa he sets himself up as a vassal of the Philistines in the south. Only after a long struggle with Abner does he become king. But the Chronicler sees this in quite a different light. For him, Saul's death is a punishment from God who promptly hands over the kingdom to David, His servant. David is crowned at Hebron in an atmosphere of splendour and power (1st. Chr. 11:1ff): "He owed his dignity to the divine choice, in which the entire nation at once and unanimously acquiesced".ⁱⁱ The distressed, debtors, and discontented, who formed his followers in 1st. Sam. 22:1ff., have become brilliant warriors belonging to the choicest tribes of Israel (1st. Chr. 12:1 - 23). This David is no rebellious upstart

i Well. regards the parable of Jehoash (2 Kgs. 14:9-10) as a just estimate of the two kingdoms. Note also that N. Kg. was scene of most of the great prophets, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Amos; after 722 B.C., Judah is regarded merely as "the Remnant" in Isaiah.

ii W. WC. Pg. 13.

with a band of discontented recruits with whom the people had to come to terms; he is an illustrious warrior, blessed by the approval of God who gave him his crown and consolidated his claim amidst the most spectacular celebrations. But this difference is not so much a difference in facts, but a difference of interpretation. The account in 1st. Samuel does not minimise Saul's sins, nor does it ignore the divine choice which rested on David (13:13ff; 15:28ff; 28:6ff).

This glory with which David is invested at his coronation glows with ever-increasing brilliance as the history unfolds. This is especially noticeable in the Chronicler's omissions and additions. The reign of Saul and the work of Samuel are passed over in silence. David's grief over Saul's death, his reign over the tribe of Judah, his contest with Saul's house, the mention of his concubines, his murdering of two lines of defeated Moabites, the disgraceful episodes of Bathsheba, Ammon and Tamar, and Absalom's rebellion etc., are all omitted in the Chronicler's history, because they are derogatory to the glory of the great king. David's dancing before the Ark is only casually mentioned, and instead of the immodest "Ephod" the Chronicler clothes him in a "robe of fine linen" (1st. Chr. 15:27). The accounts of the wars with the Ammonites and Aramaean allies based on 2nd. Sam. 10:1-19; 11:1; 12:26, 30, 31, have similar alterations. The Chronicler's additions are particularly noticeable in his love of large numbers which

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spread a fabulous glory round his hero.

But to the Chronicler David is more than an unparalleled warrior, he is the founder of the cultus, a man of unflinching allegiance to the religion and worship of Yahweh. One of his first public acts is the removal of the Ark to Jerusalem, and the all-consuming interest of his life is the preparation for the building of the temple (1st. Chr. 21-29). All the credit goes to David for the temple which Solomon built. Indeed Solomon merely carried out the plans which David had made, and he did it with the materials David prepared. "Thus every problem is anticipated and solved by David. Solomon becomes merely the representative who carries out the predetermined plans, and is thus robbed of the credit for that performance which the earlier historical writings put down as his greatest glory".ⁱⁱ Besides this, David is credited with the whole organisation of the religious worship and the appointment of temple officers. The Levites are conspicuously absent from the earlier histories, but in the Chronicler's work

- i a) David captures 7000 horsemen, slays 7000 charioteers (1st. Chr. 18:4; 19:18) instead of 700 (2nd. Sam. 8:4; 10:18); Ammon confronts him with 32,000 chariots (1st. Chr. 19:6-7) instead of 20,000 footmen (2nd. Sam. 10:6); he pays 600 shekels of gold for the threshing floor (1st. Chr. 21:25) instead of 50 shekels of silver (2nd. Sam. 24:24); cf. his lavish gifts to temple (1st. Chr. 22:14), which reckoned today would be one billion pounds. Similarly note, Shishak's attack of 1200 chariots, and 60,000 horsemen (2nd. Chr. 12:3); Abijah has 400,000 to fight Jeroboam's 800,000 of whom 500,000 were slain (2nd. Chr. 13:3; 17); Asa has 300,000 men of Judah plus 280,000 of Benjamin, whereas his opponent Zerah has a million men and 300 chariots (2 Chr. 14:8-9); Amaziah has 300,000 men plus 100,000 mercenaries to defeat Edom (2nd. Chr. 25:5-6); Ahaz lost 120,000, killed by the Syrian alliance, and another 200,000 were led away captive (2nd. Chr. 28:6,8).
- b) Note also, the Chronicler's love of genealogies and lists is too obvious to deserve special attention.
- ii Curtis ICC. Pg. 245.

they were everywhere in evidence. The whole liturgical system, of which we shall speak under the next head, is traced back to David. Finally his reign closes with his selection of Solomon as his successor, and because of this Solomon becomes heir to the throne by divine appointment. No mention is made by the Chronicler of Solomon's accession through the machinations of his mother Bathsheba and Nathan the prophet (1st. Kgs. 1.). Welch adequately sums up the Chronicler's treatment of David in the words: "What he had it in his heart to say was that David gave Israel two great gifts, the Kingdom and the Temple, the two institutions which dominated and coloured the national life in Palestine".ⁱ

The Chronicler's treatment of the reign of Solomon conforms to the same pattern. All effort is made to lend prestige to the son of David, and little is allowed to stain his career. He carefully omits the sordid story of Solomon's accession (1st. Kgs. 1 and 2) his affiliation with the house of Pharaoh (1st. Kgs. 3:1-2), the incident of the harlots (1st. Kgs. 3:16-28), and the worship of foreign deities (1st. Kgs. 11). These incidents do not contribute to the conception the Chronicler seeks to set forth. For the same reason the Chronicler gives a different emphasis to certain aspects of the earlier histories. The sacrifices Solomon made at Gibeon (1st. Kgs. 3) are made there not because it is a High Place, but because the Tabernacle was there (2nd. Chr. 1:3-6). Solomon's blessing the people (1st. Kgs. 8:54-61) is omitted by the Chronicler (2nd. Chr. 6:13ff), since this would be an infringement of the priestly prerogatives. Pharaoh's daughter is removed from Jerusalem, not simply because her palace was now ready for her (1 Kgs. 3:1), but rather because her presence in the city might lead to sacrilege. (2nd. Chr. 8:11).

Occasionally the Chronicler gives a complete reversal of the earlier narrative. The payment by Solomon of 200 cities to Hiram, King of Tyre (1st. Kgs. 9:10-14), was much too derogatory for the Chronicler, who reversed the transaction (2nd. Chr. 8:1-2), since to him this was the only possible construction to put upon the facts. Like David, Solomon also is a true zealot for the worship of Yahweh. In the account of the dedication of the Temple (1st. Kgs. 8) the Chronicler inserts four verses (2nd. Chr. 5:11-13) about the priests' sanctification, the Levitical garments and instruments of music that honoured the occasion.

What this very cursory description shows is, that to the Chronicler the reigns of David and Solomon loomed as large as the great days of the past, when all that was best and most abiding in Judaism was established. This conception is maintained, though on a less spectacular scale, throughout his treatment of the rest of the monarchy's life. The idolatrous conditions of Rehoboam's reign (1st. Kgs. 14:21 - 24) are omitted, but his extensive fortifications (2nd. Chr. 11: 5-12) and the return of the Priests and Levites to Judah from the northern rebels, (2nd. Chr. 11:13-17) are added. Abijah's brief but evil reign, according to Kings (1st. Kgs. 15:2-4), is painted as one of glorious victory over Jeroboam I, "because his people relied on Jehovah" (2nd. Chr. 13:1ff). Asa's piety, mentioned only in a few verses in 1st. Kgs. 15:11-15, is enlarged by the Chronicler to three chapters (2nd. Chr. 14-16). Jehoshaphat's reign is depicted as one of great religious activity and splendour. He sends out princes, Priests and Levites to instruct people in the Law (2nd. Chr. 17:7-9). He builds castles, store-cities, maintains a huge army (17:12-19), receives tribute from Philistines and Arabians

(17:10-11), and wins a great victory over Moab and Ammon through the direct intervention of Yahweh as a response to prayer and praise (20:1-30). The Chronicler is ever careful to state the indispensable rôle of divine providence in the successes of his heroes (2nd. Chr. 13:15,16; 14:12-13; 20:22-4). The Chronicler's interest and method are strongly illustrated in his account of the reign of Joash. Instead of the officers of the Carites and runners who assisted in the overthrow of Athaliah's regime and at the coronation of Joash, we have the Levitical chiefs whose names are given (2nd. Chr. 23: 1-21). It would appear that the Chronicler could not tolerate the idea of the holy precincts of the temple being profaned by the foreign bodyguard, so the affair is organised by the Priests and Levites, and their part in it is stressed while the rôle of the military is diminished. A similar difference of emphasis is made by the Chronicler in the account of the repairing of the temple recorded in 2nd. Kgs. 12:4-16. Since the management of the work was not properly conducted under Jehoiada the Priest, the money for the enterprise was to be placed in a box under the care of a royal scribe and the High Priest, and Jehoiada was rebuked for his failure. Such grave reflections upon the Priests and the fact that the king assumed authority over them as the supreme ruler and guardian of the temple was unthinkable to the Chronicler. Hence he reinterprets the facts (2nd. Chr. 24:4-14) to the effect that the Priests and Levites were summoned to go and collect the money, and the box is instituted simply because the collection did not proceed with adequate speed.

No attempt has been made to cover all the details of the Chronicler's pre-exilic history, but rather to illustrate some of the salient characteristics which reveal his peculiar emphases

and interests. We have seen that running through all these events to which the Chronicler attaches importance, is the strong desire to present the glories of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, with its royal line of matchless kings, its famous city Jerusalem, and its religious worship in the Temple, as the pivotal centre of the People's life. In doing this he is seeking to present that side of the nation's life which to him seems the only right side, the side that supremely matters, and to which his generation must look if they would understand the true significance of their eternal destiny. But in all this the Chronicler is not fabricating a new history that is born of his own imagination. It is the same essential story of the earlier writers but with a new emphasis and a fresh interpretation. All his omissions, additions, and modifications are not the result of a deliberate falsification of the facts; they are the endeavour to set forth the facts in a new perspective, which the author felt to be the only true and adequate interpretation according to the light of his own age.

11. His Liturgical Interest.

In what has been said so far, it has been evident that one of the outstanding features of the Chronicler's work is his liturgical interest. So great is it that his whole history has been given a liturgical setting. Whether von Rad is right in claiming that the Chronicler was a member of the Levitical Choir is uncertain, but it cannot be denied that he possessed an extraordinary interest in the worship of his people and in the liturgical aspect of that worship. In comparison with this aspect of his people's life, all other interests sink into insignificance. Even the glorification of Judah which has just been discussed is not so much an end

in itself as a means to a higher end, namely, the desire to make plain to his generation the profoundly important place the worship of the sanctuary has had through their long history. He dwells at length on the removal of the Ark (1st. Chr. 13), upon his thought of the temple (1st, Chr.17), on the preparation for its construction (1st. Chr. 21-22, 28-29), upon its structure, furniture and dedication (2nd. Chr. 2-7), upon its repair under subsequent kings (2nd. Chr. 24:4-14; 29:3-10; 34:8-13), and upon the Passover Feasts (2nd. Chr. 30; 35:1-19).

The Chronicler traced to David the entire system of ecclesiastical organisation which was in operation in his own day. Conspicuous among the last acts of David (1st. Chr. 23-29) is his organisation of the Levites as the special wards of the temple services (Ch.23), the Priests (Ch.24), and the Singers (Ch. 25). A grand total of 38,000 Levites is divided into 23 courses, and their duties are to assist the Priests at sacrifices and Temple services. Welch believes that in the Chronicler's view the Levites were on the same level of importance and function as the Priests. The Chronicler claimed that owing to the number of the sacrifices in the reign of Hezekiah, Levites had to assume the duties of Priests (2nd. Chr. 29:34). Indeed, their zeal outshone the Priests'. "The Levites were more in heart to sanctify themselves than the Priests". No doubt, originally Priests and Levites were not distinguishable as separate orders. For the Chronicler, at least, Levites and Priests together constituted the Priesthood. They were the teachers and ministers of religion. They taught the people the Law (2nd. Chr. 19), they were in charge of the liturgical

aspect of the cultus,ⁱ they were especially associated with the Ark,ⁱⁱ and were even, at times, formidable men-at-arms (1st. Chr. 12:23-8; 2nd. Chr. 13:12; 23:7). In the same way David is claimed to have divided the Singers into three choirs, Heman, Asaph and Jeduthum (Ethom) (1st. Chr. 25). No one can fail to sense this Levitical-Priestly influence which dominates the Chronicler's history. All his interest lies in the tribe of Levi and the sons of Aaron. They are omitted from David's census, they are vitally connected with the removal of the Ark to Jerusalem,ⁱⁱ whereas in the earlier history they are not even mentioned (2nd. Sam. 6:12-19). Again the Chronicler expands the account of Solomon's bringing the Ark into the Temple, mentioning how all the Priests took part in the performance and not simply those to whom in course the service might have fallen, and by describing the musical service, at the conclusion of which the house was filled with the cloud of Yahweh, and in which all the Levitical singers took part (2nd. Chr. 5). In the genealogical tables more space is given to the tribe of Levi than to any other.

It is very obvious also that an important aspect of this Levitical interest of the Chronicler is his concern for the music of the sanctuary.ⁱⁱⁱ Bennett rightly affirms, "For the most part the Chronicler tells his story of the virtuous days of the good kings to a continual accompaniment of temple music". From the time David organised the temple choirs, with Chenaniah, who was the chief Levite (1st. Chr. 15:16-24), as conductor of song, the

ⁱ See W.WC.Pgs. 56-63.

ⁱⁱ See W.WC.Pg. 64-73 - for a detailed examination see this whole chapter; and for a critical study of David's appointment of the Priesthood, see Ch. 4 Pgs. 81ff.

ⁱⁱⁱ W.H.Bennett, "The Books of Chronicles", Pg. 440.

music of the sanctuary is brought into all events. They perform at the removal of the Ark (1st. Chr. 15,16), at the dedication of the Temple (2nd. Chr. 5), in the army of Jehoshaphat (2nd. Chr. 20: 19), at the coronation of Joash (2nd. Chr. 23), and at the reformatioⁱns and celebrations connected with the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah (2nd. Chr. 29,34,35 etc.).

There are many incidents in which the Chronicler's religious interest is peculiarly apparent. Some of them have been mentioned before. Solomon is made to kneel, not before the altar, which was sacred to the Priests, but upon an improvised pedestal (2nd. Chr. 6:13); his wife is removed from the city lest her presence should cause sacrilege (2nd. Chr. 8:11). In the four chapters devoted to Hezekiah's reign (2nd. Chr. 29-32) much space is given to his religious reforms, the temple worship etc. In the Chronicler's picture of Josiah, we do not see a king suddenly spurred to religious zeal by the discovery of a temple book, but a king credited with piety from his earliest years, so that his reformation actually precedes the discovery of the book (2nd. Chr. 34). Secondly, the repairs to the temple he effected were not merely necessitated by time and decay (2nd. Kgs. 22:5), but by violence done to it by former kings; and the overseers are Levites mentioned by name. Finally in his account of the Passover, the rôle of the Priests and Levites is particularly prominent (2nd. Chr. 35).

Much might be said as to the source of the Chronicler's priestly inspiration. Upⁱⁱ to recent times it has been felt that it was to be traced to the Priestly Code. Undoubtedly P did influence the Chronicler, but the recent works of von Radⁱⁱⁱ and Welch^{iv} have

ⁱ For an illuminating illustration of the Chronicler's method in the account of Hezekiah, see W.WC. ch. 5.

ⁱⁱ e.g. Curtis ICC Pg. 9. and Well. HI Pg. 171.

ⁱⁱⁱ Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes, 1930.

^{iv}. PJ and WC 1939 - cf. also Batten ICC Pg. 188

demonstrated beyond question that the dominating influence in the Chronicler's work is D and not P. Certainly the concentration of interest in the one shrine of Jerusalem, the hatred of all extraneous cults, the deep loyalty to Jehovah, and the language and vocabulary of many passages, would indicate that this recent position stands on very firm ground.ⁱ Here again the Chronicler's liturgical interest is not a nullification of the earlier histories. It is to him rather an amplification of an aspect of the history which the earlier writers ignored or overlooked. Undoubtedly in this the Chronicler is reading back to some extent into the past the conditions of his own time, but that does not invalidate the main facts of his story.

III. His spiritual and doctrinal basis

If we concluded that the sum total of the Chronicler's religion consisted in his liturgical interest we would be doing him a grave injustice. We must not allow the form in which his religious activity expressed itself to blind our eyes to a just appreciation of his living faith and deep spiritual insight. Beneath his love of ritual lies a deep well of spiritual power and happy dependence upon God. Barnes has already pointed out that while we do not find in the Chronicler the strong denunciations of Isaiah, yet there are many instances to show that his religious ethics are not limited to ritualistic practices.ⁱⁱ The Chronicler's record of the instruction given to Jehoshaphat's judges (2nd Chr. 19:6-7) breathes the authentic air of the prophetic spirit. The

i That P also influenced the Chr. see Pg. 244, footnote.

ii W.E. Barnes "Religious Standpoint of the Chronicler", in AJSL Oct. 1896.

judges are to look upon their task as a divine vocation, and as such they are to act in the spirit of fair-play and justice that characterises God Himself. Montefiore,ⁱ the able Jewish scholar, makes the same claim for the Chronicler, when he warns us that the exclusive stress of later Judaism is not upon external doing as against internal being, since there is a constant harping upon the "heart" as the source and seat of good and evil. David warns Solomon his son, "know thou the God of thy father and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts..." (1st. Chr. 28:9). The same sentiments are reiterated in David's prayer (1st. Chr. 29:18-19), and the heart's quiet waiting upon God finds numerous expressions in the Chronicler's work (1st. Chr. 22:19 and 2nd. Chr. 11:16; 15:12; 16:9). No one has more ably demonstrated the prophetic element in the Chronicler's history thanⁱⁱ Prof. Welch. To reproduce the evidence would simply be redundant since he has already presented it in concise and convincing form. It is sufficient for our purpose to quote a few extracts which lay bare his conclusions:

"A feature in the Chronicler's narrative is the prominent position he gave to prophecy in relation to the Kingdom... For C introduced into his narrative a series of prophets who appeared before the successive kings, in order to warn them of the policy they ought to follow or to rebuke them for their failure in fulfilling the divine will. How fundamental these stories are to C's thoughts about the kingdom is clear from the fact that they are all peculiar to his account.... The Davidic kings were not merely like all their subjects, under the Torah: they were also controlled by the authentic voice of God, uttered by the prophets. Only

ⁱ Montefiore, "Hibbert Lectures", 1892, Pg. 483.
ⁱⁱ WC. Ch. 2.

if they obeyed the divine voice could they expect the divine furtherance". i

In practically all things recorded by the Chronicler this deep spiritual consciousness finds expression. Even with all the effort expended to glorify David as the author of the sanctuary, the Chronicler is careful to attribute all his inspiration to God Himself (1st. Chr. 28:19). While David made the plans, collected the materials, and instructed others for the undertaking, the ultimate source of his knowledge is traced to Yahweh, his God. Although the Chronicler is so deeply concerned for the Holy Temple and its functions, his faith went beyond the narrow view that God is confined to a Temple made with hands (2nd. Chr. 2:4,6; 6:18). Nowhere do we find a higher conception of God's spiritual greatness over man, His creature, and yet His readiness to draw near to the suppliant as in this prayer. In all his work there pervades a living faith in God as the loving powerful protector of man. Righteousness is above ritual. The Temple is not merely a house for God to live in, but a place of worship for One who is too big for earthly habitations. His great heroes are men hedged round by a sustaining communion with a God all-powerful to save.

In close connection with this religious faith, the Chronicler held to a doctrine of retribution. To him Hebrew

i a) W.WC. Pgs. 42,46,48.

b) It is worthy of note in this connection that the Chr. shares advanced views on many problems. He modifies K's ideas on slavery (cf. 1st. Kgs. 5:13-14 with 2nd. Chr. 2:16-18); he breaks with the old ideas of tribal solidarity and communal guilt (2nd. Chr. 25:4-cf. Ez. 18 and Deut. 24:16); he shares a universalistic view of Yahweh, in that even Hiram of Tyre acknowledges Him as "maker of Heaven and Earth" (2nd. Chr. 2:12); he replaces God by Satan as the inspirer of David's census of the people (1st. Chr. 21:1). These aspects are fully developed in ~~by~~ B.D. Thesis - Toronto 1938.

history was the clear channel of God's divine operations. All events became related to moral causes. Prosperity was God's way of recognising man's obedience and adversity was a token of sin. This doctrine settled down upon the Chronicler's mind with stern rigidity. Consciously or unconsciously he related all events to this doctrine. Saul's downfall was a punishment sent from God for disobedience (1st. Chr. 10:13-14). Shishak's invasion in the reign of Rehoboam is interpreted in the same way (2nd. Chr. 12:1-2). The war between Asa of Judah and Baasha of Samaria is thought to take place in the 36th year of Asa's reign, in spite of the fact that Baasha is supposed to have died 10 years before (1st. Kgs. 16:8,10). The only sound reason for the Chronicler's position is that Asa's cultus reform deserved a period of peace and prosperity (2nd. Chr. 15:15), and the war with Baasha is delayed until his 36th year and made the direct result of Asa's sin in reliance on a foreign power (2nd. Chr. 16:7ff). Similarly the disaster to Jehoshaphat's naval expedition is stated to be the result of his alliance with Ahaziah (2nd. Chr. 20:35-37), although according to the source in Kings the disaster preceded the alliance (1st. Kgs. 22:48ff). According to 2nd. Kgs. 12 Joash was a good king, but Hazael of Syria came to Jerusalem against him and he had to buy him off at a high price. Later he was assassinated. For these calamities the Chronicler felt there must have been a cause, and the cause is given as failure to maintain loyalty to Yahweh after the death of Jehoiada the Priest (2nd. Chr. 24:15-22). In the same way the Chronicler interpreted the suffering of Uzziah from leprosy. In 2nd. Kgs. 15:5 we are told Uzziah was smitten with leprosy because

he did not remove the High Places, and had to abandon the rule of the country to his son Jotham. But for a long and prosperous reign like Uzziah's to be so blighted the Chronicler felt there must have been some other cause. This cause is given in 2nd. Chr. 26:16-20, where we read that pride and arrogance had led the King to usurp the priestly function of offering incense in the temple, and as a result leprosy broke out upon him. In the light of this theory the Chronicler has reinterpreted the narrative of the Syrian invasion of Judah in the time of Ahaz (2nd. Kgs. 16 cf. Is. 7:1ff.). According to him Rezin and Pekah invaded Judah separately, and Ahaz is delivered into the hands of his enemies, who take large numbers of prisoners and make a great slaughter (2nd. Chr. 28:5ff.), because of the gross apostasy of Ahaz who had made idols for the Baalim, offered incense in the valley of Hinnom, and sacrificed human infants after the custom of the heathen (2nd. Chr. 28:1-4, an enlargement of 2nd. Kings 16:3). Since, however, the intervention of the prophet Oded effected the release of the Judaeans, the reason for Assyrian help under Tiglath-Pileser is not for a resistance against the Syrian invasion as recorded in Kings, but against fresh attacks from Philistia and Edom (2nd. Chr. 28:16-21).

Finally, in the unrelieved blackness of Manasseh's wickedness, the Chronicler felt he had to find some redeeming virtue in order to account for the length of his reign. A king who was utterly wicked and yet who reigned for 55 years did not make sense. Hence, to make the facts intelligible, the Chronicler describes Manasseh's religious zeal that characterised his regime after his return from Babylon (2nd. Chr. 33:11-20). Professor

ⁱ
 Sayce has shown solid grounds, based on modern archaeology, for believing that the Chronicler's account of Manasseh's captivity in Babylon and his subsequent return to Jerusalem is based on historic facts. It affords additional proof for the contention that where no definite source corroborates the Chronicler's additions, he may none the less be historically authentic.

These examples, which could be much further extended, show plainly that the Chronicler is reading events of the past in the strong light of a preconceived doctrinal position. It is to make history speak to his generation the truth that he felt it fundamental to know that he so arranges his sources. In doing this he is not conscious of unduly stretching the facts; he is conscious rather of presenting the facts in the only way in which they appear to him intelligible. This method of writing history is not peculiar to the Chronicler. It is as old as history itself and as modern as our own age. ⁱⁱ As we have seen already, the books of Kings shared to some extent this same doctrine. They attributed Uzziah's leprosy to his failure to suppress the High Places, whereas the Chronicler finds the reason as an infringement of the priestly prerogatives. The defeat of Ahaz is attributed to his pursuit of former kings in "the abominations of the heathen" (2nd Kgs. 16:3), whereas the Chronicler expands this general indictment to embrace the worst of barbaric practices. While the condemnation of the book of Kings falls on

- i A.H. Sayce, "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments"-
 for a full reproduction of this argument, see *my* B.D.
 Thesis, Toronto, Pgs. 93 ff.
- ii e.g. see W.H. Bennet, "The Books of Chronicles Pgs. 361,
 363, and W.W.C. Pgs. 100 ff.

those who failed to suppress the High Places, the condemnation of ~~the~~ Chronicles is rather on those who failed to comply with the Divine will as revealed through the prophets.ⁱ Both writers are recasting the facts in the light of a preconceived doctrine.ⁱⁱ To an evaluation of this doctrine we shall turn in the final chapter.

i See W. WC. Pgs. 46 ff.

ii That the author of Kings also omits facts irrelevant to his purpose is shown by Herbert Loewe, Exp. T. Apr. 1941 Pg. 278, who points out the omission of any reference to the earthquake in the reign of Uzziah, which had become for the prophets a fixed point of chronology.

Chapter 11

The Chronicler's History of the Restoration
and His Contribution.

In the summary of the Chronicler's Method and Interests given in the previous chapter, it was shown that his work in the books of Chronicles exhibited certain well-defined emphases. These emphases were his deep interest in the Judaeen monarchy, the liturgical worship of the Sanctuary at Jerusalem, and the profoundly religious and doctrinal framework in which his whole history was cast. Where we had the earlier histories with which to compare his work, these fundamental interests of the Chronicler became unmistakable. In the case of his Restoration history in Ezra and Nehemiah, we are not placed in so favourable a position, since we have no other history of the period on which, so far as we know, the Chronicler largely depended, and with which we can compare his work. But since his pre-exilic and post-exilic histories form one continuous whole, it is reasonable to assume that in Ezra and Nehemiah there are the same characteristic features which distinguished the books of Chronicles. From our study of Ezr.-Neh. in the previous sections this fact has been more than obvious, and no attempt will here be made to reiterate what has already been clearly seen. But the questions to which we now turn are:-

- 1) How far do these interests and emphases of the Chronicler explain the problems to which a critical study of the post-exilic history gives rise?
- 2) What is the distinctive contribution of the Chronicler as an historian?

In our study it has been necessary to admit that the Chronicler has failed to preserve intact some of his sources, and that many of them have been misplaced and wrongly interpreted.

The introductions to the Persian Edicts are blurred and incomplete (Pgs. 89-90), sections of these Edicts present both textual and other difficulties which indicate that in their present form they have been badly preserved (Pgs. 97, 162-3), and the lists of names leave us with many unsolved problems (Pgs. 136-40). In the period of the reign of Cyrus we saw reason to believe that the Chronicler was badly confused, or for some reason misinterpreted his sources. The list of the returned is obviously later than the time to which he relates it (Pgs. 139-142); Zerubbabel was made leader of the return under Cyrus, although his official status could not have existed before the removal of Sheshbazzar, the governor (Pgs. 142, 146); Sheshbazzar is credited with laying the foundation-stone of the temple in the time of Cyrus, although there is every reason to believe that no such thing took place prior to the time of Darius (Pgs. 151, 155-9); and finally, the Aramaic source of Ezr. 4:7-23, with an appropriate introduction (vs. 1-6) and conclusion (v. 24) by the Chronicler, is wrongly related to the temple building, which at that time had most probably not even been begun (Pgs. 152-4, 173, 211ff. 221). When we come to the period of Ezra and Nehemiah we find a similar mishandling of sources. Ezra's reading of the Law, instead of being placed among his own memoirs, is placed among Nehemiah's, and thus the two are made contemporary officials in Jerusalem, and the reading of the Law, for which Ezra was despatched by Artaxerxes, is delayed some 13 years after his arrival in Jerusalem (Pgs. 183, 196, 198). In Nehemiah's memoirs, the Dedication of the walls is not in correct sequence (Pg. 235); the reforms in Ch. 5 are not put at the close of the first period of administration, although that is clearly where they occurred (Pg. 238); and the litany of Ch. 9 whose origin is uncertain has been wrongly attached

to Ezra's reading of the Law, and with it placed in Nehemiah's narrative (Pgs. 238, 241).

Of course, these dislocations may have taken place before the Chronicler wrote. Whether we regard him as a final editor of the history or as the original compiler of the sources, it may still be true that much of the confusion existed before the sources reached his hands. Nevertheless, when we relate these dislocations to the salient interests of the Chronicler as they are presented to us in the books of Chronicles, where his history can, to some extent, be controlled by earlier works on which he depended, a broad ray of light is thrown upon them. Even though the Judaeen Monarchy had passed away, the Judaeen Community, in the form of the returned exiles, had taken its place, and in the Chronicler's mind this Return in the reign of Cyrus deserved a halo of glory with which no subsequent period could compare. His affection for the citadel of the old kingdom gathers round the little community of returned exiles, whose presence in Jerusalem expands his heart with joy, and as he writes of those first days when God vindicated the high hopes of his people, no aspirations were too noble, no labour too great, and no glory too bright with which to credit their high endeavour. This is beyond doubt the reason for the Chronicler's exaggerated narrative of the first Return, which, according to the glimpses afforded by Haggai and Zachariah, was somewhat insignificant, ineffective, and gradual (Pgs. 127-132). The Chronicler made every effort to shed glory on these early pioneers of the resuscitated Judaeen State. Thus the long list of Neh. 7, which tradition assigned to this period, but about whose origin there is no certainty, the Chronicler inserts into his story of the first Return under Zerubbabel (Ezr. 2), giving the impression that the

return was a tremendous affair, elaborately organised and equipped.ⁱ The confusion about the leader of the first Return, the beginning of the temple building and the laying of the foundation-stone, is obviously the result of the Chronicler's effort to glorify this earliest Judaeian settlement. It was inconceivable to him that the main purpose of the Return, namely, the rebuilding of the Temple and the establishment of its worship, did not form the paramount interest and claim the unremitting labour of this first community. To substantiate his conception there was the Cyrus Edict which ordered the Temple to be rebuilt and which allowed the exiles to return for that purpose. Secondly there was in his Aramaic source the clear statement of the Jews that Sheshbazzar had laid the foundation, and that the building had all along been in the process of construction (Ezr. 5:16). But over against these facts were the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah and the Aramaic sources from the time of Darius, all of which bore embarrassing witness to the blunt fact that the temple building was carried out by Zerubbabel and Joshua in the reign of Darius. (Pgs. 154-9). The problem which the Chronicler faced was how to relate these discordant sources. He found the solution in two things: first, his own personal bias in favour of the time of Cyrus which would naturally prejudice him in favour of his sources for this date. Secondly, there was the Aramaic source of Ezr. 4:7-23, which definitely spoke of an interruption of building operations in Jerusalem. He seized upon this source as his means of accounting for the long delay in the fulfilment of the task which began in the time of Cyrus and was not completed

ⁱ Note his love of numbers, genealogies etc. (Pg. 256) which also characterises Ezr.-Neh.

until the 6th year of Dariusⁱ (Pgs. 172-4). The confusion that resulted from this is not solely due to the Chronicler. It has already been suggested how the Aramaic source came to present the view that the operations in question had their start and origin in the time of Cyrus and Sheshbazzar (Pgs. 163ff.). There is no reason to believe that the Jews committed deliberate perjury. They were presenting one reasonable interpretation of the facts for which no doubt they had strong grounds, and this interpretation in turn misled the Chronicler. But the fact of importance which is here made obvious is that the Chronicler's confusion is largely due, not to any fabrication of material, but to his earnest attempt to relate his sources in the way in which he felt they most satisfactorily presented the truth.

The Religious and Liturgical interest of the Chronicler is everywhere apparent in Ezer-Nehemiah, and again this provides a key to many of the peculiarities of the history which have faced us. Wherever possible he has elevated the Priests and Levites to conspicuous prominence, and the service of the Temple is the very pulse of his people's heart. The first great act of the Restored Community was the erection of the Altar inspired by Joshua the Priest. Burnt-offerings and religious feasts distinguished the occasion, and preparation for the new temple was undertaken, especially the appointment of the Priests and Levites for their part in the enterprise. At the alleged laying of the foundation-stone it was the Priests, Levites and Temple choirs that took the prominent part in the celebrations (Ezer. 3). Indeed the whole nature of the Return was that of religious pilgrimage, whose distinctive features were the functions of Priests, Levites, divine

i Br. EJ. Ch. 3; W.PJ. Ch. 6.

liturgy and song (Pg. 147). Ezra's journey to Jerusalem had to be halted until a proper number of Levites were found to go with them (Ezr. 8:15ff). Priests and Levites are prominent among Nehemiah's workmen (Pg. 224). The Levites and Singers were the prominent features at the dedication of the Wall (Pg. 235). Nehemiah was unable even to make a solemn oath without the Priests as witnesses (Neh. 5:12). The Levites were the leaders of prayer (Neh. 9), and their maintenance and other religious reforms were conspicuous among the concerns of Nehemiah's administration (Pgs. 245-6). The preoccupation of Ezra and Nehemiah with mixed marriages is another instance of the Chronicler's special religious interest. What was a dominant interest of the Chronicler's pre-exilic history, has now become the chief factor in the history of the Restored Community. It is not unreasonable to find in this feature of his history a partial explanation, at least, of some of the problems in Ezr.-Neh. which we have met. We have already noted the fact that the Chronicler tends to subordinate the secular authorities to the Priests in his interpretation of the revolution which put Joash on the throne, and in his introduction of "the box" for the repair-money of the temple, under the vigilance of the royal scribe (Pg. 259). For the same reason Welch (Pgs. 140, 145) is probably right in regarding the Chronicler's omission of the word 'Tirshatha' in Ezr. 2, when he borrowed the list of Neh. 7, as his attempt to glorify the "heads of the fathers" at the expense of the official governor. If this 'Tirshatha' in Neh. 7 were actually Sheshbazzar, this omission in Ezr. 2 may be also part of the Chronicler's refusal to attribute the laying of the foundation-stone to Sheshbazzar, since according to the Chronicler, this was done by "the builders" (Ezr. 3:10). a refusal for which, as we have

seen, the Chronicler had strong grounds, in spite of the one witness against him (Ezr. 5:16) which we have already explained.

A notable instance of the Chronicler's priestly interest is perhaps the reason behind the problem of Ezra's association with Nehemiah and the silence which surrounds Ezra's end. We have seen how strong are the reasons for Ezra and Nehemiah's not being contemporary officials of the Persian Government in Jerusalem (Pgs. 184-9); for the Chronicler's correctness in placing Ezra's mission prior to Nehemiah's (Pgs. 189-95); and also for the period of disaster immediately prior to Nehemiah's arrival, to which Ezr. 4:7-23 no doubt relates, having some relation to the disappearance of Ezra as a Persian official with almost limitless authority (Pgs. 210-14, 219, 230). But these conclusions would have been wholly intolerable to the Chronicler's conception of the dignity and grandeur of Ezra the Priest and Scribe. The elaborateness of Ezra's mission, the high vocation to which he was called, and the blessing and prosperity which his functions and status deserved, were wholly inconsistent with the failure to which they seemed doomed. Yet over against these considerations, the Chronicler had to face the hard fact that Nehemiah's great work, even if we deduct from it the task of wall-building, was largely the result of Ezra's failure. Had Ezra met with unqualified success such catastrophes which led to Nehemiah's mission would never have occurred, and much of his social and religious reforms would never have been necessary. Of course, we have no final proof that these catastrophes were connected with Ezra, and it is here that we lack the help of another source such as Samuel and Kings afforded in the pre-exilic period, by which to know whether the Chronicler really omitted facts inconsistent with his ideas. But

it is very hard to imagine how Ezra, with all his plenary powers, could remain aloof from a situation which obtained in Jerusalem within twelve years of his arrival. The Chronicler may have had no sources which connected him with the events reflected in Ezz. 4:7-23, but that he must have had some connection seems certain. The Chronicler's method, therefore, of maintaining the dignity of Ezra in the presence of Nehemiah was by making them contemporaries; by having the Law read in the time of Nehemiah in spite of thirteen years interval, and by giving Ezra a part in the Dedication of the Walls (Pgs. 200-201, 218ff).

Whether the Chronicler himself is responsible for these dislocations, or someone before him whose sources he used, is uncertain. What is important for our purpose is that the dislocation is the result of,

- i) a priestly interest which sought to glorify its here, and
- ii) an earnest attempt to relate conflicting sources.

That Ezra was a contemporary of Nehemiah and was present in Jerusalem when Nehemiah's tasks were accomplished is more than likely, and that he was given a place in the Dedication of the Walls in deference to his former dignity may rest on solid grounds (Pgs. 189, 235). But that he was contemporary with Nehemiah in his former official capacity, and that his authority and power were unaffected by the calamities of which Hanani spoke, is a mistaken interpretation of the facts, born of the Chronicler's priestly interest. This effort of the Chronicler, so apparent in all his work, of giving his own emphasis to an incident is the reason for the novelty with which the people received Ezra's reading of the Law. That his emphasis of novelty is not inconsistent with the true facts of the occasion, but rather is a correct psychological observation, has already been

shown (Pgs. 208-210, 218). We have already noted the importance the Chronicler attached to Nehemiah's expulsion of Tobiah and Sanballat's son-in-law (Neh. 13) as indicative of his reverence for the sacredness of the Temple and its priesthood, although the Chronicler omits any censure of Eliashib, whose laxity Nehemiah well knew (Pgs. 245-6). The Deuteronomic influence in Ezer-Nehemiah, which was found to be a chief source of the Chronicler's religious inspiration in his pre-exilic history, (Pg. 264) has also been already noted (Pg. 203ff).

The spiritual and doctrinal interests of the Chronicler are also strongly marked in his post-exilic history. The living faith of the author of Chronicles is everywhere apparent in Ezer-Nehemiah, quite apart from its ritualistic observances. Nehemiah is supremely a man of prayer. His life is controlled by communion with God. In seeking to gain the support of his fellows in rebuilding the walls he reminds them of two facts:-

i) that at every turn God had been the One who had opened his way before him, and

ii) that his task had the support of the King (Neh. 2:18).

His repeated use of the expression, "hand of God",ⁱ indicates his consciousness of divine guidance. God had led him to the King, had created a favourable opportunity for an interview, and had moved the King to note his depression and to consider his petition sympathetically. The words expediency, coincidence and luck just do not express the Chronicler's mind. The same characteristic dependence of the heart upon God distinguishes Nehemiah even amid the practical difficulties of Sanballat's opposition. Prayer and the sword are coupled together (4:9). To degrade the sacred place of

i Batten ICC, Pg. 202.

worship as an asylum is abhorrent to one of Nehemiah's spirit:

"Should such a one as I flee?" (6:11).

The Chronicler's strong prophetic allegiance is characteristic of Ezz.-Neh., as it was of Chronicles. The Cyrus Edict and the whole character of the Return to which it led, is considered as the fulfilment of the prophetic voice (Ezr. 1:1). The Temple building is but one aspect of prophetic activity which called the Priests and the people to fulfil their high destiny (Ezr. 5:1ff). The reforms of Nehemiah (chs. 5,10,13) are carried through as obedience to the will of God; "the thing that ye do is not good: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God?" (Neh. 5:9).ⁱ

The doctrine of retribution is not so plainly evident in Ezz.-Neh., because the events described do not afford the same opportunity for its application as the events of the pre-exilic history. Nevertheless its presence is unmistakably felt. Haggai did not fail to apply it to those whom he wished to spur on to build the temple as a guarantee of the end of their afflictions (Pg. 126). The Chronicler could not apply it in this instance because the view that the restored Judaeans were apathetic to this great task was wholly alien to his understanding of the matter. But the Chronicler most strongly emphasised it in Ezra's prayer (Ezr.10) in connection with mixed marriages (Pgs. 206 ff.), and in the litany of Neh. 9, which is wrongly attached to the reading of the Law (Pg.239).

2) We are now brought to the final question to which our whole study has led up: In what sense can the authenticity of

ⁱ An instance of the Chr.'s universalistic idea, similar to Hiram's acknowledgement of Yahweh (see Pg. 266 note 1b), can be found in the Cyrus Edict, where Cyrus makes a similar acknowledgement (Ezr. 1:2).

the Chronicler's account of the Restoration be regarded as historically sound? This is the central question round which our whole criticism gathers, and we must now turn to the final conclusion to which it has led. Our study began with the attack on the linguistic nature of the Chronicler's work, and as typical of it Prof. Torrey's conclusion was quoted,

"That the Chronicler, as a historian, is thoroughly untrustworthy. He distorts facts deliberately and habitually, invents chapter after chapter with the greatest freedom.....Where his account is not supported by any other witness, the matter is settled, strictly speaking, without further discussion". (Pg. 22).

In view of the evidence which we have examined, can that statement stand? It must be admitted that the Chronicler's history is not what a twentieth-century scholar could call historically scientific. No doubt the narratives in Samuel and Kings should preserve a sounder historical report than Chronicles, since they stand nearer to the events described, although we have seen that even these earlier accounts are not free from preconceived opinions (Pg. 269). The Chronicler's characteristic interests, which so strongly colour his narrative, would naturally preclude his record from being a photographic picture of what actually occurred. Such a record it was not his purpose to write. He was not primarily interested in historical exactitude 'per se', but in history as the vehicle of certain fundamental facts which he felt it imperative to make known. So captivated was he by his peculiar interests in the religious activities of the Restored Community, its Worship and Sanctuary and obedience to the divine will, of which those things were the earthly expression, that his work ceased to be motivated by a strict historical accuracy, and became permeated with a religious zeal for the things that were to him of more importance.

We have shown how this explains his special emphases and interpretations, his peculiar omissions, additions and amplifications in relation to other histories of the same events, and we saw these to be consistently employed in Ezer.-Neh., where there are no parallels to form a similar comparison. But when every admission is made in this direction, there are no grounds to support the sweeping indictment of Torrey that the Chronicler's work is historically a fraud, and that wherever he has no corroborating witness his facts are fiction. The whole burden of this thesis is to show the unsoundness of this charge, which has lain more or less like a blight upon the Chronicler for a generation.

On the linguistic side (Sect. 1) it was shown that the evidence is inadequate to prove either that the EA is later than the 5th century B.C., or that the Ezra Memoirs were identical with Chronicles. But however much weight be attached to this evidence it can never prove that the contents of the Chronicler's history do not rest on historic facts. Moreover, this same linguistic evidence yielded solid grounds for the belief that the Chronicler had access to independent sources which he preserved, and further that he probably used some of his Ezer.-Neh. source material for his work in Chronicles. This is precisely the reverse of Torrey's theory. That he had sources of his own, otherwise unknown, is supported by some of the evidence of the Aramaic sections of Ezra, which indicated that what have generally been regarded as forms due to literary development may be idiosyncrasies due to differences of locality.

- i. No. 3 Pg. 25; No. 4 Pg. 26; No. 22 Pg. 41; No. 35 Pg. 49ff.; 114 ff. also temple specifications, Pg. 135; & Osnappar & Esar-haddon, Pg. 110ff.
- ii. No. 18 Pg. 35; No. 19 Pg. 36; No. 34 Pg. 48.
- iii. Pgs. 17-19.

On the historical side (Sect. 2) it was shown, not only that the Chronicler had accurately reflected the Persian regime in which his Restoration history was set, but that his sources corresponded in form and content to similar parallels of the period whose authenticity was beyond dispute.

In our critical examination of the Restoration history from an internal point of view (Sec. 3), and in our survey of the Chronicler's method and interest (Sect. 4), it has been made clear that in spite of all his peculiarities his history does give in broad outline a faithful presentation of the facts. To claim that his work is a baseless fraud deliberately imposed upon an unscientific age is to be guilty of a complete misunderstanding of his purpose. Behind all his idiosyncrasies stands a solid basis of historic fact. In spite of all attacks many scholars have maintained this attitude to the Chronicler's work:-

"At all events, we may not on account of the ornate garb deny a living entity within, or assume that embellishments mean utter absence of historical material". i

ii

It has been rightly claimed by McFadyen that the Chronicler does not create his facts. He may modify, amplify and transpose, but always on the basis of facts. As we have abundantly seen, most of his confusions and dislocations are due to his earnest effort to deal justly with his conflicting sources. There is no reason for doubting the validity of these sources. Where many of his critics have gone astray is in mistaking the Chronicler's dislocations for fabrications. His inexactitudes are not due to a deliberate twisting of the facts out of what he knew to be their true perspective,

- i. A.H. Jennings, "The Thinker", Vol. 2., 1892.
- ii. Mc. IOT.

but rather to a combination of conflicting material, for which in all probability he was not himself responsible, with the didactic purpose for which he wrote. This purpose was to interpret history to his generation, that God's hand in events might be made manifest. Hence he uses history for this purpose, honestly believing that things could only be as he saw them. His omissions are not necessarily due to a belief that these things were false, but they were irrelevant to his purpose. The flavour which the story of Bathsheba leaves in one's mouth is not the flavour characteristic of the greatness of David. It may be a perfectly true story, and from all we know of human nature it is probably one of the truest things about David; but it does not reveal to us the true David, the king whose virtues and charming qualities have left an immortal example to all ages of manliness and courage. Similarly the failure of Ezra was not indicative of his greatness or of the magnitude of the service he rendered. All great biographers know that the derogatory episodes of a great life do not contain, and so cannot convey, the ultimate essence of his personality. Similarly the additions and modifications of the Chronicler are not given with a view to setting before men's eyes a false image, but to setting before them a picture with its supreme lessons and import unmistakably revealed. The charge of deliberate fraud is completely inconsistent with the sincerity and moral earnestness of a writer who seeks so diligently to set before his people the vital lessons of a great faith. Even the unpalatable doctrine of retribution, so strong in Chronicles, and also found in Ezer.-Neh., was his attempt to present to his generation a fundamental truth. He saw certain facts in man's experience which presented baffling problems to religious faith. To see good men perish in misery and

the wicked flourish in happiness, especially when one's hopes do not go beyond the horizons of an earthly life, demanded some reasonable explanation. The Psalmist (73) and Job faced the same facts and found no answer in rational processes. Only in the higher realm of absolute trust in God's goodness did they find peace (cf. Paul, Rom. 8). We need to realise first of all, that the Chronicler is not grappling with any easy problem, but with one that goes to the very heart of divine providence, and which makes heavy demands upon a man's faith. Secondly, the Chronicler, like all others to whom this problem is real, was acutely conscious that these grievous experiences are in direct opposition to another set of facts that are equally real and unquestionable. The suffering of the innocent and the prosperity of the wicked provide questions for faith only because faith is based upon other facts, namely, the knowledge of God's justice, righteousness and love. The Chronicler knew that God does enter into the human scene, and that this powerful and all-wise will is woven into the very texture of history. He had caught a glimpse of certain fundamental laws that govern the universe and against which man throws himself in vain. The thunderous roar of the message of Amos that man rejects God at his peril, still reverberated in his soul. Amos was not a man beating the air, but a man facing the moral facts of the Universe, and calling men to a clear recognition of the truth by which they could live. The Chronicler knew that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people", (Pr. 14:34), and that the ultimate wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). History for him was the record of God's reaction against evil and His sustaining of the good. All this composed the substance of that other set of facts which the Chronicler knew to be so by reason of the deep and living faith that pervaded his life. "He sees, as it were, the

vast overarching firmament of providence reflected in the narrow waters of his own soul".ⁱ Now these are the facts which the Chronicler desired to convey to his people. Of course, he did not see them in the clearer light of the Christian hope by which we read them now, but these are the facts, none the less, which he earnestly desired to set forth. God is at work in the world. He controls the destinies of men and nations, and He stands foursquare for righteousness and justice. Obedience to His Will wins His approval and man's spiritual rights. Disobedience means punishment and loss. These are the basic facts behind the Chronicler's doctrine of retribution, and we must not let the rigidity of his forms of expression blind our eyes to the truth he sought to stress. His doctrine tended to deepen religious faith and increase the zeal of a man's religious life, though in form and logical implication it became perverse. He is a man who must find reasons for the faith that is in him, and while his reasons may be fallible and his illustrations unsound, that does not invalidate the convictions he seeks to enforce. For him piety, humble trust and prayer are the things that win God's response. All great spirits have believed this, but the form which that response is thought to take has varied with man's spiritual vision.

The Chronicler was a religious scribe who wrote of the past in the light of his own day. During the interval many forces had been at work. The Law had been accepted as the dominating influence in a theocratic society. Hence, the Restored Community had become a Church rather than a State, with its ritual and officers clearly defined, and a scripture that was sacrosanct. But this was no period of rigid legalism (which it later became) but one of great

ⁱ Said of Paul by H.H. Farmer, "The World & God", Pg. 231.

religious enthusiasm, when men's delight was in the Law of the Lord, and in that Law did they meditate day and night. At such a time did our author live, and so entrenched was he in the religious worship and zeal of his day that he could not realise the time when things were otherwise. For him Judah had always been the home of these post-exilic institutions. The glorious time of David was when all this first came into being. A way of idealising the past became natural. He viewed it, according to Welch, not in the light of history, but "as it were, 'sub specie aeternitatis' ".ⁱ It was only natural for such a man to regard the chief interest of the returning exiles as that of the Temple building. The fact that the worship had been carried on complacently in a dilapidated ruin for some 18 years, was to him an incredible fact that could scarcely cross his horizon. The record he gives is the only conceivable harmony of the facts he could possibly imagine.

From all this it should be now clear how incalculably impoverished Hebrew history would be had the Chronicler never written. His work has been a standing protest against the formalism of post-exilic religion which the New Testament rebukes. But this one-sided picture of Judaism which the New Testament affords finds its correction in the spirit of men like the Chronicler who represented Judaism at its best. It was they who kept alive the living faith of the great prophets in post-exilic days. Not only does this work of the Chronicler lend to the earlier histories a new authority by reason of his dependence upon them, but it sheds an indirect light upon the conditions of his own time. His work lights up with

extraordinary brilliance the immediate background of the New Testament. His very peculiarities and emphases show us what elements of his period played a determinative part in the moulding of his national and religious life. How meagre would our knowledge be without Ezra and Nehemiah! No history of the Restoration exists apart from this record.

The Chronicler's work breathes the devotion of a man with an intense belief in God and in a world where moral forces are at work. He illustrates the value and limitation of law as a means of spiritual advancement. Obedience to its smallest requirements becomes an avenue to God, but formalism is an accompanying danger, and the Chronicler did not wholly avoid it. But he shows that the Law was a real means of spiritual growth, and devotion to it did not necessarily stunt the spiritual life. Finally, the Chronicler's work is a protest against all who would belittle the significance of the liturgical element in worship. For him worship was man's highest response to God, and as such it should have in it all the richest contribution music and song can bestow. The most splendid execution, the most careful preparation, must be part of the service in which man approaches Almighty God.

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