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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY ON  
NEHEMIAH

*by Adam Clarke.*

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without  
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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# A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

ON THE

# HOLY BIBLE

## OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

DESIGNED AS A HELP TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE SACRED WRITINGS

**BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.S.A., &c.**

A NEW EDITION, WITH THE  
AUTHOR'S FINAL CORRECTIONS

**For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.—Rom. 15:4.**

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

IN the introduction to the book of Ezra, we have already seen those wonderful interferences of Divine Providence in which Nehemiah bore so large a share. Dr. Prideaux, with his usual perspicuity, has interwoven the whole of the transactions of the mission of Nehemiah with that part of the Persian history with which they are connected; which I shall give, as in the preceding book, in his own words. He connects this book, as it ought to be, with the book of *Ezra*. See before.

“He who succeeded Ezra in the government of Judah and Jerusalem was Nehemiah, a very religious and most excellent man; one that was nothing behind his predecessor, saving his learning and great knowledge in the law of God. He came to Jerusalem in the *twentieth* year of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, about *four hundred and forty-five* years before *Christ*; and by a commission from him, superseded that of Ezra, and succeeded him in the government of Judah and Jerusalem. He had in that commission, by an express clause therein inserted, full authority to repair the walls, and set up the gates of Jerusalem; and to fortify it again in that manner as it was before it was dismantled and destroyed by the Babylonians. He was a Jew, whose ancestors had formerly been citizens of Jerusalem; for there, he says, was the place of his fathers’ sepulchres: but as to the tribe or family which he was of, no more is said but only that his father’s name was *Hachaliah*, who seems to have been of those Jews who, having gotten good settlements in the land of their captivity, chose rather to abide in them than return into their own country, when leave was granted for it. It is most likely that *Hachaliah* was an inhabitant of the city of *Shushan*, and that it was his dwelling there that gave his son an opportunity of gaining an advancement in the king’s palace; for he was one of the cup-bearers of King *Artaxerxes*, which was a place of great honour and advantage in the Persian court, because of the privilege it gave him of being daily in the king’s presence, and the opportunity which he had thereby of gaining his favour for the obtaining of any petition which he should make to him; and that, especially, since the times of his attendance always were when the king was making his heart merry with the wine which he served up to him; for this is the best opportunity with all men for the obtaining any boon that shall be desired of them, because they are always then in the best humour for complying: it was at such a time that he asked the government of

Judea, and obtained it. And by the like advantages of his place, no doubt it was that he gained those immense riches which enabled him for so many years, out of his own private purse only, to live in his government with that splendour and expense as will be hereafter related, without burdening the people at all for it; and no doubt it was by the favour of Queen Esther, as being of the same nation and people with her, that he attained so honourable and advantageous a preferment in that court. However, neither the honour nor advantage of this place, nor the long settlement of his family out of his country, could make him forget his love for it, or lay aside that zeal which he had for the religion of his forefathers, who had formerly dwelt in it. For though he had been born and bred in a strange land, yet he had a great love for Sion, and a heart thoroughly set for the advancing the prosperity of it, and was in all things a very religious observer of the law of his God; and therefore, when some came from Jerusalem, and told him of the ill state of that city, how the walls of it were still in many places broken down, and the gates of it in the same demolished state as when burnt with fire by the Babylonians, and that, by reason thereof, the remnant of the captivity that dwelt there lay open, not only to the incursions and insults of their enemies, but also to the reproach and contempt of their neighbours, as a mean and despicable people, and that they were in both these respects in great grief and affliction of heart; the good man, being suitably moved with this representation, applied himself in fasting and prayer unto the Lord his God, and earnestly supplicated him for his people Israel, and the place which he had chosen for his worship among them. And having thus implored the Divine mercy against this evil, he resolved next to make his application to the king for the redressing of it, trusting in God for the inclining of his heart thereto; and therefore, when his turn came next to wait in his office, the king, observing his countenance to be sad, which at other times used not to be so, and asking the cause thereof, he took this opportunity to lay before him the distressed state of his country; and, owning this to be the cause of great grief to him, prayed the king to send him there to remedy it. And by the favour of Queen Esther he had his petition granted unto him; for it being particularly marked in the sacred text that the queen was sitting with the king when *Nehemiah* obtained this grant, sufficiently indicates that her favour was assisting to him herein; (See my note on this passage.-A. C.) and accordingly a royal decree was issued out for the rebuilding of the walls and gates of Jerusalem; and Nehemiah was sent thither with it, as governor of the province of Judea, to put it into execution; and to do him the more honour, the king sent a guard of horse

with him, under the command of some of the captains of his army, to conduct him safely to his government. And he wrote letters to all the governors on this side the river Euphrates, to further him in the work on which he was sent; and also gave his orders to Asaph, the keeper of the forests in those parts, to allow him as much timber out of them as should be needed for the finishing of it. However, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Samaritans, and other neighbouring nations round, did all they could to hinder him from proceeding therein; and to this they were excited, not only by the ancient and bitter enmity which those people bore to the whole Jewish nation, because of the different manners and different religions they professed; but most especially at this time because of their lands; for during the time that the Jews were in captivity, these nations, having seized their lands, were forced to restore them on their return; for which reason they did all they could to oppose their settlement, hoping that, if they could be kept low, they might find an opportunity, some time or other, of resuming the prey they had lost. But Nehemiah was not at all discouraged at this; for having, on his arrival at Jerusalem, made known to the people the commission with which he was sent, he took a view of the ruins of the old walls, and immediately set about the repairing of them, dividing the people into several companies, and assigning to each of them the quarter where they were to work, but reserving to himself the superintendence and direction of the whole, in which he laboured so effectually that all was finished by the end of the month *Elul*, within the compass of *thirty-two* days, notwithstanding all manner of opposition that was made against him, both from within and without; for within several false prophets, and other treacherous persons, endeavoured to create obstructions; and from without Sanballat the Horonite, Tobias the Ammonite, Geshem the Arabian, and several others, gave him all the disturbance they were able, not only by underhand dealings, and treacherous tricks and contrivances, but also by open force; so that while part of the people laboured in carrying on the building, the other part stood to their arms, to defend themselves against those who had any designs upon them. And all had their arms at hand, even while they worked, to be ready at a signal given to draw together at any part where the enemy should be discovered to be coming upon them: and by this means they secured themselves against the attempts and designs of their enemies till the work was brought to a conclusion. And when they had thus far finished the walls and set up the gates, a public dedication of them was celebrated with great solemnity by the priests and Levites, and all the people. The

burden which the people underwent in the carrying on of this work, and the incessant labour which they were forced to undergo to bring it to so speedy a conclusion being very great, and such as made them faint and groan under it; to revive their drooping spirits, and make them the more easy and ready to proceed in that which was farther to be done, care was taken to relieve them from a much greater burden, the oppression of usurers, which they at that time lay under, and had much greater reason to complain of; for the rich, taking advantage of the necessities of the poor, had exacted heavy usury of them, making them pay the *centesimal* for all moneys lent them; that is, one *per cent.* for every month, which amounted to twelve *per cent.* for the whole year: so that they were forced to mortgage their lands, and sell some of their children into servitude, to have wherewith to buy bread for the support of themselves and families; which being a manifest breach of the law of God, given by Moses, (for that forbids all the race of Israel to take usury of any of their brethren,) Nehemiah, on his hearing of this, resolved forthwith to remove so great an iniquity; in order whereto he called a general assembly of all the people, where, having set forth unto them the nature of the offence, how great a breach it was of the Divine law, and how heavy an oppression upon their brethren, and how much it might provoke the wrath of God against them, he caused it to be enacted by the general suffrage of that whole assembly, that all should return to their brethren whatsoever had been exacted of them upon usury, and also release all the lands, vineyards, olive-yards, and houses, which had been taken of them upon mortgage on this account.

“And thus Nehemiah, having executed the main of the end for which he obtained the favour of the king to be sent to Jerusalem, appointed Hanani and Hananiah to be governors of the city, and returned again unto him into Persia; for a time had been set him for his return again to court, when he first obtained to be sent from thence on this commission; which, as expressed in the text, plainly imports a short time, and not that of *twelve* years, after which he again went unto the king, as some interpret it. And his having appointed governors of the city as soon as the walls were built evidently implies that he then went from thence, and was absent for some time; for, had he still continued at Jerusalem, he would not have needed any deputies to govern the place. And farthermore, the building of the walls of Jerusalem being all for which he prayed his first commission; when this was performed, he seems to have needed a new authority before he could go on to other proceedings, which were necessary for the well

settling of the affairs of that country. But on his return to the king, and having given him an account how all things stood in that province, and what farther was needful to be done for the well regulating of it, he soon obtained to be sent back again to take care thereof: and the shortness of his absence seems to have been the cause why there is no mention of it in the text, though the particulars I have mentioned seem sufficiently to imply it.

“Nehemiah, being returned from the Persian court with a new commission, in the *twenty-first* year of Artaxerxes, [B. C. 444,] forthwith set himself to carry on the reformation of the Church, and the state of the Jews, which Ezra had begun; and took along with him the advice and direction of that learned and holy scribe in all that he attempted in this work.

“The first thing that he did was to provide for the security of the city, which he had now fortified, by settling rules for the opening and shutting of the gates, and keeping watch and ward on the towers and walls: but finding Jerusalem to be but thinly inhabited, and that to make this burden more easy there needed more inhabitants to bear their share with them in it, he projected the thorough re peopling of the place: in order to which he prevailed first with the rulers and great men of the nation to agree to build them houses there, and dwell in them; and then others following their example, offered themselves voluntarily to do the same; and of the rest of the people every tenth man was taken by lot, and obliged to come to Jerusalem, and there build them houses, and settle themselves and their families in them. And when the city was fortified, and all that had their dwellings in it were there well secured by walls and gates against the insults of their enemies, and the incursions of thieves and robbers, who before molested them, all willingly complied; by which means the houses, as well as the walls and gates, being again rebuilt, and fully replenished with inhabitants, it soon after this received its ancient lustre, and became again a city of great note in those parts.

“Nehemiah, finding it necessary to have the genealogies of the people well investigated and clearly stated, next examined into that matter; and this he did, not only for the sake of their civil rights, that all knowing of what tribe and family they were, they might be directed where to take their possessions; but more especially for the sake of the sanctuary, that none might be admitted to officiate, even as Levites, who were not of the tribe of Levi; or as priests, that were not of the family of Aaron. And therefore, for the true settling of this matter, search was made for the old registers;

and, having among them found a register of the genealogies of those who came up at first from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Jeshua, he settled this matter according to it; adding such also as came up, and expunging others whose families were extinct. And this caused the difference that is between the accounts we have of these genealogies in Ezra and Nehemiah: for in the *second* chapter of Ezra we have the old register made by Zerubbabel; and in the *seventh* of Nehemiah, from the *sixth* verse to the end of the chapter, a copy of it as settled by Nehemiah with the alterations I have mentioned. Ezra, having completed his edition of the law of God, and written it out fairly and clearly in the Chaldean character, this year, on the feast of trumpets, publicly read it to the people of Jerusalem. This feast was celebrated on the *first* of *Tisri*, the *seventh* month of the Jews' ecclesiastical year, and the *first* of their civil year. Their coming out of Egypt having been in the month *Nisan*, from that time the beginning of the year, in all ecclesiastical matters, was reckoned among them from the beginning of that month, which happened about the time of the vernal equinox; but in all civil matters, such as contracts and bargains, they still continued to go by the old form, and began their year from the *first* of *Tisri* which happened about the time of the autumnal equinox, as all other nations of the East then did; and all instruments and writings relating to contracts and bargains, or other civil matters, were dated according to this year, and all their jubilees and Sabbatical years began with it; and, therefore, reckoning it their new-year's-day, they celebrated it with a festival; and this festival being solemnized by the sounding of trumpets, from the morning of that day to the end of it, to proclaim and give notice to all of the beginning of the new year, it was from thence called the feast of trumpets. To celebrate this feast, the people assembled from all parts of Jerusalem; and understanding that Ezra had finished his revisal of the law, and written out a fair copy of it, they called upon him to have it read to them; when a scaffold or large pulpit was erected in the largest street of the city, where most of the people might stand to hear it. Ezra ascended into it, with thirteen other principal elders; and having placed six on his right hand, and seven on his left, he stood up in the midst of them; and having blessed the Lord, the great God, he began to read the law out of the Hebrew text; and while he read it in this language, *thirteen* other of the Levites, whom he instructed for this purpose, rendered it period by period into Chaldee, which was then the vulgar language of the people, giving them the meaning of every particular part; thus making them understand it: thus the holy scribe, with these assistants, continued from morning till noon, reading and



explaining the law of God unto the people in such a manner as suited their low capacities. But it being a festival day, and the dining hour approaching, Nehemiah, Ezra, and the rest that had been assisting, dismissed them to dinner, to eat and drink, and rejoice before the Lord. The remainder of the day, because it was thus consecrated to be kept holy unto Him: but the next morning they assembled again, in the same place; and Ezra and his assistants went on farther to read and to explain the law of God in the same manner as they had done the day before; and when they came to the *twenty-third* chapter of Leviticus, wherein is written the law of the feast of tabernacles, and had explained to them the obligation they were under to observe it, and that the *fifteenth* day of that month was the day appointed for the beginning of it, he excited an eager desire in all the people to fulfil the law of God in this particular; and proclamation was therefore made through all Judah, to give notice of the festival, and to warn them all to be present at Jerusalem on that day for the observing of it. Accordingly they went thither at the time prescribed; and, as they were instructed by the law of God, prepared booths, made of the branches of trees, and kept the festival in them, through the whole *seven* days of its continuance, in so solemn a manner as had not been observed before since the days of Joshua to this time. Ezra, taking the advantage of having the people assembled in so great a number, and so well disposed towards the law of God, went on with his assistants farther to read and explain in the same way as he had done on the two former days; and this he did from the first to the last day of the festival, till they had gone through the whole law; by which the people, perceiving in how many things they had transgressed the law of God through ignorance, (for till now the law of God had never been read since their return from Babylon,) expressed much trouble of heart, being much grieved for their sins, and exceedingly terrified with the fear of God's wrath for the punishment of them. Nehemiah and Ezra, finding them so well disposed, applied themselves to make the best improvement they could of it for the honour of God, and the interests of religion; and, therefore, proclaimed a fast to be held the day but one after the festival was ended, to which having called all the people while the sense of these things was fresh in their minds, excited them to make a solemn confession of their sins before God, and also to enter into a solemn vow and covenant with God to avoid them for the future. The observances which they chiefly obliged themselves to in this covenant were: *Firstly*, Not to make intermarriages with the Gentiles, either by giving their daughters to them, or by taking any of their daughters to themselves. *Secondly*, To observe

the Sabbaths and Sabbatical years. *Thirdly*, To pay their annual tribute to the temple for the repairing of it, and finding all the necessaries for the carrying on of the public service in it. And *Fourthly*, To pay the tithes and first-fruits to the priests and Levites. And these particulars being thus named in this covenant shows us that they were the laws of God which they had been neglectful of since their return from the captivity. It being their ignorance which led them into these transgressions, and this ignorance having been occasioned by their not having heard the law of God read to them; to prevent this for the future, they had from this time the most learned of the Levites and scribes that were skilled in the law, to read it to them in every city; which no doubt was at first done by gathering the people together in the most wide street, where all might the better hear it; but the inconvenience of this being soon felt, especially in the winter and stormy seasons of the year, they erected houses or tabernacles to meet in, and these were the original synagogues among them. That they had no synagogues before the Babylonish captivity is plain, not only from the silence of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, but also from several passages in them, which evidently prove that there were none in those days; for it is a common saying, among the Jews, that where there is no book kept of the law, there can be no synagogue; for the chief service of the synagogue being the reading of the law to the people, where there was no law, there certainly could be no synagogue. Many texts of Scripture tell us that the book of the law was very rare through all Judah before the Babylonish captivity. When Jehoshaphat sent teachers through all Judah to instruct the people in the law of God, they carried the law with them; which they need not have done if there had been copies of the law in those cities where they went, which there would have been had there been synagogues in them, it being the same absurdity to suppose a synagogue without a book of the law, as to suppose a parish church without a copy of the Bible in it; and therefore as this proves the want of the law through all Judah, so it proves the want of synagogues in them also. And when Hilkiah found the law in the temple, neither he nor the king Josiah would have been surprised at it, had books of the law been common in those times. Their behaviour on that occasion sufficiently proves that they had never seen it before, which could not have been the case had there been any copies of it to be found among the people; and if there were no copies of the law at that time among them, there could then be most certainly no synagogues for them to resort to for the hearing of it read. From hence it plainly follows that there could be no synagogues among the Jews till after the

Babylonish captivity; and it is most probable that Ezra's reading to them the law, and the necessity which they perceived there was of having it oftener read to them, was the occasion of their erecting them after their captivity in the manner I have related; and most learned men are of this opinion, and some of the Jews themselves say as much.

“Nehemiah, after having held the government of Judah *twelve* years, returned to the Persian court, either recalled thither by the king, or else going thither to solicit a new commission after the expiration of the former, [32 Artax. B. C. 433.] During all the time that he had been in the government he managed it with great justice, and supported the dignity of his office, through these whole *twelve* years, with a very expensive and hospitable magnificence; for there sat at his table every day *a hundred and fifty* of the Jews and rulers, besides strangers who came to Jerusalem from among the heathen nations round about them; for when occasion brought them thither, if they were of any quality, they were always invited to the governor's house, and there hospitably and splendidly entertained; so that there were provided for Nehemiah's table every day *one ox, six choice sheep, and fowls and kine*, with all other things in proportion, which must have been a great expense; yet all this he bore through the whole *twelve* years, out of his own private purse, without burdening the province at all for it, or taking any part of that allowance which before was raised by other governors to support them in their station; which argues his great generosity, as well as his great love and tenderness to the people of his nation, in thus easing them of this burden; and also his vast wealth, in being able to do so. The office which he had been in at court gave him the opportunity of amassing great riches, and he thought he could no better expend them than in the service of his country, and by doing all he could to promote its true interest in Church and state; and God prospered him in the work, according to the great zeal with which he laboured in it.

“Nehemiah, on his return to the Persian court, in the *thirty-seventh* year of Artaxerxes, [B. C. 428,] having tarried there about *five* years in the execution, as it may be supposed, of his former office, at length obtained permission from the king to be sent back to Jerusalem with a new commission. The generality of chronologers as well as commentators on this part of Scripture make his going back there to have been much sooner; but considering the many and great corruptions which he tells us in the *thirteenth* chapter the Jews had run into during his absence, it cannot be conceived how, in less than *five* years' time, they could have grown to such

a height among them. He had been *twelve* years in reforming what was amiss among them, and Ezra had been *thirteen* years doing the same before him; and they had brought their reformation to such a state of stability, that a little time would not have been sufficient to have unhinged it. It is indeed expressed in our English version, that *Nehemiah* came back from the *Persian* court to Jerusalem, *after certain days*; but the Hebrew word *ימי* *yamin*, which is there rendered *days*, signifies also *years*; and is in a great many places of the Hebrew Scriptures so used. About this time lived *Malachi* the prophet: the greatest of the corruptions he charged the Jews with are the same as those they had run into in the time of *Nehemiah's* absence; and therefore it is most probable that in this time his prophecies were delivered. It is certain that the temple was all finished, and every thing restored in it, before this time, for there are passages in his prophecies which clearly suppose it; for he does not charge the Jews with not restoring the temple, but their neglect of what pertained to the true worship of God in it. But at what time after the restoration of the temple it was that he wrote his prophecies, is nowhere stated; and therefore we have only conjecture about it, and I know of no conjecture that can place it with more probability than in the time I have mentioned.

“Many things having gone wrong among the Jews during the absence of *Nehemiah*, as soon as he was again settled in the government, he applied himself with his accustomed zeal to correct them. That which he first took notice of was a great profanation which had been introduced into the temple for the sake of *Tobiah* the *Ammonite*. This man, though he had made two alliances with the Jews, (for *Johanan* his son had married the daughter of *Meshullam* the son of *Berechiah*, who was one of the chief managers in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, under the direction of the governor, who himself had married the daughter of *Shecaniah* the son of *Arah*, another great man among the Jews,) yet being an *Ammonite*, he bore a national hatred to all who were of the race of Israel; and therefore, envying their prosperity, did the utmost he could to obstruct *Nehemiah* in all that he did for the good of that people, and confederated with *Sanballat*, their greatest enemy, to carry on this purpose. However, by reason of the alliances I have mentioned, he had many correspondents among the Jews, who were favourers of him, and acted insidiously with *Nehemiah* on this account; but he, being aware of their devices, withstood and baffled them all, so long as he continued in Jerusalem. But when he went from thence to the *Persian* court, *Eliashib* the high priest was

prevailed upon, being one in the confederacy and alliance with *Tobiah*, to allow and provide for him lodging within the temple itself. In order for which he removed *the meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of corn, the new wine, and the oil, which had been commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the offerings of the priests*, out of the chambers where they used to be laid; and to make out of them one large apartment for the reception of this heathen stranger. It is doubted by some whether this *Eliashib* were Eliashib the *high priest*, or only another priest of that name; for he is named in the text, where this is related of him, by the title only of priest, and is there said to have the oversight of the chambers in the house of God; from whence it is argued that he was only chamberlain of the temple, and not the high priest, who was above such an office. But the oversight of the chambers of the house of God may import the whole government of the temple, which belonged to the high priest only; and it is not easily to be conceived how any one less than the absolute governor of the whole temple could make such an innovation in it. Besides, *Eliashib* the high priest has no character in Scripture with which such a procedure can be said to be inconsistent. By what is said in the book of Ezra, <sup><51018></sup>**Ezra 10:18**, it appears that the pontifical family was in his time grown very corrupt; and there is no act of his mentioned, either in Ezra or Nehemiah, except only his assisting in the repairing of the wall of Jerusalem. Had he done any thing else worthy of memory in the reforming of what was amiss, either in Church or state, in the times of Ezra or Nehemiah, it may be presumed mention would have been made of it in the books written by them. The silence of him in both these books, as to any good act done by him, is a sufficient proof that there was none to be recorded; for the high priest being head of the Jewish Church, had he borne any part with those two good men, when they laboured so much to reform that Church, it is utterly impossible that it should have been passed over in their writings, where they give an account of what was done in that reformation. What *Jeshua* his grandfather did, in concurrence with Zerubbabel the governor, and Haggai and Zechariah the prophets, in the resettling of the Church and state of the Jews, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, is all recorded in Scripture; and had *Eliashib* done any such thing in concurrence with Ezra and Nehemiah, we may be certain it would have been recorded also.

“Putting all this together, it appears most likely that it was *Eliashib* the high priest who was the author of this great profanation of the house of God.

What was done, however, the text tells us, Nehemiah immediately withstood, as soon as he returned to Jerusalem; for, overruling what the high priest had ordered to be done by the authority which he had as governor, he commanded all the household stuff of *Tobiah* to be cast out, and the chambers to be cleansed and restored to their former use.

“The reading of the law to the people having been settled by Nehemiah, so as to be constantly carried on at certain stated times ever since it was begun under his government by Ezra, (probably on every Sabbath day,) when in the course of their lessons they came to chap. xxiii. of Deuteronomy, where it is commanded that a *Moabite or an Ammonite should not come into the congregation of the Lord even to the tenth generation for ever*; Nehemiah, taking advantage of it, separated all the mixed multitude from the rest of the people, that thereby it might be known with whom a true Israelite might lawfully marry; for neither this law, nor any other of the like nature, is to be understood as excluding any, of whatever nation, from entering into the congregation as a proselyte, and becoming a member of their Church. Neither did the Jews so interpret it; for they freely received into their religion all who would embrace it, and on their conversion admitted them to all its rights and privileges, and treated them in all respects as true Israelites, excepting only in the case of marriage; and therefore this phrase in the text, *of not entering into the congregation even to the tenth generation*, must be understood to imply no more than a prohibition not to be married with them till then; and thus all the Jewish doctors expound it.

“Among other corruptions that grew up during the absence of Nehemiah, one especially to be noticed was, the neglect of not carrying on the daily service of the house of God in the manner it ought; for the tithes, which were to maintain the ministers of the temple in their offices and stations, either being embezzled by the high priest or other rulers under him, or else subtracted by the laity, and not paid at all; for want of them the Levites and singers were driven from the temple, every one to his own house, there to seek for a subsistence some other way. This abuse the governor, whose piety led him always to attend to the public worship, could not be long without taking notice of, and when he had thoroughly informed himself of the cause, he soon provided very effectually for its remedy; for he again made those dues to be brought into the temple treasuries, and forced every man faithfully and fully to pay them; thus a maintenance being again provided for those who attended the service of the house of God, all was

there again restored to its pristine order. And he also took care that the Sabbath should be duly observed, and made many good orders for the preventing of the profanation of it, and caused them all to be put into effectual execution. But though all these things are mentioned in one chapter, they were not all done at one time; but this good man brought them about as opportunities best served for the success of effecting them. In the same year [B. C. 425] in which Nehemiah went again to his government of Judea, from the Persian court, i.e., in the *fourth* year of the *eighty-seventh* Olympiad, *Plato*, the famous Athenian philosopher, was born, who came the nearest to the truth in Divine matters of any of the heathens; for, having in his travels to the East, (whither he went for his improvement in knowledge,) conversed with the Jews, and got some insight into the writings of Moses, and their other sacred books, he learned many things from them which the other philosophers could not attain unto, and therefore he is said by *Numenius* to be none other than Moses speaking Greek; and many of the ancient fathers speak of him to the same purpose.”

With this book the general historical books of the Old Testament end; and the succeeding accounts of the Jewish people must be sought partly in the Apocryphal books, and in Josephus; but nowhere with so much *perspicuity* as in the remaining volumes of the industrious and judicious author of *The Connected History of the Old and New Testaments*, from which the reader has already had such copious extracts.

## THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

### *Chronological Notes relative to this Book*

- Year from the Creation, according to Archbishop Usher, whose system of chronology is the most generally received, 3558.
- Year before the birth of Christ, 442.
- Year before the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 446.
- Year of the Julian period, 4268.
- Year since the flood of Noah, according to the English Bible, 1902.
- Year of the Cali Yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 2656.
- Year from the vocation of Abram, 1476.
- Year from the destruction of Troy, 739.
- This we collect from three passages in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, (who flourished in the Augustan age,) which state that an interval of *four hundred and thirty-two years* elapsed from the destruction of Troy to the building of Rome.
- Year from the foundation of Solomon's temple, 565.
- Year since the division of Solomon's monarchy into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 529.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, king of Elis, who reestablished the Olympic games, *three hundred and thirty-eight years* after their institution by Hercules, or about *eight hundred and eighty-four years* before the commencement of the Christian era, 439.
- This epoch is famous in chronological history, as every thing previous to it seems involved in fabulous obscurity.
- Year since Corœbus won the prize at Olympia, a town of Elis in Peloponnesus, (being the *twenty-eighth* Olympiad after their re-establishment by Iphitus,) 331.
- Third year of the *eighty-third* Olympiad.
- The epoch of the Olympiads commenced according to the accurate and learned computations of some of the moderns, exactly *seven hundred and seventy-six years* before the Christian era, in the year of the Julian period 3938, and *twenty-three years* before the building of Rome. N. B. The Olympic games were celebrated at the time of the full moon which



immediately followed the day of the summer solstice; therefore the Olympiads were not of equal length, because the time of the full moon differs about *eleven* days every year; and for that reason the Olympiads sometimes began the next day after the solstice, and at other times four weeks after.

- Year of the Varronian or generally received era of the building of Rome, 308. This computation was used by the Romans in the celebration of their secular games.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Cato and the *Fasti Consulares*, 307. Dionysius of Halicarnassus follows this account in his *Roman Antiquities*.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Polybius the historian, (a native of Megalopolis in Peloponnesus, and son of Lycortas,) 306.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, (the first Roman who wrote a history of his own country, from the age of Romulus to the year of Rome 536,) 302.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, a king of Babylon after the division of the Assyrian monarchy, 302.
- Year since the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, 276.
- Year from the destruction of Solomon's temple by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, 143.
- Year since the publication of the famous edict of Cyrus, king of Persia, empowering the Jews to rebuild their temple, 90. The commencement of this epoch was synchronical with the termination of the *seventy years* during which the Jews were under the dominion of the Babylonians.
- Year since the expulsion of the Tarquins from Rome, which put an end to the regal government of the Romans, 63. The consular government immediately followed the expulsion of the Tarquins.
- Year before the celebrated Peloponnesian war, 16. This war began on the seventh of May, *four hundred and thirty-one years* before the Christian era; and continued *twenty-seven years* between the Athenians and the inhabitants of Peloponnesus, with their allies.
- Year before the commencement of the era of the Seleucidæ, 134. This era was named after Seleucus, one of the captains of Alexander the Great,

surnamed Nicator, or The Conqueror. The year in which he conquered Babylon (viz. 312 B. C.) is called the first year of this era.

- Year before the formation of the famous Achæan league, 165.
  - Year before the commencement of the first Punic war, 182. The Arundelian marbles are said to have been composed in the first year of this war.
  - Year before the fall of the Macedonian empire, 278.
  - Year before the extinction of the reign of the Seleucidæ in Syria, on the conquest of that country by Pompey, 381.
  - Year before the commencement of the era of the Roman emperors, 415. The year in which the famous battle of Actium was fought is the first year of this era.
  - Year of Archidamus, king of Lacedæmon, and of the family of the Proclidæ or Eurypontidæ, 24.
  - Year of Plistoanax, king of Lacedæmon, and of the family of the Eurystheuidæ or Agidæ, 21. This king was general of the Lacedæmonian armies in the Peloponnesian war. N. B. The kings of the Lacedæmonians of the families of the Proclidæ and the Eurysthenidæ sat on the throne together for several hundred years; viz., from 1102 B. C. to about 200 B. C.
  - Year of Perdicas II. the eleventh king of Macedon, 9.
  - Year of Artaxerxes, surnamed Macrochir (μακροχειρ) or Longimanus because his arms were so long that when standing erect, his hands reached down to his knees, 20.
  - Roman Consuls, T. Quintius Capitolinus the fourth time, and Agrippa Furius. During this consulship the Æqui and Volsci came near to the gates of Rome, and were defeated.
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*Eminent men who were contemporary with Nehemiah; upon the supposition that his birth happened about 500 B. C., and his death about 420 B. C.*

- Acron*, a physician of Agrigentum; flourished 459 B. C.
- Æschylus*, the tragic poet of Athens; born, 525 B. C., died 456 B. C., at the age of 69.
- Alcidamus* the philosopher; flourished 424 B. C.
- Anaxagoras*, a Clazomenian philosopher; born B. C. 500., died 428 B. C., at the age of 72.
- Aristarchus* the tragic poet of Tegea in Areadia; flourished about 454 B. C.
- Aristides*, the Athenian; flourished about 480 B. C.
- Aristophanes*, the comic poet; said to have flourished about 434 B. C.
- L. Furius Camillus*, celebrated Roman; born 445 B. C., and died 365 B. C., aged 80, after he had been five times dictator, once censor, three times interrex, twice a military tribune, and obtained four triumphs.
- Charandas*, who gave laws to the people of Thurium; died 446 B. C.
- Charon*, a historian of Lampsacus; flourished about 479 B. C.
- L. Q. Cincinnatus*, a celebrated Roman; flourished about 460 B. C.
- Cossus*, a Roman who killed Volumnius, king of Veii, and obtained the Spolia Opima, A. U. C. 317, B. C. 437.
- Cratinus*, the comic writer; born 528 B. C., died 431 B. C., at the age of 97.
- Democritus*, the philosopher; born 470 B. C., died 361 B. C., at the advanced age of 109.
- Empedocles*, a philosopher, poet, and historian, of Agrigentum in Sicily; flourished about 444 B. C.
- Epicharmus*, a poet and Pythagorean philosopher of Sicily, who, according to Aristotle and Pliny, added the two letters  $\chi$  and  $\theta$  to the Greek alphabet; flourished 440 B. C., and died in the 90th year of his age.
- Euctemon*, the astronomer; flourished about 431 B. C.
- Eupolis*, a comic poet of Athens; flourished about 435 B. C.

- Euripides*, the tragic poet, born at Salamis the day on which the army of Xerxes was defeated by the Greeks; torn to pieces by dogs, 407 B. C., in the 73d year of his age.
- Georgias*, a celebrated sophist and orator; born 508 B. C., died 400 B. C., at the advanced age of 108.
- Hellanicus*, the Greek historian; born at Mitylene, 496 B. C., died 411 B. C., in the 85th year of his age.
- Herodicus*, a physician surnamed Gymnastic; flourished 443 B. C.
- Herodotus*, a celebrated historian of Halicarnassus; born 484 B. C., read his history to the council of Athens, and received public honours, in the 39th year of his age, 445 B. C.
- Hippocrates*, a celebrated physician of Cos; born 460 B. C., died 361 B. C., nearly 100 years of age.
- Isoarates*, the orator; born 437 B. C., died about 338 B. C., aged 99.
- Leocrates*, an Athenian general; flourished about 460 B. C.
- Lysias*, the orator; born 459 B. C., died 378 B. C.
- Melissus*, the Samian philosopher; flourished about 440 B. C.
- Meton*, the astrologer and mathematician; flourished about 432 B. C.
- Peticles*, the celebrated minister of Athens; born 499 B. C., died of the plague about 429 B. C.
- Phidias*, a celebrated statuary of Athens; died 432 B. C.
- Pindar*, a celebrated lyric poet of Thebes; born 521 B. C., died 435 B. C., at the age of 86.
- Plato*, the Greek poet, called the prince of the middle comedy; flourished about 454 B. C.
- Protagoras*, a Greek philosopher; died at a very advanced age, about 400 B. C.
- Socrates*, one of the most celebrated philosophers of all antiquity; born 470 B. C., died 400 B. C., aged 70.
- Sophocles*, a celebrated tragic poet of Athens, educated in the school of Æschylus; born 497 B. C., died 406 B. C., at the age of 91.
- Thucydides*, a celebrated Greek historian; born at Athens 471 B. C., died 391 B. C., in his 80th year.

-*Xenophon*, the celebrated general, historian, and philosopher; born 449 B. C., died 359 B. C., aged 90.

-*Zeuxis*, a celebrated painter; flourished about 468 B. C.

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## CHAPTER 1

*Account of Nehemiah, 1. His inquiry about the Jews that had returned from their captivity, and concerning the state of Jerusalem, of which he receives the most discouraging information, 2, 3. He is greatly affected; fasts and prays, 4. His prayer and confession to God, 5-11.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 1. The words of Nehemiah]** That this book was compiled out of the *journal* or *memoranda* made by *Nehemiah* himself, there can be no doubt: but that he was not the *compiler* is evident from several passages in the work it. self. As it is written consecutively as one book with *Ezra*, many have supposed that this latter was the author: but whoever compares the style of each, in the Hebrew, will soon be convinced that this is not correct; the style is so very different, that they could not possibly be the work of the same person.

It is doubtful even whether the *Nehemiah* who is mentioned <sup><1500></sup> **Ezra 2:2**, who came to Jerusalem with *Zerubbabel*, be the same with him who is the reputed author of this book. By the computation of the best chronologists, *Zerubbabel* came to Jerusalem in A. M. 3468; and *Nehemiah*, who is here mentioned, did not come before the *twentieth* year of the reign of *Artaxerxes*, which falls in with A. M. 3558, *ninety* years after: and as his account here is carried down to A. M. 3570, *nearly twenty* years later, he must at his death have been about *a hundred and thirty*, allowing him to have been only *twenty* years old at the time that *Zerubbabel* went up to Jerusalem. This is by no means likely, as this would make him the king's cupbearer when he was upwards of *a hundred years of age*! It seems, therefore, evident that the *Nehemiah* of *Ezra* cannot be the same with the reputed author of this book, and the cup-bearer of the Persian king.

**Son of Hachaliah]** Of what tribe or lineage he was, we cannot tell: this is all we know of his parentage. Some suppose he was a priest, and of the

house of Aaron, on the authority of 2 Mac. i. 18, 21; but this is but slender evidence. It is likely he was of a very eminent family, if not of the blood royal of Judah, as only persons of eminence could be placed in the office which he sustained in the Persian court.

**The month Chisleu]** Answering to a part of our November and December.

**Twentieth year]** That is, of Artaxerxes, A. M. 3558, B. C. 446.

**Shushan the palace]** The ancient city of *Susa*; called in Persian [Persian] *Shuster*: the winter residence of the Persian kings.

**Verse 2. I asked them concerning the Jews]** Josephus gives a probable account of this business: “Nehemiah, being somewhere out of Susa, seeing some strangers, and hearing them converse in the Hebrew tongue, he went near; and finding they were Jews from Jerusalem, he asked them how matters went with their brethren in that city, and what was their state?” And the answer they gave him is, in substance, that recorded in the text; though with several aggravations in Josephus.-*Joseph. Ant. lib. xi., c. 5.*

**Verse 3. The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down]** This must refer to the walls, which had been *rebuilt* after the people returned from their captivity: for it could not refer to the walls which were broken down and levelled with the dust by *Nebuchadnezzar*; for to hear of this could be no *news* to Nehemiah.

**Verse 4. And mourned certain days]** From the month *Chisleu* to the month *Nisan*; about *four* months from the time he received the above information, till the time that Artaxerxes noticed his grief, <sup><[10]></sup>**Nehemiah 2:1.** All this time he probably spent in supplication to God; waiting for a favourable opening in the Divine providence. Every *good* work is not to be undertaken hastily; prayer and watchfulness are necessary to its completion. Many good works have been ruined by making *haste*.

**Verse 5. Lord God of heaven]** What was, before the captivity, *Jehovah, God of hosts* or *armies*.

**Great]** Able to do mighty things. *Terrible*-able to inflict the heaviest judgments.

**Verse 6. Let thine ear]** *Hear* what we say and *confess*. *Thine eyes open*-see what we *suffer*.

**Verse 7. Have not kept thy commandments]** The moral precepts by which our lives should be regulated.

**Statutes]** What refers to the rites and ceremonies of thy religion.

**Judgments]** The precepts of justice relative to our conduct to each other.

**Verse 8. Thy servant Moses]** See the parallel places in the margin, and the notes there. Though in an enemy's country, and far from the ordinances of God, Nehemiah did not forget the law: he read his Bible well, and quotes correctly.

**Verse 11. Mercy in the sight of this man.]** Favour before the king, Ahasuerus. He seems then to have been giving him the cup.

**For I was the king's cup-bearer.]** The king's *butler*, (the Persians call him [Arabic] *saky*,) which gave him the opportunity of being frequently with the king; and to be in such a place of trust, he must be in the king's confidence. No Eastern potentate would have a cup-bearer with whom he could not trust his life, *poison* being frequently administered in this way. This verse seems to have been a mental prayer, which Nehemiah now put up as he was delivering the cup into the king's hand.

## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 2

*Artaxerxes, observing the sorrow of Nehemiah, inquires into the cause, 1, 2. Nehemiah shows him the cause, and requests permission to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, 3-6. The king grants it, and gives him letters to the governors beyond the river, 7, 8. He sets out on his journey, 9. Sanballat and Tobiah are grieved to find he had got such a commission, 10. He comes to Jerusalem; and, without informing any person of his business, examines by night the state of the city, 11-16. He informs the priests, nobles, and rulers, of his design and commission, 17, 18. The design is turned into contempt by Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, 19. Nehemiah gives them a suitable answer, 20.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1. Month Nisan]** Answering to a part of our *March* and *April*.

**I took up the wine]** It is supposed that the kings of Persia had a different cup-bearer for each quarter of the year, and that it had just now come to Nehemiah's turn.

**Verse 2. Then I was very sore afraid.]** Probably the king spoke as if he had some suspicion that Nehemiah harboured some bad design, and that his face indicated some conceived treachery or remorse.

**Verse 3. Let the king live for ever]** Far from wishing ill to my master, I wish him on the contrary to live and prosper for ever. ÆLIAN, *Hist. Var.* lib. i. c. 32, uses the same form of speech in reference to Artaxerxes Mnemon, one of the Persian kings, βασιλευ Αρταξερξη, δι αιωνος βασιλευοις, "O King Artaxerxes, may you reign for ever," when speaking of the custom of presenting them annually with an offering of earth and water; as if they had said, *May you reign for ever over these!*

**Verse 4. So I prayed to the God of heaven.]** Before he dared to prefer his request to the king, he made his prayer to God, that his suit might be acceptable: and this he does by mental prayer. To the spirit of prayer every place is a *praying place*.

**Verse 5. The city of my fathers' sepulchres]** The tombs of the dead were sacred among the ancients, and nothing could appear to them more



detestable than disturbing the ashes or remains of the dead. Nehemiah knew that in mentioning this circumstance he should strongly interest the feelings of the Persian king.

**Verse 6. The queen also sitting by him]** Who probably forwarded his suit. This was not Esther, as Dean Prideaux supposes, nor perhaps the same Artaxerxes who had taken her to be queen; nor does **l gv shegal** signify *queen*, but rather harlot or concubine, she who was chief favourite. The Septuagint translate it **παλλακη**, *harlot*; and properly too. See the introduction.

**I set him a time.]** How long this time was we are not told; it is by no means likely that it was *long*, probably no more than *six months* or a *year*; after which he either returned, or had his leave of absence *lengthened*; for in the same year we find he was made governor of the Jews, in which office he continued twelve years, viz., from the twentieth to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, <sup><1614></sup>**Nehemiah 5:14**. He then returned to Susa; and after staying a short time, had leave to return to rectify some abuses that Tobiah the Ammonite had introduced into the temple, <sup><1616></sup>**Nehemiah 13:6,7**, and several others of which the people themselves were guilty. After having performed this service, it is likely he returned to the Persian king, and died in his office of cup-bearer; but of this *latter* circumstance we have no mention in the text.

**Verse 8. Asaph the keeper of the king's forest]** **sdrph hapardes** of the *paradise* of the king. This I believe is originally a *Persian* word; it frequently occurs in Arabic, [Arabic] *ferdoos*, and in Greek, **παραδεισος**, and in both signifies a *pleasant garden, vineyard, pleasure garden*, and what we call a *paradise*.

Above the hall of audience, in the imperial palace at Dehli, the following Persian couplet is inscribed:—

[Persian]

[Persian]

*“If there be a paradise on the face of the earth,  
this is it, this is it, this is it.”*

Thus we find that the word is applied to denote *splendid apartments*, as well as *fine gardens*; in a word, any place of pleasure and delight. The *king's forest* mentioned in the text might have been the same to

*Artaxerxes*, as the *New Forest* was to *William the Conqueror*, or *Windsor Forest* to the late amiable sovereign of the British people, **GEORGE the THIRD**.

**And the king granted me, &c.]** This noble spirited man attributes every thing to God. He might have said, I had been long a faithful servant to the king; and he was disposed, in reward of my fidelity, to grant my request; but he would not say so: “He granted my request, because *the good hand of my God was upon me.*” God favoured me, and influenced the king’s heart to do what I desired.

**Verse 10. Sanballat the Horonite]** Probably a native of Horonaim, a *Moabite* by birth, and at this time governor of the Samaritans under the king of Persia.

**Tobiah the servant]** He was an *Ammonite*; and here, under the Persian king, joint governor with Sanballat. Some suppose that the Sanballat here mentioned was the same who persuaded Alexander to build a temple on Mount Gerizim in favour of the Samaritans. Pelagius thinks there were two governors of this name.

**Verse 13. The dragon well]** Perhaps so called because of the representation of a dragon, out of whose mouth the stream issued that proceeded from the well.

**Dung port]** This was the gate on the eastern side of the city, through which the filth of the city was carried into the valley of Hinnom.

**Verse 14. The gate of the fountain]** Of *Siloah*.

**The king’s pool]** Probably the *aqueduct* made by Hezekiah, to bring the waters of Gihon to the city of David. See <sup><4320></sup>**2 Chronicles 32:30**.

**Verse 15. By the brook]** *Kidron*.

**By the gate of the Valley]** The valley through which the brook Kidron flowed. It was by this gate he went out; so he went all round the city, and entered by the same gate from which he had gone out.

**Verse 16. The rulers knew not whither I went]** He made no person privy to his design, that he might hide every thing as much as possible from their enemies till he had all things in readiness; lest they should take measures to defeat the work.

**Verse 18. Then I told them]** He opened to them his design and his commission.

**Verse 19. Geshem the Arabian]** Some chief of the Arabs contiguous to Samaria, who had joined with Sanballat and Tobiah to distress the Jews, and hinder their work.

**Will ye rebel against the king?]** This they said in order to raise jealousies in the king's mind, and induce him to recall his ordinance.

**Verse 20. Ye have no portion, nor right]** To be a citizen of Jerusalem was a high honour; and they would not permit those who did not belong to the tribes of Israel to dwell there. Zerubbabel gave the same answer to the Samaritans, <sup><1504B></sup>**Ezra 4:3.**

## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 3

*The names of those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem; and the part assigned to each person, 1-32.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 3

**Verse 1. Eliashib the high priest]** It was right that the priests should be *first* in this holy work; and perhaps the *sheep gate* which is mentioned here is that by which the offerings or sacrifices were brought into the temple.

**They sanctified it]** As they began with the sacred offering as soon as they got an altar built, it was proper that the gate by which these sacrifices entered should be consecrated for this purpose, i.e., set apart, so that it should be for this use only.

**Verse 3. The fish gate]** We really know scarcely any thing about these gates-what they were, why called by these names, or in what part of the wall situated. All plans of Jerusalem, its temple, walls, and gates, are mere works of conjecture; and yet how *learnedly* have some men written on all these subjects!

**Verse 7. The throne of the governor]** His house, and the place where he dispensed justice and judgment. Previously to the days of Nehemiah, Jerusalem was governed by a deputy from the Persian king; (see <K&S> **Nehemiah 5:15**;) but after this time they were governed by governors and judges chosen from among themselves.

**Verse 8. Goldsmiths.]** From the remotest period of the history of the Jews they had artists in all elegant and ornamental trades; and it is also evident that goldsmiths, apothecaries, and merchants were formed into *companies* in the time of Nehemiah.

**Apothecaries]** Rather such as dealt in *drugs, aromatics, spices, &c.*, for embalming, or for furnishing the temple with the incense consumed there.

**Verse 9. Ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.]** Probably the city was divided into *two parts*; one for Judah, and the other for Benjamin, each having its proper governor. Rephaiah mentioned here was *one* of these

governors, and *Shallum*, mentioned <sup><16812></sup>**Nehemiah 3:12**, was the *other*. There were other rulers or governors of particular country or village districts.

**Verse 11. Repaired the other piece]** That which was left by *Jedaiah* after he had repaired the wall opposite to his own house. Probably some of the principal people were obliged to repair those parts of the wall opposite to their own dwellings. Perhaps this was the case generally.

**Verse 12. The son of Halohesh]** Or, the son of the *Enchanter*: conjectured to be thus named from having the art to *charm* serpents.

**The ruler of the half part]** See on <sup><16819></sup>**Nehemiah 3:9**.

**Verse 13. The inhabitants of Zanoah]** This was a town in the tribe of Judah. <sup><16153></sup>**Joshua 15:34**.

**Verse 14. Beth-haccerem]** A village or town in the tribe of Benjamin. See <sup><2400></sup>**Jeremiah 6:1**.

**Verse 15. The pool of Siloah]** This is probably the same as that mentioned by the evangelists.

**The stairs that go down from the city of David.]** Jerusalem being built on very *uneven ground*, and some *hills* being taken within the walls; there was a necessity that there should be in different places *steps* by which they could ascend and descend: probably similar to what we see in the city of *Bristol*.

**Verse 16. The pool that was made]** Calmet supposes that this was the reservoir made by Hezekiah, when besieged by Sennacherib, <sup><14334></sup>**2 Chronicles 32:4**.

**The house of the mighty.]** Probably a place where a *band of soldiers* was kept, or the *city guard*.

**Verse 19. The going up to the armoury]** This was either a *tower* that defended the angle where the two walls met; or the *city arsenal*, where shields, spears, &c., were kept to arm the people in time of danger.

**Verse 20. Earnestly repaired]** He distinguished himself by his *zeal* and *activity*.

**Verse 22. The priests, the men of the plain.]** Some of the officers of the temple, particularly the *singers*, dwelt in the *plain* country round about Jerusalem, <sup><16128></sup>**Nehemiah 12:28**; and it is likely that several of the *priests* dwelt in the same place.

**Verse 28. The horse gate]** The place through which the *horses* passed in order to be watered; It was near the temple. Some rabbins suppose that in order to go to the temple, a person might go on horseback to the place here referred to, but then was obliged to alight, as a horse could pass no farther. Horses were never very plentiful in Jerusalem.

**Verse 32. The goldsmiths and the merchants.]** The word **μυρϋχh** *hatstsorephim* may signify *smiths*, or persons who worked in *metals* of any kind; but it is generally understood to mean those who worked in *gold*. I have already observed, that the mention of *merchants* and *goldsmiths* shows that these persons were formed into *bodies corporate* in those ancient times. But these terms are differently rendered in the *versions*. The *Vulgate* is the same as ours, which probably our translators copied: *aurifices et negociatores*. The *Syriac* is, *goldsmiths* and *druggists*. The *Arabic*, *smelters of metal* and *porters*. The *Septuagint*, in some copies, particularly in the *Roman* edition, and in the *Complutensian*, *Antwerp*, and *Paris Polyglots*, have **οι χαλκεις και οι μεταβολι**, *smiths* and *merchants*; but in other copies, particularly the *London Polyglot*, for **μεταβολοι** we find **ρωποπωλαι**, *seller of shields*. And here the learned reader will find a double mistake in the *London Polyglot*, **ρωποπωλαι** for **ρωποπωλαι**, and in the Latin version *scruta* for *scuta*, neither of which conveys any sense.

## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 4

*Sanballat and Tobiah mock the Jews, and endeavour to prevent the completing of the wall, 1-3. Nehemiah prays against them, and the people complete one half of the wall, 4-6. The Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites, conspire together, and come to fight against the Jews, 7, 8. The Jews commend themselves to God, and determine to fight for their lives and liberties; on hearing of which their enemies are disheartened, 9-16. The Jews divide themselves into two bands; one half working, and the other standing ready armed to meet their enemies. Even the workmen are obliged to arm themselves, while employed in building, for fear of their enemies, 17, 18. Nehemiah uses all precautions to prevent a surprise; and all labour with great fervour in the work, 19-22.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 4

**Verse 2. The army of Samaria]** As he was *governor*, he had the command of the army, and he wished to excite the soldiers to second his views against Nehemiah and his men.

**What do these feeble Jews?]** We may remark here, in general, that the enemies of God's work endeavour by all means to *discredit* and *destroy* it, and *those* who are employed in it. 1. They *despise* the *workmen*: *What do these feeble Jews?* 2. They endeavour to turn all into *ridicule*: *Will they fortify themselves?* 3. They have recourse to *lying*: *If a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.* 4. They sometimes use *fair* but *deceitful* speeches; see <sup><6612></sup>**Nehemiah 6:2**, &c.

**Verse 4. Turn their reproach upon their own head]** A prayer of this kind, understood literally, is not lawful for any *Christian*. Jesus, our great master, has said, "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you." Such sayings as the above are excusable in the mouth of a Jew, under severe irritation. See the next verse.

**Verse 5. Let not their sin be blotted out]** These are the most terrible imprecations; but probably we should understand them as *declaratory*, for the same form of the verb, in the Hebrew, is used as *precative* and *imperative*. *Turn their reproach*-Their reproach *shall be* turned. *Give them for a prey*-They *shall be* given for a prey. *Cover not their iniquity*-Their

iniquity *shall* not be covered. *Let not their sin be blotted out*-Their sin *shall* not be blotted out. All who know the genius of the Hebrew language, know that the *future* tense is used to express all these senses. Besides, we may rest assured that Nehemiah's curses, or declaration of God's judgments, had respect only to their *bodies*, and *to their life*: not to their *souls* and the *world to come*. And then they amount to no more than this: *What a man soweth that he shall reap*.

**Verse 6. For the people had a mind to work.]** The original is very emphatic: *bl yhyw twv[| | μ[| |* *vayehi leb leam laasoth*, "For the people had a *heart* to work." Their *hearts* were engaged in it; and where the *heart* is engaged, the work of God goes on well. The whole of this 6th verse is omitted by the *Septuagint*.

**Verse 7. The walls of Jerusalem were made up]** That is, they were made up *to the half height of the wall*; for the preceding verse seems to intimate that the *whole wall* was thus far built; not *half of the wall* completed, but the *whole wall built to half its height*.

**Verse 9. We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch]** The strongest confidence in the protection and favour of God does not preclude the use of *all* or any of the *means of self-preservation and defence* which his providence has put in our power. While God works in us *to will and to do*, we should proceed *to willing*, through the *power* he has given us *to will*; and we should proceed *to action*, through the *power* he has given us *to act*. We cannot *will*, but through God's *power*; we cannot *act*, but through God's *strength*. The *power*, and the *use* of it, are two distinct things. We may *have the power to will*, and *not will*; and we may *have the power to do*, and *not act*: therefore, says the apostle, seeing God has wrought in you these powers, see that YOU WORK OUT YOUR OWN salvation, *with fear and trembling*.

**Verse 10. The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed]** They worked both *day* and *night*, scarcely ever putting off their clothes, except for the purpose of being *washed*, <sup><1602></sup>**Nehemiah 4:21, 23.**

**Much rubbish]** The ruins they were obliged to clear away, before they could dig the foundation for a new wall: and in this labour they were nearly exhausted; see <sup><1615></sup>**Nehemiah 5:15.**



**Verse 12. From all places whence ye shall return unto us]** This verse is extremely difficult. Our translators have supplied the words, *they will be upon you*, which have nothing correspondent in the Hebrew. The Septuagint have given a good sense, **Αναβαινουσιν εκ παντων των τοπων εφ̄ ημας**, *They come up from all places against us*. The sense appears to be this: the Jews which dwelt among the Samaritans, &c., came often to Nehemiah from all quarters, where they sojourned, and told him the *designs* of his enemies against him: therefore, he set people with their swords, spears, and bows, to defend the walls. It is probable that instead of **wbwvt** *tashubu*, “ye shall return,” we should read **wbvj** *chashebu*, “they *designed* or *meditated*.” This word is very similar to the other, and makes the sense very clear. “The Jews who dwelt among them told us frequently, from all places, what they *designed* against us.” For this reading *Houbigant*, *Michaelis* and *Dathé* contend. But this various reading is not found in any MS., and is not countenanced by any of the *versions*. See <1615> **Nehemiah 4:15.**

**Verse 14. Be not ye afraid of them]** Are they more terrible or stronger than God?

**Fight for your brethren]** Your own *countrymen*, who worship the same God, and are come from the same stock; *your sons*, whom they wish to slay or lead into captivity; *your daughters* and *wives*, whom they wish to deflower and defile; and *your houses*, which they wish to seize and occupy as their own. They had every thing at stake; and therefore they must fight *pro aris et focis*, for their *religion*, their *lives*, and their *property*. A people thus interested, who once take up the sword, can never be *conquered*.

There is an address made to the Greeks by their leader in Æschylus, *Pers.* ver. 402, similar to this, to excite them against the Persians:—

-----Ω παιδες̄ ελληνων, ιτε,  
 Ελευθερουτε πατριδ, ελευθερουτε δε  
 Παιδας, γυνιακας, θεων ρε πατρων εδη,  
 Θθηκας τε προγονων, νυν υπερ παντων αγων.

“-----*Sons of the Greeks, go on!*  
*Free now your country, and your children free;*  
*Your wives, the temples of your fathers' gods,*  
*And dear abodes of farthest ancestors:—*  
*Now strike the blow for all!”*  
*J. B. B. C.*

**Verse 15. Their counsel to naught]** The word *counsel* used here countenances the *emendation* in the 12th verse.

**Verse 16. Half-wrought in the work]** This is no unusual thing, even in the present day, in Palestine: people sowing their seed are often attended by an armed man, to prevent the Arabs from robbing them of their seed, which they will not fail to do if not protected.

**Habergeons]** In the Franco-Gallic, *hautbergon* signifies *a coat of mail*; but as in *Teutonic* [Teutonic] signifies the neck, and [Teutonic], to *cover* or *defend*; it may be considered rather as signifying a *breastplate*, or *armour for the breast*.

**Verse 17. With one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.]** That is, he had his *arms* at hand, and was as fully prepared to *fight* as to *work*. So OVID, *Epist.* xi., *Canace Macario*, ver. 1:—

*Si qua tamen cæcis errabunt scripta lituris,  
Oblitus a dominæ cæde libellus erit:  
Dextra tenet calamum; strictum tenet altera ferrum:  
Et jacet in gremio charta soluta meo.*

*If streaming blood my fatal letter stain,  
Imagine, ere you read, the writer slain.  
One hand the sword, and one the pen employs,  
And in my lap the ready paper lies.  
DRYDEN.*

By this mode of speech Canace does not intimate to her brother Macarius, that she actually *held* the *sword* in one hand while she held the *pen* in the other, but that she had it *ready* to slay herself as soon as she had written the epistle.

**Verse 20. Ye hear the sound of the trumpet]** As the walls were very extensive, and the workmen consequently much scattered, their enemies might easily attack and destroy them successively, he therefore ordered them all to work as near to each other as they could; and himself, who was everywhere surveying the work, kept a trumpeter always with him, who was to sound when the enemy approached; and all were instantly to run to the place where they heard the sound.

**Verse 22. Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem]** The country people were accustomed, after their day's labour, to return to their families; now being so formidably threatened, he obliged them all to sleep in Jerusalem, that they might be ready, in case of attack, to help their brethren. All this man's arrangements were wise and judicious.

**Verse 23. None of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing.]** The Hebrew for all this is only  $\mu\text{ymh wj l v vya wnydgb } \mu\text{ycvp wnj na } \hat{\text{y}}\text{a}$  *ein anachnu poshetim begadeynu ish shilcho hammayim*; which *Montanus* translates, *Non nos exuentes vestes nostras, vir missile suum aquas*; "We, not putting off our garments, a man his dart to the waters." Of this latter clause what sense can be made? Let us hear what the ancient *versions* say.

The *Vulgate*, *Unusquisque tantum nudabatur ad baptismum*, "Every one stripped himself for the bath."

The *Septuagint* omit the latter part of this clause, *And there was none of us who put off his garments.*

The *Syriac*, "None of us put off his clothes for a month each in his turn.

The *Arabic*, "Nor did we put off our clothes, but with our arms, at the end of a month."

There is a remarkable reading in one of *Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS.*

$\text{wnydgb } \mu\text{ycvp wnj na } \hat{\text{y}}\text{a } \mu\text{ymh l [ hj l vm}$ , We did not lay aside our garments, but in order to send them to the washing. This is most likely the sense of the place.

It is curious to see how our old versions translate the place.

*Coverdale*: *We put never of our clothes, so much as to wash ourselves.*-1535.

*Becke*: *We put never of our clothes, so much as to wash ourselves.*-1549.

*Cardmarden*: *We put never of our clothes no more than the other did they harness, save onely because of the water.*-1566.

This shows how all interpreters have been puzzled with this vexatious clause.

THE reading from *Deuteronomy Rossi's MS.*, given above, is the most likely to be the true one, because it gives a good sense, which cannot be

found in the Hebrew text as it now stands. The general meaning is sufficiently evident; they worked nearly day and night, only had their hours by turns for repose; this did not permit them time sufficient to undress themselves in order to take regular sleep, therefore they only put off their clothes when they were obliged to get them washed.

## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 5

*The people complain that they are oppressed and enthralled by their richer brethren, 1-3. Nehemiah calls them to account; upbraids them for their cruelty; and obliges them to swear that they will forgive the debts, restore the mortgaged estates, and free their servants, 4-13. Nehemiah's generosity and liberality, 14-17. The daily provision for his table, 18, 19.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 2. We, our sons, and our daughters, are many]** Our families are larger than we can provide for; we are obliged to go in debt; and our richer brethren take advantage of our necessitous situation, and oppress us. The details which are given in the next verse are sufficiently plain.

**Verse 3. Because of the dearth.]** About the time of Zerubbabel, God had sent a judicial dearth upon the land, as we learn from *Haggai*, <sup><37010></sup>**Haggai 1:9**, &c., for the people it seems were more intent on building houses for themselves than on rebuilding the house of the Lord: "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it is come to little; because of mine house that is waste; and ye run, every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brought forth; and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands." This dearth might have been continued, or its effects still felt; but it is more likely that there was a *new* dearth owing to the great number of people, for whose support the land that had been brought into cultivation was not sufficient.

**Verse 4. We have borrowed money]** This should be read, *We have borrowed money for the king's tribute on our lands and vineyards.* They had a tax to pay to the Persian king in token of their subjection to him, and though it is not likely it was heavy, yet they were not able to pay it.

**Verse 5. We bring in to bondage our sons]** The law permitted parents to sell their children in times of extreme necessity, <sup><122107></sup>**Exodus 21:7.**

**Verse 7. Ye exact usury]** This was expressly contrary to the law of God; and was doubly cruel at this time, when they were just returning out of the land of their captivity, and were suffering from the effects of a *dearth*. Some think that it was about the time of a Sabbatical year, when their land must have lain at rest without cultivation, and during which they were expressly commanded not to exact any debt. <sup><615D></sup> **Deuteronomy 15:2.**

**I set a great assembly against them.]** Brought all these delinquents before the rulers of the people.

**Verse 9. Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God]** If ye wish to *accredit* that religion ye profess which comes from the God of *justice* and *mercy*; should you not, in the sight of the heathen, abstain from *injustice* and *cruelty*? Can they credit your profession, when they see such practices? The inconsistent conduct of some professors of religion does much harm in the Church of God.

**Verse 11. Also the hundredth part of the money]** *Houbigant* contends, 1. That the word *tam meath*, which *we* and the *Vulgate* translate one *hundredth* part, never means so anywhere; and 2. That it would have answered no end to have remitted to people so distressed merely the *one hundredth part* of the money which had been taken from them by usury. He understands *tam meath* as signifying the same as *ta ^m min eth*, contracted into *tam meeth*, a preposition and demonstrative particle joined together, *also a part FROM THE money*. Neither the *Syriac*, *Septuagint*, nor *Arabic* acknowledges this *hundredth* part. Some think that the *hundredth* part is that which they obliged the poor debtors to pay each month, which would amount to what we would call *twelve per cent.* interest for the money lent, or the debt contracted. See the *introduction*.

**Verse 13. Also I shook my lap]** This was a significant action frequent among the Hebrews; and something of the same nature was practised among other nations. “When the Roman ambassadors entered the senate of Carthage, they had their toga gathered up in their bosom. They said, We carry here *peace* and *war*; you may have *which* you will. The senate answered, You may give *which* you please. They then *shook their toga*, and said, We bring you war. To which all the senate answered, We cheerfully accept it.” See *Livy*. lib. xxi., cap. 18; and see *Calmet*.

**Verse 14. I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor.]** From what is related here, and in the following verse, we find that the table of the governor was always supplied by the people with *bread* and *wine*; and, besides, they had *forty shekels* per diem for their other expenses. The people were also greatly oppressed by the *servants* and *officers* of the governor; but, during the *twelve years* that Nehemiah had been with them, he took not this salary, and ate none of their bread. Nor were his servants permitted to take or exact any thing from them. Having such an example, it was scandalous for their chiefs, priests, and nobles, thus to oppress an afflicted and distressed people.

**Verse 16. Neither bought we any land]** Neither he nor his officers took any advantage of the necessities of the people, to buy their lands, &c. He even made his own servants to work at the wall.

**Verse 17. A hundred and fifty of the Jews]** He kept *open house*, entertained *all comers*; besides having *one hundred and fifty* Jews who had their food constantly at his table, and at his expense. To be able to bear all these expenses, no doubt Nehemiah had saved money while he was cup-bearer to the Persian king in *Susa*.

**Verse 18. One ox, and six choice sheep]** This was food sufficient for more than *two hundred* men.

**Once in ten days store of all sorts of wine]** It is supposed that every *tenth* day they drank wine; at all other times they drank *water*; unless we suppose the meaning of the phrase to be, that his servants laid *in a stock* of wine every ten days. Though the Asiatics drank sparingly of wine, yet it is not very likely that, in a case such as that above, *wine* was tasted only *thrice* in each month.

Bishop *Pococke* mentions the manner in which the *bey* of *Tunis* lived. He had daily *twelve sheep*, with *fish, fowls, soups, oranges, eggs, onions, boiled rice, &c., &c.*, His *nobles* dined with him; after they had done, the *servants* sat down; and, when they had finished, the *poor* took what was left. Here is no mention of a *fat ox*; but there were *six sheep* at the bey's table *more* than were at the table of Nehemiah: so the *twelve sheep* were equal to *six sheep* and *one ox*. Probably the mode of living between these *two* was nearly alike.

**Verse 19. Think upon me, my God, for good]** Nehemiah wishes for no reward from *man*; and he only asks *mercy* at the hand of his God for what his *providence* enabled him to do; and which, according to the good hand of his God upon him, he had done *faithfully*. He does not offer his *good deeds* to God in extenuation of his *sins*, or as a *compensation* for the *heaven* he expected. Nothing of the kind: he simply says, what any good man might say, My God, *as* I have done good to them, *so* do good to me; or as the poet has sung:—

*“Teach me to feel another’s wo,  
To hide the fault I see:  
The mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me!”*  
**POPE.**

This is according to the precept of Christ: “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you.”



## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 6

*Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, insidiously desire a conference with Nehemiah, which he refuses, 1-4. They then charge him with the design of rebelling, and causing himself to be made king, 5-7; which he denies, and prays to God for support, 8, 9. A false prophet is hired by Tobiah and Sanballat, to put him in fear; he discovers the imposture, and defeats their design, 10-13. He prays to God against them, 14. The wall is finished in fifty-two days, 15. He discovers a secret and treasonable correspondence between Tobiah and some of the Jewish nobles, 16-19.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 6

**Verse 2. Come, let us meet together in-the plain of Ono.]** They wished to get him out of Jerusalem from among his friends, that they might either carry him off, or murder him. *Ono* is supposed to have been in the tribe of Benjamin, near Jordan.

**Verse 3. I am doing a great work]** Though he knew their design, he does not think it prudent to mention it. Had he done so, they would probably have gone to extremities, finding that they were discovered; and perhaps in a formidable body attacked Jerusalem, when ill provided to sustain such a shock. They wished to effect their purpose rather by *treachery* than by open *violence*. I know not any language which a man who is employed on important labours can use more suitably, as an answer to the thousand invitations and provocations he may have to remit his work, enter into useless or trivial conferences, or notice weak, wicked, and malicious attacks on his work and his motives: "I am doing a great work, so I cannot *stoop* to your nonsense, or notice your malevolence. Why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come *down* to such as *you*?"

**Verse 5. With an open letter in his hand]** This was an insult to a person of Nehemiah's quality: as letters sent to chiefs and governors in the East are always carefully folded up, and put in costly silken bags, and these carefully sealed. The circumstance is thus marked to show the contempt he (Sanballat) had for him.

**Verse 6. And Gashmu saith it]** You are accused of crimes against the state, and *Geshem*, the Arabian, is your accuser.

**Verse 7. Thou hast also appointed prophets]** Persons who pretend to be commissioned to preach to the people, and say, *Nehemiah reigneth!*

**Come now therefore, and let us take counsel]** Come and justify yourself before me. This was a trick to get Nehemiah into his power.

**Verse 8. There are no such things done]** You well know that what you say is false: I shall not, therefore, trouble myself about a false charge.

**Verse 10. Who was shut up]** Lived in a sequestered, solitary state; pretending to sanctity, and to close intercourse with God.

**Let us meet together in the house of God]** The meaning is, “Shut yourself up in the temple; appear to have taken sanctuary there, for in it alone can you find safety.” This he said to discourage and disgrace him, and to ruin the people; for, had Nehemiah taken his advice, the people would have been without a *leader*, their enemies would have come upon them at once, and they would have been an easy prey. Besides, had Nehemiah done this, he would have been shut up in the temple, his government would have been declared at an end, and Sanballat would have assumed the reins.

**Verse 11. Should such a man as I flee?]** Shall *I*, who am governor of the people, appointed both by God and the king, shall I betray my trust, and leave the flock without a shepherd? Shall I be a traitor, and abandon the office to which I am appointed? -No! Who, in my situation, with such responsibility, and such prospects, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not: I will stand at my post, and be ready to receive my enemies whensoever they come; so let Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem look to themselves.

**Verse 14. And on the prophetess Noadiah]** Whether this was a *prophet* or *prophetess*, we cannot tell; the *Hebrew* text only makes her a *prophetess*; all the *versions* have *Noadiah the prophet*, except the *Arabic* which has [Arabic] *Younadaa the prophet*. I think the **h** *he* at the end of **haybn** *nebiah* is a *mistake*, and that we should read *Noadiah the prophet*.

**Verse 15. The twenty and fifth-of-Elul]** This Jewish month answers to a part of our *August* and *September*.

**Fifty and two days.]** I see no difficulty in supposing that several thousand workmen, each of whom was working *as for God*, should be able to

complete this wall in *fifty-two* days. There is little doubt that several parts of the old wall were entire; in many places the foundations still remained; there were all the *materials* of the old wall still at hand; and though they had to clear and carry away much rubbish, yet they do not appear to have had any stones to quarry. The work mentioned here was little when compared to what *Cæsar* did in Gaul and other places; and to what *Titus* did at Jerusalem, who built a wall round Jerusalem of *five thousand* paces in three days, besides, *thirteen towers* of *ten stadia* in circuit. And *Quintus Curtius* and *Arrian* inform us that Alexander the Great built the walls of Alexandria, on the Tanais, which were nearly *eight miles* in compass, in the space of between *twenty* and *thirty days*. Nehemiah therefore had time sufficient in *fifty-two* days to repair and restore the walls of Jerusalem. See *Calmet* on this place.

**Verse 16. This work was wrought of our God.]** This is an additional reason why we should not wonder at the *shortness* of the time in which so great a work was done, for God helped them by an especial providence; and this was so very observable, that their *carnal* enemies could discover it.

**Verse 17. The nobles of Judah sent many letters]** The circumstances marked in this and the following verses show still more clearly the difficulties which Nehemiah had to encounter; he had enemies *without* and false friends *within*. A treacherous correspondence was carried on between the nobles of Judah and the Ammonites; and had almost any other man been at the head of the Jewish affairs, Jerusalem had never been re-established.

**Verse 18. He was the son-in-law of Shechaniah]** Previously to the coming of Nehemiah, the Jews seemed to be fast intermixing with the heathen, by *intermarriages* with *Ashdodites*, *Ammonites*, and *Moabites*; see <sup><16132></sup>**Nehemiah 13:23**. Ezra had many evils of this kind to redress, (<sup><15008></sup>**Ezra 9:3**, &c..) chiefly among the common people, though there were both chiefs and priests in that trespass. But here we find the heathen and Jewish nobles interlinked; and the latter were so far imbued with the spirit of idolatry, that they forgot God, his service, their brethren, and their own souls.

## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 7

*Nehemiah makes use of proper precautions in guarding the city gates, 1-4. He proposes to reckon the people according to their genealogies; and finds a register of those who came out of Babylon, with Zerubbabel, 5-7. A transcript of the register, 8-10. Account of those who came from other provinces; and of priests who, because they could not show their register, were put away from the priesthood as polluted, 61-65. The sum total of the congregation: of their men-servants and maid-servants; singing men and women; horses, mules, camels, and asses, 66-69. The sums given by different persons for the work, 70-72. All betake themselves to their several cities, 73.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 7

**Verse 2. My brother Hanani]** This was the person who gave Nehemiah the account of the desolate state of the Jews, <sup><6012></sup>**Nehemiah 1:2**. He is now made ruler of Jerusalem, probably because Nehemiah was about to return to the Persian court. And he found this man to be one in whom he could trust: 1. Because *he was a faithful man*-one who had a proper *belief* in God, his government, and his protection; and being devoted to the interests of his people, would **be faithful** in the discharge of his office. 2. Because he *feared God above many*-was the most religious person in the congregation; would govern according to the laws; would take care of the interests of *pure religion*; would not oppress, take bribes, nor abuse his authority; but act in all things as one who had the *fear of God* continually before his eyes. These are the proper qualifications of a governor.

**Verse 3. Until the sun be hot]** The meaning of this is, the gates were not to be *opened* before *sunrise*, and always *shut* at *sunset*. This is the custom to the present day in many of the cities of the East if a traveller arrives *after sunset*, he finds the gates shut; and on no consideration will they open them till the next morning, so that those who come late are obliged to lodge in the plain, or *under the walls*.

**Every one-over against his house.]** Each was obliged to guard that part of the wall that was opposite to his own dwelling.

**Verse 4. The houses were not builded.]** The city was not yet rebuilt, only a row of houses in the inside of the wall all round.

**Verse 5. God put into mine heart]** With this good man every *good thing* was of GOD. If he *purposed* any good, it was because *God put it into his heart*; if he *did* any good, it was because *the good hand of his God was upon him*; if he *expected* any good, it was because he earnestly *prayed God to remember him for good*. Thus, in all his ways he acknowledged God, and God directed all his steps.

**Verse 7. Who came with Zerubbabel]** The register which he found was that of the persons only who came long before Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Joshua the son of Josedek, which register could not answer in every respect to the state of the people then. Several persons and families were no doubt dead, and others had arrived since. Nehemiah probably altered it only in such parts, leaving the body of it as it was before; and this will account for the difference between it and the register that is found in *Ezra*, <sup><15101></sup>**Ezra 2:1-58.**

**Verse 8. The children of Parosh]** As this chapter is almost entirely the *same* with the second chapter of the book of Ezra, it is not necessary to add any thing to what is said there; and to that chapter, and the accompanying notes, the reader is requested to refer.

**Verse 19. The children of Bigval, two thousand threescore and seven]** Some MSS. read *two thousand and sixty-six*, as in <sup><15124></sup>**Ezra 2:14.**

**Verse 33. The men of the other Nebo]** The word *other* is not in the parallel place, <sup><15129></sup>**Ezra 2:29**, and is wanting in many of *Kennicott's* and *Deuteronomy Rossi's* MSS. This *Nebo* is supposed to be the same as *Nob* or *Nobah*, in the tribe of Benjamin.

**Verse 34. The other Elam]** To distinguish him from the Elam mentioned <sup><16712></sup>**Nehemiah 7:12.**

**Verse 54. The children of Mehida]** Many of *Kennicott's* and *Deuteronomy Rossi's* MSS., have *Mehira*.

**Verse 68. Their horses, &c.]** The whole of this verse is wanting in *fifty* of *Kennicott's* MSS., and in *twenty-nine* of those of *Deuteronomy Rossi*, in the edition of *Rab. Chayim*, 1525, in the *Roman Edit.* of the *Septuagint*; also in the *Syriac* and in the *Arabic*. It should however be observed, that the *Arabic* omits the *whole list*, having nothing of the chapter but the first five verses. The whole is found in the parallel place, <sup><15126></sup>**Ezra 2:66.** *Calmet's* note on this passage is incorrect.

**Verse 69.** Their camels, four hundred thirty and five] After this verse St. Jerome has inserted the following words in the *Vulgate*:—

*Hucusque refertur quid in commentario scriptum  
fuerit; exin Nehemiae historia textitur.*

“Thus far do the words extend which were written in the register; what follows belongs to the history of Nehemiah.”

But this *addition* is not found either in the *Hebrew* or any of the ancient *versions*. It is wanting also in the *Complutum* and *Paris Polyglots*, but is in the *Editio Prima* of the *Vulgate*.

**Verse 70. The Tirshatha gave]** The *Septuagint*, particularly the copy in the *Codex Alexandrinus*, intimates that this sum was given to the *Tirshatha*, or Nehemiah: καὶ τῷ Ἀθηρσαθᾶ ἔδωκαν εἰς θησαυρον, *And to the Athersatha they gave for the treasure, &c.*

For the meaning of the word *Tirshatha*, see on <sup><1506></sup>**Ezra 2:63**.

**Verse 71. Two thousand and two hundred pounds]** The *Septuagint* has *two thousand THREE hundred minae of silver*.

**Verse 73. All Israel, dwelt in their cities]** It was in reference to this particularly that the public registers were examined; for by them they found the different *families*, and consequently the cities, villages, &c., which belonged to them, according to the *ancient division* of the lands. It seems that the examination of the registers occupied about a *month*; for as soon as the walls were finished, which was in the *sixth* month, (*Elul*,) <sup><1665></sup>**Nehemiah 6:15**, Nehemiah instituted the examination mentioned in this chapter, <sup><1676></sup>**Nehemiah 7:5**; and by the *concluding* verse we find that the different families had got into their paternal cities in the *seventh month*, *Tisri*, answering to a part of our *September* and *October*. Thus the register determined every thing: there was no room for complaint, and none to accuse the governor of partiality.

## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 8

*Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Levites, read and interpret the laws to the people, 1-7. The manner in which they do this important work, 8. The effect produced on the people's minds by hearing it, 9. The people are exhorted to be glad, and are told that the joy of the Lord is their strength, 10-12. On the second day they assemble, and find that they should keep the feast of tabernacles; which they accordingly religiously solemnize for seven days; and Ezra reads to them from the book of the law, 13-18.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 8

**Verse 1. The street that was before the water gate]** The gate which led from the temple to the brook *Kidron*.

**Verse 2. All that could hear with understanding]** Infants, idiots, and *children* not likely to receive instruction, were not permitted to attend this meeting; nor should any such, in any place, be ever brought to the house of God, if it can be avoided: yet, rather than a poor mother should be deprived of the ordinances of God, let her come with her child in her arms; and although it be inconvenient to the congregation, and to some ministers, to hear a child cry, it is cruel to exclude the mother on this account, who, having no person to take care of her child while absent, must bring it with her, or be totally deprived of the ordinances of the Christian Church.

**Upon the first day of the seventh month.]** This was the *first* day of what was called the *civil year*; and on it was the *feast of trumpets*, the year being ushered in by the sound of these instruments.

**Verse 4. Stood upon a pulpit of wood]** *Idgm migdal*, a tower, a platform, raised up for the purpose, to elevate him sufficiently for the people both to see and hear him; for it is said, <sup><1685></sup>**Nehemiah 8:5**, that *he was above all the people*. This is the first intimation we have of a *pulpit*, or *structure* of this kind. But we must not suppose that it was any thing similar to those *tubs* or *barrels* ridiculously set up in churches and chapels, in which a preacher is nearly as much confined, during the time of his preaching, as if he was in the *stocks*.

**Verse 5. All the people stood up]** This was out of respect to the sacred word: in imitation of this, when the *gospel* for the day is read in our churches, all the people stand up.

**Verse 6. Ezra blessed the Lord]** In imitation of this, we say, when the gospel for the day is commenced, *Glory be to God for his holy Gospel!* and conclude this thanksgiving with, *Amen.*

**Verse 8. So they read in the book]** For an explanation of this verse, see the observations at the end of the chapter. **See Clarke “Ne 8:17”.**

**Verse 9. Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha]** This puts it out of doubt that, when the *Tirshatha* is mentioned, *Nehemiah* himself is intended, *Tirshatha* being the name of his *office.*

**Mourn not, nor weep.]** This is a holy day to God: a day appointed for *general rejoicing* in Him who has turned our captivity, restored to us his law, and again established among us his ordinances.

**Verse 10. Eat the fat, and drink the sweet]** Eat and drink the best that you have; and while ye are feeding yourselves in the fear of the Lord, remember those *who cannot feast;* and send *portions* to them, that the joy and the thanksgiving may be general. Let the poor have reason to rejoice as well as you.

**For the joy of the Lord is your strength.]** This is no gluttonous and drunken festival that *enervates* the body, and *enfeebles* the mind: from your religious feast your bodies will acquire *strength* and your minds power and fervour, so that you shall be able to DO HIS will, and to do it *cheerfully.* *Religious joy,* properly tempered with continual dependence on the help of God, meekness of mind, and self-diffidence, is a powerful means of strengthening the soul. In such a state every duty is practicable, and every duty delightful. In such a frame of mind no man an ever fell, and in such a state of mind the general health of the body is much improved; a cheerful heart is not only a continual feast, but also a continual medicine.

**Verse 14. In the feast of the seventh month]** That is, the *feast of tabernacles,* which was held in commemoration of the sojourning of their fathers in the wilderness after they had been delivered from the Egyptian bondage. Now, having been delivered from the Babylonish captivity, and the proper time of the year occurring, it was their especial duty to keep the same feast.



**Verse 15. Fetch olive branches]** For every thing concerning this feast of tabernacles, see the notes on Lev. xxiii., and the other places *there* referred to.

**Verse 16. Upon the roof of his house]** It need scarcely be repeated, that the houses in the East are generally built with *flat roofs*. On these they reposed; on these they took the air in the heats of summer; and on these they oftentimes slept.

**Verse 17. Since the days of Joshua]** No feast of tabernacles since Joshua's time had been so heartily and so piously celebrated. The story of the *sacred fire* now discovered, which had been hidden by the order of Jeremiah in a dry well, and now, some of the mud from the bottom being brought upon the altar, was kindled afresh by the rays of the sun, which suddenly broke out, though before covered with clouds, &c., is worthy of no credit. Those who wish to see the detail may consult **2Mac 1:18-36**.

ON the subject in <sup><408></sup>**Nehemiah 8:8**, I beg leave to make a few observations:-*So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.* The Israelites, having been lately brought out of the Babylonish captivity, in which they had continued *seventy years*, according to the prediction of Jeremiah, <sup><4251></sup>**Jeremiah 25:11**, were not only extremely corrupt, but it appears that they had in general lost the knowledge of the ancient Hebrew to such a degree, that when the book of the law was read, they did not understand it: but certain Levites *stood by, and gave the sense*, i.e., translated into the Chaldee dialect. This was not only the origin of the Chaldee *Targums*, or translation of the law and prophets into that tongue but was also, in all probability, the origin of *preaching from a text*; for it appears that the people were not only ignorant of their ancient language, but also of the rites and ceremonies of their religion, having been so long in Babylon, where they were not permitted to observe them. This being the case, not only the *language* must be *interpreted*, but the meaning of the *rites* and *ceremonies* must also be explained; for we find from <sup><40813></sup>**Nehemiah 8:13**, &c., of this chapter, that they had even forgotten the *feast of tabernacles*, and every thing relative to that ceremony.

As we nowhere find that what is called *preaching on* or expounding a text was ever in use before that period, we are probably beholden to the Babylonish captivity for producing, in the hand of Divine Providence, a custom the most excellent and beneficial ever introduced among men.

What the nature of *preaching* or *expounding* the word of God was, at this early period of its institution, we learn from the above cited text.

I. *They read in the book of the law of God.*-The words of God, the doctrines of *Divine revelation*, are the proper *matter* of preaching; for they contain the wisdom of the Most High, and teach man the things which belong to his peace and happiness.

II. They read *distinctly*-*vrpm mephorash*, from *vrp parash*, to expand; they analyzed, dilated, and expounded it at large, showing the import and genuine meaning of every word.

III. They *gave the sense*-*l kc μwcv vesom sechel*, they *put weight to it*; showed its value and utility, and how intimately concerned they were in all that was revealed: thus applying verbal criticism, and general exposition to their true and most important purposes.

IV. They *caused them to understand the reading*-*arqmb wnybyw vaiyabinu bammikra*: and they *understood*-had a *mental taste and perception* of the things which were in *the reading*, i.e., in the *letter and spirit* of the text. Thus *they knew* the *Divine will*, and *approved the things that were more excellent, being* (thus) *instructed out of the law*,

**Romans 2:18.**

This was the ancient method of expounding the word of God among the Jews; and this mode is still more necessary for US:—

1. Because the sacred writings, as they came from God, are shut up in languages no longer vernacular; and no *translation* ever did or ever can reach the force of the *original* words, though perhaps our own in general, comes nearest to this of all versions, whether ancient or modern.

2. Ninety-nine out of a hundred know nothing of these languages; and consequently cannot, of themselves, reap all the requisite benefit from reading the Scriptures.

3. Sacred things are illustrated in the Bible by a reference to *arts and sciences*, of which the mass of the people are as ignorant as they are of the original tongues.

4. *Provincial customs* and *fashions* are mentioned in these writings, which must be understood, or the force and meaning of many texts cannot be comprehended.

5. There is a *depth* in the word of God which cannot be fathomed except either by Divine inspiration, or by deep study and research, for which the majority of the people have no time.

6. The people in general trust to the piety, learning and abilities of their ministers, and maintain them as persons capable of instructing them in all the deep things of God; and believing them to be *holy men*, they are confident they will not take their *tithes*, their *food*, and *their raiment*, under a pretence of doing a work for which they have not the ordinary qualifications. Where there is not such preaching as this, the people “sit in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death;” sinners are not converted unto God; neither are believers “built up on their most holy faith.”

Reader-Art thou a *Christian minister*? Dost thou *feed the flock of God*? Let thy *conduct*, thy *conscience*, and the *fruits* of thy *ministry* answer for thee.

## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 9

*On the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month, the people hold a solemn fast unto the Lord, and confess their sins, 1-3. The Levites give a general account of God's kindness and forbearance to them and to their fathers; and acknowledge God's mercies and judgments, 4-37. They make a covenant with the Lord, 38.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 9

**Verse 1. Now in the twenty and fourth day]** The *feast of trumpets* was on the *first* day of this month; on the *fourteenth* began the *feast of tabernacles*, which, lasting *seven days*, finished on the *twenty-second*; on the *twenty-third* they *separated* themselves from their *illegitimate wives and children*; and, on the *twenty-fourth*, they held a solemn *day of fasting and confession* of sin, and reading the law, which they closed by renewing their covenants.

**Verse 2. The seed of Israel separated themselves]** A reformation of this kind was begun by Ezra, <sup><S10B></sup>**Ezra 10:3**; but it appears that either more were found out who had taken strange wives, or else those who had separated from them had taken them again.

**And stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.]** They acknowledged that they had been sinners against God throughout all their generations; that their fathers had sinned and were punished; and that they, with this example before their eyes, had copied their fathers' offences.

**Verse 3. One fourth part of the day]** As they did no manner of work on this day of fasting and humiliation, so they spent the whole of it in religious duties. They began, says *Calmet*, on the *first* hour, and continued these exercises to the *third hour*; from the *third* they recommenced, and continued till the *sixth* hour; from the *sixth* to the *ninth*; and from the *ninth*, to the *twelfth* or *last* hour. 1. They heard the law read, standing; 2. They prostrated themselves, and confessed their sins; 3. They arose to praise God for having spared and dealt thus mercifully with them.

**Verse 5. Stand up and bless the Lord your God]** It is the shameless custom of many congregations of people to sit still while they profess to

bless and praise God, by singing the *Psalms of David* or *hymns* made on the plan of the Gospel! I ask such persons, Did they ever feel the *spirit of devotion* while thus employed? If they do, it must be owned that, by the prevalence of habit, they have counteracted the influence of an attitude most friendly to such acts of devotion.

**Verse 6. Thou preservest them all]**  $\mu\lambda\ k\ ha\ hjj\ m\ htaw\ vettah$  *mechayieh eth cullam*, and thou givest life to them all: and the host of the heavens,  $\mu\gamma\omega\j\ tvm\ \ddot{E}l$  *lecha mishtachavim*, prostrate themselves unto thee. How near is this to the opinion of *Kepler*, that all the heavenly host are *instinct* with life, and navigate the great expanse on pinions adjusted to their situation in their respective orbits! But to *preserve in life*, or in *being*, is a very good meaning in the original, which does not necessarily imply *vitality*. We say a *tree* is *alive* when *flourishing*, a *plant* is *dead* when it *withers*, &c.

**Verse 7. Who didst choose Abram]** See the notes on the passages referred to in the margin.

**The name of Abraham]** For the explanation of this name, See **Clarke's notes on "<sup><0176></sup>Genesis 17:5"**.

**Verse 12. By a cloudy pillar]** See the notes on the parallel passages, both here and in the other verses.

**Verse 14. Madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath]** They appear to have forgotten this *first* of all the commandments of God, during their sojourning in Egypt.

**Verse 17. And in their rebellion appointed a captain]** This clause, read according to its order in the Hebrew text, is thus: *And appointed a captain to return to their bondage in their rebellion*. But it is probable that  $\mu\gamma\text{rmb}$  *bemiryam*, in their rebellion, is a mistake for  $\mu\gamma\text{rxmb}$  *bemitsrayim*, in Egypt. This is the reading of *seven* of *Kennicott's* and *Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS.*, the *Neapolitan* edition of the *Hagiographa*, and the *Septuagint*. It is also the reading in <sup><0140></sup>**Numbers 14:4**. The clause should undoubtedly be read, *They appointed a captain to return to their bondage in EGYPT*.

**Verse 19. The pillar of the cloud departed not from them]**  $\mu\text{hyl}$  [*m* *mealeyhem*, "from over them." I have already had occasion to observe that

this miraculous cloud, the symbol of the Divine presence, assumed *three* different positions while accompanying the Israelitish camp: 1. As a cloud in the form of a *pillar*, it went before them when they journey, to point out their way in the wilderness. 2. As a pillar of *fire*, it continued with them during the *night*, to give them light, and be a rallying point for the whole camp in the night season. 3. As an *extended cloud*, it *hovered over them* in their encampments, to refresh them with its dews, and to keep them from the ardours of the sun.

**Verse 21. Their clothes waxed not old]** See Clarke's note on "~~4:10~~ Deuteronomy 8:4".

**Verse 22. The land of Og king of Bashan.]** It is most evident that *Sihon* was king of *Heshbon*. How then can it be said that they possessed *the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon*? The words *the land of the king of Heshbon* are wanting in two of *Deuteronomy Rossi's MSS.* In another MS. the words *and the land of* are wanting; so that the clause is read, *They possessed the land of Sihon, king of Heshbon.* The *Septuagint* has the same reading; the *Arabic* nearly the same, viz., *the land of Sihon, the land of the king of Heshbon.* The *Syriac* has, *They possessed the land of Sihon, the land of the KINGS of Heshbon.* The reading of the text is undoubtedly wrong; that supported by the MSS. and by the *Septuagint* is most likely to be the true one. Those of the *Arabic* and *Syriac* contain at least no *contradictory* sense. The *and* in the *Hebrew* and *our version*, distinguishes *two lands* and *two kings*; the *land of Sihon* and the *land of the king of Heshbon*: when it is most certain that only *one land* and *one king* can be meant: but the *W vau* may be translated here as it often is, *even*: EVEN *the land of the king of Heshbon.*

**Verse 25. Became fat, and delighted themselves]** They became effeminate, fell under the power of *luxury*, got totally corrupted in their manners, sinned against all the mercies of God, and then were destroyed by his judgments. We have an old nervous saying, "*War begets poverty, poverty begets peace, peace begets affluence, affluence begets luxury and corruption of manners*; and hence *civil broils, foreign wars, and desolations.*" A sensible Roman historian has said the same: "*Imperium facile iis artibus retinetur, quibus initio partum est: verum ubi pro LABORE, DESIDIA; pro continentia et æquitate, LIBIDO atque SUPERBIA invasere: fortuna simul cum moribus IMMUTATUR.*"

**Verse 27. Thou gavest them saviours]** The whole book of Judges is a history of God's mercies, and their rebellions.

**Verse 30. Many years didst thou forbear]** It is supposed that Nehemiah refers here principally to the *ten tribes*. And many years did God bear with them; not less than *two hundred and fifty-four* years from their separation from the house of *David*, till their captivity and utter dispersion under *Shalmaneser*; during the whole of which time God invariably warned them by his prophets; or, as it is here said, *by thy Spirit in thy prophets*, which gives us the true notion of *Divine inspiration*. God's Spirit was given to the prophets; and they testified to the people, *according* as they were *taught* and *influenced* by *this Spirit*.

**Verse 32. On our kings, on our princes]** I believe Nehemiah in this place mentions the whole of *civil society* in its *officers* as they stand related to each other in *dignity*:—1. **KINGS**, as supreme. 2. **PRINCES**. 3. **PRIESTS**. 4. **PROPHETS**. 5. The **FATHERS**, heads or chiefs of tribes and families. 6. The **COMMON PEOPLE**. Those who disturb this natural order (for it subsists even in *Britain*) are enemies to the peace of the *whole*, whatever they may pretend to the contrary.

**Verse 34. Neither have our kings]** In this verse he acknowledges that the *kings, princes, priests, and fathers*, had broken the law: but the *prophets* are left out; for *they* continued faithful to God, testifying by his Spirit against the crimes of all; and this even at the risk of their lives.

**Verse 35. For they have not served thee in their kingdom]** Instead of  $\mu\tau\omega\kappa\lambda\ \text{mb}$  *bemalcutham*, “in THEIR kingdom,”  $\text{E}\tau\omega\kappa\lambda\ \text{mb}$  *bemalcuthecha*, in THY kingdom,” is the reading of two of *Kennicott's MSS.*; as also of the *Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic*. This is most likely to be the true reading.

**Verse 36. Behold, we are servants]** They had no king of their own: and were under the government of the kings of Persia, to whom they paid a regular tribute.

**Verse 37. It yieldeth much increase unto the kings]** Good and fruitful as the land is, yet it profits us *little*; as the chief profits on all things go to the kings of Persia.

**Over our bodies]** Exacting *personal and feudal services* from us, and from our *cattle*; and this not by any *fixed rate, or rule*, of so *much rent*, so *much labour, or boons*; but *at their pleasure*; so that we can neither call

our *persons*, our *time*, our *land*, nor our *cattle*, our own: therefore *we are in great distress*. Miserable are the people that live under such a government. Think of this, ye *Britons!* think of your liberties and rights. Compare them with any other nation under heaven, and see what a *balance* is in *your favour*. Almost all the nations of the earth acknowledge Britons the most happy of all men. May I not say,

*O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint!*

*“How exceedingly happy would you be, could you but consider your many advantages!”*

**Verse 38. Our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.]** Persuaded that we have brought all the miseries upon ourselves by our transgressions, *feeling much and fearing more*, we make a covenant with thee to devote ourselves to thy service; to do with us as thou pleasest. From this *sealing* we learn that at this time the government of the Jews was a mixed *aristocracy*; composed of the *nobles* for the *civil* department, and the *priests* and *Levites* for the *ecclesiastical*.

THIS was not mixing the *Church* with the *state*, or the *state* with the *Church*: both were separate, yet both mutually supported each other. The *state* never attempted to model the *Church* according to its own mind; because the *Church* had been founded and regulated by God, and neither its *creed* nor its *ordinances* could be *changed*. The *Church* did not meddle with the *state*, to give it *new laws*, *new ordinances*, or *new officers*. Therefore the one could not be jealous of the other. Where this state of things prevails, every public blessing may be expected. In every *state* God says to the *governors* and the *governed*: “Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and to GOD the things which are GOD’S.”



## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 10

*The names of those who sealed the covenant, 1-27. All solemnly promise not to have affinity with the people of the land, 28-30; to observe the Sabbaths, 31; to provide for the sanctuary according to the law, 32-36; and to pay the regular tithes for the support of the priests, Levites, and other officers of the temple, 37-39.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 10

**Verse 1. Now those that sealed]** Four classes here seal. *Nehemiah* first, as their governor. And after him, *secondly*, The *priests*, <sup><16102></sup>**Nehemiah 10:2-8**. *Thirdly*, The *Levites*, <sup><16103></sup>**Nehemiah 10:9-13**. *Fourthly*, The *chiefs of the people*, <sup><16104></sup>**Nehemiah 10:14-27**.

It is strange that, among all these, we hear nothing of *Ezra*, nor of the high priest *Eliashib*. Nor are any of the *prophets* mentioned, though there must have been some of them at Jerusalem at this time.

The whole of this chapter, the two first verses excepted, is wanting in the *Arabic*; the word *Pashur* of the third verse is retained; and the rest of the chapter is summed up in these words, *and the rest of their assembly*.

**Verse 28. And the rest of the people]** All had, in one or other of the classes which sealed, their *representatives*; and by their sealing they considered themselves bound.

**Verse 29. They clave to their brethren]** Though they did not *sign* this instrument, yet they bound themselves under a *solemn oath* that they would fulfil the conditions of the covenant, and walk according to the law of Moses.

**Verse 30. Not give our daughters]** Make no affinity with the people of the land.

**Verse 31. Bring ware]** We will most solemnly keep the Sabbath. *Leave the seventh year*-We will let the land have its Sabbath, and rest every seventh year. See on <sup><122310></sup>**Exodus 23:10, 11**.

**Verse 32. Charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel]**

According to the law, every one above *twenty* years of age was to give *half a shekel* to the sanctuary, which was called a *ransom for their souls*. See <sup><02301></sup>**Exodus 30:11-16**. But why is *one third* of a shekel now promised instead of the *half shekel*, which the law required? To this question no better answer can be given than this: the general *poverty* of the people, occasioned by their wars, overthrows, heavy tributes, &c., in the land of their captivity: and now on their return, having little property, it was impossible for them to give more; and we know, from the terms of the law in this case, that the *poor* and the *rich* were obliged to give *alike*, because it was a *ransom for their souls*; and the souls of the *poor* and the *rich* were of *like value*, and stood equally in need of *redemption*; for all were *equally fallen*, and *all* had come equally short of the *glory of God*.

Though only a *third part* of a shekel was given at this time, and probably for the reason above assigned, yet when the people got into a state of greater prosperity, the *half shekel* was resumed: for it is clear that this sum was paid in the time of our Lord, though not to the *temple*, but to the *Roman government*. Hence when those who collected this as a *tribute* came to our Lord, it was for the **διδραχμα**, *didrachma*, which was *half a shekel*; and the coin with which our Lord paid for himself and *Peter* was a *stater*, which contained exactly *two half shekels*. See <sup><01724></sup>**Matthew 17:24-27**.

**Verse 34. Cast the lots-for the wood-offering]** There does not appear to have been any *wood-offering* under the law. It was the business of the *Nethinim* to procure this; and hence they were called *hewers of wood* and *drawers of water* to the congregation. But it is very likely that after the captivity few *Nethinim* were found; for as such, who were the descendants of the *Gibeonites*, were considered only as slaves among the *Israelites*, they would doubtless find it *as much*, if not *more*, their *interest* to abide in the land of their captivity, than to return with their former masters. As there was not enough of such persons to provide wood for the fires of the temple, the people now cast lots, not *who* should furnish the wood, but what class or district should furnish it at a particular time of the year, so that there might be a constant supply. One district furnished it for one whole year, or for the *first* month or year; another, for the second month or year; and so on. Now the lot was to determine which district should bring the supply on the first month or year; which on the second; and so on. When the wood was brought, it was delivered to the *Levites*: they cut,

prepared, and stacked it; and when wanted, delivered it to the *priests*, whose business it was to lay it upon the altar. Perhaps this providing of the wood was done only *once a year* by one district, the next year by another district, and so on: and this bringing the wood to the temple at last became a great day; and was constituted into a *feast*, called by Josephus **ξύλοφορία**, *the carrying of the wood*.—See *Deuteronomy Bell.* Jud. lib. ii., cap. xvii., sec. 6, p. 194. This feast is not mentioned in the sacred writings: then there was no need for such an institution, as the Nethinim were sufficiently numerous.

**Verse 36. Also the first-born]** See this law, and the reasons of it, <sup><02130></sup>**Exodus 13:1-13**. As by this law the Lord had a right to all the firstborn, instead of these he was pleased to take the *tribe of Levi* for the whole; and thus the Levites served at the tabernacle and temple, instead of the *first-born* of all the tribes.

**Verse 38. Tithe of the tithes]** The tithes of all the produce of the fields were brought to the Levites; out of these a *tenth* part was given to the priests. This is what is called the *tithe of the tithes*. The law for this is found, <sup><04826></sup>**Numbers 18:26**.

**Verse 39. We will not forsake the house of our God.]** Here was a glorious resolution; and had they been faithful to it, they had been a great and good people to the present day. But what is implied in, *We will not forsake the house of our God?* I answer:-

I. The Church of God is the house of God; there he has his constant *dwelling-place*.

II. True believers are his *family* in this house; and this family consists of, 1. *Fathers and mothers*; 2. *Young persons*; 3. *Little children*; And 4. *Servants*.

III. The ministers of the word of God are the officers and overseers of this house and family.

IV. The worship of God is the grand employment of this family.

V. The ordinances of God are the food of the members of this family; or the means of their spiritual support.

VI. Those who do not *forsake* the house of their God are those, 1. Who continue in the faith; 2. Who grow in grace; 3. Who labour in the vineyard;

4. Who bring forth fruit; 5. Who conscientiously attend all the ordinances; and 6. Who take care that the offerings of the house of God shall be duly made, providing for those who labour in the word and doctrine.

READER, 1. Art thou *of* this house? 2. Art thou *in* this house? 3. To what part of the family dost thou belong? 4. Art thou still an infant *in* this house? 5. Dost thou attend the ordinances *of* this house? 6. Hast thou *forsaken* this house? These questions are of great importance; answer them as in the sight of God.

## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 11

*Lots are cast that a tenth of the people may constantly dwell at Jerusalem, and the other nine parts in the other cities and villages, 1. Some willingly offer themselves to dwell in Jerusalem, and the people bless them, 2. An enumeration of the families that dwell in Jerusalem, of Judah, and Benjamin, 3-9; of those of the priests, 10-12; of the chiefs of the fathers, 13; of the mighty men, 14; of the Levites, 15-18; of the porters, 19; of the residue of Israel and the officers, 20-24. The villages at which they dwelt, 25-35. Certain divisions of the Levites were in Judah and Benjamin, 36.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 11

**Verse 1. To bring one of ten]** Jerusalem certainly had many inhabitants at this time; but not sufficient to preserve the city, which was now encompassed with a wall, and the rebuilding of which was going on fast. Nehemiah therefore obliged *one tenth* of the *country people* to come and dwell in it, that the population might be sufficient for the preservation and defence of the city. *Ten* were set apart, and the lot cast among them to see *which one* of the ten should take up his residence in the city.

**Verse 2. All the men that willingly offered]** Some *volunteered* their services, which was considered a sacrifice to patriotism at that time, as Jerusalem afforded very few advantages, and was a place of considerable danger; hence the *people spoke well of them*, and no doubt prayed for God's blessing upon them.

**Verse 3. Now these are the chief]** A good deal of difference will be found between the *enumeration* here and that in <sup><1300></sup>1 **Chronicles 9:2**, &c. *There*, those only who came with Zerubbabel appear to be numbered; *here*, those, and the persons who came with Ezra and Nehemiah, enter into the account.

**Verse 9. And Joel was their overseer]** Joel was chief or magistrate over those, and Judah was his *second* or *deputy*. Perhaps each had a *different* office, but that of Joel was the *chief*.

**Verse 11. Ruler of the house of God.]** He had the command over all *secular* matters, as the high priest had over those which were *spiritual*.

**Verse 14. Mighty men of valour]** Noted for strength of body, and military courage.

**Verse 16. And Shabbethai]** This verse, with verses 20, 21, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, and 35, are all wanting in the *Septuagint* and the whole chapter is wanting in the *Arabic*, the translator not being concerned in Jewish *genealogies*.

**The outward business]** Calmet supposes that he provided the victuals for the priests, victims for the sacrifices, the sacerdotal vestments, the sacred vessels, and other necessaries for the service of the temple.

**Verse 17. The principal to begin the thanksgiving]** The *precentor*, *pitcher of the tune*, or *master-singer*.

**Verse 22. The overseer also of the Levites]** *dyqp pekid*, the *visitant*, the *inspector*; translated *επισκοπος*, *bishop*, both by the *Septuagint* and *Vulgate*.

**Verse 23. It was the king's commandment]** By the *king* some understand *David*, and others *Artaxerxes*. It is most probable that it was the latter; who wished that a provision should be made for these, a part of whose office was to offer up *prayers* also, as well as *praises*. For we know that *Darius* made an ample provision for the priests, *that they might offer sacrifices of sweet savour unto the God of heaven; and pray for the life of the king and of his sons*, <sup><1360></sup>**Ezra 6:10**. Some have thought that they had been Jewish singers employed in the service of the Persian king, to whom he had given a salary, and to whom he wished still to continue the same.

**Verse 24. Pethahiah-was at the king's hand]** He was the governor appointed by the Persian king over the Jewish nation in those matters in which the civil government interfered with Jewish concerns. He no doubt fixed, levied, and received the tribute.

**Verse 26. And at Jeshua]** This city is nowhere else mentioned.

**Verse 28. Mekonah]** This city is also unknown.

**Verse 31. Geba]** Probably the same as *Gibeah of Saul*.

**Verse 32. Ananiah]** No city of this name is known.

**Verse 33. Hadid]** This place is also unknown.

**Neballat]** Also unknown.

**Verse 35. Lod, and Ono]** These towns were built by the sons of Elpaal,  
<sup><13812></sup>**1 Chronicles 8:12.**

**The valley of craftsmen.]** See <sup><13044></sup>**1 Chronicles 4:14.** Probably this latter town was built in this *valley*.

**Verse 36. And of the Levites were divisions]** The Levites had their dwellings in the divisions of Judah and Benjamin. This is probably the meaning: the *Syriac* says, *They had the half of Judah and Benjamin*; which is not likely.

THAT the people whose hearts were now turned towards the Lord, would make the best provision for the support of God's work, and all those engaged in it, we may naturally suppose; but this could not be very great, as the complete service was not yet established, and the Levites themselves were few in number.

## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 12

*Account of the priests and Levites that come up with Zerubbabel, 1-7. Of the Levites, 8-21. The Levites in the days of Eliashib, 22-26. Of the dedication of the wall, and its ceremonies, 27-43. Different officers appointed, 44-47.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 12

**Verse 1. Now these are the priests]** Not the *whole*, but the *chief of them*, as we are informed, <sup><161207></sup>**Nehemiah 12:7, 22-24.** The *Septuagint* omit ver. 3, except the word *Shechaniah*; as also verses 12:4-6, 9, 37-41. The *Arabic* omits the first *twenty-six* verses, and 12:29. Mention is made of *Ezra* in this verse; and he is generally allowed to be that *Ezra* whose book the reader has already passed over, and who came to Jerusalem in the time of *Cyrus*, with Zerubbabel. If this were the same, he must have been at this time upward of *a hundred* years of age: and this case is not improbable, as an especial providence might preserve such a very useful man beyond the ordinary age of men. See what has been said on the case of Nehemiah, **See Clarke “Ne 1:1”**.

**Verse 7. The chief of the priests]** They were *twenty-four* orders or courses in number, all subordinate to each other; as established by David, <sup><132418></sup>**1 Chronicles 24:18.** And these orders or courses were continued till the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. See *Calmet*.

**Verse 8. Over the thanksgiving]** The principal singers: **See Clarke on “Ne 11:17”**.

**Verse 22. Jaddua]** This was probably the high priest who went in his pontifical robes, accompanied by his brethren, to meet Alexander the Great, when he was advancing towards Jerusalem, with the purpose to destroy it, after having conquered Tyre and Gaza. Alexander was so struck with the appearance of the priest, that he forbore all hostilities against Jerusalem, prostrated himself before Jaddua, worshipped the Lord at the temple, and granted many privileges to the Jews. See *Josephus*, ANT. lib. xi., c. 3, and *Prideaux’s Connections*, lib. 7, p. 695.



**To the reign of Darius the Persian.]** *Calmet* maintains that this must have been *Darius Codomanus*, who was defeated by Alexander the Great: but Archbishop *Usher* understands it of *Darius Nothus*, in whose reign he thinks Jaddua was born, who was high priest under *Darius Codomanus*.

**Verse 23. The book of the chronicles]** This is not the book of *Chronicles* which we have now, no such list being found in it; but some other book or register, which is lost.

**Verse 25. The thresholds of the gates.]** Some understand this of a sort of *porticoes* at the gates, and are puzzled about it, because they find no mention of porticoes elsewhere: but why may we not suppose these to resemble our *watch-boxes* or some temporary moveable shelters for those who took care of the gates? That there must have been some such conveniences, common sense dictates.

**Verse 27. At the dedication of the wall]** They sent for the Levites from all quarters, that this dedication might be as solemn and majestic as possible; and it is likely that this was done as soon as convenient after the walls were finished. The dedication seems to have consisted in processions of the most eminent persons around the walls, and thanksgivings to God, who had enabled them to bring the work to so happy a conclusion: and no doubt to all this were added a particular *consecration* of the city to God, and the most earnest *invocation* that he would take it under his guardian care, and defend it and its inhabitants against all their enemies.

The ancients consecrated their cities to the gods, and the very *walls* were considered as sacred. *Ovid* gives us an account of the ceremonies used in laying the foundations of the *walls of the city of Rome*, by *Romulus*. After having consulted together who should give name to the city, and have the direction of the wall by which it was necessary to surround it, they agreed to let the case be decided by the flight of birds. One brother went to the top of the Mons Palatinus, the other to that of Mount Aventine. *Romulus* saw twelve birds, *Remus* saw but six; the former, therefore, according to agreement, took the command. The poet thus describes the ceremonies used on the occasion:—

*Apta dies legitur, qua mœnia signet aratro;  
 Sacra Palis suberant; inde movetur opus.  
 Fossa fit ad solidum: fruges jaciuntur in ima.  
 Et de vicino terra petita solo.  
 Fossa repletur humo, plencæque imponitur ara;  
 Et novus accenso finditur igne focus.  
 Inde, premens stivam, designat mœnia sulco;  
 Alba jugum niveo cum bove vacca tulit.  
 Vox tuit haec regis; Condenti Jupiter urbem,  
 Et genitor Mavors, Vestaque mater ades:  
 Quosque pium est adhibere deos, advertite cuncti:  
 Auspicibus vobis hoc mihi surgat opus.  
 Longa sit huic ætas, dominæque potentia terræ:  
 Sitque sub hac oriens occiduusque dies!  
 Ille precabatur.  
 OVID, *Fast. lib. iv., ver. 819.**

“A proper day is chosen in which he may mark out the walls with the plough: the festival of Pales was at hand when the work was begun. A ditch is dug down to the solid clay, into which they cast the fruits of the season; and bring earth from the neighbouring ground, with which they fill up the trench; and on it build an altar, by whose flames the newly made hearth is cleft asunder. Then Romulus, seizing the plough, which a white heifer yoked with a snowy bull drew along, marked out the walls with a furrow. And thus spoke the king: ‘O Jupiter, and Father Mars, with Matron Vesta, prosper me in founding this city! And all ye gods, approach, whomsoever it is right to invoke! Under your auspices may the work arise; may it endure for countless ages, and be the mistress of the world; and may the East and the West be under its control!’ Thus he prayed.”

The above is a literal version, and the account is not a little curious.

**Verse 29. From the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth]** Or, from Beth-Gilgal; a village erected in the place where the Israelites encamped after they had, under the direction of Joshua, passed over Jordan.

**Verse 30. The priests and the Levites purified themselves]** This consisted in washings, abstinence from wine, and other matters, which, on all other occasions, were lawful. And as to the purifying of the *gates* and

the *walls*, nothing was requisite but to remove all filth from the former, and all rubbish that might have been laid against the latter.

**Verse 31. Then I brought up the princes]** Perhaps this verse should be read thus: “Then I caused the princes of Judah to go upon the wall, and appointed two great choirs, [to sing praises,] and *two* processions, one on the right hand, &c.

The following seems to have been the order of the procession: he divided the *priests*, the *Levites*, the *magistrates*, and the *people* into *two companies*; each company to go round one half of the wall. They began at the *dung gate*, one party going to the *right* and the other to the *left*, till they met at the *great space opposite to the temple*, where they all offered many sacrifices to God, and rejoiced with exceeding great joy; shouting so that the noise was heard a great way off.

**Verse 38. The broad wall]** What part this was, we know not: it might have been a place designed for a *public promenade*, or a *parade* for assembling the troops or guard of the temple.

**Verse 47. All Israel-gave the portions of the singers]** The *singers* and the *porters* were supported by the *people at large*; and each of these had their portions served out to them *daily*.

**And they sanctified-unto the Levites]** The things which were provided for *sacred uses* were delivered by the *people* to the *Levites*, and the *Levites* presented them to the *priests*.

**The children of Aaron.]** This may refer principally to the *tithes* which the people brought to the *Levites*; the *tithe* or *tenth* of which the *Levites* gave to the *priests*. The presenting these *tithes* is termed *sanctifying* them; that is, *dedicating* them to those sacred or ecclesiastical uses for which they were designed: this is a very general meaning of the word *sanctify* in Scripture.

## NEHEMIAH

## CHAPTER 13

*The law is read, which commands that the Ammonite and Moabite should be separated from the congregation, on which they separate all the mixed multitude, 1-3. Eliashib the high priest having not only joined opinion with Sanballat, but being also allied to Tobiah the Ammonite, and having given him some of the chambers in the court of the house of God, 4, 5; Nehemiah casts out the goods of Tobiah, and purifies the chambers, 6-9. He rectifies several evils; and the people bring the tithes of all things to the treasuries, 10-12. He appoints treasurers, 13, 14; finds that the Sabbaths had been greatly profaned by buying and selling, and rectifies this abuse, 15-22; finds Jews that had married strange wives; against whom he testifies, and expels one of the priests who had married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, 23-29. He cleanses them from all strangers, makes a final regulation, and prays for God's mercy to himself, 30, 31.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 13

**Verse 1. On that day]** I am quite of *Calmet's* mind that the transaction detailed in this chapter did not immediately succeed the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem. It is most likely that, when this dedication was ended, Nehemiah returned to Babylon, as himself particularly marks, <sup><161316></sup>**Nehemiah 13:6**, for he did return in the *thirty-second* year of Artaxerxes; and then, after certain days, supposed to be about the term of *one* year, he got leave to return to Jerusalem to see how matters were conducted: and there he found the evils which he mentions in this chapter, and which he redressed in the manner himself describes. See the *introduction* to this book.

**Should not come into the congregation]** That is, Ye shall not form any kind of *matrimonial alliance* with them. This, and this alone, is the meaning of the *law*.

**Verse 3. They separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.]** They excluded all strange women, and all persons, young and old, who had been born of these illegal connections.

**Verse 4. Eliashib the priest]** *Perhaps* this was a different person from Eliashib the high priest; but there is no indubitable evidence that he was not the same. If he was high priest, he was very unfaithful to the high charge

which he had received; and a reproach to the priesthood. He had married his grandson to Sanballat's daughter: this produced a connection with Tobiah, the fast friend of Sanballat; in whose favour he polluted the house of God, giving him one of the chambers for his ordinary residence, which were appointed for the reception of the tithes, oblations, &c., that came to the house of God.

**Verse 6. Was not I at Jerusalem]** Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in the *twentieth* year of Artaxerxes, and remained there till the *thirty-second* year, *twelve* years: then returned to Babylon, and staid one year; got leave to revisit his brethren; and found matters as stated in this chapter.

**Verse 8. I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah]** He acted as Jesus Christ did when he found the courts of the Lord's house profaned: He *overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of those who sold doves.*

**Verse 10. The portions of the Levites had not been given]** Hence we find they were obliged to abandon the sacred service, and betake themselves to cultivate the land for their support. This was the fault of the *rulers, who permitted all these abuses.*

**Verse 11. Why is the house of God forsaken?]** They had all solemnly promised, <sup><16109></sup>Nehemiah 10:39, that *they would never forsake the house of their God*; but, alas, how soon is this forgotten! Nehemiah used their own words here by way of reproof.

**Verse 13. They were counted faithful]** They were reported to me as persons in whom I could confide; they had been steady in God's ways and work, while others had been careless and relaxed.

**Verse 14. Wipe not out my good deeds]** If thou wert strict to mark what is done amiss, even my *good deeds* must be *wiped out*; but, Lord, remember me in thy mercy, and let my upright conduct be acceptable to thee!

**Verse 15. Treading wine-presses]** The Sabbath appears to have been totally disregarded.

**Verse 17. I contended with the nobles]** These evils took place through their negligence; and this I proved before them.

**Verse 19. When the gates-began to be dark]** After sunset on Friday evening he caused the gates to be shut, and kept them shut all the Sabbath; and, as he could not trust the ordinary officers, he set some of *his own servants* to watch the gates, that no person might enter for the purpose of traffic.

**Verse 20. So the merchants-lodged without Jerusalem]** They exposed their wares for sale on the outside of the walls.

**Verse 21. I will lay hands on you]** I will *imprison* every man of you. This had the desired effect; *they came no more*.

**Verse 22. Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.]** By some Nehemiah has been thought to deal with God too much on the principle of *merit*. That he wished God to *remember him for good*, is sufficiently evident; and who does not wish the same? But that he expected *heaven because of his good deeds*, does not appear. Indeed, the concluding clause of this verse proves the *contrary*, and shows that he expected nothing from God but through *the greatness of his mercy*. Shame on those who, with this evidence before them, brand this good man with the epithet of *workmonger!* a man who, in inward holiness, outward usefulness, and genuine love to God and man, was worth ten score of such *self-called* believers.

**Verse 24. Half in the speech of Ashdod]** There were children in the same family by *Jewish* and *Philistine* mothers. As the Jewish mother would always speak to *her* children in *Hebrew* or *Chaldee*, so they learnt to speak these languages; and as the *Ashdod mother* would always speak to *her* children in the *Ashdod language*, so *they learnt that* tongue. Thus there were, in the same family, children who could not understand each other; *half*, or one *part*, speaking *one language*, and the *other part another*. Children of different wives did not ordinarily *mingle together*; and the wives had separate apartments. This is a better explanation than that which intimates that the *same child* spoke a *jargon*, half *Ashdod* and half *Hebrew*.

**Verse 25. I contended with them]** Proved the fact against these iniquitous fathers, in a legal assembly.

**And cursed them]** Denounced the judgments of God and the sentence of the law upon them.

**Smote certain of them]** Had them punished by *whipping*.

**And plucked off their hair]** Had them *shaven*, as a mark of the greatest ignominy.

**And made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give]** Caused them to bind themselves by an oath, that they would make no intermarriages with those who were not of the seed of Israel.

**Verse 26. Did not Solomon]** Have you not had an awful example before you? What a heavy curse did Solomon's conduct bring upon himself and upon the people, for a conduct such as *yours*?

**Verse 27. Shall we then hearken unto you]** If God spared not *Solomon*, who was so much beloved of Him, shall we spare *you*, who by your conduct are bringing down God's judgments upon Israel?

**Verse 28. One of the sons of Joiada]** This was *Manasseh*, brother of *Jaddua*, son of *Joiada*, and grandson of *Eliashib* the high priest.

**I chased him from me.]** Struck him off the list of the priests, and deemed him utterly unworthy of all connection and intercourse with truly religious people.

**Verse 29. Because they have defiled the priesthood]** God, therefore, will *remember* their iniquities against them, and punish them for their transgressions. These words of Nehemiah are to be understood *declaratively*.

**Verse 31. For the wood-offering]** This was a most necessary regulation: without it the temple service could not have gone forward; and therefore Nehemiah mentions this as one of the most important services he had rendered to his nation. See <sup><161034></sup>**Nehemiah 10:34**.

**Remember me, O my God, for good.]** This has precisely the same meaning with, *O my God, have mercy upon me!* and thus alone it should be understood.

OF Nehemiah the Jews speak as one of the greatest men of their nation. His concern for his country, manifested by such unequivocal marks, entitles him to the character of the first *patriot* that ever lived. In the course of the Divine providence, he was a captive in Babylon; but there his excellences were so apparent, that he was chosen by the Persian king to fill an office

the most respectable and the most *confidential* in the whole court. Here he lived in ease and affluence; he lacked no manner of thing that was good; and here he might have *continued* to live, in the same affluence and in the same confidence: but he could enjoy neither, so long as his people were distressed, the sepulchres of his fathers trodden under foot, the altars of his God overturned, and his worship either totally neglected or corrupted. He sought the peace of Jerusalem; he prayed to God for it; and was willing to sacrifice wealth, ease, and safety, and even life itself, if he might be the instrument of restoring the desolations of Israel. And God, who saw the desire of his heart, and knew the excellences with which he had endowed him, granted his request, and gave him the high honour of restoring the desolated city of his ancestors, and the pure worship of their God. On this account he has been considered by several as an expressive type of Jesus Christ, and many parallels have been shown in their lives and conduct.

I have already, in several notes, vindicated him from all mercenary and interested views, as well as from all false notions of *religion*, grounded on *human merit*. For disinterestedness, philanthropy, patriotism, prudence, courage, zeal, humanity, and every virtue that constitutes a great mind, and proves a soul in deep communion with God, Nehemiah will ever stand conspicuous among the greatest men of the Jewish nation, and an *exemplar* worthy to be copied by the first patriots in every nation under heaven.

It has already been observed that, in the Jewish canon, Ezra and Nehemiah make but one book; and that both have been attributed, but without reason, to the same author: hence the *Syriac* version ends with this colophon-The end of the book of Ezra, the scribe, in which are contained *two thousand three hundred and sixty-one* verses.

**MASORETIC NOTES.**-Ezra and Nehemiah contain *six hundred and eighty-eight* verses. *Middle verse* is <sup><16182></sup>**Nehemiah 3:32**. *Sections, ten.*